

Local Plan webinar event Q&A responses

1. Introduction

- 1.1. As part of the Braintree District Local Plan Regulation 18 Preferred Options consultation, Braintree District Council hosted 6 in-person consultation events and 1 online webinar event for communities and other stakeholders to find out more about the draft updated Local Plan proposals and to ask questions.
- 1.2. The online webinar took place on Tuesday 24 March 2026 and was designed to cover a general introduction and overview of the draft Local Plan. The webinar event enabled public engagement with those members of the community who could not or did not wish to attend an in-person event, enabling an alternative method of outreach. The webinar was held during the evening (6pm-7pm) to ensure that people who worked during the day would be able to join. The event was recorded and has been made available to view on YouTube¹ for those who could not attend at the time.
- 1.3. The webinar included a presentation which summarised the content of the consultation and gave a high level explanation about the larger site proposals relevant and the policies of the draft Local Plan. This was followed by a question and answer session following questions submitted through registration in advance of the webinar. Participants were able to submit questions in writing before the event, and many of these were answered verbally during the event. Because of the volume of questions that were received, it was not possible for all the questions to be answered during the event.
- 1.4. The purpose of this document is to ensure that every question asked in advance of the webinar event receives a response from the council.
- 1.5. A link to this document will be placed on the council's Local Plan consultation webpage.

¹ YouTube, Braintree District Local Plan – webinar event, 24th March 2026, available at: <https://youtu.be/Tae-Diekjls>

2. Question themes

2.1. The remainder of this report sets out the questions that were raised through the webinar, along with the councils' responses to these. These have been arranged by broad themes, as set out below.

2.2. The questions raised are shown in the left-hand column of the tables that follow. Responses from the council are shown in the right-hand column.

Infrastructure

	Question	Response
1	What infrastructure is proposed to support the Local Plan?	<p>This draft plan outlines the necessary infrastructure required to support growth for each site proposal at a high level only.</p> <p>Although we have an indicative list of infrastructure aspirations in the plan, Part of the Consultation seeks views from ECC as education and NHS for healthcare on infrastructure provision they want to see as part of overall growth policy.</p> <p>After the consultation has closed and once we have considered all the comments we receive and confirmed the preferred spatial option, we will update the policies to clearly state what is required onsite and develop an Infrastructure Delivery Plan which will set out all our infrastructure</p>

		requirements and undertake a viability assessment to ensure the plan is deliverable.
2	What provision is set out for community facilities: clinics, schools, shops, parking and local traffic access to the A12 and A120?	<p>We are expecting the larger strategic growth sites to include local centres which will be an area that will provide services to meet day to day needs of community. This means that they become more sustainable as schools and local facilities will be provided which minimise day to day trips for those accessing these facilities.</p> <p>Access to all new local plan sites is being considered and for the strategic sites there will be considerable engagement with ECC and National Highways on road network improvements. These will need to be modelled and included within the evidence base which will be consulted on at Regulation 19 stage.</p> <p>However, it is also worth noting that access will be a key consideration when a more detailed planning application is submitted if the site is still included in the final plan once it has been adopted.</p> <p>For the A12 and A120 – discussions are ongoing with National Highways around the infrastructure that is needed to the strategic growth network to support the preferred spatial option. This is alongside discussions with Essex Highways who are responsible for local road network. We will look for final adopted policies to safeguard the road infrastructure that is needed to support the growth in the Local Plan.</p>
3	How would the NHS and police cope? Staffing is an issue.	Any planning application that comes in would be supported by a Section 106 legal agreement which is a mechanism by which we secure money

		<p>for the delivery of new or expanded facilities such as GP surgeries for example. Typically, Section 106 is only allowed to deal with capital investment cost not revenue. Staffing is something that needs to be considered by the police and NHS. The planning system cannot provide revenue funds for that purpose.</p> <p>For the police, they are involved at the planning application stage in relation to the design of new developments in order that they're designed in a way which can minimise potential opportunities for crime and create safe new communities. We do engage with the police on all of our major planning applications to understand what their concerns might be around safety and take those in. The developers are asked to design new developments in a way that would hopefully minimise opportunities in that area.</p>
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Halstead site proposal

	Question	Response
2	What is the timing of the bypass delivery in Halstead?	The detailed highway modelling work is yet to be undertaken. This means we don't know what the phasing is likely to be yet. The modelling work will provide evidence of phasing that is needed to help us inform when that road needs to be come forward, as opposed to when new houses are built. We'll have more information on this within a future consultation (Regulation 19).
3	What is the timeframe for sites and services included in Halstead to be developed?	For the proposed site at land south and north east of Halstead, we need to take an evidence led approach in terms of timing of infrastructure delivery.

		<p>The council take into account when that infrastructure needs to be provided and that is included in the clauses within a Section 106 legal agreement to say what the triggers are for providing certain bits of infrastructure. Typically money for education facilities or NHS facilities is typically paid on commencement of development. That's not because they're immediately going to provide those facilities, but it's to allow for delivery partners like Essex County Council and the NHS to put plans in place for new facilities. Those facilities may actually need planning permission in their own right. Paying on commencement means that they will be delivered, but that they probably won't be delivered until some of the housing is in place because they've got to go through their own processes.</p>
4	Will Grade II* Listed Property be affected by the expansion in Halstead?	<p>All of the strategic growth locations need a more detailed heritage impact assessment to ensure new development can be planned in a way that preserves the designated heritage assets. Evidence work will be available for comment in Regulation 19.</p>
5	Is there research to understand where the traffic is coming from and going to in order to justify the bypass?	<p>Yes, the highway impact assessment document which is in the evidence base for Regulation 18 for the transport work analyses travel patterns. The highways impact assessment essentially assesses the preferred spatial option in the plan.</p> <p>The consultants working on the highways evidence (Essex Highways) do have an idea of where journeys are coming from and going to, and we know where the pressure points are in the road network and where that needs to be alleviated on the road network. There will be a cumulative impact of growth within the District and beyond and look at the impact potential improvements will have on the whole of the network.</p>
6	What's the knock on effects of improving 1 junction and how does this need to feed into the network as a whole? What's the rationale for providing 3,000 homes in this area and	<p>Essex has always been a popular place to live and it's a commutable place. There is a housing crisis, which means that people are moving from more expensive areas into the district.</p>

	where are people coming from to live in these homes?	There isn't really any control over who these homes are going to be provided for. The number of homes we need to provide is set down by national government. In terms of the rationale for providing the homes, Halstead is one of the three main towns in the Braintree District. The settlement hierarchy shows these towns have a wider range of facilities to support growth and in addition, the potential to provide the new relief road to alleviate existing congestion is one of the key benefits of allocating this site. That road would not come forward without the housing and would support the delivery of the road.
7	What's planned for the Riverside area of Halstead?	<p>There are concerns that this is potentially going to be part of the strategic large growth location and what's going to happen to the Riverside Walk. The detailed layout of the strategic growth locations needs to be worked out for all of the sites, including Halstead.</p> <p>Care needs to be taken when we're designing new developments around rivers and normally you have to keep a buffer from a river. Whilst the detailed master planning of the site needs to be worked through considerably, it is likely that the areas around the river would be retained for informal recreation.</p>
8	Will they be compensated essentially for the use of the bypass?	The developer would need to ensure that new developments and the relief road is designed to ensure the amenities of existing residents are maintained, but we wouldn't compensate.
9	How will the current road network join the bypass?	We don't know this yet. We have to do more detailed work on road enhancements, including the connections between the relief road and the existing road network, which will be available at Regulation 19.
10	How will safe walking and cycling passage be established for children attending Ramsey Academy from Colne Engaine because they would need to cross the bypass road?	That detail would be much further along in the plan process, likely a detailed planning application matter to consider. When you're planning a provision of a new road, there is a Section 38 process managed by the Highway Authority and that secures the design of new roads and ensures

		they are are built to adoptable standards. This process includes undertaking a road safety audit to ensure there will be safe passage for all users.
11	Is HAT R2203 proposed or does this have planning already?	<p>HAT R2203 is a good example of a site that's orange on the plan with a reference number. This is being allocated for the first time. There's a reason that there's nothing online is because this consultation is the first thing that you're seeing online so the site doesn't have any planning application or permission currently. This Regulation 18 is the first time you have your say about that site, and residents are encouraged to take part and share any concerns about that site or any other new site that's been proposed.</p> <p>All the new sites are found on the relevant inset maps in the draft Local plan document.</p>

King's Dene, Kelvedon site proposal

	Question	Response
1	What are the traffic studies for Kelvedon and how does this show that there would be no impact?	None of the highways impact assessment work shows there would be no impact. For Regulation 18, we have a highway impact assessment available on the website under the evidence base which shows impact of preferred spatial option. This means we know where the pinch points are in the road network which will be made worse by the growth that is

	I would like to understand how the travel assessment has been completed and how the building of the Kings Dene development will have no impact on Kelvedon from a travel prospective	<p>planned. The next stage will be to look at detailed modelling and mitigation that means that the growth we're planning – road network will be improved to ensure the growth plan will not impact the existing network.</p> <p>Once we know what mitigation we need, we will develop an infrastructure delivery plan including costs for delivery and we will do a viability assessment on the Local Plan This will all be available at Regulation 19.</p>
2	Tell us more about the increased number of commuters at Kelvedon station studies	No studies have been done on this issue by the Council. However as part of this consultation we are engaging with Network Rail for them to consider the impact of the growth on their infrastructure, as well as Greater Anglia. Once we have their views, we will consider these comments and update the plan for Regulation 19.

Hatfield Peverel site proposal

	Question	Response
1	What is the infrastructure approach for the Hatfield Peverel 1123 homes proposal?	We'll have more information on that within Regulation 19 once we've had more views back from the NHS, ECC and highways and national highways to inform how the sites can go forward potentially. High level detail is included in the draft Regulation 18 document as part of the consultation which you can view online.
2	What is the plan to address the cancelled A12 widening and junction changes at Hatfield Peverel?	The council would like to see the widening of the A12 and we are hugely disappointed by the decision. We understand ECC are in discussions with the Department for Transport to lobby government to consider options in relation to the A12.

		We are also working alongside Colchester and Chelmsford and other Essex authorities to lobby government to reconsider position on A12 to support growth in North Essex as we know it's a regional issue.
3	What green belt land is in Hatfield Peverel?	<p>The Braintree district does not currently contain any land designated as Green Belt.</p> <p>Green belt is land that was designed to protect urban containment around large settlements (and in the case of other Essex Authorities, London). Braintree district does not have any designated green belt land as we are too far from London.</p> <p>In the context of Hatfield Peverel, we do have evidence about green buffers, which are essentially areas of land that we safeguard to stop coalescence. We are proposing one between the village of Hatfield Peverel and the town of Witham taking into account the extension of Hatfield Peverel that is proposed within the draft Local Plan.</p>

East of Braintree proposal

	Question	Response
1	What new infrastructure will be put in place to accommodate the new houses, specifically in Braintree? For example, new roads and all roundabouts to keep traffic flowing, new schools and more grocery stores.	One of the key reasons for allocating this site is that it would provide land next to Galleys Corner, which could be used to be to deliver improvements. For other parts of Braintree, we have secured a new link road for Springwood Industrial Estate and improvements to the Springwood roundabout that are coming forward as a result of strategic sites that we're carrying into this plan. There will be other improvements.

		We're consulting with key delivery partners on the education and health facilities that will be needed on the sites. We will be expecting all the strategic sites to provide shops and facilities that meet day-to-day needs.
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Environment impact

	Question	Response
1	What is the wildlife impact (including badgers)?	<p>Badgers are a particular protected species like bats and certain birds and some types of snails.</p> <p>There are a lot of protected species and protecting wildlife is a key consideration in the Local Plan. Any new development must take that into account. Before any planning permission is granted, the developer has to do an ecological survey that does a survey based on what's on the site, including legally protected species. The principle in law with legally protected species is you have to know what the population is of that species in order to mitigate it. Once you know what the population is and you know what that habitat is, they can be relocated or compensated for.</p> <p>The council won't support development that would harm important wildlife sites, such as local wildlife sites or local nature reserves. Even if there are clear benefits that outweigh that harm, we want to protect those. Developers must show how much damage will be avoided or reduced and how wildlife would be protected. That is inherent within our existing planning policies.</p> <p>The Local Plan also requires new development to improve nature where possible, such as creating new habitats, improving green spaces, linking wildlife corridors or providing features like bird or bat boxes and green</p>

		roofs. The Local Plan aims not just to protect wildlife, but also to help with nature recovery and for nature to thrive alongside new developments.
2	Will current residents be disturbed by light and noise pollution, both in the development and the use of?	Light and noise pollution is a matter that would be considered at the detailed planning application stage if the site becomes allocated once the Local Plan is adopted.

Village impact

	Question	Response
1	Is Cornish Hall End and Finchingfield suitable for building? Will there be new homes in small villages?	<p>A lot of sites put forward to us so far have been discounted that are in the small villages, as the villages don't tend to have the facilities to enable them to support larger growth proposals.</p> <p>Some villages have been identified for small amounts of development, and this is either through new site allocations or through changes to development boundaries.</p> <p>The best place to find out what's planned is by looking at the relevant inset map in the draft plan. For example, for Cornish Hall End, the inset map is map 17 on page 234 of the draft Local Plan, and it should be read in conjunction with the key for the map, which is on page 212 of the draft Local Plan.</p>

