

Braintree District Council Housing Delivery Action Plan

August 2019

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 In 2018 the Government introduced a Housing Delivery Test (HDT) for local planning authorities in England. This measured housing delivery over the previous three years with the plan targets that applied at that time. Publication of the HDT results is planned to be in November each year, although publication of the 2018 results was delayed to February 2019.
- 1.2 The target to pass the Housing Delivery Test is 95%; all local authorities where net housing supply was less than 95% of the target must prepare a Housing Action Plan.
- 1.3 If supply is less than 85% of the target for the previous 3 years, the buffer required in the 5 year supply assessment is increased from 5% to 20%.
- 1.4 If supply is below a specified level, this results in a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For the 2018 HDT (measuring supply 2015/16 to 2017/18) that level is set at 25% of the target. For the 2019 HDT (measuring supply 2016/17 to 2018/19) supply needs to meet at least 45% of the target to avoid a presumption. From the 2020 HDT (measuring supply 2017/18 to 2019/20 and onwards) supply needs to meet at least 75% of the target to avoid a presumption.
- 1.5 The target is defined by the adopted Plan annual average when the Local Plan is less than 5 years old; once the Plan reached 5 years old it is measured against, for up to 2017/2018, the annual average requirement according to a ten year period from the household projections; and from 2018/2019 the new housing need methodology.

2 The Results in Braintree District

- 2.1 The results against target for Braintree District 2015/2018 in the Housing Delivery Test are set out in Table 1. Braintree needs to produce an Action Plan but was confirmed as a 5% buffer authority for the 2018 HDT results:

Table 1: 2018 Housing Delivery Test Results Braintree District		
	Target	Supply
2015/2016	273	529
2016/2017	504	291
2017/2018	640	491
Total 2015/2018	1,416	1,311
Shortfall against 100% target 2015-18		105
Shortfall against test of 95% of target		35

- 2.2 For the 2018 HDT, the target for Braintree was based on the adopted Core Strategy for Year 1 (2015/2016) and part of Year 2 (2016/2017). As this document became more than 5 years old during Year 2, part of Year 2 and all of Year 3 (2017/2018) was then based on the nationally prepared household projections.
- 2.3 There are 108 local planning authorities (around a third of the total) which are required to produce a Housing Action Plan in 2019 (i.e. from the 2018 HDT results). Of these, 87 authorities now have a 20% buffer applied as supply was less than 85% of the target.

Figure 1 compares the results for Braintree with the other authorities in Greater Essex:

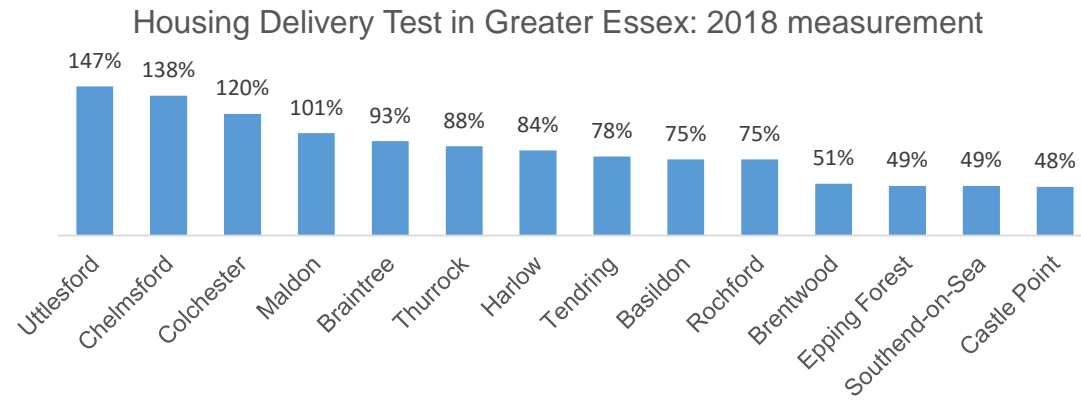
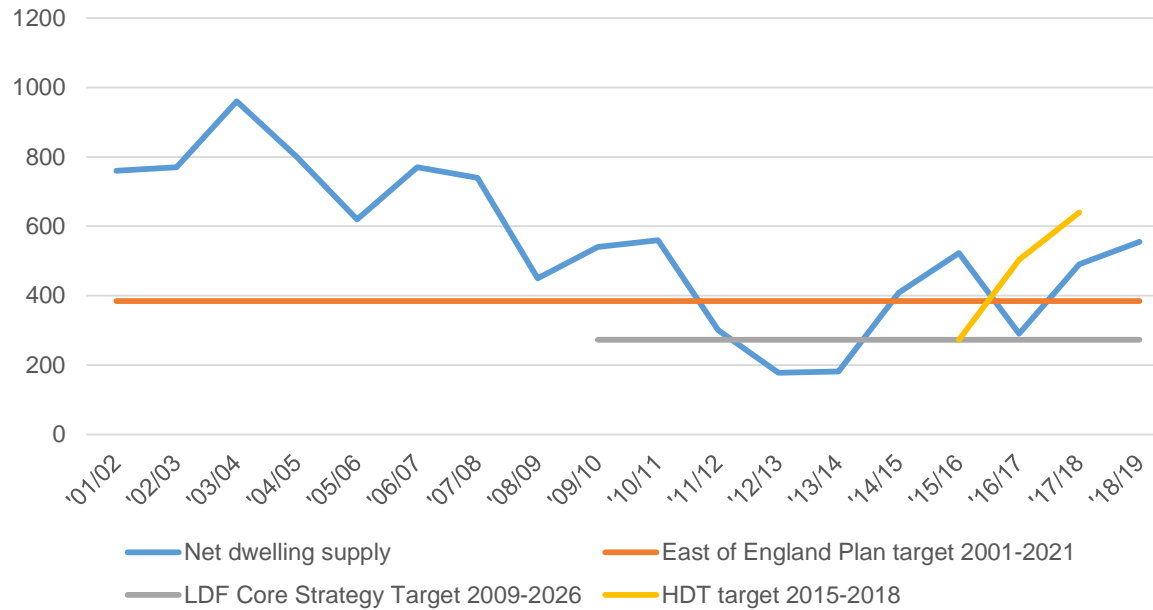


Figure 2 sets out the Councils actual completion rates per year alongside various targets which were in place at the time of recording the results.

Figure 2: Net dwelling supply Braintree District compared to targets



3 Increase in the stock of sites with planning consent

- 3.1 Recognising that the District housing target rose dramatically from that set out in the 2011 adopted Core Strategy, the Council has been granting permission for new homes on suitable sites to meet the new target.

Figure 3 illustrates the increase in the stock of sites with planning consent in Braintree District from 2015.

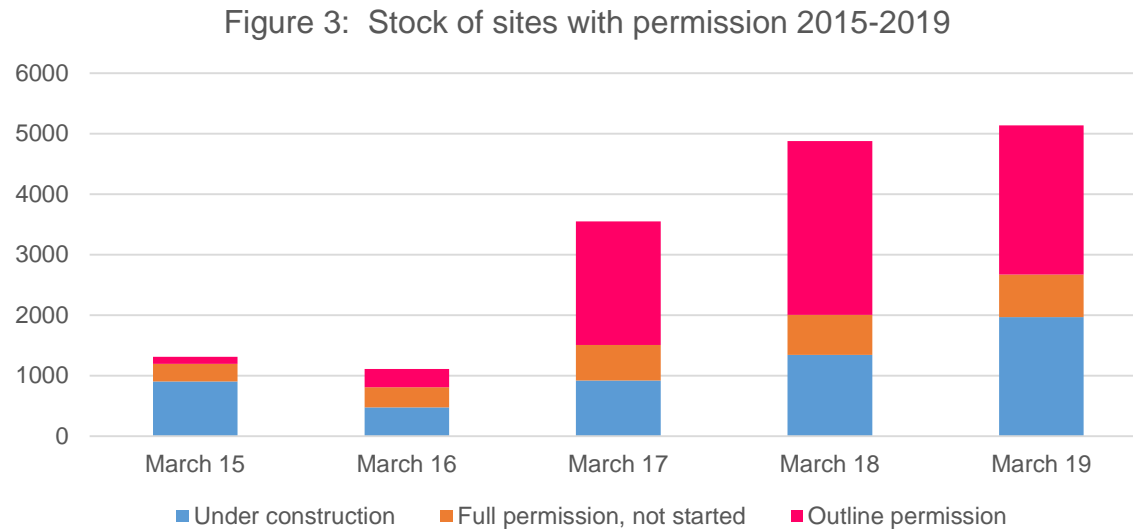


Table 2 sets out the figures for the stock of sites with permission by planning status, and also sites with a Resolution to Approve, from March 2015 to March 2019.

Table 2: stock of sites with permission, and sites with a Resolution to Grant					
Category of site planning status	March 15	March 16	March 17	March 18	March 19
Under construction	904	474	921	1342	1970
Full permission, not started	293	333	585	665	704
Outline permission	115	304	2046	2874	2465
Resolution to Grant	1120	1630	687	326	554

- 3.2 Comparing the stock of sites either with permission or with a Resolution to Grant in 2015 and in 2019; and taking into account the supply of homes built 2015-2019, the supply of sites increased by 5,121 over the for year period (if sites with a Resolution to Grant are excluded the change was +5,687). .
- 3.3 The sites which have been approved or allocated within the Local Plan are of various sizes and are in various locations spread across the District. 30% of 40% affordable housing is also achieved on all sites of 10 or more. Appendix 1 to this report sets out the location of sites and the size of site by type of permission.
- 3.4 The number of developers who are involved in the District housing supply has also increased with 16 different developers currently involved in sites of more than 10 dwellings. Appendix 2 to this report sets out those developers and the schemes they are currently working on.
- 3.5 Analysis of the time between the gaining of detailed planning permission and the start of construction on site has been found to be quicker than averages set out in national studies and therefore the authority considers that the way it is dealing with pre commencement or discharge of conditions or reserved matters is effective.

- 3.6 There are no inherent issues with stalled sites in the District, once planning permission is granted then these are normally built out. This will continue to be monitored and any issues dealt with on a case by case basis.
- 3.7 Viability is not generally an issue which causes delay on site development in the District although this differs on a site by site basis and sites which involve previously developed land or regeneration sites are more likely to be faced with viability issues.
- 3.8 However the authority notes that the increased number of homes with planning permission has in some cases come from greenfield sites which are not allocated in the adopted or submitted Local Plan and that this has caused concerns from residents of the District about the number of sites which have been approved outside of the Local Plan process and the impact this may have on the provision of infrastructure.
- 3.9 The authority is therefore confident that in line with recommendations from the Letwin Review that there is a sufficient range of sites, homes and developers operating in the District to ensure an efficiency of delivery.

4 Key Issues and Challenges facing the District

- 4.1 Whilst the Council has continued to increase the number of permissions for new homes within the system it has identified four key issues set out below which could be preventing the authority reach its Housing Delivery Target. These challenges have been identified following experiences of the officers and members of the authority and discussions with key stakeholders and the development industry.

Step up in number of homes required.

- 4.2 The adopted 2011 Core Strategy was based on the now revoked East of England Plan and set a relatively low housing target for the District based on an assessment of locally generated need. This was despite a step-change increase in housing targets for the region as a whole - focused on Key Centres for Development and Change - and was in recognition of issues affecting Braintree District including the increase in long distance commuting and concern that infrastructure and employment growth had not kept pace with housing growth in past Plan periods.
- 4.3 With the revocation of the East of England Plan, the housing provision in the emerging Draft Local Plan for Braintree District sharply increased the housing target for the District. The target in the Core Strategy was an average of 273 dwellings.per.annun (dpa).; the target for 2017/18 in the Housing Delivery Test was 640 dwellings, and the draft Local Plan target over the Plan period 2013-2033 is 716 dpa. Coinciding with the slow and initially fragile recovery in housing market conditions after the severe recession, sites were not yet in place at the start of the Draft Plan Period to support the higher level of homes required; housebuilding lead times and delivery rates remained affected by economic conditions, and delivery in recent years has been below the proposed target rate.

Ensuring the delivery of the Local Plan

- 4.4 The Council submitted its Local Plan for examination in October 2017 and the document remains under examination by the Planning Inspectorate.
- 4.5 The proposed housing allocations in the Local Plan are more than sufficient to meet the Draft Plan target, and extending further ahead the Draft Plan sets out a Strategy in Section 1 of the Plan to meet to the need for new homes over the longer term by working together with neighbouring Colchester and Tendring districts on delivery of three New Garden Communities which if approved will provide around half of the housing need of North Essex for the next 30 -40 years.

- 4.6 Additional evidence has been provided to the Planning Inspector and has undergone a public consultation exercise. The examination sessions are due to reopen later in 2019.
- 4.7 Whilst the Local Plan is being examined draft allocations within the section 2 Local Plan have been coming forward in advance of the examination.

Appeals

- 4.8 The Council has in common with many other authorities seen an increase in the number of residential appeals which have been lodged. This takes planning resources away from determining planning applications to dealing with these appeals, particularly the work which is required when the matter is dealt with by inquiry. The Council has also seen several decisions 'recovered' or 'called in'. This includes situations where the authority has resolved to grant planning permission. There have been severe delays until the final decision has been issued, which in turn has an obviously knock on effect regarding the delivery of the homes.
- 4.9 The consistency of appeal decisions particularly where they relate to the 5 year housing supply and the deliverability of sites has also led to uncertainty and risk for both the local authority and developers in the District but has also had a detrimental effect of District residents. The Council wrote in August to the Secretary of State regarding how different sites were treated completely different in different appeal results on the matter of their deliverability within the 5 year housing supply but has yet to receive a response.

Market Factors

- 4.10 There are a large number of factors which affect the rate of house building in the District, and indeed nationally, which are in many cases beyond the control of the local planning authority. These include;
- The availability of finance
 - The availability of skilled construction labour
 - The availability of building materials
 - The uncertainty brought about by Brexit.

5 Action Plan

5.1 The table below sets out the work the local authority has identified to carry out to continue to increase house building in the District in order to meet the requirements of the HDT.

Proposal	Actions	Responsible team	Timescale
Facilitate access to construction skills	Through the Braintree District Education and Skills board facilitate conversations between employers and education providers to ensure the right skills are being gained by school leavers	Economic Development team	Ongoing
Ensure that construction roles and careers are promoted	Promote construction skills through events such as the annual career fair, apprenticeship events and the annual job fayre organised by Braintree District Council	Economic Development team	Ongoing
Increase the use of Planning Performance Agreements	Increase the use of Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) between the local authority and developers of residential sites to ensure deliverable timescales for determination of a planning application.	Development Management	Ongoing
Implement the efficiencies set out in the Development Management Service Improvement Plan	The Plan has a number of projects to maximise the use of IT and secure efficiencies in the processing and determination of planning applications	Development Management	March 2020.
Continue to offer a Pre Application service	Continue to promote the opportunity for developers to engage in pre application discussions with planning officers to enable any scheme issues to be dealt with prior to the submission of a formal planning application	Development Management	Ongoing
To continue to seek detailed information on site progress for	To continue to seek detailed information on site progress and anticipated delivery rates from all sites over 10 homes in the District.	Planning Policy	Ongoing

the development industry			
To strengthen the relationship between the authority and the development industry	To hold regular meetings with developers operating or seeking to operate in the District to ensure open conversations and early identification of issues which might cause an impediment to the delivery of homes on a site or many sites	Planning Policy/ Development Management	Ongoing
To bring forward the I-construct Project	An innovation in construction hub will be built in Braintree in a partnership between the District Council and the Haven Gateway Partnership. A three year European funded project will be based at the hub engaging with small and medium sized construction businesses to promote and development new and efficient ways of working.	Economic Development/Haven Gateway Partnership	Operational 2020
To adopt the Local Plan	To continue to work with the Planning Inspectorate to work efficiently through the Local Plan examination and adopt an up to date Local Plan for the District.	Planning Policy	Autumn 2020
To consider CPO powers to unlock sites	The Council is considering the use of the CPO powers to bring sites together or unlock redundant or previously developed sites for suitable residential sites	Planning Policy	As required
To make the most efficient use of Council owned sites	The Council is currently regenerating a town centre site which will include residential development and has recently agreed to dispose of a number of unused sites in the District where housing may be suitable	Strategic Investment	Spring 2020
Liaison and support for our main Registered Providers	The Council will continue to regularly meet with Registered Providers to ensure a positive relationship and opportunities for development or redevelopment are maximised.	Strategic Housing/Planning Policy	Ongoing
Regular dialogue with Homes England and MHCLG	Ongoing and regular dialogue with Homes England and MHCLG to consider delivery issues and address constraints identified. This includes actively considering available funding streams.	Planning Policy	Ongoing

Appendix 1

Sites listed by size, location and planning permission type

Sites of 10 or more dwellings: sites with planning permission or with Resolution to Grant

Location	Dwelling capacity size band of site							Total
	10-49	50-99	100-299	300-499	500-999	1,000-1,999	Over 2,000	
New Garden Communities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Braintree (includes also Gt Notley/London Road)	8	2	3	0	1	0	0	14
Halstead	5	1	4	0	0	0	0	10
Witham (incl NE Witham GL and Rickstones Rd)	0	4	1	1	1	0	0	7
Coggeshall	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Earls Colne	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	6
Feering	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Hatfield Peverel	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	5
Kelvedon	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Sible Hedingham	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Silver End	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	5
Cressing	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Gosfield	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Great Bardfield	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Great Yeldham	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Ridgewell	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	27	15	15	3	2	0	0	62

Sites of 10 or more dwellings: sites without planning permission or Resolution to Grant

Location	Dwelling capacity size band of site							
	10-49	50-99	100-299	300-499	500-999	1,000-1,999	Over 2,000	Total
New Garden Communities	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Braintree (includes also Gt Notley/London Road)	8	1	1	0	1	2	0	13
Halstead	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Witham (incl NE Witham GL and Rickstones Rd)	6	0	0	1	0	0	0	7
Coggeshall	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Earls Colne	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feering	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Hatfield Peverel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kelvedon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sible Hedingham	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Silver End	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Black Notley	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cressing	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Gosfield	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Great Bardfield	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Great Yeldham	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ridgewell	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Steeple Bumpstead	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	20	4	1	1	2	2	2	32

Sites of 10 or more dwellings: all sits currently identified

Location	Dwelling capacity size band of site							
	10-49	50-99	100-299	300-499	500-999	1,000-1,999	Over 2,000	Total
New Garden Communities	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Braintree (includes also Gt Notley/London Road)	16	3	4	0	2	2	0	27
Halstead	7	2	4	0	0	0	0	13
Witham (incl NE Witham GL and Rickstones Rd)	6	4	1	2	1	0	0	14
Coggeshall	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
Earls Colne	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	6
Feering	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
Hatfield Peverel	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	5
Kelvedon	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Sible Hedingham	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Silver End	2	3	0	1	0	0	0	6
Black Notley	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1
Cressing	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	3
Gosfield	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Great Bardfield	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Great Yeldham	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Ridgewell	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Steeple Bumpstead	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	47	19	16	4	4	2	2	94

Appendix 2

Developers of current Major development sites (10+ dwellings):

Developer Redrow Homes

- Rayne Gardens, Rayne Road Braintree (127 homes, under construction)
- Lodge Farm Witham (750 homes, 95 completed 2018/2019, since April 2019 24 more completed and 113 under construction as at July 2019). Phase 1a (91) nearing completion, Phases 1 (84) and 2 (61) under construction starting 2019. Phase 3 now coming forward 2019.
- Meadow View Western Road Silver End (350 homes, construction started 2019)

Developer Bellway Homes

- Rivenhall Park Forest Road (Phases 1 and 2 under construction, 385 homes in total, Phase 1 nearing completion, 22 homes, and Phase 2 started 2019, 163 homes)
- Willow Park Sudbury Road Halstead (218 homes, started 2019)
- Portway Place Halstead (103 dwellings, nearing completion)
- Avondale Mill Lane Cressing (118 dwellings, under construction)
- Hatfield Grove, former Arla Dairy site Station Road Hatfield Peverel (145 homes, Reserved Matters submitted March 2019)
- Hatfield Bury Farm Hatfield Peverel (50 homes, outline planning permission, detailed plans in preparation)
- Station Road Earls Colne (90 homes, Reserved Matters submitted)
- Gimsoms Witham, 78 homes, Full planning application with Resolution to Approve from the Council's Planning Committee March 2019, as at July 2019 awaiting the decision of the MHCLG Casework Unit as to whether to call in the planning application)
- Land south of Rickstones Road Rivenhall, 58 homes, Reserved Matters approved July 2019

Developer Bloor Homes

- Oakwood Hill, Oak Road Phase 1 183 homes, construction started March 2018, as at July 2019 63 completed and 55 under construction
- Inworth Road Feering, 165 homes, Reserved Matters submitted

Developer Crest Nicholson

- Notley Grange Bakers Lane Black Notley, 96 homes, construction started January 2017, as at July 2019 92 completed and 4 under construction
- The Burrows, Monks Road Earls Colne, 50 homes, construction started September 2018, as at July 2019 5 built and 39 under construction

Developer David Wilson Homes

- St Andrews Gate, Oak Road Phase 2 100 homes, construction started May 2018, as at July 2019 24 completed and 52 under construction
- Gleneagles Way Hatfield Peverel, 120 homes with outline permission, Outline application submitted December 2016, Council Resolution to Approve April 2017, Application called in by Secretary of State, Public Inquiry held December 2017; Secretary of State decision to approve July 2019, Reserved Matters planned to be submitted 2019

Developer Countryside Properties

- Meadow Rise Pods Brook Braintree 215 homes, started June 2018
- Braintree Road Cressing 225 homes, Reserved Matters submitted April 2019
- Wood End Farm Witham 400 homes, outline planning application in preparation

Developer Mersea Homes and Hills Residential

- Land at Panfield Lane North West Braintree, Hybrid application for 825 homes, 189 for detailed approval and 636 for outline approval, Resolution to Approve 2 July 2019 subject to signing of a Section 106 Agreement

Developer Sanctuary Homes

- Conrad Road Witham, 150 homes, With outline permission, Full planning application submitted 2019
- Land East of Boars Tye Road Silver End, 50 homes, Reserved Matters submitted April 2019

Developer CALA Homes

- Station Road Earls Colne, 56 homes, started May 2019

- Monks Farm Station Field Kelvedon, 250 homes, with outline permission, detailed application submitted

Developer Bovis Homes

- Land north of Colchester Road Coggeshall, Outline planning application for 300 homes approved April 2019; Reserved Matters in preparation

Developer Croudace Homes

- Bardfield Walk Braintree Road Great Bardfield (37 dwellings, all under construction)

Developer Myriad Homes

- Former Carier site East Street Braintree, 74 homes, Reserved Matters approved November 2018, conditions being discharged pre-development

Developer Keepmoat Homes

- McManus Place Land West of Boars Tye Road Silver End, 59 homes Reserved Matters granted 28.12.2017, 40 homes completed 2018/2019, as at July 2019 53 homes completed and 6 under construction

Developer Linden Homes

- Former Hunnable Industrial Estate, 60 homes, Reserved Matters approved April 2019, construction started April 2019

Developer Beacon Hill Homes

- Ashen Road Ridgewell, Full application for 18 homes following outline approval for 16

Developer Chelsteen Homes

- Current Full application for 17 homes following outline approval for up to 19