

Braintree District Local Plan 2043

Submission Draft (Regulation 19)



A summary of the proposed Local Plan,
its contents and what happens next



What is Regulation 19 and how you can comment

The Local Plan is now at Regulation 19 stage known as the Submission Draft Local Plan. This is when the final draft plan is published for comments to be made on the plan before the plan is sent to the Government for examination.

This is a bit different to previous consultation stages which sought opinions of sites, policies and development across the district more generally.

Regulation 19 is more focused and technical. The role of this stage is to provide the opportunity for representations to be made on the ‘soundness’ and legal compliance of the plan and the supporting documents.

Soundness is defined by specific tests set out in the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework which requires Local Plans to be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

Plans are sound if they are:

- **Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum seeks to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs, and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring authorities is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development
- **Justified** – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence
- **Effective** – deliverable over the plan period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground
- **Consistent with national policy** – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the NPPF and other statements of national policy, where relevant.

We want to know if you think the updated Local Plan passes these ‘tests of soundness’.

This means that specifically, we are asking people to consider whether the policies and proposals in the Plan meet these tests when making a comment.

More details are in the “Guidance on how to respond to Regulation 19” guide at the end of this booklet. All responses received during the consultation period will be sent to the government together with the final version of the Local Plan and supporting documentation including the evidence base.



Where can you find out more

Paper copies of the draft Local Plan document, supporting documents, paper response forms, guidance and FAQ's are available to view at:

- Braintree district libraries
- Our consultation events
- Causeway House, Braintree, Essex CM7 9HB

We have organised a webinar and events to help you understand the Local Plan and its supporting evidence, and support you in preparing your representation in the right way. The webinar will be hosted online and recorded to be viewed afterwards.

Drop-in events where you can learn more and asks questions:

Location	Date
Coggeshall Village Hall – Main Hall	Tuesday 13th October
Halstead Queens Hall	Wednesday 21st October
Feering Community Centre	Monday 26th October
Kelvedon Institute	Wednesday 28th October

All events will take place between 4pm and 8pm.

Online webinar

Date	Time
Tuesday 20th October	6pm-7pm

You can sign up here and submit your questions in advance: <https://bit.ly/localplanreg19webinar>

A recording of the webinar will be made available after the webinar along with written responses to questions raised.

How do you respond

You can send us your views on whether the plan is ‘sound’ in the following ways:



Online using our Local Plan Portal

Visit www.braintree.gov.uk/localplanreg19

This is the easiest way of submitting comments and ensures you will be kept informed of future stages of the plan preparation.

Alternatively, we have developed our own Local Plan web form which is available at: www.braintree.gov.uk/localplan2043



Email

Response forms should be sent to the email address. planningpolicy@braintree.gov.uk

You can scan in and send a paper form to this email.



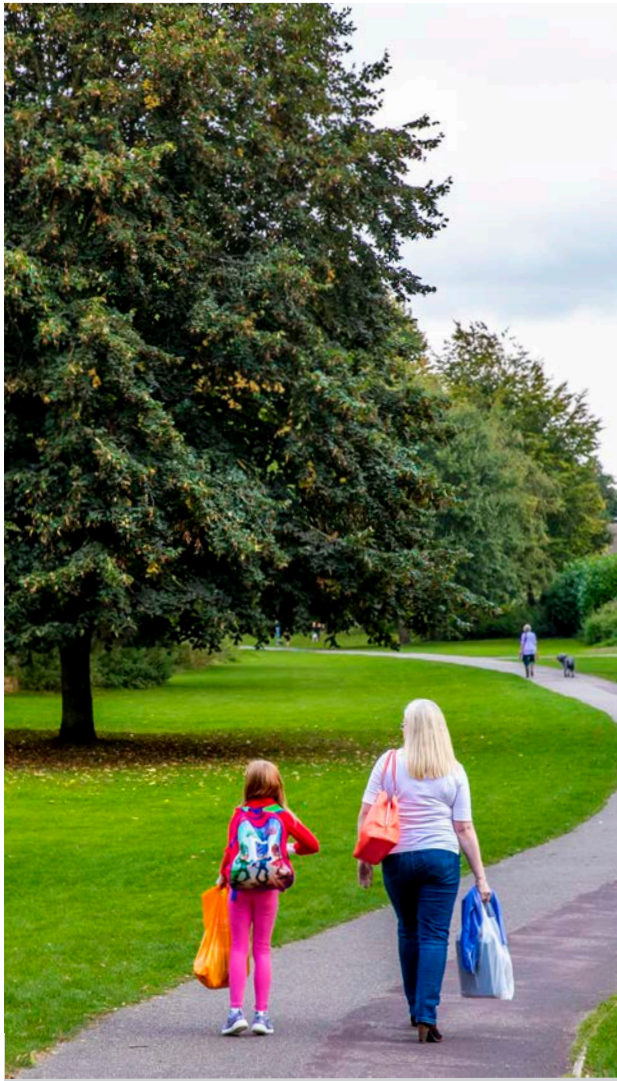
Post

A paper copy of the comments form can be used which is available on the website, at the District Council offices and local libraries. Written responses should be posted to: Planning Policy, Braintree District Council, Causeway House, Bocking End, Braintree, CM7 9HB.

You can comment from Wednesday 23rd September until 5pm on Friday 6th November 2026.

It is a requirement of the Local Plan process that comments can only be accepted if they are received in writing (online, email and post). Comments made verbally or anonymously cannot be accepted. We will make all representations available for public inspection on our website as soon as possible following the closure of the consultation.

If you require further assistance, please email planningpolicy@braintree.gov.uk or call 01376 552525.



Our Vision for the Braintree District

By 2043, we want the Braintree District to be a great place to live, work and raise a family, with thriving towns and villages, good jobs, well-designed homes and the infrastructure communities need. Growth will be carefully planned so that it benefits both current and future residents, while protecting the area's countryside, wildlife and heritage.



Better homes

- More homes to meet local needs, including affordable housing.
- New neighbourhoods designed to be attractive, sustainable and well connected.
- Growth focused around Braintree, Halstead, Hatfield Peverel and Kelvedon with smaller developments helping rural communities thrive.



More jobs and opportunities

- More businesses choosing to invest in the district.
- New employment land and business space to support growth.
- More opportunities for local people to find good jobs closer to home.



Better roads and transport

- Improvements to key routes including the A12, A120, Galley's Corner and local road network.
- Better public transport, walking and cycling connections.
- Easier access to London, Stansted Airport and other major destinations.



Schools, healthcare and community facilities

- New and expanded schools to support growing communities.
- Improved healthcare facilities and services.
- Community spaces, leisure facilities and services available where people need them.



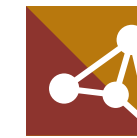
Greener, healthier places

- More parks, green spaces and opportunities for recreation.
- Communities designed to support healthier lifestyles and wellbeing.
- A stronger focus on reducing health inequalities and improving quality of life.



Protecting the environment

- The district's countryside, landscapes, wildlife and historic places protected and enhanced.
- New development designed to respond to climate change and support nature recovery.
- More trees, green infrastructure and sustainable development.



Connected for the future

- Reliable high-speed broadband for homes and businesses.
- New development designed to high standards and built to last.
- Modern technology used to create more sustainable communities.

Our vision is for a district that grows in the right way, with new homes, jobs and infrastructure planned together, while keeping the character and qualities that make Braintree District special.

The story so far...

Work on the Local Plan started in March 2024.

Two consultations were held prior to this one, most recently on the Draft Local Plan (known as Regulation 18) which took place between March and April 2026.

1,537 separate people made over 2,700 comments, which have been carefully considered and have helped to shape the Submission Draft Local Plan. As well as your comments, we've also taken account of national planning policy requirements, and evidence across a wide range of issues.

What is a Local Plan and why do we need one?

A Local Plan is an important document which guides decisions on planning applications. It provides the Council with an opportunity to guide growth within the Braintree District.

It is important we plan for sustainable development which protects the environment, supports biodiversity, tackles climate change alongside providing new homes where people can afford to live and local jobs.

Alongside this, planning for social infrastructure such as schools, health facilities and new leisure provision is really important so that new places become a great place to live.

The current adopted Local Plan is over 5 years old and planned to deliver 716 homes a year. National Government has set a new mandatory target requiring the Council to deliver around 1,300 homes per year which means that our existing plan is out of date.

This makes it easier for developers to obtain planning permission on a site which is not allocated for development. An up-to-date Local Plan will help address this challenge so that we can retain control on where we would like to see growth and protect the places where growth would not be sustainable.

What happens next

Once Regulation 19 ends, we will prepare documents for submission to the Government, alongside all the representations received.

Before submission, the Plan will be considered at an additional Full Council meeting, where councillors will be asked to approve its submission for independent examination.

The Government will then appoint an independent Planning Inspector to undertake a 'public examination' of the Plan and propose any modifications which are required to ensure that the Plan is sound and legally compliant. The Planning Inspector may organise public hearings to assist with this process, ensuring the examination is open and transparent.

This is the last stage of the process for producing a Local Plan.



How do we decide how much development is needed in the district?

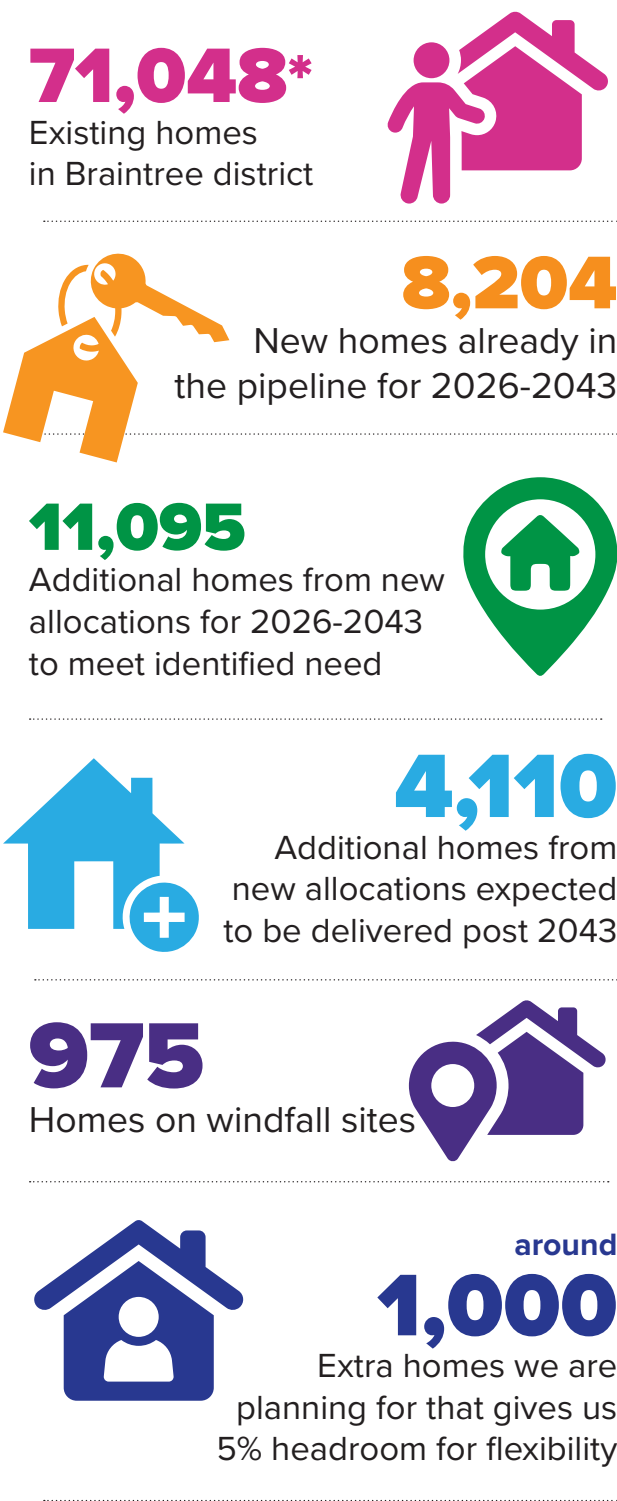
A key role of the Local Plan is to identify and meet the area’s development needs.

To support this, the plan proposes at least 19,261 new homes between 2026 and 2043 which is 1,133 homes per year. This housing number comes from the government’s mandatory housing target.

Much of this growth will come from existing planned sites such as well as windfall sites. We have identified sites that will deliver further homes by 2043 to meet the needs and provide a buffer to ensure the target is met.

8,150 have been allocated as part of strategic growth locations (sites delivering 10 or more homes). 2,945 are on non-strategic sites (sites delivering less than 10 homes).

We need to make sure we plan for development in the most sustainable way, minimising the need for travel and maximising opportunities for walking, cycling and accessing public transport.



* Source: Number of dwellings by tenure and district, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2025)

What happens if we don’t have a plan?

Without an up-to-date plan, we would have less influence over where development takes place, less ability to secure infrastructure alongside growth and a greater risk of speculative development.

While preparing a Local Plan involves difficult choices, it remains the best way to plan for the homes, services and infrastructure our communities need.

You can find out more about the local plan on our website at: www.braintree.gov.uk/localplan2043.



Site allocations in the Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan

There are 50 site allocations in the Braintree district.

10 are strategic growth locations and 40 are non-strategic locations including brownfield sites in urban areas that can contribute to regeneration.

New strategic growth locations	Total number of houses (number beyond the plan period in brackets)
East of Braintree	1,900 (760)
Land East of Halstead	2,850
Kings Dene – North, West and South West of Kelvedon	2,250 (3,350)
Land North of the A12, Hatfield Peverel	1,150
Total	8,150 (12,260)

Existing strategic growth locations	Total number of houses (number beyond the plan period in brackets)
Hayeswood, East of Great Notley	1,650
Land East of Broad Road, Braintree	1,000
Former Towerlands Park Site, Braintree	575
North West Braintree – Panfield Lane	825
Land South East of Feering	835
Wood End Farm, Witham	400
Total	5,385

What are the big issues?

Homes need to be sustainable, near to jobs, shops, services and other facilities. We also need to ensure the plan meets all the government’s requirements and we must have a range of sites of different sizes, types and locations.

On the sites proposed, we want to deliver high-quality homes that people expect and we must make sure the homes being provided meet the needs of residents – in terms of affordability, size and type.

Affordability is a key issue and the plan seeks to ensure that 30-40% of the housing allocation is affordable for local people.

Given the housing target that has been set by national Government, we are proposing strategic scale developments in some areas as these provide the opportunity to create more sustainable places. Built around local services

such as schools and health facilities, including land which will provide local jobs, strategic scale development gives us the opportunity to improve public transport and connectivity for everyone living, working and visiting the area. In addition, new areas of open space can be provided which everyone can enjoy.

We need to support existing towns and village centres and ensure any new infrastructure benefits as many people as possible.

For these reasons, our draft plan focuses development in the most sustainable existing locations or where development of a strategic scale can be achieved to provide good levels of sustainability. This includes allocating land on the edges of main towns at Braintree, Halstead and Witham and at Key Service Villages such as Kelvedon, Hatfield Peverel and Coggeshall where there is the ability to access major roads like the A12 and the A120 and good access to rail links.



What has changed since the Regulation 18 consultation?

Following the Regulation 18 consultation, we reviewed thousands of comments from residents, communities, statutory organisations and other stakeholders. The Submission Draft Local Plan has been updated to reflect this feedback, along with new technical studies and national planning policy changes.

Key changes include:

- Updated housing and employment figures to reflect the extended plan period to 2043 and the latest evidence.
- Additional housing sites proposed to help maintain a five-year housing land supply and meet Government housing requirements.
- New strategic site policy developed to strengthen the policy framework for master planning of large sites including an expectation for community engagement within the master planning process.
- Stronger infrastructure requirements across major housing sites, including clearer expectations for schools, healthcare, transport and community facilities.
- More detailed transport evidence and a wider package of transport improvements, public transport measures, walking and cycling routes.

- Stronger environmental policies, including updates relating to biodiversity, protected habitats, tree planting, climate change and the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- Updated flood risk and water management policies following feedback from the Environment Agency and water companies.
- Changes to some site allocations and policy wording to improve clarity, respond to consultation feedback and ensure consistency with national planning policy.
- Updated sustainability appraisal, heritage and habitat assessments to reflect changes to the Plan and the latest available evidence.
- Alignment of Policies to the new National DM policies contained within the NPPF 2026 so that new policies can be afforded significant weight once adopted.



Employment

In the **Employment** chapter, the Local Plan sets out **seven policies** to support local jobs, encourage business growth and make sure there is enough land available for businesses to invest and expand.

The Plan allocates around **30 hectares of new employment land** during the plan period, with key locations including **Kings Dene near Kelvedon, Bluebridge Industrial Estate in Halstead, Horizon 120 near Great Notley, and employment sites around Braintree and Witham.**

The chapter supports a range of employment opportunities, from offices and business parks to industrial, storage and distribution uses, while also protecting existing employment areas. It encourages the growth of local businesses, supports rural enterprises and tourism, and plans for jobs alongside major new housing developments.

Policies in this chapter cover:

Strategic employment

The Local Plan identifies the amount of employment land needed to support future economic growth and investment. It plans for new business, industrial and warehouse space to help create jobs and support the district's economy. The aim is to provide opportunities for people to work closer to where they live.

Employment locations

The Plan identifies specific sites for new employment development and protects existing business areas. This helps ensure there is enough land available for businesses to expand and invest in the district. Key employment locations are focused around the district's main towns and strategic growth locations.

Supporting local businesses

Policies support both existing businesses and new enterprises, including smaller and growing companies. The Plan encourages flexible business space and investment in sectors that can help strengthen the local economy. The aim is to support long-term economic growth and job creation.

Rural enterprise and tourism

The Plan supports farm diversification, tourism and other rural businesses where development is appropriate and respects the countryside. This can help create jobs and strengthen the rural economy. Existing rural businesses are supported to grow sustainably.

Business parks and employment areas

The Local Plan protects important employment sites so they can continue to provide jobs for local people. Policies help prevent the unnecessary loss of employment land to other uses. This helps maintain a strong supply of sites for businesses across the district.

Shops and Services

In the **Shops and Services** chapter, the Local Plan sets out seven policies to support and improve the district's town centres, shopping areas and local services, while helping them adapt to changing shopping habits.

The chapter identifies Braintree, Witham and Halstead as the district's main town centres, with Great Notley as a district centre and local centres in places such as Coggeshall, Earls Colne, Hatfield Peverel, Kelvedon and Sible Hedingham. It aims to keep these centres vibrant, attractive and easy to access, while supporting new shops, cafés, services and community facilities where they are needed.

The evidence shows that by 2043 the district could need:

- Around 18,700 square metres of new retail and food and drink floorspace.
- Around 2,800 square metres of new leisure and cultural floorspace.

The Plan also supports improvements to town centres, encourages walking, cycling and public transport, and helps ensure local shops and services continue to meet the needs of residents and communities across the district.



Homes

In the **Homes** chapter, the Local Plan sets out **29 policies** to make sure enough homes are built to meet the needs of current and future residents, while creating attractive, sustainable communities supported by the right infrastructure.

The Plan provides for around 19,200 new homes by 2043, including affordable housing, specialist housing, self-build plots and accommodation for Gypsy and Traveller communities. Most new homes will be focused around Braintree, Witham, Halstead, Kelvedon and Feering, with some smaller developments in villages to help meet local needs.

The chapter also sets policies on:

- **Affordable housing**
The Local Plan requires developers to provide 30-40% affordable homes as part of new housing developments, helping local people access homes that are more affordable to rent or buy. The amount of affordable housing required varies across the district and has been informed by local evidence on housing need. The aim is to help meet the needs of people who might otherwise struggle to find suitable housing.
- **Housing for older people and those with additional needs**
The Local Plan supports housing designed for older people, people with disabilities and others who need specialist accommodation. It encourages a range of options, including supported living, extra care housing and care homes, based on identified local needs.

This helps more people live independently and safely within their communities for longer.

- **Housing design, accessibility and energy efficiency**
The Local Plan promotes well-designed homes that are attractive, accessible and fit for modern living. New homes are expected to meet accessibility standards and be more energy and water efficient, helping to reduce household bills and environmental impact. The aim is to create homes that work well for people throughout different stages of life.
- **Self-build and custom-build homes**
The Local Plan supports opportunities for people who want to design and build their own home. Larger developments will be expected to provide serviced plots for self build and custom-build housing where there is demand. This gives residents more choice and helps create a wider variety of homes across the district.
- **Protecting the character of towns, villages and the countryside while allowing appropriate development**

The Local Plan directs most new development to the most sustainable locations while protecting the character of existing communities and the countryside. Policies help ensure that new homes are designed to fit their surroundings and respect local identity. This approach aims to balance the need for growth with protecting the places that residents value most.

Transport and Infrastructure

In the **Transport** and **Infrastructure** chapter, the **Local Plan** sets out 12 policies to make sure new homes and businesses are supported by the roads, public transport, schools, healthcare, utilities and digital connectivity needed for communities to thrive.

It identifies the requirement for improvements to roads, public transport, schools, healthcare, green spaces, sports facilities, water services and digital connectivity, and requires developers to contribute towards these where necessary.

The chapter focuses on improving transport choices, reducing congestion and ensuring growth is matched by investment in infrastructure.

The evidence base identifies a range of projects to support growth, including improvements to Galleys Corner, Marks Farm roundabout, the Halstead link road, Kelvedon Station, Braintree Station access, a shuttle bus connection between Braintree and Beaulieu Park stations, new walking and cycling routes, and upgrades to water, energy and broadband infrastructure.

Policies in this chapter cover:

Sustainable transport

The Local Plan promotes walking, cycling and public transport as easy and attractive ways to travel. New developments will be expected to include safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists, public transport connections and measures that reduce reliance on the car. This helps create healthier communities and supports the district's climate goals.

Parking provision

Policies require new developments to provide appropriate parking for cars and bicycles. Existing town centre and station car parks are protected where they play an important role in supporting local services and transport links. This helps balance accessibility with sustainable travel choices.

New road infrastructure

The Local Plan safeguards several road improvement schemes that could help support growth and reduce congestion. These include the Halstead link road, improvements at High Garrett, improvements around Hatfield Peverel, new links in Braintree, and support for improvements on key strategic routes. The aim is to make the transport network safer, more efficient and more reliable.

Broadband and digital connectivity

The Plan supports high-speed broadband and digital infrastructure across the district. New homes and businesses will be expected to have access to reliable, modern connectivity wherever possible. This helps support home working, education, business growth and access to online services.

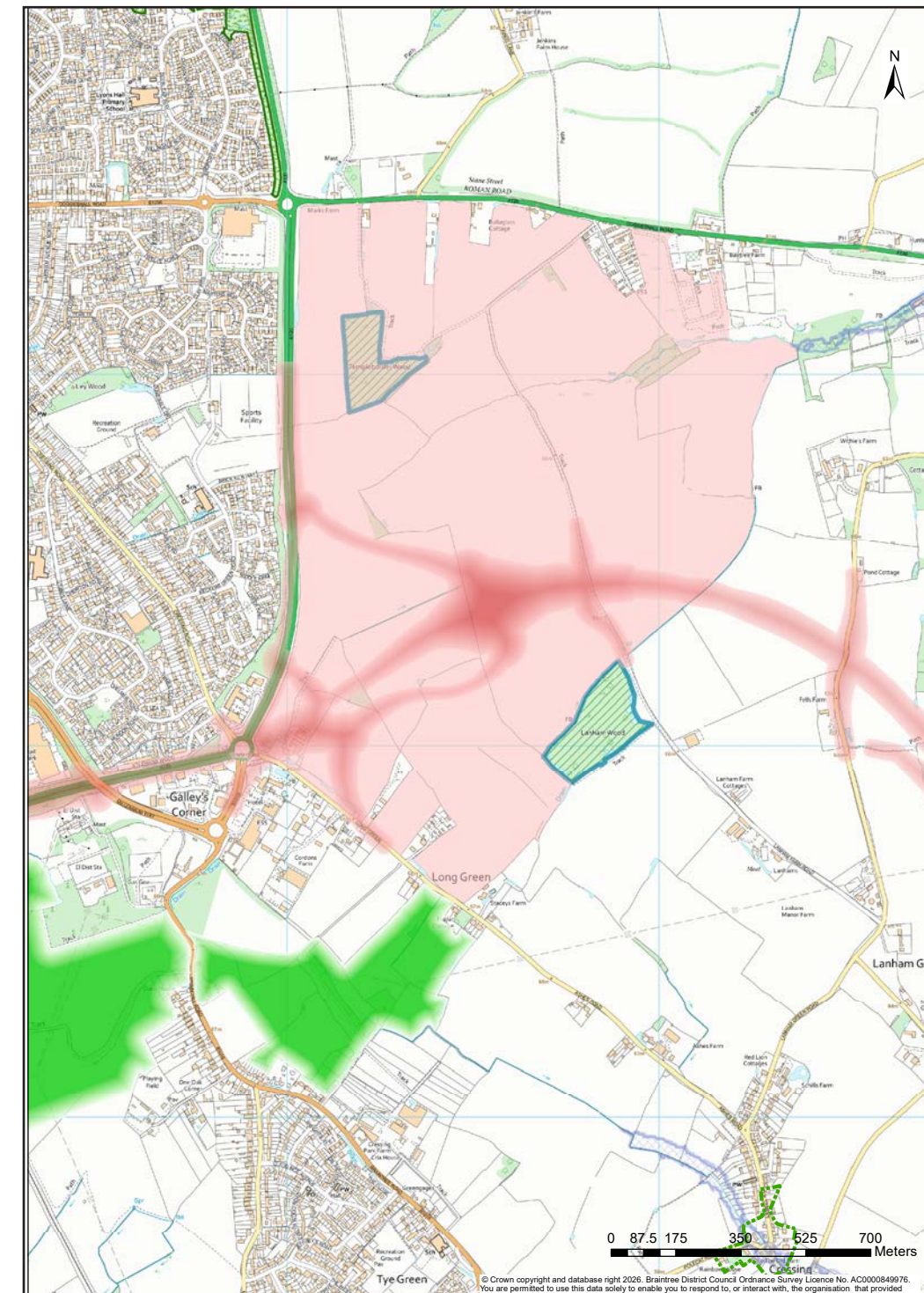
Infrastructure delivery

The Local Plan is supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan which identifies the services and facilities needed to support growth. Developers will be required to contribute to infrastructure such as schools, healthcare, transport, green spaces, utilities and community facilities where necessary. This helps ensure infrastructure is planned alongside new development rather than afterwards.

Housing allocations and infrastructure

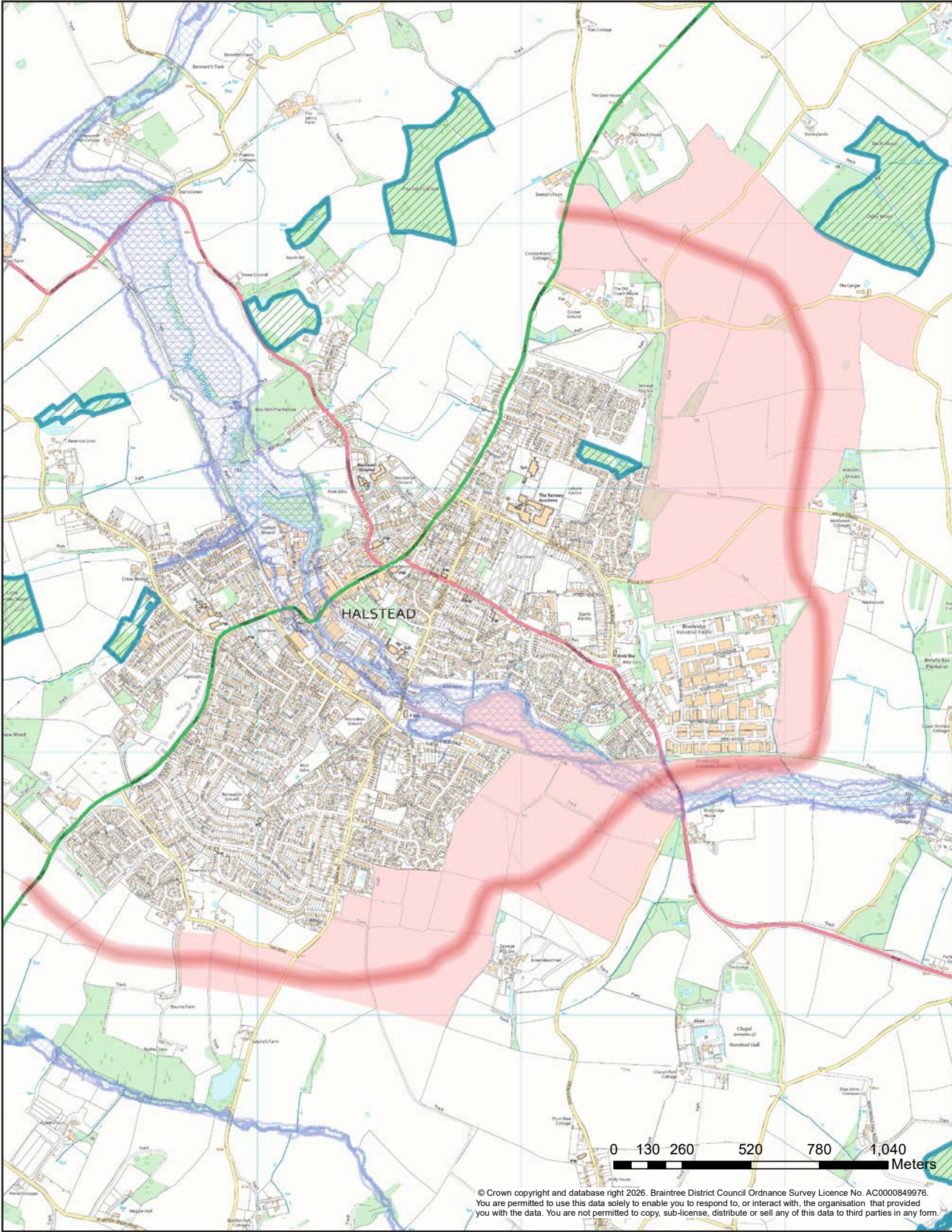
East of Braintree

A new mixed-use community of around 2,500 homes is proposed east of Braintree. The development would be expected to provide a new secondary school, healthcare facilities, local shops, employment land, public open space, walking and cycling routes, improvements to Galleys Corner and other transport infrastructure, and enhancements for biodiversity and green spaces.



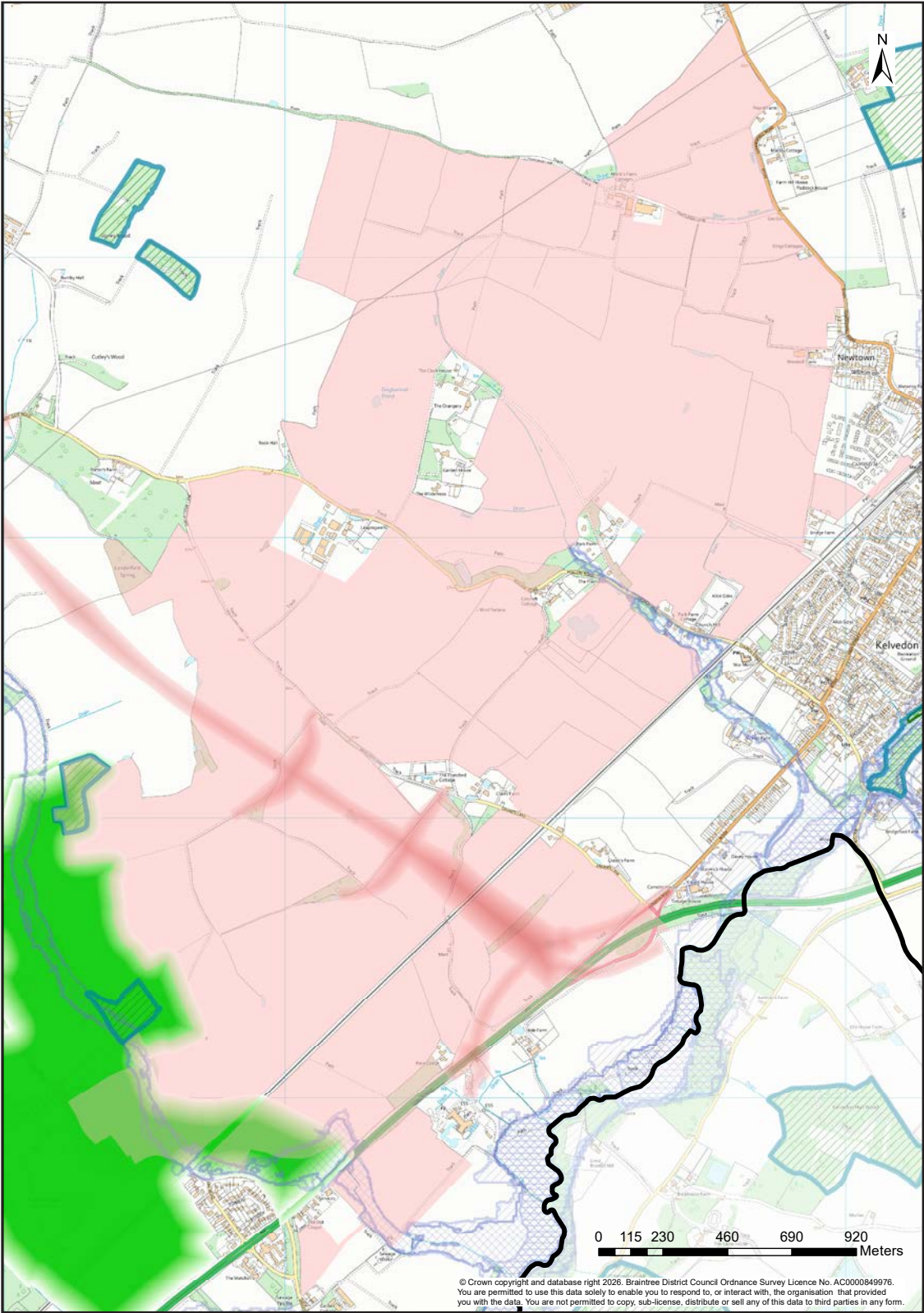
Land East of Halstead

Around 2,850 homes are planned on land around Halstead. The development would help deliver a new Halstead link road, new primary school provision, healthcare facilities, local shops and services, sports and recreation facilities, public open space and improvements to the wider road network.



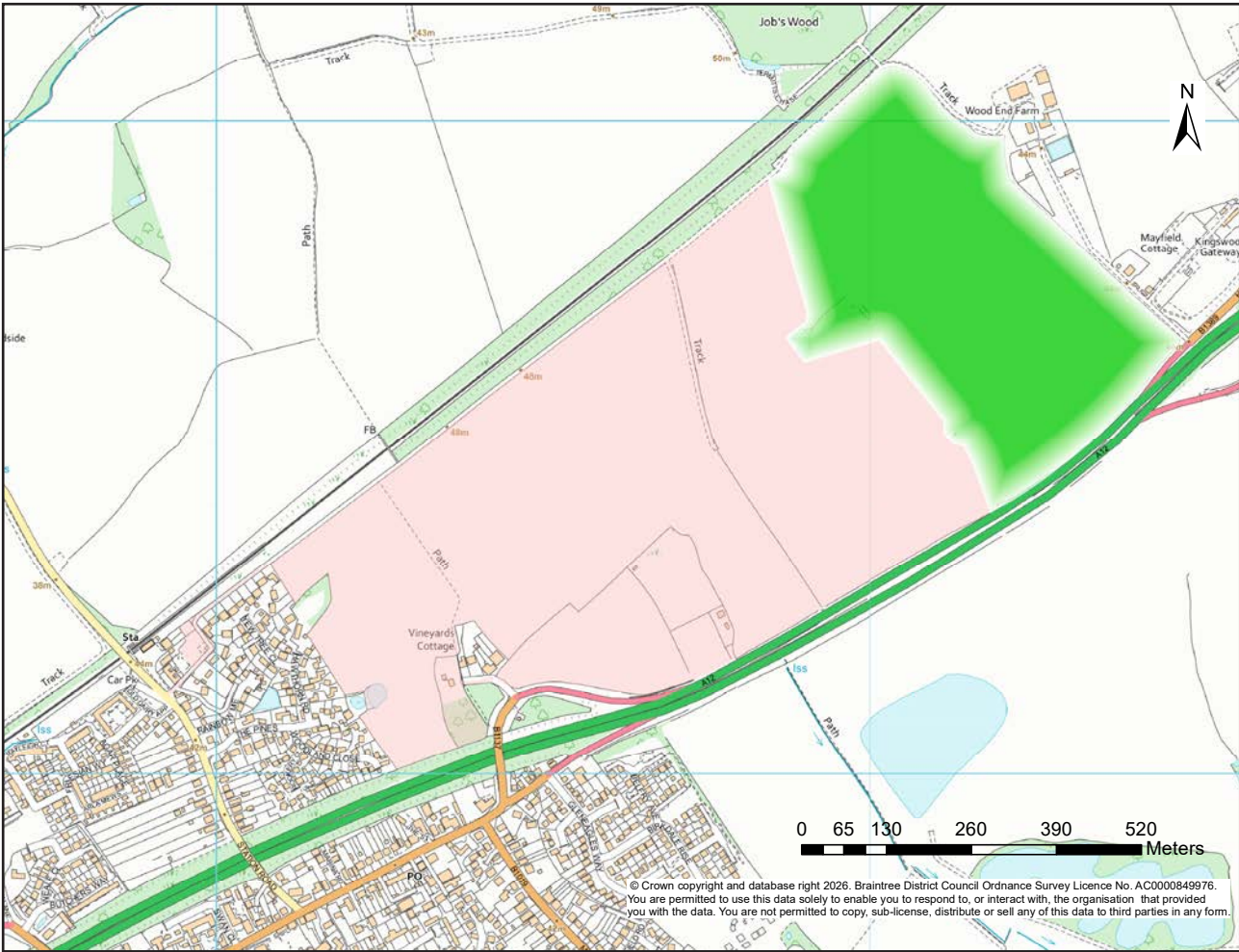
King's Dene – North, West and South West of Kelvedon

King's Dene is the largest proposed growth location, with around 2,250 homes planned up to 2043 and further development beyond the plan period. Infrastructure includes a new secondary school, two new primary schools, healthcare facilities, employment land, local centres with shops and services, improvements to Kelvedon Station, a new connection to the A12 and new link road, public transport improvements, green spaces and extensive walking and cycling links.



Land North of the A12, Hatfield Peverel

A new community of around 1,150 homes is planned north of the A12. The development would contribute towards healthcare and education provision, public open space, walking and cycling links to Hatfield Peverel and the railway station, improvements to transport infrastructure. Alongside this a green buffer between Hatfield Peverel and Witham will ensure separation between these two settlements is retained.



Creating Better Places

In the **Creating Better Places** chapter, the Local Plan sets out 31 policies to help create healthy, attractive and well-designed communities, while protecting the district’s historic character and local heritage.

The chapter covers everything from health and wellbeing to design, open spaces, community facilities and conservation, helping ensure that new development improves the places where people live, work and spend their time.

The chapter promotes healthier lifestyles through access to green spaces, sport and recreation, supports new schools and community facilities, and sets standards for high-quality design. It also includes policies to protect conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological sites and other heritage assets that contribute to the district’s identity.

Policies in this chapter cover:

Healthy communities

The Local Plan encourages development that supports healthy lifestyles and wellbeing. New developments will be expected to consider their impact on health and provide access to services, open spaces and opportunities for physical activity. Larger schemes may need to complete Health Impact Assessments to show how they support healthier communities.

Open spaces, sport and recreation

The Plan protects existing parks, sports facilities, play areas and open spaces while requiring new developments to provide additional facilities where needed. New homes should be supported by spaces for recreation, exercise and relaxation. This helps create attractive communities and supports physical and mental wellbeing.

High-quality design

The Local Plan sets expectations for well-designed homes, buildings and public spaces that fit their surroundings and are safe, accessible and attractive. New development should respect local character while creating places that work well for residents and visitors. The aim is to ensure growth improves the quality of the built environment.

Community facilities

The Plan helps protect important local facilities such as schools, community centres, healthcare services, libraries and places of worship. It also supports the provision of new facilities where they are needed to serve growing communities. This helps ensure residents can access services close to home.

Heritage and local character

The chapter includes policies to protect and enhance conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological sites and historic landscapes. Development should respect the district’s heritage and the features that make towns and villages distinctive. The aim is to make sure growth does not come at the expense of the district’s character and history.

Accessible and inclusive places

The Local Plan promotes development that can be used safely and easily by everyone. Buildings, streets and public spaces should be designed to be inclusive and accessible, helping people of all ages and abilities take part in community life. This supports the creation of welcoming places for everyone.

The Districts Natural Environment

In The District's **Natural Environment** chapter, the Local Plan sets out 15 policies to protect wildlife and landscapes, respond to climate change, manage flood risk and help nature recover. The chapter aims to make sure new development is environmentally responsible and leaves the district's natural environment in a better condition for future generations.

The Local Plan plays an important role in tackling climate change and helping nature recover. It supports development that reduces carbon emissions, improves energy and water efficiency, and is designed to cope with the effects of climate change, such as flooding, drought and extreme weather. At the same time, it strengthens protection for wildlife, trees, habitats and green spaces, while requiring development to deliver biodiversity improvements and create better-connected spaces for nature.

Policies in this chapter cover:

Nature and green spaces

The Plan protects important natural habitats, wildlife sites, trees and green infrastructure across the district. It encourages new development to contribute towards nature recovery and create more connected habitats for wildlife. The aim is to improve biodiversity and make nature an integral part of future development.

Protecting wildlife and biodiversity

Development will be expected to avoid harm to important habitats and species wherever possible. New schemes must deliver at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain, meaning nature should be left in a better state than before development took place. Features such as habitat creation, bird and bat boxes, tree planting and wildlife corridors are encouraged.

Climate change

The Plan supports development that helps reduce carbon emissions and prepares communities for a changing climate. It encourages energy-efficient buildings, renewable energy, tree planting and stronger habitat networks. These measures help reduce environmental impacts while making places more resilient in the future.

Water, flooding and drainage

The Local Plan includes policies to reduce flood risk and make sure development is safe from flooding. Sustainable drainage systems, natural flood management and careful site design are expected in new developments. The aim is to manage water more effectively while also supporting nature and green infrastructure.

Trees, landscapes and countryside

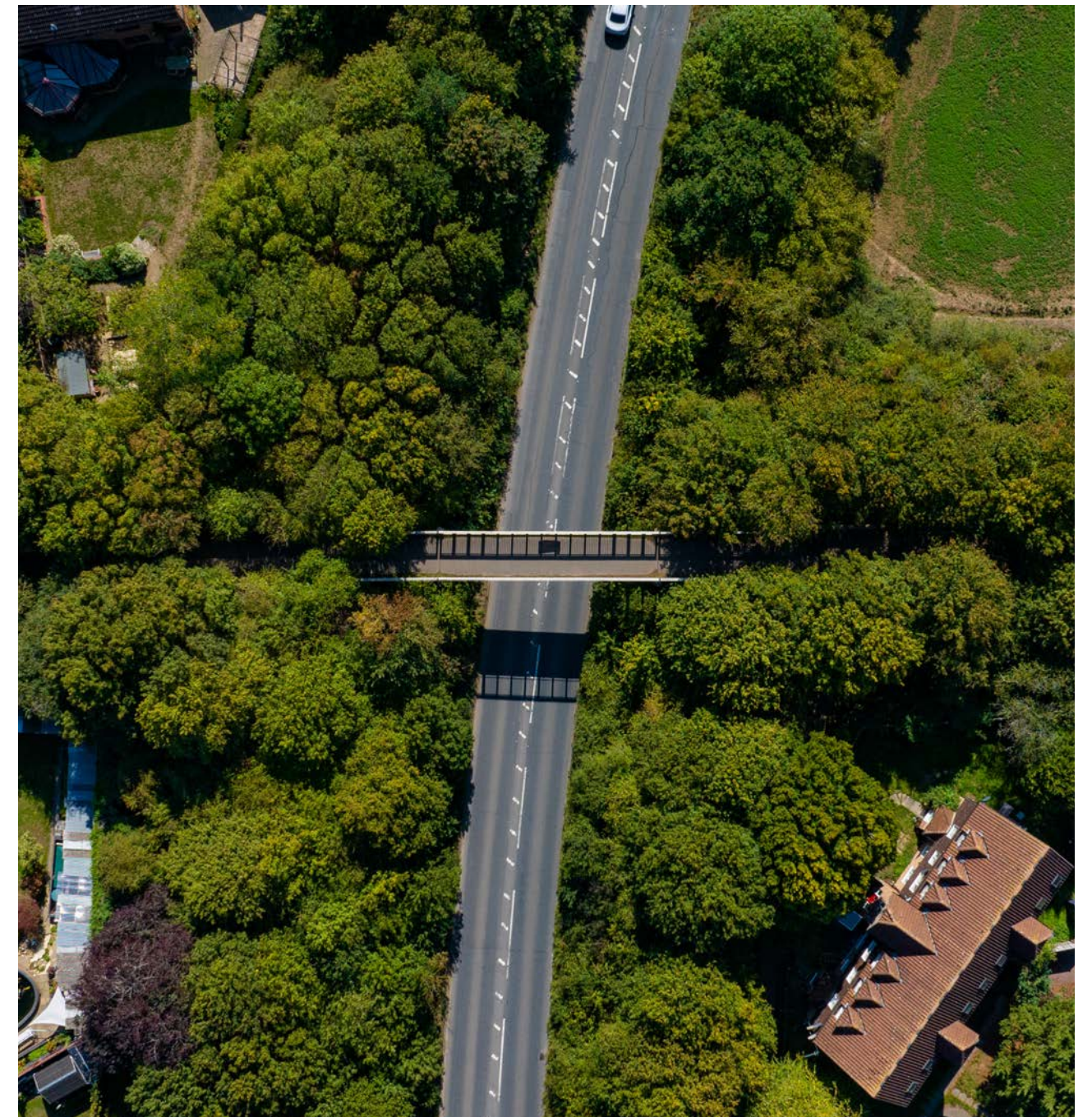
The chapter protects trees, valued landscapes, green buffers and the character of the countryside. New development should respect its surroundings and preserve the separation between towns and villages where appropriate. Additional tree planting and landscaping are encouraged to enhance biodiversity, improve resilience to climate change and create attractive places.

Energy and renewable energy

The Plan supports renewable and low-carbon energy projects where impacts can be properly managed. New homes will be expected to be more energy and water efficient, helping reduce carbon emissions and pressure on natural resources. This supports the district's move towards a more sustainable future.

More information

- Visit our website: www.braintree.gov.uk/localplan2043
- Read our supporting documents and evidence base, which can be viewed in our document library on our consultation page: www.braintree.gov.uk/LPEvidenceBase



Frequently asked questions (FAQ's)

Q: What documents have been published?

Publication of the Submission Draft Braintree District Local Plan must be in accordance with the regulations with specific documents to be prepared to support the consultation including:

- The Submission Draft Braintree District Local Plan
- Local Plan Policies Map
- Sustainability Appraisal
- Sustainability Appraisal Non-Technical Summary
- Habitats Regulation Assessment

In addition to the main consultation documents, there are a number of supporting background and evidence documents which have been published alongside the consultation.

These can be viewed on the council's planning portal.

Q: How do I find the consultation documents?

The Draft Local Plan and supporting documents are available to view electronically on the Braintree District Council planning portal at www.braintree.gov.uk/localplanreg19.

Q: How can I see a hard copy?

Hardcopy printouts are available during normal opening hours at Braintree District Council, Causeway House, Braintree, Essex CM7 1HB and Braintree district libraries.

If required, hardcopy printouts of specific sections or whole documents can be made available upon request.

Copies of consultation documents can be made available in alternative formats e.g. large print. To request this, email planningpolicy@braintree.gov.uk.

Q: Can I comment anonymously?

We cannot accept anonymous comments, or anything marked as private or confidential. Comments will be attributed to individuals and organisations. If you submit comments, the consultation responses and your personal data will be passed to the Planning Inspectorate and a Programme Officer. The Programme Officer manages the procedural and administrative aspects of the examination. The Programme Officer will contact you using the personal information you have provided if you have indicated in the representation form that you wish to engage in the examination.

Q: Why has the Local Plan period changed from 2026-2041 to 2026/27-2043?

The plan period consulted on for Regulation 18 was for the period 2026-2041. Respondents to this question noted that a 15 year plan period was required in order for the plan to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework. The Council agrees that it is necessary to make this change in order that the plan is found to be sound as one

of the tests for plan-making is whether the plan is in accordance with national planning policy. The Plan extension to 2043 was also a recommendation from the Planning Inspectorate in order to conform with the NPPF requirement of a 15 year Plan period from adoption.

There is no requirement within the Local Plan regulations to consult on individual changes that are made to a plan between Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 consultations. The comments received from the Regulation 18 consultation have helped shape the Submission Draft Local Plan that has been published.

The change to the plan period is being consulted on at this Regulation 19 stage.

Q: Why have more housing sites been added to the Local Plan?

The Planning Inspectorate has required the council to extend the Local Plan period by two years. This means the plan must now include two additional years of housing need that would otherwise have been considered as part of the next Local Plan. To meet this requirement, the Submission Draft Local Plan includes five additional housing allocations, providing around 1,000 more homes over the plan period. At the same time, the flexibility buffer has been reduced to 5%, helping to limit the amount of additional land allocated while still meeting national planning requirements.

Q: Can new sites be suggested during Regulation 19?

The primary purpose of Regulation 19 is not to seek additional sites but to consider whether the published Plan is legally compliant and sound.

However, respondents may explain why they believe alternative approaches or sites should have been included.

Q: How will the Local Government Reorganisation affect the Local Plan?

The Government has withdrawn its previous decision on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Essex and has announced a review of the programme. This means there is currently no confirmed timetable or final decision on the future structure of local government in Essex. The Government has also confirmed that local elections in May 2027 will go ahead on existing council boundaries.

Regardless of the outcome of the review, Braintree District Council remains responsible for preparing a Local Plan for the district. Having an up-to-date Local Plan is the best way to manage future growth, influence where development takes place and secure the infrastructure and services needed to support communities.

If a new unitary authority is created in the future, any adopted Local Plan would remain in place for the Braintree district area until it is reviewed or replaced by a new plan covering the wider authority area. However, if the council does not progress the Local Plan, the district could remain without an up-to-date plan for several years, reducing local control over development and increasing the risk of speculative planning applications.

The Council wishes to retain control over where growth happens and is therefore looking to submit its plan by 31 December 2026.

Q: Can allocations be changed as a result of consultation if alternative sites come forward at this stage?

The site allocations identified in the Draft Local Plan are based on robust evidence, including the Sustainability Appraisal that rigorously tested the policies and site allocations included in the Plan as well as the reasonable alternatives.

Changes will only be suggested to the Plan if it is necessary to achieve a sound plan.

The Regulation 19 consultation process allows the public and key stakeholders to make comments on the site allocations in the Draft Local Plan, with a view of ensuring the site allocations are legally compliant, sound and have been prepared in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate.

Q: How do pre-apps the Council are currently receiving relate to the Local Plan?

The Council is currently receiving a number of requests for pre application advice on sites for housing development. These generally have no relationship to the Local Plan other than where they are on sites that are proposed allocations. As the Local Plan progresses through its statutory process, it will help the Council to regain control of where development is located in the longer term.

Q: How does the Council’s five-year housing land supply position relate to the Local Plan?

The Council does not currently have a 5 year housing land supply since the Local Plan became over 5 years old in Spring 2026. The lack of a 5 year housing land supply leaves the district at risk of speculative development until the Draft Local Plan is adopted. The Council is working hard to mitigate the reduction in its housing land supply by continuing work on its new local plan to provide for future housing and sustainable development across the district in order to close the gap between housing supply and requirements.



Guidance note on making a representation

This note is intended explain what is meant by soundness and legal compliance and to help respondents make their points clear for the planning inspector.

This is particularly important for those who are submitting responses outside of our online survey such as via email or letter.

What is soundness?

The tests of soundness are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Plans are sound if they are:

- a) positively prepared – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development
- b) justified – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives and based on proportionate evidence
- c) effective – deliverable over the plan period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground
- d) consistent with national policy – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.

If you think the content of the plan is not sound because it does not include a policy on a particular issue, you should go through the following steps before making representations:

- Is the issue with which you are concerned already covered specifically by national planning policy?
- Is the issue with which you are concerned already covered by another policy in this plan?
- If the policy is not covered elsewhere, in what way is the plan unsound without the policy?
- If the plan is unsound without the policy, what should the policy say?

What is legal compliance?

You should consider the following before making a representation on legal compliance:

- The plan should be included in the LPA’s current Local Development Scheme [LDS] and the key stages set out in the LDS should have been followed. The LDS is effectively a programme of work prepared by the LPA, setting out the plans it proposes to produce. It will set out the key stages in the production of any plans which the LPA proposes to bring forward for examination. If the plan is not in the current LDS it should not have been published for representations. The LDS should be on the LPA’s website and available at its main offices.
- The process of community involvement for the plan in question should be in general accordance with the LPA’s Statement of Community Involvement [SCI] (where one exists). The SCI sets out the LPA’s strategy for involving the community in the preparation and revision of plans and the consideration of planning applications.

- The LPA is required to provide a Sustainability Appraisal [SA] report when it publishes a plan. This should identify the process by which SA has been carried out, and the baseline information used to inform the process and the outcomes of that process. SA is a tool for assessing the extent to which the plan, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives.

- The plan should comply with all other relevant requirements of the PCPA and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended [the Regulations].

How should I write my representation?

Although any and all comments can be submitted, the planning inspector will be interested in representations relating to the soundness and legal compliance of the Local Plan.

When you're preparing your written comments, it is important to consider which of the specific tests of soundness, and/or which of the legal compliance requirements, you think your comment relates to.

It will also help the planning inspector to know what specific policy you're commenting on, so think about using headings or different sections to make that clear.

The planning inspector will also be interested in what changes you think are needed to make the policy you're commenting on sound or legally compliant.

Our online survey form on our consultation portal and web form is designed to help with this, but if you're writing an email or letter, you should set out:

- which specific policy you want to provide comments on
- how your comments relate to the tests of soundness and legal compliance

- what changes you think are needed to address the issues you are raising If you wish to comment on more than one policy, we suggest using this structure for each of your comments.

Setting out your comments in a format like this will help the planning inspector understand your views, how they relate to the tests and consider whether to recommend changes to the Local Plan based on your comments.

If you wish to provide supporting documentation as part of your response, it will help to make clear within your comments how this relates to the specific issues you are raising.

How to submit a group representation

Where groups or individuals share a common view on the plan, it would be very helpful if they would make a single representation which represents that view, rather than a large number of separate representations repeating the same points. In such cases the group should indicate how many people it is representing and how the representation has been authorised.

Submitting your representation

To ensure your views are considered, all representations must be received by the council no later than 5pm on Friday 6th November 2026.

Please note that representations received after the deadline will be marked as late and may not be considered by the planning inspector.

If you are submitting a representation on behalf of an organisation, or acting as an agent on the behalf of a landowner or developer, make sure to state this clearly.

Further information

If you have a question about making a representation to the Regulation 19 consultation, or to request assistance or alternative formats, you can contact us by email at planningpolicy@braintree.gov.uk or by telephone at 01376 552525.

Thank you

We would like to thank you for your support and involvement so far as we invite you once again to comment on the Local Plan and supporting documents before we submit them for independent examination.

