

Local Plan webinar event Q&A responses

1. Introduction

1.1 As part of the Submission Draft Braintree District Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation, Braintree District Council hosted 4 in-person consultation events and 1 online webinar event for communities and other stakeholders to find out more about the final draft Local Plan and to ask questions.

1.2 The online webinar took place on Tuesday 20 October 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 YouTube.

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.

The purpose of this document is to ensure that every question asked in advance of the webinar event receives a response from the council.

1.4 A link to this document will be placed on the council's Local Plan consultation webpage.

1 YouTube, Braintree District Local Plan – webinar event, 20 October 2026, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SgJ1tuEN8kA> for those who could not attend at the time.

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 new infrastructure is being planned? What binding mechanisms will ensure that this infrastructure is delivered alongside the housing?	The Council has developed an infrastructure delivery plan and an infrastructure delivery schedule which can be found here: REBT005 - Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) - Sept 26 - Local Plan Review – Braintree District Council This sets out the infrastructure that is needed to support growth proposed in the Local Plan following extensive stakeholder engagement with infrastructure providers. Site specific requirements for the strategic sites are then included within the wording of the relevant policies. Any planning application that is submitted will need to demonstrate compliance with the policy criteria and will be subject to a legal agreement (known as a S106 agreement) which requires infrastructure payments to be made before a certain part of the development commences. This then allows time for the infrastructure provided (e.g. ECC as the Education Authority) to seek planning permission for a new or expanded school.

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2	What about the infrastructure for all the new housing estates? Suggestion of cycle path/underpass for crossing A1124 at Bluebridge to go with potential ring road	Infrastructure is a really important part of the Local Plan. It looks not just at roads, but at schools, healthcare, public transport, utilities, walking and cycling, green spaces and community facilities needed to support new development. Site specific requirements for the strategic sites are included within the wording of the relevant policies reflecting the requirements set out within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. On transport specifically, modelling has looked at the cumulative impact of the Local Plan growth rather than considering each housing development entirely in isolation. It recognises that parts of the existing network are already under significant pressure and identifies a package of mitigation, including road improvements, public transport and active travel measures. The suggestion of a cycle path or underpass across the A1124 at Bluebridge is a useful suggestion. The Plan does specifically identify improvements for cycling, including a route along the A1124 from Greenstead Hall Road towards the hospital, while the wider policies require development to provide safe walking and cycling connections into the existing network. The Local Plan also safeguards the Halstead link road as part of the wider transport approach. Detailed proposals such as how pedestrians and cyclists safely cross major roads would therefore need to be considered alongside the relevant transport and development proposals.
3	Why did our council and councillors refuse to adopt the plan and ensure that the infrastructure and any development meets the needs of local communities i.e. current infrastructure is woefully inadequate, only approve and permit development of social and affordable housing for the sole use of local people who have been so for at least 10 years etc.?	There has previously been discussion at Full Council about an amendment to the Local Plan concerning infrastructure and the timing of its delivery, but that shouldn't be interpreted as the council being against infrastructure-first development. The council's position in the Local Plan is that an infrastructure-first approach is necessary. The Local Plan is actually one of the key ways we can achieve that. It identifies what infrastructure is needed to support growth and provides a framework for securing it alongside development. The timing of that

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		infrastructure is a key consideration. That doesn't necessarily mean that every road, school or healthcare facility has to be completely built before the first home, because major developments are delivered in phases, but the infrastructure needed to support development needs to be identified and its delivery properly planned. Without an up-to-date Local Plan, we would have less ability to coordinate development and infrastructure and a greater risk of speculative development, which is exactly the situation we want to avoid. We also absolutely recognise the need for affordable housing. However, affordable housing is only one part of the housing need that the Local Plan has to address. National planning policy requires councils to plan for housing needs and sets the framework within which Local Plans and planning applications are considered. On the suggestion that new affordable or social housing should only be available to somebody who has lived locally for at least ten years, that's a separate issue from deciding whether land should receive planning permission. Local connection arrangements for affordable housing are a distinct housing-allocation issue rather than a means of restricting all new development through the Local Plan. When affordable housing is secured, the Council's allocation policy does apply so that this is given to local people.
4	A claim that infrastructure cannot be funded.	Infrastructure can be funded in a number of ways. New development can be required to provide land, works or financial contributions through mechanisms such as Section 106, while larger strategic projects may also require investment from Government and infrastructure providers. The Local Plan is supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan and viability work specifically to consider infrastructure requirements, costs, funding and delivery. The draft policy also provides for Section 106 to secure land, works and financial contributions, and says the council will consider introducing a

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		Community Infrastructure Levy where a viable charging schedule would best mitigate the impacts of growth. Where a developer argues that the required mitigation cannot be afforded, the draft policy requires that to be demonstrated through a transparent, open-book viability assessment and this is usually targeted at reducing the level of affordable housing that will then be provided if it can be justified. Viability and funding aren't issues that are simply being assumed - they form part of testing whether the growth proposed by the Plan is actually deliverable. Ultimately, that evidence will also be considered through the independent examination of the Local Plan. The purpose of having an up-to-date plan is to identify what infrastructure growth requires, secure appropriate contributions from development and provide the basis for seeking the wider investment needed.
5	What about the safeguarded route for the A120?	We understand planning permission has been granted by Essex County Council for glasshouses which would be very close to the A120 route D. One of the proposed allocations (SILV2272) would further close the gap available for this route to be implemented. Whilst Route D was the route preferred by Essex County Council, this was not endorsed by National Highways and no approval of any route has been granted. A new link between the A120 and the A12 remains an ambition for the Council. As such, the Local Plan seeks to safeguard land within LPR26 – Kings Dene and LPR23 – East of Braintree for the beginning and end of a route however further feasibility work is required to agree a full route which is a longer-term ambition for the District rather than a Local Plan requirement.

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Housing and employment

	Question	Response
1	Where the areas of residential and commercial development are likely to be.	The most significant proposed residential allocations are the strategic growth locations. These are mixed-use developments covering not just new homes but employment, education, retail and community facilities too. In terms of commercial development, the Local Plan allocates around 30 hectares of new employment land to support economic growth and job creation. Key employment locations identified in the draft plan include: • Kings Dene near Kelvedon • Bluebridge Industrial Estate in Halstead • Horizon 120 in Great Notley • Employment sites around Braintree and Witham All of these are outlined in the full Local Plan document so please do have a read at the homes and employment section in the plan for full details.
2	What are the details of rural area development near Cornish Hall End?	Cornish Hall End isn't identified for the sort of large-scale development proposed in the main towns or strategic growth locations. It's classified as a Third Tier village, reflecting its smaller size and more limited access to facilities and public transport. There is a development boundary for the village, which is shown on Inset Map 17 of the Submission Draft Local Plan. Development within that boundary still needs to meet normal planning requirements around matters such as highways, design and the impact on the character of the area. Land

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		outside the boundary is generally treated as countryside, where development is much more restricted.
3	Where are Gypsy and Traveller sites proposed?	Each of the new strategic sites will be required to provide a number of Gypsy and Traveller pitches to meet the need set out within the evidence base. The exact location of the pitches is unknown at this time and will be the subject of detailed masterplanning which will determine the most appropriate location for this provision. Any new pitches would need to be the subject of a detailed planning application which would be the subject of its own consultation exercise prior to any decision being made.

Halstead strategic growth location proposal

	Question	Response
1	What is the timeframe for Halstead spine road?	There isn't currently a single date we can give for completion of the Halstead link road. Its delivery has to be phased alongside development, and work is being undertaken to determine the relationship between the number of homes delivered and when the road needs to be completed and available for use. The link road remains a requirement of the Local Plan. We were notified in September that some of the land associated with the Halstead Strategic Growth Location may not currently be available, so further work is also looking at alternative mitigation that could support the proposed growth and address congestion.

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2	How is it sound if landowner won't sell?	The Council was officially notified on 7 September that some of the land required in connection with the Halstead Strategic Growth Location may not currently be available. While this presents a challenge so late in the Local Plan process, it does not change our commitment to ensuring that any future growth in Halstead is supported by appropriate infrastructure and measures to address traffic congestion. Further work has been commissioned to assess alternative mitigation options that could support the proposed growth and improve traffic conditions in and around the town. This evidence will be completed in time for submission of the Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate. At the same time, it is important to note that the Council retains the ability to consider compulsory purchase powers if required and if no suitable alternative solution can be identified. For these reasons, the land for the link road – which is already safeguarded within our current adopted Local Plan – and the policy requirement for the link road have been retained within the plan.
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East of Braintree strategic growth location proposal

	Question	Response
1	The plan proposes a lot of new additional homes in Braintree. What is the council's integrated infrastructure delivery programme for the roads, schools, GP services, public transport, utilities and other facilities required to support that growth, and what binding mechanisms will ensure that this infrastructure is delivered alongside the housing rather than after thousands of homes have already been occupied?	The Local Plan isn't just about identifying where development could take place - it's also about planning the infrastructure needed to support that growth. For the larger sites proposed in the draft Local Plan, the infrastructure requirements are identified from the outset and are set out within the site policies. Infrastructure can then be secured through planning conditions and legal agreements when planning applications come forward. In many cases, these

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		agreements include triggers linked to the number of homes occupied, meaning certain infrastructure or contributions have to be delivered at specific stages of development rather than waiting until the site is complete. The Local Plan is also supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which helps identify what infrastructure is needed, where it is needed and how it may be delivered. The Council continues to work closely with infrastructure providers, Essex County Council, the NHS, education authorities and others throughout this process. While some larger infrastructure projects will inevitably be delivered in phases, the aim is to ensure that growth and infrastructure are planned together, rather than treating them as separate issues.
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King's Dene, Kelvedon strategic growth location proposal

	Question	Response
1	Why the council fails to recognise the need for the transport infrastructure to be determined and secure before passing this planning development in Kelvedon.	We absolutely understand concerns about traffic and infrastructure in Kelvedon. The Local Plan is designed to plan for homes, jobs and the infrastructure needed to support them, including transport improvements. The council is required by Government to maintain an up-to-date Local Plan and plan for identified housing needs, while individual planning applications must be assessed against planning policy and transport evidence, including advice from the highway authority. Work is ongoing to understand the number of homes that can be delivered before a new junction on the A12 must be provided. This work will be used to inform a statement of common ground with National Highways and Essex County Council Highways who ultimately need to be happy with the impact to the strategic road network and the local road network. We know the existing

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		road network is under pressure and needs improvements to accommodate the growth that is planned but this cannot be done without the agreement of these key stakeholders and a plan for delivery of any major road improvements will take time to be developed fully.
2	What are the plans for A12 access at Feering and Kelvedon and public transport links between Kelvedon and Feering and Stansted Airport?	Transport is a significant part of the proposals for this area. For King's Dene, the Local Plan identifies a new access junction to the A12, together with a new Coggeshall Road/ Oak Road link road. It should be noted that the proposals at this stage are not agreed in any way by National Highways or Essex County Council who have responsibility for the local highway network. The policy work requires the delivery and phasing of the direct A12 access and improvements to the local road network to be fully understood and work is ongoing on this issue. The wider transport package includes public transport improvements, with proposals for a new bus route serving Kelvedon, King's Dene and north towards Coggeshall, alongside improvements to Kelvedon Station and walking and cycling connections. The Local Plan's wider vision is to improve connections to destinations including Stansted Airport. In terms of Stansted Airport specifically, there are already public transport connections from Kelvedon, although they are not necessarily direct. Greater Anglia currently advertises rail journeys between Kelvedon and Stansted Airport, while bus journey information also shows connections requiring a change. The Local Plan's role is therefore about planning for improved sustainable connectivity as growth takes place, rather than promising a particular direct airport service.

Hatfield Peverel strategic growth location proposal

	Question	Response
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1	Why is the Council proposed to build more houses in the vicinity of the A12 in the light of the currently cancelled A12 development.	The cancellation of the A12 widening scheme is clearly an important consideration, and one we are extremely disappointed about, but the Council is still required to plan for future housing and employment needs. The Local Plan transport evidence does not assume the A12 widening scheme will happen. Any proposed growth therefore needs to be shown to work based on the network and infrastructure that can realistically be relied upon, alongside the improvements and mitigation that can be delivered and is required as development comes forward. The proposed strategic growth location north of the A12 at Hatfield Peverel includes infrastructure requirements and transport improvements that would need to be considered and secured as development comes forward. The draft Local Plan is supported by transport evidence, and proposed growth locations will be subject to detailed transport assessment and infrastructure requirements. We will continue making the case for investment in the A12. New development can be required to mitigate its own impact, but it cannot solve existing strategic transport problems across the wider network on its own. Government investment therefore remains essential, particularly when councils are also required to plan for significantly increased housing needs. Ultimately, the examination process will test whether the evidence demonstrates that the proposed level and location of growth can be supported by the necessary infrastructure, and that is one of the reasons we are consulting on the final draft plan and inviting feedback from residents and stakeholders.
2	Why was there no exhibition in Hatfield Peverel?	For Regulation 19, we've focused our resource on drop-in events that saw the highest level of attendance in the last Regulation 18 consultation whilst

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		concentrating on areas with higher levels of growth at Kelvedon, Halstead and Coggeshall. There have been many alternatives for people to find out more and ask questions, such as this online webinar and submitting questions when they register, and finding materials at Hatfield Peverel or Causeway House that people can view and take home with them.
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Hayeswood strategic growth location

	Question	Response
1	A comment about the Hayeswood proposal with concerns that this shouldn't happen before the infrastructure is delivered.	We absolutely recognise the concern that new homes need to be supported by the infrastructure that communities need. The purpose of the Local Plan is not simply to identify land for housing, but to plan development and the infrastructure needed to support that growth together. Hayeswood is a site that it is in our current Local Plan and as it has not yet been built, it has been carried over as a site into this updated Local Plan. The site is currently being considered through the planning application process, including its transport and infrastructure implications. National Highways has been engaged in discussions about the Hayeswood proposal. Where infrastructure improvements are necessary to make development acceptable, the important issue is making sure those requirements are identified and that development is appropriately coordinated with their delivery. That does not necessarily mean every piece of infrastructure has to be completed before the first home can be built. On a significant development, infrastructure and housing may need to be phased together.

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		Residents should ensure that their concerns about this live planning application are taken into account by commenting on the proposal using our planning application system. Details of how to do this can be found at: View a planning application – View or comment on planning applications – Braintree District Council
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Environmental impact

	Question	Response
1	Loss of countryside and bird habitat	We recognise that many residents value the district's countryside, habitats and wildlife and are concerned about the potential impact of development on these areas. However, to meet the mandatory housing target, development on greenfield sites is required. Protecting and enhancing the natural environment is a key part of the draft Local Plan. The Plan is supported by extensive environmental evidence, including Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessment and landscape studies, which help identify important environmental assets and assess the potential effects of development. This evidence can be found on our website at: www.braintree.gov.uk/LPEvidenceBase.
2	What information is there on air quality?	Air quality has been considered as part of the evidence supporting the Local Plan and the assessment of future development. This can be found in the Sustainability Appraisal evidence that supports the Local Plan: https://www.braintree.gov.uk/downloads/file/4617/rebr004-braintree-local-plan-sa-reg19-sept-2026 as well as individual site considerations in the full draft Local Plan document.

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		The evidence shows that Braintree district does not currently have monitored locations exceeding the national air-quality objective for nitrogen dioxide, although traffic on routes such as the A12, A120 and A131 is recognised as an important issue. Further work has been commissioned on air quality in connection with protected habitat sites will be available in December 2026. The Plan therefore looks at how the location and design of development, sustainable transport and green infrastructure can help limit additional emissions and protect air quality. Air-quality impacts also need to be considered in more detail as individual strategic sites are master planned and subsequently come forward through the planning process.
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Water

	Question	Response
1	What information is there on water supply?	Water supply has been considered as part of the Local Plan, working with water providers. They have highlighted the need for new development to be planned alongside investment in the water network to ensure a reliable supply. The water cycle study forms part of the Local Plan evidence base which can be found on our website here: REBN002 Water Cycle Study Draft - February 2026. Work is ongoing to understand water supply and sewerage requirements to support the growth planned in the Local Plan and statements of common ground will be entered into with the water companies and Environment Agency once the further work has been completed so there is an agreed position on these matters.

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		For larger developments such as Kings Dene, water supply, drainage and network capacity will need to be considered in more detail as proposals progress. These issues will also form part of the independent examination of the Local Plan.
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