

Local Plan Sub-Committee AGENDA



THE PUBLIC MAY ATTEND THIS MEETING

Please note this meeting will be webcast and audio recorded

Date: Monday, 12 January 2015

Time: 18:00

**Venue: Council Chamber , Braintree District Council, Causeway House,
Bocking End, Braintree, Essex, CM7 9HB**

Membership:

Councillor D L Bebb
Councillor G Butland
Councillor A V E Everard
Councillor M C M Lager
Councillor J M Money

Councillor Lady P Newton
Councillor W D Scattergood
Councillor C Siddall
Councillor M Thorogood
Councillor R G Walters (Chairman)

Members are requested to attend this meeting, to transact the following business:-

PUBLIC SESSION

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Declarations of Interest

To declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, other Pecuniary Interest or Non-Pecuniary Interest relating to Items on the Agenda having regard to the Code of Conduct for Members and having taken appropriate advice where necessary before the meeting.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee held on 3rd September 2014 (copy previously circulated).

- | | | |
|-----------|---|------------------|
| 4 | Public Question Time
(See paragraph below) | |
| 5 | Local Plan Issues and Scope Consultation Document | 4 - 47 |
| 6 | Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment | 48 - 141 |
| 7 | Local Development Scheme | 142 - 160 |
| 8 | Planning Obligations - Changes | 161 - 166 |
| 9 | Urgent Business - Public Session
To consider any matter which, in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered in public by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency. | |
| 10 | Exclusion of the Public and Press
To agree the exclusion of the public and press for the consideration of any Items for the reasons set out in Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972. | |

At the time of compiling this Agenda there were none.

PRIVATE SESSION

- | | | |
|-----------|--|--|
| 11 | Urgent Business - Private Session
To consider any matter which, in the opinion of the Chairman, should be considered in private by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency. | |
|-----------|--|--|

E WISBEY
Governance and Member Manager

Contact Details

If you require any further information please contact the Governance and Members Team on 01376 552525 or email demse@braintree.gov.uk

Public Question Time

Immediately after the Minutes of the previous meeting have been approved there will be a period of up to 30 minutes when members of the public can speak.

Members of the public wishing to speak should contact the Governance and Members Team on 01376 552525 or email demse@braintree.gov.uk at least 2 working days prior to the meeting.

Members of the public can remain to observe the whole of the public part of the meeting.

Health and Safety

Any persons attending meetings at Causeway House are requested to take a few moments to familiarise themselves with the nearest available fire exit, indicated by the fire evacuation signs. In the event of a continuous alarm sounding during the meeting, you must evacuate the building immediately and follow all instructions provided by a Council officer who will identify him/herself should the alarm sound. You will be assisted to the nearest designated assembly point until it is safe to return to the building.

Mobile Phones

Please ensure that your mobile phone is either switched to silent or switched off during the meeting.

Comments

Braintree District Council welcomes comments from members of the public in order to make its services as efficient and effective as possible. We would appreciate any suggestions regarding the usefulness of the paperwork for this meeting, or the conduct of the meeting you have attended.

Please let us have your comments setting out the following information

Meeting Attended..... Date of Meeting

Comment

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Contact Details:

Local Plan Issues and Scope Consultation Document		Agenda No: 5
Corporate Priority: Building a Prosperous District - Securing Appropriate Infrastructure and Housing Growth Portfolio Area: Planning and Property Report presented by: Emma Goodings Report prepared by: Emma Goodings		
Background Papers: National Planning Policy Framework (2012). National Planning Practice Guidance (2014)		Public Report YES
Options: To approve or not approve the recommendation at the end of this report.		Key Decision: NO
Executive Summary: The Issues and Scoping consultation is the first stage of public participation in the process of producing a new Local Plan. The document is structured around the 3 forms of sustainable development, economic, environmental and social. It highlights a number of important issues for the District which will need to be tackled in the new Local Plan, and strategies for how they might be addressed. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list but is designed to stimulate a debate and discussion. The draft document is attached at Appendix 1 . This report asks that the Issues and Scoping document be approved for public consultation. If approved this will begin on the 26 th January 2015 for 6 weeks. Responses to the consultation will be reported to this committee in June 2015.		
Decision: To approve the Local Plan Issues and Scoping document for public consultation.		
Purpose of Decision: To agree to publish the Issues and Scope document for a 6 week public consultation.		

Any Corporate implications in relation to the following should be explained in detail	
Financial:	The cost of preparing the document and for the consultation will be met from existing budgets.
Legal:	Local Plan preparation must take place in compliance with the relevant legislation and guidance
Safeguarding	None.
Equalities/Diversity	The Council's policies should take account of equalities and diversity.
Customer Impact:	A public consultation period will be held on the document to inform the production of the Local Plan. More information on this is set out within the main body of the report.
Environment and Climate Change:	Policies in the Plan as a whole will need to have regard to the environment and climate change issues.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	A public consultation period will be held on the document to inform the production of the Local Plan. More information on this is set out within the main body of the report
Risks:	That the Plan is found unsound at examination.
Officer Contact:	Emma Goodings
Designation:	Planning Policy and Land Charges Manager
Ext. No.	2511
E-mail:	Emma.Goodings@braintree.gov.uk

1. Background

1.1 In September 2014, Members agreed to not submit the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan for examination to the Planning Inspectorate but instead to begin work immediately on a new Local Plan. The new Local Plan will include all strategic and non-strategic policies and site allocations within a single Plan and once approved will replace the Core Strategy and Local Plan Review 2005.

1.2 Since September, officers have been working on gathering evidence which will be used to support the new Local Plan and have carried out a Call for Sites which asked developers to submit sites they thought were appropriate for development. This is background and technical work which is required to support a new Local Plan and work will continue in various forms throughout the process.

1.3 As part of the production of a new Local Plan between now and submission of the Local Plan to the Planning Inspector in late 2016, it is our intention to hold at least 3 periods of public engagement. Each of these has a different focus and more details on the Issues and Scoping consultation is set out below.

2. Issues and Scoping

2.1 An Issues and Scoping consultation is one of the first stages of producing a new Local Plan, and is the first stage of public participation. It is an opportunity for residents, local businesses and the key stakeholders to become engaged in the process for the first time and to help shape the new Local Plan before it is published in draft form in late 2015.

2.2 There is no set formula on what the document should look like or the points that it should address but it must meet the relevant legislation and guidance including the following from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on consultation and involvement within the Local Plan process;

“Early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses is essential. A wide section of the community should be proactively engaged, so that Local Plans, as far as possible, reflect a collective vision and a set of agreed priorities for the sustainable development of the area, including those contained in any neighbourhood plans that have been made.”

2.3 The document is structured around the three forms of sustainable development which form the basis of the NPPF. These are economic, social and environmental. Each chapter is then split into smaller sections tackling specific issues such as landscape, a healthy and active District and economic growth.

2.4 There is a limited amount of introductory text to each section which sets the current national policy position and local context. A series of issues and potential strategies/policies are then set out. Depending on what the topic is, some may be fairly broad, whilst others may be raising more specific or detailed issues. They must relate to planning and land use and they must be realistic options where there is an ability to influence the outcome.

2.5 The issues and strategies identified in the document are not an exhaustive list but are designed to form the basis of debate and discussion. There will be the opportunity to suggest other issues for the Council to consider during the consultation.

2.6 A draft of the document is attached in **Appendix 1** to this report. Before publication there will be further changes to the formatting and layout, including use of the new Local Plan branding.

2.7 A Sustainability Appraisal commentary on the Issues and Scoping has been prepared by our consultants and is subject to a separate report at tonight's meeting.

3. Consultation

3.1 If approved at committee tonight, it is intended to carry out a 6 week public consultation on the document which will run between the 26th January and the 6th March 2015. The consultation strategy is currently being worked up and a verbal briefing will be given at the meeting. However it will include a series of stakeholder workshops and notification and promotion of the event through electronic and print media, directly writing to those on the consultation database, Parish and Town Councils etc.

3.2 As part of our engagement strategy a newly developed Local Plan logo will appear on all our communication and documents. This is to ensure that there is a consistent and recognisable message across all the various forms of consultation, communication and documents which we produce.

3.3 Due to the nature of the consultation as a broad discussion document we are likely to receive many responses of some length. These will take time to analyse but we expect to have completed this analysis to report to this committee in June 2015.

4. Conclusion

4.1 The Issues and Scoping consultation is the first public involvement in the new Local Plan process and provides an opportunity for local residents, businesses and key stakeholders to help shape the vision, objectives and policies which will make up the new Local Plan, alongside the technical evidence which is currently being gathered.

4.2 If approved a 6 week consultation period will be held between the 26th January and the 6th March 2015 and responses will be reported to a meeting of the Local Plan Sub Committee.

Recommendation

To approve the Local Plan Issues and Scoping document for public consultation.

Introduction

District Profile	2
Future Challenges	4
Why a new Local Plan is required	5
Have your say... ..	6
What happens next?	7

A Prosperous District

A Strong Economy	9
Shops and Services	12
Homes	14
Transport and Infrastructure	16

Creating Better Places

Community facilities	20
Creating high quality spaces	22
A healthy and active District	25

Protecting the Environment

Climate Change and Renewable Energy	30
Nature Conservation and landscape character	34
Evidence Base	37
Glossary of Terms	39

District Profile



Braintree is a large, mainly rural District that covers 612 square kilometres in north and mid Essex. The northern part of the District, extending to the Suffolk border, is fairly rural; the central and southern parts of the District lie in a key location between Stansted Airport, the east coast ports, and the key rail and road transport routes to London. Braintree District is a good place to live, with a high quality environment and many historic buildings. The

District also benefits from a Country Park at Great Notley and river walks, local nature reserves and local wildlife sites, including ancient woodland across the area.

The largest town is Braintree, followed by Witham and Halstead. In addition to the local town centre facilities, the development of the Freeport retail outlet and leisure centre has provided an attraction serving the District and beyond. Towns and villages in the A12 and A120 corridors are attractive to commuters. Neighbouring Chelmsford and Colchester are important sources of employment for people who live in Braintree District, as is London.

Braintree District has been one of the fastest growing areas in the country over the past decade. The population of the District is currently approximately 150,000 and is projected to rise substantially by 2033. As life expectancy increases, the age structure is expected to change, with a marked increase in the number and proportion of the population who will be aged 65 and over. The number of one-person households is also expected to increase.

In 2011, approximately 58,000 people worked in the District which has a wide employment base of mainly small and medium sized businesses. Approximately 15,000 people travelled into the District to work, and approximately 32,000 people travelled out of the District to work including to the major centres of London, Chelmsford and Colchester. Unemployment and youth unemployment rates have fallen since last year and are below the national average.

The Council has invested in new and enhanced leisure facilities in the District; in 2014 a new leisure centre with swimming pool and gym opened in Witham, and facilities at Braintree Leisure Centre and at the Braintree Swimming Centre were expanded and enhanced. Outdoor gyms have been provided at Braintree and Witham.

The Council is promoting the LiveWell campaign, working together with partner agencies to reduce levels of adult obesity and reduce levels of hip fractures in the over 65s. Levels of adult obesity in the District are currently higher than the national average, and levels of physical activity by adult residents are lower than the national average and the lowest in Essex. Braintree District has



the highest rate of excess winter deaths out of all the Districts in Essex, and the proportion of over-65 year old residents admitted to hospital with hip fractures is higher than the national average.



Figure 1 District Map

Future Challenges

The Plan will set out the basis for working with partners to provide for future local needs for homes; employment and business sites, whilst protecting the most valuable countryside and maintaining a high quality of life. The scale of past population growth has proved a challenge for services such as local health and education; the rapid increase in the rate of growth that is expected to be called for in the future is likely to provide an even greater challenge to services for the population of the District.

The Council is committed to encouraging employment development and inward investment to support prosperity and achieve a better balance between homes and employment. More employment, particularly with a good range of jobs, can help to reduce the increase out-commuting and reduce pressure on strategic roads and rail services.

The Council is keen to work with partners to improve educational attainment and encourage skills development in the District.

Demonstrating that the new Plan can achieve and maintain a supply of readily available development sites for new homes, to meet a much higher target than in the past, will be a key objective for the District.

As well as the overall level of need for new homes, the Plan will need to consider the need for specialist homes, services and facilities to support the increasing number of elderly people expected to be living in the District in the future.



Providing the necessary infrastructure, particularly for travel but also other things such as telecommunications, high speed broadband and utilities supplies are all likely to be a crucial challenge in the Plan.

Why a new Local Plan is required

The Council is working on a new long term strategy for the District which will be called the Local Plan. The Council needs to draw up a clear and up to date Local Plan that meets local development needs and reflects the views of local people on how they wish their area to develop.

The Government's national planning policy - set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and supporting guidance - requires local planning authorities to significantly boost the supply of new homes, building the homes communities want and need. The Council is considering a range of requirements for the number of new homes for Braintree District; at this stage it is expected that the District will need to accommodate an average of between 750 and 950 homes per year.

The new Local Plan will need to plan for this growth to be supported by infrastructure, jobs and community facilities. Promoting economic growth and prosperity in the District will be a key part of the Plan, including identifying land to support new employment areas.

The Council will work with local communities; parish and town councils, and developers to plan and help to build better places to live for everyone. The Council is working with neighbouring local authorities to identify cross-boundary issues and to promote the necessary infrastructure improvements.

Have your say...

We invite your comments on this document, especially in response to issues which have been highlighted here. The Council encourages people to submit comments online. Although representations can be made and submitted using the form provided, if you register to submit comments online, you can update your own contact details as needed, and you will receive e-mails informing you when new documents are available for consultation. The consultation portal can be found at:

<http://braintree-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/>

You will be asked to register or login before being able to comment on the documents listed below but you can read the documents without registering. To register please click on the 'Register' link within the 'Login' section. The portal is also used to maintain the mailing list. To join the Local Plan mailing list please register using the 'Register' link within the 'Login' section.

Written comments should be sent to:

Planning Policy
Braintree District Council
Causeway House
Braintree
Essex
CM7 9HB

All comments should be received by **p.m. on**

If you have any questions about the consultation please contact the Planning Policy team on 01376 551414

or e-mail planningpolicy@braintree.gov.uk

If you would like this document in an alternative format such as large print, braille or another language then please contact the Planning Policy team. A fully accessible version of the document can be found on our website at <http://www.braintree.gov.uk>

What happens next?

This is the first stage in developing a new Local Plan for Braintree District. The Council will use the comments and suggestions that it receives on this document to help it to develop preferred policy options in a draft plan. That draft plan will be the subject of the next stage of public consultation in Autumn 2015 before it is formally submitted to the Secretary of State.

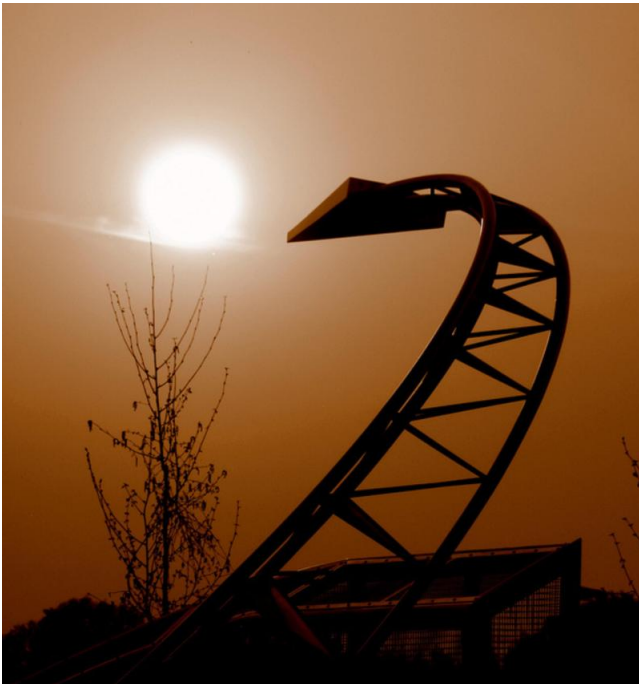
The key stages in the Local Plan preparation, and the planned timetable, are:

1. **Issues and Scope:** to consider what the main aims and objectives are going to be for the Local Plan (January 2015)
2. **Draft Local Plan:** Provides a first draft of the Plan, with specific policy proposals and sites for particular uses, including areas identified for future new homes; employment and green space (consultation on this stage late 2015)
3. **Submission Local Plan:** Takes into account changes made following consultation on the Draft Local Plan. This is the version of the Plan that will be formally submitted to the Secretary of State and Planning Inspector (consultation on this stage Spring 2016, followed by submission Summer 2016)
4. **Examination in Public:** The Inspector examines the "soundness" of the Plan in a series of round table discussions on different issues, giving individuals and organisations the opportunity to challenge or support the Plan (probably Autumn/Winter 2016)
5. **Adoption:** if the Planning Inspector is content that the Plan is sound, then the Council can adopt the Plan, taking on board any relevant recommendations from the Inspector to change the Plan. The Council is aiming for the new Local Plan to be adopted in early 2017.

A Prosperous District

- **A Strong Economy**
- **Shops and Services**
- **Homes**
- **Transport and Infrastructure**

A Strong Economy



The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth and should plan pro-actively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century.

Braintree District is well located to support business growth and inward investment: lying between the major urban centres of Chelmsford and Colchester and close to Cambridge and the international transport hubs of London Stansted Airport and the Haven Ports. London is 45 minutes away by rail. However these good connections mean that Braintree District must compete with these centres for employees and out-commuting levels in the District are high.

Braintree District has a wide employment base with a large number of small and medium sized businesses working in a wide variety of sectors. Major employment areas are located around the urban areas of Braintree, Witham and Halstead, but rural employment such as that based around farming and agriculture also play an important part in the economy.

The Council has already approved two new major employment sites for development at 'Eastlink 120' off the A131 near Great Notley and an expansion to the Springwood Drive industrial estate in Braintree. The development of these sites will be progressing, but it will not be enough to provide the necessary number of jobs over the Plan period and major new sites will need to be found in the right locations to attract inward investment.

Having enough schools is very important. A well-educated and qualified population is good for the economic health and attractiveness of the District for new and existing businesses. It is important that new development provide toward education, school places, and when needed to, identify new sites for schools. Protecting existing schools and nurseries is also necessary. The Council will support the re-modelling of and expansion of schools to meet local school needs, provided enough play grounds and fields are left.

The quality of schooling provided is also very important, and it is important to ensure that the people of the District meet their full potential. A range of educational opportunities should be provided including practical vocational training and on the job training such as apprenticeships. Education is a continuing process and opportunities should be available for all age groups to expand their skills and knowledge base.

Infrastructure constraints leading to congestion on the main road network, rail services and poor access to high speed and reliable broadband in rural areas have the potential to be barriers to new economic growth; our approach to addressing those issues is set out under the Connectivity theme.

Issues:

- How can we ensure that there is enough employment land in the right places, serving different business needs?
- We need to strike a balance between supporting rural employment and protecting the countryside;
- It is unlikely that the number of new jobs needed will be able to be met by the growth of existing companies in the District;
- The District has high levels of out-commuting with locations such as London, Colchester, Chelmsford and Stansted Airport being key draws for residents in the District.
- The increasing requirements for homeworking need to be accommodated
- The rural areas and heritage assets in the District can act as a magnet for visitors but this can bring problems with car parking, travel and pressure on local facilities.
- How do we ensure sufficient quality school places?
- Providing education opportunities for adults;

Options:

- Attract new business and jobs to the area;
- Support the improvement, intensification and re-use of existing employment sites that are fit for purpose and identify appropriate alternative uses for those which are not;
- Locate new employment sites close to existing employment areas;
- Locate major new employment sites in the rural areas;
- Locate new employment sites on the strategic road and rail network;
- Encourage the development of rural businesses located in the countryside;
- Support new facilities and attractions to promote tourism in the District.

Is this a suitable range of options to address the issues raised; are there any other options we should consider?

Are these the issues that impact upon the District economy; are there any other issues that we need to include?

Shops and Services



The District is likely to need to increase its retail provision to meet the demands from new housing and employment growth. Evidence will have to be collected showing what the likely new retail requirement will be for new food shops and other retail and leisure uses. The changing nature of town centre's will need to be recognised and addressed.

Under national policy we are required to provide for the District's identified need for main town centre uses which include retail,

restaurants, offices and cultural & tourism development among other uses.

The three main towns of Braintree, Halstead and Witham offer residents shopping, leisure and work opportunities, provide a wide variety of services and act as service centres for people living outside of the main towns in surrounding rural areas. Larger villages such as Coggeshall, Hatfield Peverel, Silver End, Sible Hedingham, Earls Colne, and Kelvedon act as centres for surrounding villages and offer a smaller scale shops and services.

Each of the three towns, and Coggeshall, has a market. These markets offer local traders who sell a range of goods and services. Additional markets are held throughout the year such as at Christmas as well as visiting specialist markets.

The District is well positioned between the larger centres at Chelmsford and Colchester which are easily accessible and offer residents a wide range of shopping choices. Braintree is home to the Freeport Outlet Centre which attracts customers from all over the District as well as the wider region and London.

In recent years the District has embarked on a "Backing our Towns" program of improvements to its town centres, and Braintree has also been designated as a Portas Pilot town. Innovative steps have been taken to improve the retail offer in these centres as well as encouraging independent retailers, such as the provision of pop-up shops and reduced parking charges.



Issues:

- Providing enough shops, offices, recreational, tourism, and heritage facilities;
- Getting more people shopping locally;
- Are existing centres of sufficient size to cope with the planned population growth;
- Our approach to town retailing;
- Protecting locally important shops and facilities?
- Encouraging mixed use development;
- Supporting rural shops and services;
- Improving hotel accommodation and tourist facilities;
- Making sure the centres achieve their full potential;
- What role should markets play in the future?

Are these the issues that impact upon town centres and regeneration; are there are other issues that we need to include?

Options:

- To protect and enhance town and local centres as the main location for main town centre uses and markets;
- Allocate sites and regeneration areas within town centre for main town centre uses or expand the town centres to meet identified retail need;
- Increase the out of town provision retail provision;
- Keep the town centre attractive to all users and visitors in the day and evening through public realm and other initiatives;
- Set out policies to encourage living and working in town centres?

Is this a suitable range of options to address the issues raised; are there any other options we should consider?

Homes



Local authorities are required to boost significantly their supply of housing by ensuring that they meet their full assessed needs for housing and provide a supply of specific sites where development will take place. National policy also sets out that a wide choice of high quality homes should be delivered which widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.

Braintree District will need to continue to grow over the next 15 years to meet the housing and employment needs of an expanding population. There is a need to build high quality homes in attractive neighbourhoods that offer good connectivity to places where people work and access to a wide range of community facilities such as shops, schools and open space.

We are also required by Government to allocate sites to meet the needs of Gypsy and Travellers in the District and we will need to do that in the Local Plan.

Currently there are 62,704 homes in the District, accommodating 147,053 people (2011 census). Government projections show that the District population will continue to rise over the next 15 years. The population is growing because people are living longer and more people are moving into the District than are moving out of it. In addition more people are living on their own, or in smaller groups than ever before.

The adopted Core Strategy set an annual average target of 272 new homes to be built in the District. Recent research has indicated that between 750 and 950 new homes will be required to be built every year to 2033 to meet the needs of the District's growing population. In order to accommodate these homes major access and infrastructure improvements will be required in the District as well as high quality employment opportunities for new and existing residents. How these will be provided is set out in other sections of this consultation document.



House prices in Braintree District vary and we need to ensure that we are providing a good mix of all sizes and types of houses to meet the needs of all new and existing residents and that there are sufficient affordable housing options available. We will also need to consider the need for specialist homes and those that can be adapted to facilitate people living independently for longer.

Issues

- Large numbers of new homes are required in the District to support the growing population;
- The District may not have enough brownfield sites (those where there has previously been buildings) to accommodate the new homes that need to be provided;
- The Council must balance new homes with protection of the natural and historic environment;
- Everyone should have the opportunity for a decent home, which they can afford;
- New Gypsy and Traveller provision needs to be made in the District at appropriate locations.

Are these the issues that impact upon where new homes should be built; are there any other issues that we need to include?

Options

- New homes should be focused on the existing towns and larger villages;
- New homes should be built in one or more **new** villages;
- New homes should be dispersed between all areas of the District;
- New homes should be built in areas where they can provide funding for major infrastructure projects such as new roads;
- New homes should be built on the existing public transport/rail network to encourage sustainable travel;
- The District will ensure that land is available in the District for people to build their own homes;
- Bring forward sites for affordable housing only;
- Include some market housing on affordable housing exception sites in rural areas to ensure they are delivered;
- The criteria for identifying new Gypsy and Traveller pitches in policy CS3 of the Core Strategy should be retained;

Is this a suitable range of options to address the issues raised; are there any other options we should consider?

Transport and Infrastructure



National policy requires the transport system to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes such as buses and cycling. However it is also recognised that different policies and solutions will be necessary in different areas. The NPPF also indicates how high quality communications infrastructure is crucial for sustainable growth.

Braintree District is a large and substantially rural District with just over half the residents living in the 3 main urban areas of Braintree, Halstead and Witham; and the remainder in rural areas. As such car ownership in the District is high and is the primary means of transport for many residents.

There are particular stretches of roads or junctions in the District that can be congested, especially at peak times when people are travelling to and from school or work and we are working on solutions to this congestion, including new roads or changes to junction arrangements as appropriate. Traffic growth can also occur when new homes or offices are built in neighbouring areas and the Council's must work together to minimise these impacts on all communities. Transport and congestion can have a negative impact on air quality and this will need to be carefully monitored and managed. Encouraging alternative approaches to private vehicle travel such as electric cars and facilitating the infrastructure required such as charging points may

Public transport networks in the towns are adequate during the day on weekdays but during the evening and in rural areas the availability of public transport can be limited. With the increasing elderly population in the District, we need to ensure that public transport is accessible and available to all, providing access to key facilities. Fragmented cycleway networks are available in mainly Witham and Braintree.

Essex County Council is responsible for roads and public transport in the District, whilst the Highways Agency is responsible the major routes of the A120 and the A12. Braintree District Council has a good relationship with these organisations and will need to continue to work in partnership with them and our neighbouring authorities to deliver the required projects.

The availability of high speed and reliable broadband, particularly in the rural parts of the District is a key factor in unlocking new development opportunities and ensuring that people can access services online and work from home.

Other infrastructure requirements for new developments include the availability of utilities such as telecommunications, electricity, gas, water and waste water treatment facilities and the Council will need to work with the organisations responsible for delivering this essential infrastructure in the District.



The District has already identified a number of key priorities in relation to infrastructure improvement in the District. These are:

- To improve connectivity between Braintree and Colchester;
- To secure access improvements into Braintree town centre from the A120 to relieve congestion;
- To secure junction improvements on the A12 and other main roads to reduce congestion;
- To lobby to secure funding for, and the delivery of, the Braintree rail loop to substantially improve access to London;
- Work with partners to improve express public transport links between Stansted Airport, Braintree, Witham and the rail network;
- Secure the earliest availability for universal broadband coverage and fastest connection speeds for all existing and new developments in the District.

Issues:

- To ensure that road infrastructure is not a barrier to providing new jobs and homes in the District;
- Public transport links, especially in rural areas and at evenings and weekends are limited;
- How do we plan development to reduce the need to travel by private car?
- Ensuring that key facilities are easily accessible by public transport, particularly for the elderly population;
- Is there sufficient car parking available to meet demand?
- New and existing developments need to be served by a high speed reliable broadband service which is not a barrier to economic growth;
- Essential infrastructure and services must be provided to meet the needs of new and existing residents;
- The Council does not have control over funding or work programmes and therefore must work with partners to deliver many of these schemes.

Are these the issues that impact upon transport and infrastructure; are there any other issues to include?

Options:

- Encourage people to walk, cycle or use public transport by providing or facilitating the provision of facilities in new and existing developments;
- Provide public transport that is accessible for the elderly population for example, bus stops near retirement homes/care homes;
- Promote mixed use development where homes, community facilities and jobs are all located in close proximity to each other;
- Develop sites in clusters of uses which are linked via high quality public transport and road infrastructure;
- Developing safe cycle/footpaths which provide connections to facilities;
- Develop a tariff approach where each new home must pay a set amount towards improving infrastructure;
- Continue to negotiate contributions to infrastructure on a site by site basis.

Is this a suitable range of options to address the issues raised; are there any other options we should consider?

Creating Better Places

- **Community Facilities**
- **Creating high quality spaces**
- **A healthy and active District**

Community facilities

The Council, with the help of the community, has to plan positively for the provision of community facilities and other local services to make sure people don't have to travel too far to access services they need.

We should stop the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly when this reduces the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs. We should also ensure that shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable and retained for the benefit of the community. We should ensure a joined up approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.



Community facilities are things like local shops, meeting places, sport venues, public houses, heritage and religious buildings. Local communities can nominate assets of community value which gives communities the opportunity to protect and retain those facilities which they consider to be the most important locally.

Braintree Museum, the Warner Textile Archive and cultural and heritage facilities throughout the area, play an important role in the promotion of the cultural heritage and

identity of the District.

The District has many leisure facilities such as the new Witham Leisure Centre and the Braintree Swimming & Fitness centre which has recently expanded and now offers gym facilities. Halstead is also well served and has a leisure centre offering a 25m swimming pool as well as gym facilities. These centres are a great community asset and will continue to provide a wealth of opportunities for residents to stay fit and active.

Community Orchards and Woodlands can deliver social, economic and health benefits and people can volunteer to help. They can also be used as an educational resource for local schools. Orchards and woodlands help the natural environment and provide open space provision. They have significant wildlife value, with a variety of flora and fauna.

It is also necessary to protect and if needed, provide new cemeteries.

Issues:

- Enabling new community facilities and their ongoing cost and local management;
- Ensuring accessible services which are accessible by a range of transport options;
- Close working with service providers;
- What is the likely demand for cemetery provision, will we need cemeteries in future?
- How do we best protect local facilities?
- Closure of local facilities such as pubs in rural and urban areas.

Options:

- Provide and maintain new community facilities to allow those uses to continue;
- Make provision for multi-use buildings which can meet a range of community needs.

Is this a suitable range of options to address the issues raised; are there any other options we should consider?

Are these the issues that impact upon community facilities; are there any other issues that we need to include?

Creating high quality spaces

Braintree District is facing challenges in providing significantly increased housing, employment and retail. Without proper consideration this growth could have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the District unless due consideration is given to design, landscape and heritage issues.

The NPPF states that local planning authorities should set in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment and also emphasises the importance of good design, which is indistinguishable from good planning, and is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Braintree District has many different towns and villages each of which have their own unique character and appearance. The District is home to Silver End known for its modern movement housing, and Great Notley garden village. Finchingfield is renowned as the iconic picturesque English village and Coggeshall is a late medieval cloth town with many timber-framed buildings. But the main market towns of Braintree, Halstead, and Witham all have historic centres and conservation areas, as do many of the villages in the District.

The 2013 National Heritage List for England shows that the District has 3230 heritage assets including 3184 listed buildings of all grades, 37 Conservation Areas, 40 scheduled Ancient Monuments and 8 Historic Parks and Gardens. This is the second highest number of heritage assets in Essex.

Braintree has a rich and varied historic environment with evidence of human activity dating back as far as the Paleolithic period between 700,000 and 10,000 years BP. As such, it is important to assess areas within the District for their archaeological potential, as and when opportunities arise to do so. The Historic Environment Record contains 6622 records relating to the historic environment in Braintree District. The majority of archaeological sites are not designated and it is recognised that many areas of a similar significance to designated assets are potentially present.



It is important that when any development is proposed, it must take account of the historic character of the area, and its relationship to and impact upon any heritage assets it may be within or impact upon. This should include impact on any non-designated assets such as locally listed buildings.

The Council seeks a high standard of layout and design in all developments, large and small. Design should be based on an assessment of local context in order to allow it to complement the existing character of the area, and should harmonise with but not be identical to existing development, and where appropriate use guidance such as the Essex Design Guide. Innovative design is broadly supported, and development should not be constrained to any specific design type. Development should include appropriate and practically sized amenity spaces and gardens, and comply with relevant parking standards, providing well designed safe parking and streets. It is also important to provide attractive but practical landscaping which will work in the long term. Appropriate maintenance arrangements must also be put in place.

Safety and security issues should be addressed at the design stage, as well as the needs of all members of the community, including the elderly and people with disabilities. Design and layout of development should be practical and enable easy and convenient access for the emergency services and for the collection of refuse and recycling. External lighting should be well designed to minimise light pollution and be energy efficient.

Issues:

- How do we continue to protect historic assets in the District while meeting our development targets?
- How do we integrate new development into existing areas?
- We need to encourage high quality and innovative design;
- Securing grants and engaging with heritage stakeholder;
- Promotion of positive re-development for neglected assets;
- Ensure that there are appropriate and practical solutions for waste storage and collection;
- Do we continue to encourage minimum standards for residential parking;
- Ensuring design is safe and secure;
- Providing appropriate living standards;
- Amenity space standards and garden sizes.
- The provision and ongoing maintenance of landscaping;
- Integrating development into the wider area, including access to leisure and recreation opportunities.

Are these the issues that impact upon the creation and protection of high quality spaces; are there any other issues we need to include?

Options:

- Protect and enhance the District's historic and archaeological character;
- Promote the production and expansion of a Local List;
- Promote good design in new development and ensure that new development contributions positively to the character and appearance of the District;
- Set policies for the size, type and tenure of homes we need;
- Set policies on development density;
- Set out in policies where design guidance and master plans will be required from specific sites.

Is this a suitable range of options to address the issues raised; are there any other options we should consider?

A healthy and active District



The NPPF emphasises that planning principles should *'take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs'*.

A key role of the Local Plan is to provide for development in a way that supports and encourages active and healthy lifestyles.

Statistics indicate higher than national average levels of obesity amongst adults in the Braintree District and lower than average participation in physical activity (Essex Local Authority Portraits September 2014).

Planning is important in shaping the environment we live, work and play in. Providing leisure and recreation opportunities, or the space for those activities to happen informally, can provide significant environmental and economic benefits, opportunities for cultural activities and generally improve health and wellbeing by promoting an increase in physical activity.

To accord with the NPPF we will seek to protect and enhance existing open spaces, including recreation grounds, parks, children's play areas and allotments that exist within the District. We will also provide opportunities for new open space provision including children's play equipment and allotments in new developments.

Braintree District is predominately rural which provides opportunities for recreational access to the open countryside. There are opportunities to participate in activities such as cycling along the many rural lanes, off road cycle routes such as the Flitch Way and national cycle routes. There are also plenty of public footpaths and routes such as The John Ray Walk and The Essex Way which encourage walking in the countryside. Limited public transport services in some rural parts of the District, however can reduce access to health, leisure and recreational facilities.

Braintree District also has an ageing population with the proportion of population aged over 65 being higher than the national average. There is also a higher than average number of over 65 residents admitted to hospital with hip fractures (Essex Local Authority Portraits September 2014).

Understanding and planning for demographic change and an ageing population is a fundamental consideration in sustainable planning and creating an inclusive society. There is a need to ensure that the needs of the ageing population are met through provision of accessible and appropriate housing, access to health care and access to facilities and public transport. It should be recognised that the older generation contribute significantly to our economy, social and civic wellbeing of society.

Braintree District is generally affluent and deprivation levels are around the average for Essex as a whole. However, there are quite large inequalities between different areas of the District. Pockets of deprivation are located around the District's three urban centres including parts of north and east Braintree, northwest Witham and south Halstead. Although, these areas are not seriously deprived in national terms, they experience greater deprivation than the majority of areas in the District.

Issues:

- Encouraging people to be physically active in their everyday lives.
- Helping to tackle obesity and promoting healthier eating opportunities.
- Meeting the needs and demands of an ageing population.
- Reducing inequalities and deprivation in society.

Are these the issues that impact upon the health and activity of residents and visitors to the District; are there any other issues that we need to include?

Options:

- Retain, create and promote open green space, leisure and recreational facilities, cycle and footpaths across the District to encourage informal and formal physical activity and active recreation.
- Retain, create and promote opportunities for green spaces for people to grow their own food, for example through the provision of allotments, community maintained spaces or through provision of larger domestic gardens on new developments.
- Restrict the number of take aways near schools.
- Create developments that are accessible for everyone including those with limited mobility.
- Ensure that new developments provide lifetime homes.
- Encourage the development of age appropriate housing - this may include more retirement homes and specialist homes that help people to live independently, including bungalows.
- Create developments that incorporate spaces and buildings which promote community interaction.
- Support the NHS in the provision of health care facilities.

Is this a suitable range of options to address the issues raised; are there any other options we should consider?

Protecting the Environment

- **Climate Change and Renewable Energy**
- **Nature Conservation and landscape character**

Climate Change and Renewable Energy

The NPPF emphasises that, *'Planning plays a key role in helping shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure'*. It is also clear that the Local Planning Authorities should plan to avoid increasing the vulnerability to climatic impacts including flooding, by guiding development away from the highest risk areas and not increasing flood risk elsewhere. Flood risk means risk from all sources of flooding including from rivers and the sea, directly from rainfall on the ground, surface and rising groundwater, overwhelmed sewers and drainage systems, lakes and other artificial sources.

Climate change is the greatest environmental challenge facing the world today.

New residential, retail and commercial development needs to consider the impacts of climate change and be built with climate resilience in mind. Future increases in rainfall throughout the year, increased wind/storm intensity and frequency, summer droughts and extreme winter weather needs to be considered and risks to be minimised through effective design, layout and choice of location for development.

Flood risk must be taken into account when allocating land for development and when determining applications. The built fabric undergoes many small changes but when taken cumulatively these can bring about considerable change. As well as allocating land for larger scale development, the plan should include policies to be used when considering smaller planning applications.



The term Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) describes a wide range of works large and small scale which can be an effective way to reduce the flow to the sewerage and drainage systems. The term covers a number of different works including soakaways, permeable surfacing, green roofs, water attenuation tanks etc. Not all methods are appropriate in all ground conditions.

Methods of dealing with surface water run off involve the use of land which could otherwise be built upon and should be incorporated into the design of developments at an early stage. Sometimes a single SUDS can be used to serve multiple development sites. Alternatively to

promote the efficient use of land multiple uses of land should be encouraged e.g. SUDS might be useful for wildlife and or recreation. In order to remain effective over the long term, SUDS need to be maintained.

Essex County Council is expected to become a SUDS approval body in 2015. This means that new development affecting surface water drainage may require their approval and need to comply with National and Local Standards. Essex County has produced a draft SUDS Design and Adoption Guide and this is expected to be adopted in due course.

Some of the areas affected by river flooding or that might do so in the future lie within existing settlements. Whilst it is possible to specify drainage and layout standards on new development, climate change may result in existing localised flooding problems being exacerbated within existing settlements. Such problems can occur due to poor road surface water drainage or when individuals pave their land with impermeable surfaces.

It is essential that climate resilience is built into our existing and new development. We need to plan for and future proof our drainage systems to account for unprecedented volumes of water.



Water efficiency measures need to be designed into new development to minimise demand. This includes recycling grey water and rainwater storage to reduce demand. Tree and hedge planting in new developments, can increase the District's tree stock, enhance biodiversity, improve the air quality of the environment, act as a carbon sink and provide essential shading, especially in urban areas, to build resilience to climate change impacts such as extreme heat.

Climate change can also impact negatively on health with increases in respiratory diseases due to poor air quality, skin cancers, flood related illnesses and displacements and heat related illnesses. The vulnerable people of our society are most at risk.

In the Braintree District there are many listed buildings and conservation areas. It is therefore important that the Council supports and encourages sympathetic energy efficient improvement to these properties to avoid increasing the financial divide between living in energy efficient homes and those too costly to heat and maintain. It is essential that older buildings are made more efficient, especially in off gas areas, in a manner that also protects the character and integrity of the building.

The government's target is to cut UK carbon emissions by 80% by 2050. Insulating our housing stock to a high standard has to be a major part of this, because housing contributes more than a quarter of Britain's total emissions. The government's Carbon Plan aims to

achieve 'near zero' carbon emissions from housing by 2050. To achieve these targets, we have to insulate one more house to very high standards every minute across the UK. That's 625,000 per year.

The government published a consultation in autumn 2014 'Zero Carbon Homes' which proposes to allow developers to meet the remainder of the zero carbon targets by supporting off site carbon measures and proposes to exempt small sites (indicated to be 10 new homes or fewer) from complying with the requirement for zero carbon.

The building of low energy well insulated housing has a direct impact on fuel poverty and the associated health risks of cold, damp, mouldy homes. With energy prices rising on a 5-7% annual trend new housing built in the next 10 years must maximise energy efficiency to avoid residents falling into fuel poverty and unable to afford to heat their homes.

The UK has a 15% energy from renewables targets in 2020. There are a number of potential sources of renewable energy that support the economy, are increasingly viable and provide suitable local sources both at small (domestic) and commercial scale, solar power, biomass (forestry and farm wastes), heat pumps, wind turbines, municipal (compost) and industrial waste; anaerobic digestion/biogas. Renewable energy schemes should be acceptable for their proposed areas considering landscape, visual and amenity impact.

Encouraging our communities to reduce carbon emissions by improving energy efficiency will not only help to reduce the impact of climate change, but will also assist the Council in targeting its priorities to improve social and economic problems such as fuel poverty in our communities, a particular issue in the north of the district in areas without mains piped gas.

Decentralised energy is also seen as a key factor in reducing carbon emissions. It is energy that is generated off the main grid created near to where it is needed, including micro renewables, heating and cooling. Such schemes can serve a single building or a whole community, and in some cases are even being built out across entire towns.

Issues:

- Creating climate change resilient developments.
- Creating more energy efficient building in new developments.
- Ensuring energy efficiency measures do not cause harm to the historic fabric in our district.
- Reducing carbon emissions.
- What types of renewable energy schemes would be acceptable in the Braintree District?
- What types of fossil fuel energy schemes would be acceptable in Braintree District?
- How can we ensure the provision of 'offsite' carbon measures stay within our district?
- How can SUDS be incorporated in new development and make the most efficient use of land?
- Should the plan contain a policy to improve surface water permeability within settlements for small scale proposals. Such a policy might be applicable to the whole District, or only in places where there are flooding problems.

Are these the issues that impact upon climate change and renewable energy production; are there any other issues that we need to include?

Options:

- Require good design and layout in developments to be built with climate resilience. For example, shading and natural ventilation;
- Require high standards of energy efficiency to be provided in new developments;
- Ensure that energy efficiency measures are sympathetic to surrounding character and appearance;
- Require renewable energy schemes to be incorporated into large developments;
- Facilitate and encourage large scale renewable schemes;
- Encourage opportunities for decentralised energy networks in new and existing developments;
- Set out which SUDS types we want to be developed in the District;
- Encourage the multiple use of land used for SUDS where this is practicable;
- Set out a water permeability policy which is necessary to be met in smaller planning applications.

Is this a suitable range of options to address the issues raised; are there any other options we should consider?

Nature Conservation and landscape character

The NPPF makes it clear that, *‘the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural environment through the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils, minimising the impacts on biodiversity and, where possible, providing net gains in biodiversity’*.

Braintree District is predominately rural with distinctive and attractive landscapes. The countryside is a working, living landscape with farming, mineral extraction and other rural industries making an impact on landscape quality and the local economy. There are also other opportunities for tourism, leisure and recreation activities within the countryside. A careful balance needs to be achieved between development, use of the countryside as a recreational resource and the protection and enhancement of the natural environment.



Landscape Character Assessment is a technique that has been developed for the analysis, description and classification of the landscape. It identifies the features and elements that contribute to the landscape, enabling special character and qualities of the area to be understood. It pinpoints what makes these areas different from neighbouring areas. It also helps to develop appropriate recommendations for the future conservation and management of the landscape to maintain and enhance the diverse character and essential qualities of the countryside.

Just outside the Braintree District, the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers a 90km area centred on the lower Stour Valley. AONBs benefit from the highest level of protection in relation to the landscape and scenic beauty as set out in the NPPF. The upper Stour Valley, adjoining the AONB, is partly located along the north and east boundary of Braintree District and is an important and sensitive rural landscape. The impact of development proposals in the upper Stour Valley will be particularly carefully assessed in light of the sensitive nature of this landscape and should support the wider environmental, social and economic objectives as set out in the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Management Plan and should not prejudice the long term aim to enlarge the area included within the AONB designation.

The landscape in the Braintree District includes four areas protected for their special scientific interest (SSSIs) as well as seven local nature reserves, local wildlife sites, and eight registered parks and gardens of historic value.

The importance of the natural environment, biodiversity and geodiversity (range of plants, animals and geological features) is recognised for the economic and social benefits, making the District a more attractive place to live and work and improving quality of life. Biodiversity protects the health of the natural environment and this enables it to provide services which people depend on such as the provision of food.

The NPPF states that in preparing plans to meet development needs, the aim should be to minimise pollution (emissions to land, air, water) and other adverse effects on the local and natural environment (including noise, smells, fumes, vibrations, light). Land and groundwater can present a potential source of pollution if they have been contaminated by previous land uses. New development can increase effects such as noise, fumes, light etc. Therefore, it is important that applications that have the potential to produce any of these impacts are adequately controlled. There is also the possibility that the proposed development might be affected by existing land uses nearby (e.g. new homes close to an industrial unit/estate) and mitigating measures would be expected to protect the proposed development from the existing.

Issues:

- Identifying, conserving and enhancing the landscape character and those elements that make it distinctive.
- Ensuring designated habitats and protected species are conserved and enhanced in areas identified for development.
- Controlling pollution and its adverse effects on the local and natural environment.

Are these the issues that impact upon nature conservation and landscape character; are there any other issues that we need to consider?

Options

- Encourage sustainable development that draws inspiration from and values its landscape setting, through location, sympathetic design, proportionate scale and suitable use of materials;
- Provide suitable measures for the protection and enhancement of local biodiversity with suitable mitigation, where this is adversely affected by development;
- Ensure the best and most appropriate measures are used for the control of pollutants to air, land and water to prevent contamination and dangers to public health;
- Ensure development on or near a site where contamination may potentially exist, carries out sufficient site investigation to identify the nature and extent of the contamination;
- Ensure effective measures are taken to remove, treat, contain or control any contamination;
- Do not site residential development adjacent to or near to a commercial/industrial development where it is likely that the residents will be adversely affected by the operations taking place on that site.

Is this a suitable range of options to address the issues raised; are there any other options we should consider?

Evidence Base

In order to support the new Local Plan, a strong evidence base of documents must also be produced. As set out in paragraph 158 of the National Planning Practice Guidance;

'Each local planning authority should ensure that the Local Plan is based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area. Local planning authorities should ensure that their assessment of and strategies for housing, employment and other uses are integrated, and that they take full account of relevant market and economic signals'.

The list of evidence base documents which we already have or will be putting together is;

- Strategic Housing Market Assessment
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
- Brownfield land study
- Demographic projections Phase 1-7
- Objectively Assessed Need Housing Assessment
- Affordable Housing Viability Study
- Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpersons Accommodation Assessment
- Settlement Boundary Analysis
- Site Viability Assessments
- Employment Land Needs Assessment Study
- Retail Study
- Landscape Character Assessment
- Settlement Fringe Landscape Character Review
- Historic Characterisation Study
- Review of Historic Parks and Gardens
- Protected Lanes Study
- Habitats Regulation Assessment and if necessary an Appropriate Assessment
- Updated Water Cycle Study
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

- Open Space Strategy
- Playing Pitch Strategy
- Highways Impact Assessment
- Infrastructure Plan
 - Walking Strategy
 - Cycling Strategy
 - Community Facilities/Halls Assessment

Other specific evidence may be required as we move through the Plan process to deal with a particular issue or site.

The Council will also be producing a series of documents which it is required to produce including a Statement of Consultation and the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment of the whole Plan process.

Do you think that the evidence base documents listed above are sufficient; are there any other documents that you think we should be producing?

Glossary of Terms

- **Development Plan** – A Plan which contains policies for housing, employment growth etc., the protection of special areas, and the determination of planning applications. The current Development Plan is the Local Plan Review (2005) and the Core Strategy (2011).
- **Core Strategy** - The overarching planning policy document in the development plan (formerly the Local Development Framework), which sets out the broad planning strategy for the District.
- **Adopted Local Plan Review 2005** – The Council's current development plan, which with the Core Strategy forms the Council's Development Plan.
- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** – Central government guidance on a number of key issues such as housing provision.
- **Specialist housing** – Accommodation which is specifically designed and built to meet the needs of the elderly, young or vulnerable adults and may include elements of care and support for people living there.
- **Parish/Town Council** – The most local level of government. They can also produce Neighbourhood Plans which help determine development proposals at the local level.
- **County Council** – Responsible for the provision of schools, highways maintenance, public rights of way, fire services, social services, and minerals and waste.
- **Highways Agency** – National body responsible for the A road and motorway network, this includes the A12 and A120 where it crosses through the District.
- **Heritage Assets** – Listed buildings, conservation areas as well as other non-designated assets contained on a local list.
- **Growth Location** – Areas in the Core Strategy which the Council has identified for strategic growth for housing, employment and other uses. They are situated in the main towns of Braintree and Witham.
- **National Heritage List** – A list maintained by English Heritage which shows all statutorily designated heritage assets.
- **Local List** – A local list of buildings or structures which are considered to be important locally, but are not identified as listed buildings in their own right.
- **Gypsy and Travellers** – For the purposes of section 225 of the Housing Act 2004, gypsy and travellers means: a. Persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan: and b. All other persons of a nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, including – i. Such persons who, on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependant's educational or health needs or old age, have ceased to travel

temporarily or permanently; and ii. Members of an organised group of Travelling Show people or circus people (whether or not travelling together as such).

- **Brownfield** – Land which has been previously developed, but does not include residential gardens.
- **Greenfield** – Land which has not been developed before, usually but not always agricultural or natural land. Sites may also be considered greenfield if they have been unused for a period of time and the previous use has “returned to nature”.
- **NHS** – National Health Service provides healthcare facilities such as doctor surgeries and hospitals.

Scoping Report - Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment – Local Plan		Agenda No: 6
Corporate Priority: Securing appropriate infrastructure and housing growth Portfolio: Planning and Property Report Presented by: Juliet Kirkaldy Report prepared by: Juliet Kirkaldy		
Background Papers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - National Planning Practise Guidance (NPPG) - Issues and Scoping Report - Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 - Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 - EU SEA Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive 2001/42/EC 		Public Yes
Options: To approve the SA Scoping Report for consultation. To not approve the SA Scoping Report for consultation.		Key Decision: No
Executive Summary: It is a legal requirement for the Braintree District Local Plan to be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). This is an integrated part of the plan process, providing regular checks of social, economic and environmental impacts of a plan, leading to informed choices between alternatives. The Local Plan must be prepared taking into account the findings of the SA and SEA to establish a sound evidence base. National Planning Policy Guidance sets out a single appraisal process for the SA / SEA. The Council have commissioned consultants who will follow this process in assessing the emerging Local Plan. The first stage of this process is ' <i>Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope</i> '. The consultants have produced a Scoping Report which has reviewed other relevant plans, policies and programmes, considered the current state of the environment in Braintree District, identified key environmental issues or problems which may be affected by the Local Plan and set out the 'SA Framework' which comprises specific sustainability objectives against which the likely effects of the Local Plan can be assessed. To accord with legal requirements the Scoping Report is required to be published for consultation with Statutory Consultees (English Heritage, Environment Agency and Natural England). The public are also invited to submit comments. It is proposed to publish this document for consultation alongside the Issues and Scoping report.		
Decision: It is recommended that the SA Scoping Report is published for consultation.		

Purpose of Decision: To agree the SA/SEA to inform the emerging Local Plan.	
Corporate implications	
Financial:	The preparation of the Plans set out within the LDS will be a significant cost which will be met through the LDF budget.
Legal:	To comply with Governments legislation and guidance
Equalities/Diversity	Proposed development and protection of the environment have an impact upon equality/diversity.
Customer Impact:	The SA assesses and predicts the economic, social and environmental effects likely to arise from implementation of emerging Local Plan.
Environment and Climate Change:	The SA assesses and predicts the economic, social and environmental effects likely to arise from implementation of emerging Local Plan.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	The SA will be published for public consultation along with the Issues and Scoping report.
Risks:	The Local Plan could be found unsound. Risk of High Court challenge.
Officer Contact:	Juliet Kirkaldy
Designation:	Senior Policy Planner
Ext. No.	2558
E-mail:	juliet.kirkaldy@braintree.gov.uk

1. Background

- 1.1 Braintree District Council has commissioned consultants (*Landuse Consultants Ltd*) to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the emerging Local Plan.
- 1.2 Sustainability Appraisal of Development Plan Documents is required by Section (19) 5 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. For Development Plan Documents it is also necessary to conduct an environmental assessment in accordance with the requirements of the European Union SEA Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive 2001/42/EC, which transpose the SEA Directive into English Law (*The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004*).
- 1.3 It is, therefore a legal requirement for the Braintree District Local Plan to be subject to SA and SEA. Local Plans must be prepared by taking into account the findings of SA/SEA to establish a sound evidence base. This is an integrated part of the plan process, providing regular checks of social, economic and environmental impacts of a plan, leading to informed choices between alternatives.
- 1.4 It is possible to satisfy the requirements of a SA and SEA using a single appraisal process. National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) sets out a single appraisal process. The consultants will be using this process to assess the emerging Local Plan.

- 1.5 The term 'SA' referred to should be taken to mean '*SA incorporating the requirements of SEA Directive and SEA Regulations*'.

2. SA Scoping Report

- 2.1 The first stage of the SA process (see **Appendix A**) is '*Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope*'.
- 2.2 The SA Scoping Report (please see **Appendix B**) prepared by the consultants has reviewed other relevant plans, policies and programmes, considered the current state of the environment in Braintree District, identified key environmental issues or problems which may be affected by the Local Plan and set out the 'SA Framework' which comprises specific sustainability objectives against which the likely effects of the Local Plan can be assessed.

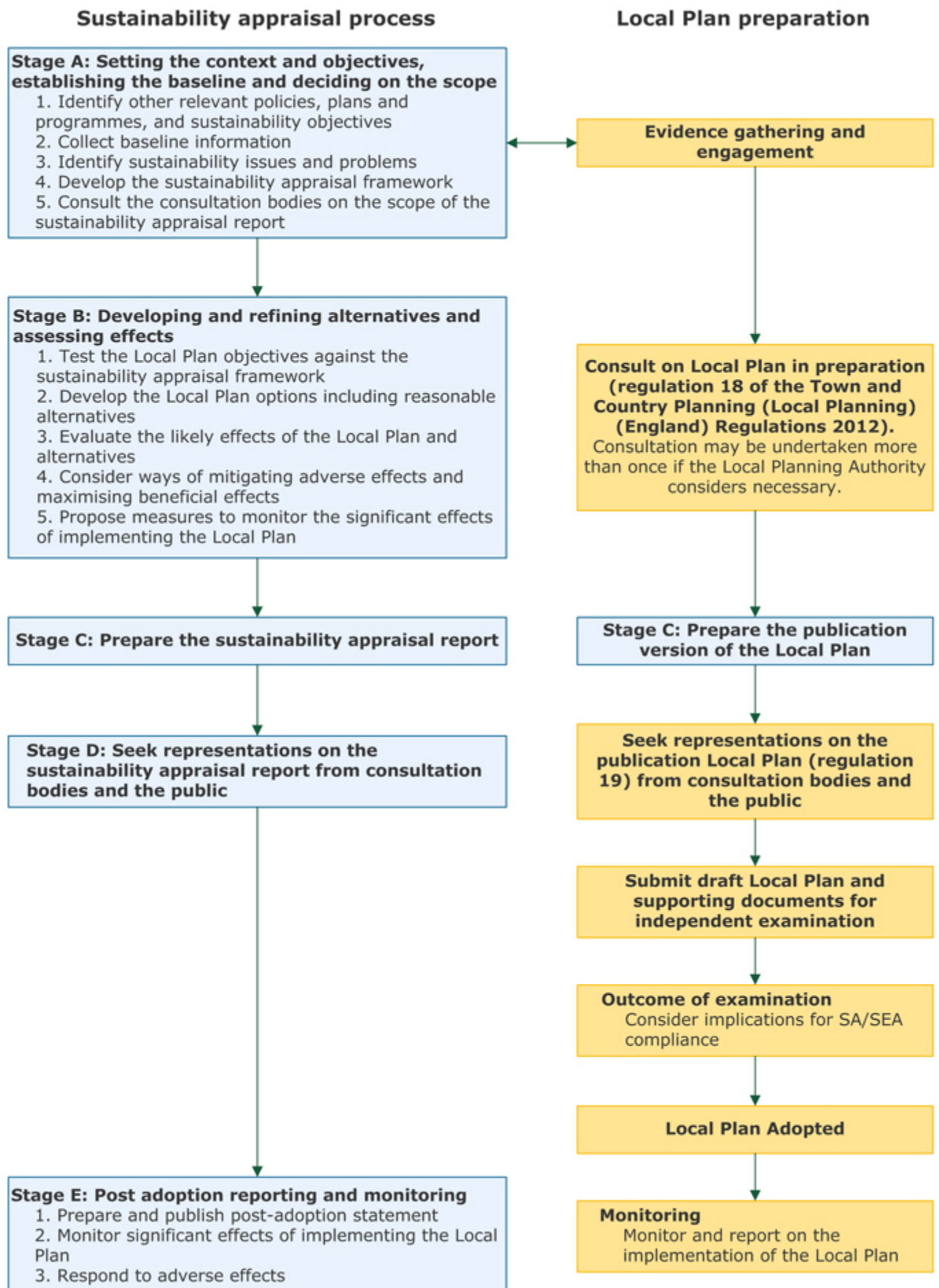
3. Consultation

- 3.1 To meet the requirements of the SEA Directive the views of the three statutory consultees (Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency) should be sought in relation to the scope and level to be covered by the SA of the Braintree District Local Plan.
- 3.2 This requirement is met by publishing this SA Scoping Report for consultation with the three statutory bodies for a five week period. Consultation has also been extended to the public. Consultees are asked to consider the following questions in particular:
- Are any significant sustainability issues or opportunities missing or misrepresented in the sustainability profile for the area covered by or potentially affected by the Local Plan? If so, please provide evidence to support suggested additional issues.
 - Do the SA objectives and associated SA methodology provide a reasonable framework with which to address the likely **significant** sustainability effects of the Local Plan?

4. Next Stages and Recommendation

- 4.1 Responses from the consultees will be addressed in subsequent stages of the SA. The next formal output of the SA process will be at the Draft Plan stage, during which preferred and reasonable alternative policy and site allocation options for the Local Plan will be appraised. The results of this assessment will inform officers in their preparation of subsequent iterations of the Local Plan.
- 4.2 **It is recommended that the SA Scoping Report is approved for public consultation.**

APPENDIX A





www.landuse.co.uk

Sustainability Appraisal for Braintree District Local Plan

SA scoping report, incorporating sustainability commentary on the Issues and Scoping Document

Final report
Prepared by LUC
December 2014

Project Title: Sustainability Appraisal for Braintree District Local Plan

Client: Braintree District Council

Version	Date	Version Details	Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by Principal
1_0	18/12/2014	Working draft for client review. Outstanding points will be dealt with alongside client comments in final report.	J Pearson S Williams E Cartwright	J Pearson	Jeremy Owen
2_0	18/12/2014	Outstanding checks and internal review points on V1_0	J Pearson S Williams E Cartwright	J Pearson	Jeremy Owen
3_0	19/12/2014	Final report for consultation, responding to client review points	J Pearson S Williams E Cartwright	J Pearson	Jeremy Owen



www.landuse.co.uk

Sustainability Appraisal for Braintree District Local Plan

SA scoping report, incorporating sustainability commentary on the Issues
and Scoping Document

Final report
Prepared by LUC
December 2014

Planning & EIA
Design
Landscape Planning
Landscape Management
Ecology
Mapping & Visualisation

LUC LONDON
43 Chalton Street
London NW1 1JD
T 020 7383 5784
F 020 7383 4798
london@landuse.co.uk

Offices also in:
Bristol
Glasgow
Edinburgh



FS 566056
EMS 566057

Land Use Consultants Ltd
Registered in England
Registered number: 2549296
Registered Office:
43 Chalton Street
London NW1 1JD
LUC uses 100% recycled paper

Contents

1	Introduction	1
	The Local Plan area	1
	The Braintree District Local Plan	1
	Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment	2
	Habitats Regulations Assessment	5
	Structure of the Scoping Report	5
2	Relevant plans and policies	7
	Outline of the Braintree District Local Plan and relationship with other plans and programmes	7
	Environmental, social and economic policy objectives	8
3	Baseline information and key sustainability issues	10
	Introduction	10
	Data limitations	10
	Baseline information, sustainability issues and their likely evolution without the Local Plan	10
4	Proposed approach to the SA	22
	Overarching approach to the assessment	22
	Approach to the SA of site allocations	25
5	Sustainability commentary on Braintree District Local Plan Issues and Scoping Document	33
	A prosperous District	33
	Creating better places	39
	Protecting the environment	42
6	Consultation and next steps	44
Appendix 1		45
	Review of other relevant plans and programmes	45
Appendix 2		63
	Proposed assessment framework for SA of policies	63
Appendix 3		73
	Proposed assessment framework for SA of site allocations	73

Tables

Table 1.1 Meeting the requirements of the SEA Directive	4
Table 3.1 SHMA guidance on property size targets	18
Table 4.1 SA framework for Braintree District Local Plan	24
Table 4.2 EIA thresholds indicating the potential for significant effects	27
Table 4.3 'Sensitive area' criteria indicating the potential for significant effects	29
Table 4.4 Institute of Highways and Transport recommended walking distances	31

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Braintree District Council commissioned LUC in October 2014 to carry out Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the emerging Braintree District Local Plan.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Scoping Report is to provide the context for, and determine the scope of, the SA/SEA of the Local Plan and to set out the framework for undertaking the later stages of the SA/SEA.
- 1.3 The scoping stage involves reviewing other relevant plans, policies and programmes, considering the current state of the environment in Braintree District, identifying any key environmental issues or problems which may be affected by the Local Plan and setting out the 'SA framework', which comprises specific sustainability objectives against which the likely effects of the Local Plan can be assessed.
- 1.4 This report also provides a sustainability commentary on each of the topic areas covered by the Issues and Scoping consultation document.

The Local Plan area

- 1.5 Braintree District is a rural district in the north of Essex and is the second largest district by area in the County. Just over half of the residents live in the three main towns of Braintree, Witham and Halstead, with the remainder living in the attractive rural areas, where there are about 60 villages, including six larger villages. The District lies between the regional growth centres of Chelmsford, Colchester and Cambridge and is close to Stansted Airport and the M11, the Haven Ports and is about 45 minutes journey time by rail from London.
- 1.6 Braintree is the main market town in the District and provides employment, town centre retailing and community services. In addition, on the edge of the town, the Freeport Factory Outlet Centre and adjacent retail park provide retail and leisure facilities, which serve an area that extends outside of the District.
- 1.7 Witham and Halstead are smaller market towns which provide employment, retail and community services. All three of the settlements contain town centres with some areas in need of regeneration. There are also two large areas in need of regeneration at former factory sites in Silver End (between Braintree and Witham) and Sible Hedingham (north west of Halstead). Witham is situated on the main London to Norwich railway line, as are the adjoining villages of Hatfield Peverel and Kelvedon, and there are significant levels of commuting from these stations, particularly to London and Chelmsford. The towns of Haverhill and Sudbury adjoin the District and provide services for residents in the northern, more isolated, rural areas of the District.

The Braintree District Local Plan

- 1.8 The Braintree District Core Strategy was adopted in 2011. A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was produced in the first half of 2014 to update the Council's evidence on housing need. The SHMA indicates that between 761 and 883 new dwellings are required per year in the District to 2026; this is substantially more than the annual provision in the Core Strategy (based on the old East of England Regional Strategy target) of 273 dwellings per year. In light of this new housing evidence and the new national policy requirements in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Council resolved in June 2014 not to proceed with its draft

Site Allocations and Development Management Plan, for which Pre-submission consultation had been completed, and instead commence work on a new Local Plan.

- 1.9 The work completed on the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan and the comments which were received during consultation on the Pre-submission draft will be rolled forward into the new Local Plan. It is therefore not the intention of the Council to review in detail all the decisions relating to minor site allocations and settlement boundary changes which have been agreed by the Local Development Framework (LDF) Sub Committee and Council over the last two years. The Council also adopted an Interim Planning Policy Statement in September 2014 which states, *"The Council accordingly adopts the land allocations and development management policies detailed within the ADMP for use within development management decision-making. The Council is of the view that these robust and clear statements should be given appropriate weight in all matters under consideration and that these are material considerations for the Council"*.
- 1.10 The Local Plan will set out the Council's strategy for future development and growth in the District up to 2033 and will include strategic policies, development management policies and site allocations. Having completed a SHMA, the Council is currently working on identifying its Objectively Assessed Housing Needs figure. It also carried out a Call for Sites during August-October 2014 to identify potential sites for development. Various other evidence documents are being prepared to support the Local Plan, including on landscape, open space, economic development and highways.
- 1.11 The Council intends to consult on three versions of the Local Plan as follows:
- Issues and Scope for the Local Plan – currently scheduled for January 2015.
 - Draft Local Plan, setting out preferred options – currently scheduled for late 2015.
 - Proposed Submission Local Plan, also known as Publication or Regulation 19 stage – currently scheduled for spring 2016
- 1.12 Following consultation on the Proposed Submission Local Plan, it may be necessary for the Council to prepare focussed changes to the Plan and consult on these prior to submission of the Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate (currently scheduled for summer 2016) and subsequent Examination in public (estimated to take place in autumn/winter 2016, subject to Inspectorate timetable).
- 1.13 In carrying out the scoping stage of the SA for the emerging Braintree District Local Plan, the work that was carried out previously during the SA of the adopted Core Strategy and the SA of the now-abandoned Pre-submission Site Allocations and Development Management Plan has been drawn on, as appropriate.

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 1.14 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, SA is mandatory for Development Plan Documents. For these documents it is also necessary to conduct an environmental assessment in accordance with the requirements of the SEA Directive (European Directive 2001/42/EC), and the SEA Regulations which transpose the SEA Directive into English law¹. Therefore, it is a legal requirement for the Braintree District Local Plan to be subject to SA and SEA.
- 1.15 The requirements to carry out SA and SEA are distinct, although it is possible to satisfy both using a single appraisal process. Government guidance² provides information to assist users in complying with the requirements of the SEA Directive and Regulations through a single integrated SA process – this is the process that is being undertaken for the Local Plan. In addition, the guidance widens the approach of SEA to include social and economic as well as environmental issues. From here on, the term 'SA' should therefore be taken to mean 'SA incorporating the requirements of the SEA Directive and SEA Regulations'.

¹ The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (Statutory Instrument 2004 No. 1633)

² Contained within the National Planning Practice Guidance website (<http://bit.ly/1zsrfEo>).

- 1.16 The SA process comprises a number of stages, as shown in Figure 1.1, with SA Scoping being Stage A.

Figure 1.1: Main stages of Sustainability Appraisal

Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope
Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects
Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report
Stage D: Consulting on the preferred options for the Local Plan and the SA report
Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the Local Plan

- 1.17 Figure 1.2 sets out the tasks involved in the Scoping stage of SA.

Figure 1.2: Stages in SA scoping (Stage A)

A1: Identifying other relevant policies, plans and programmes, and sustainability objectives.
A2: Collecting baseline information.
A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems.
A4: Developing the SA framework
A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA.

Meeting the requirements of the SEA Directive

- 1.18 This Scoping Report includes some of the required elements of the final 'Environmental Report' (the output required by the SEA Directive). Table 1.1 signposts the relevant sections of the Scoping Report that are considered to meet the SEA Directive requirements; the remainder will be met during subsequent stages of the SA. This table will be included in the SA Report at each stage of the SA process to show how the SEA Directive requirements have been met.

Table 1.1 Meeting the requirements of the SEA Directive

SEA Directive Requirements	Covered in this Scoping Report?
Preparation of an environmental report in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated. The information to be given is (Art. 5 and Annex I):	The SA Reports produced to accompany consultation on the Draft and Proposed Submission versions of the Local Plan will also form part of the 'Environmental Report'.
a) An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	Chapters 1 and 2.
b) The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;	Chapter 3.
c) The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	Chapter 3.
d) Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.;	Chapter 3.
e) The environmental protection, objectives, established at international, community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental, considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	Chapter 2 and Appendix 1.
f) The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. (Footnote: These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects);	Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.
g) The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;	Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.
h) An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	Partial explanation at Chapter 4. Requirement will be met fully at a later stage in the SA process.
i) a description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Art. 10;	Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.
j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings	Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.
The report shall include the information that may reasonably be required taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail in the plan or programme, its stage in the decision-making process and the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process to avoid duplication of the assessment (Art. 5.2)	This Scoping Report and the subsequent Environmental Reports will adhere to this requirement.
Consultation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> authorities with environmental responsibility, when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information which must be included in the environmental report (Art. 5.4) 	Consultation with the relevant statutory environmental bodies on this Scoping Report will be undertaken during January 2015.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> authorities with environmental responsibility and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Art. 6.1, 6.2) 	Public consultation on the Draft Local Plan and accompanying SA is currently proposed for late 2015. Further consultation will be undertaken for the Proposed Submission version of the Plan.

SEA Directive Requirements	Covered in this Scoping Report?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> other EU Member States, where the implementation of the plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment of that country (Art. 7). 	Unlikely to be relevant to the Braintree District Local Plan.
Taking the environmental report and the results of the consultations into account in decision-making (Art. 8)	
<p>Provision of information on the decision: When the plan or programme is adopted, the public and any countries consulted under Art.7 must be informed and the following made available to those so informed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the plan or programme as adopted a statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme and how the environmental report of Article 5, the opinions expressed pursuant to Article 6 and the results of consultations entered into pursuant to Art. 7 have been taken into account in accordance with Art. 8, and the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and the measures decided concerning monitoring (Art. 9) 	Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.
Monitoring of the significant environmental effects of the plan's or programme's implementation (Art. 10)	Requirement will be met at a later stage in the SA process.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 1.19 Under Article 6 (3) and (4) of the Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats Directive) land use plans, including Local Plans, are also subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). The purpose of HRA is to assess the impacts of a land use plan against the conservation objectives of a European Site and to ascertain whether it would adversely affect the integrity of that site.
- 1.20 The HRA for the Braintree District Local Plan will be undertaken by LUC on behalf of Braintree District Council during the plan making process. While the HRA will be reported on separately, its findings will be taken into account in the SA, where relevant, to inform judgements about the likely effects of the Local Plan on biodiversity.

Structure of the Scoping Report

- 1.21 This chapter has described the background to and subject matter of the new Braintree District Local Plan and the requirement to undertake SA and HRA. The remainder of this report is structured into the following sections:
- Chapter 2** describes the relationship of the Local Plan to other relevant plans and programmes. It also provides a summary of environmental, social and economic policy objectives identified by the detailed review of plans and programmes in **Appendix 1**.
 - Chapter 3** provides a sustainability profile of Braintree District to inform the proposed SA framework and meet SEA Directive reporting requirements.
 - Chapter 4** sets out the proposed approach to the remainder of the SA, including the framework of SA objectives. Detailed appraisal criteria and associated assumptions that will be used to appraise the Local Plan's policies and sites are set out in **Appendix 2** and **Appendix 3** respectively.

- **Chapter 5** provides high level sustainability commentaries in relation to each of the policy topics to be covered by the Local Plan.
- **Chapter 6** describes the arrangements for consultation on the Local Plan and SA Report, and the next steps for the SA.

2 Relevant plans and policies

Outline of the Braintree District Local Plan and relationship with other plans and programmes

The Environment Report should include:

"an outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan or programme and of its relationship with other relevant plans and programmes"

(SEA Regulations Schedule 2(1))

- 2.1 The Braintree District Local Plan will include all major planning policy for the District in a single document and will need to meet the requirements of the NPPF, key aspects of which are set out in the next section of the Scoping Report. Once complete, it will replace both the Core Strategy (adopted 2011) and the Local Plan Review saved policies (adopted 2005). Responsibilities for minerals and waste development plans will remain at the County level and the Braintree District Local Plan will therefore need to take account of the Essex Minerals Local Plan (adopted 2014) and the saved policies of the Essex Waste Local Plan (adopted 2001) until the emerging Replacement Waste Local Plan is adopted. Local communities may choose to produce a neighbourhood plan for their area in order to set out a vision and planning policies for the use and development of land in a neighbourhood. Any such plans will need to be in conformity with the strategic policies in the Braintree District Local Plan.
- 2.2 One of the main requirements of the NPPF is for local authorities to significantly boost their supply of housing and this applies across the Country. A document called a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) helps the Council work out how many houses are needed and of what type. It estimates this need to be between 761 to 883 new homes per year. A range of housing need requirements will be considered by the Council and further evidence on whether this is achievable will be collected before the precise number to be provided is set out in the Draft Local Plan, to be published for consultation in late 2015. The Council has agreed that work on the new Local Plan will proceed on the basis of an objectively assessed housing need figure for the District in the period 2014-2033 in the range of 750-950 dwellings per year.
- 2.3 As the Council has to plan for a larger number of new homes in the District than were provided for in the Core Strategy, it will need to look at larger and/or more numerous development sites. This could include urban extensions like Great Notley, which was built in the early 2000s, or new settlements which could follow Garden City or Garden Suburb design principles.
- 2.4 The Local Plan is not just about new homes but must ensure that housing growth is supported by infrastructure, jobs and community facilities. The Council will be working with key stakeholders such as the NHS, education and highways authorities to ensure that vital community facilities such as schools, GP surgeries and roads and public transport links are in place to support existing residents as well as new communities. Open spaces and community facilities will also be protected and new spaces and facilities will be supported.
- 2.5 An important objective of the Plan will be to promote economic growth and prosperity in the District. The Plan will need to ensure that land is available to support new employment areas and that the right jobs can be provided in the right places for local residents.
- 2.6 The Council is also working with other local neighbouring authorities to ensure that any cross-boundary issues are dealt with appropriately and to ensure that growth across all authorities can be delivered effectively, with the necessary infrastructure improvements.

Environmental, social and economic policy objectives

The Environment Report should include:

"The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation."

(SEA Regulations Schedule 2(5))

- 2.7 There are a wide range of plans and programmes at the international and national levels that are relevant to the emerging Braintree District Local Plan. The full review of other relevant plans and programmes can be seen in Appendix 1 and the key components are summarised below.

Key international plans, policies and programmes

- 2.8 At the international level, Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (the 'SEA Directive') and Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the 'Habitats Directive') are particularly significant as they require Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to be undertaken in relation to the emerging Local Plan. These processes should be undertaken iteratively and integrated into the production of the Local Plan in order to ensure that any potential negative environmental effects (including on European-level nature conservation designations) are identified and can be mitigated.
- 2.9 There are a wide range of other EU Directives relating to issues such as water quality, waste and air quality, most of which have been transposed into UK law through national-level policy; however, the international directives have been included in Appendix 1 for completeness.

Key national plans, policies and programmes

- 2.10 The most significant development in terms of the policy context for the emerging Local Plan has been the publication of the NPPF which replaced the suite of Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and Planning Policy Guidance (PPGs). The purpose of the NPPF was to streamline national planning policy, having reduced over a thousand pages of policy down to around 60 pages. The Braintree District Local Plan must be consistent with the requirements of the NPPF, which sets out information about the purposes of local plan-making. It states that:
- "Local Plans must be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. To this end, they should be consistent with the principles and policies set out in this Framework, including the presumption in favour of sustainable development."*
- 2.11 The NPPF also requires Local Plans to be 'aspirational but realistic'. This means that opportunities for appropriate development should be identified in order to achieve net gains in terms of sustainable social, environmental and economic development; however significant adverse impacts in any of those areas should not be allowed to occur.
- 2.12 One of the core planning principles set out in the NPPF is that planning should take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs. Other core planning principles are linked to health – such as design and transportation. Section 8 of the NPPF recognises that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities.
- 2.13 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to set out the strategic priorities for the area in the Local Plan. This should include strategic policies to deliver:
- the homes and jobs needed in the area;
 - the provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development;

- the provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
- the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and
- climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.

2.14 In addition, Local Plans should:

- plan positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area to meet the objectives, principles and policies of this Framework;
- be drawn up over an appropriate time scale, preferably a 15-year time horizon, take account of longer term requirements, and be kept up to date;
- be based on co-operation with neighbouring authorities, public, voluntary and private sector organisations;
- indicate broad locations for strategic development on a key diagram and land-use designations on a proposals map;
- allocate sites to promote development and flexible use of land, bringing forward new land where necessary, and provide detail on form, scale, access and quantum of development where appropriate;
- identify areas where it may be necessary to limit freedom to change the uses of buildings, and support such restrictions with a clear explanation;
- identify land where development would be inappropriate, for instance because of its environmental or historic significance; and
- contain a clear strategy for enhancing the natural, built and historic environment, and supporting Nature Improvement Areas where they have been identified.

3 Baseline information and key sustainability issues

Introduction

- 3.1 The collection of information on the current state of the environment is a key component of the SA process and a requirement of the SEA Directive. It provides a baseline from which to predict and subsequently monitor the sustainability effects of the Plan's policies and proposals.

The 'Environmental Report' should include:

- *"The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme"*
- *"the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected"*
- *"any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme, including in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as any areas designated pursuant to Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds and the Habitats Directive."*

SEA Regulations Schedule 2 (2, 3 and 4)

- 3.2 Sufficient baseline information to meet these requirements has been collected and is organised below by SA theme.

Data limitations

- 3.3 It should not be assumed that all baseline data are currently available or that it will be possible to collect missing data in the future. SEA Guidance recognises that data gaps will exist but suggests that where baseline information is unavailable or unsatisfactory, authorities should consider how it will affect their assessments and determine how to improve it for use in the assessment of future plans. The collection and analysis of baseline data is regarded as a continual and evolving process, given that information can change or be updated on a regular basis.
- 3.4 Not all the relevant information was available at the local level and as a result there are some gaps within the data set but it is believed that the available information provides a sufficiently comprehensive view of sustainability within the plan area. In collating the baseline data, problems encountered included the difficulty of obtaining ward or district level data consistently and the difficulty of identifying trends in some data sets.

Baseline information, sustainability issues and their likely evolution without the Local Plan

- 3.5 The baseline information included within this SA Report is largely drawn from that presented in the SA of the Pre-submission Site Allocations and Development Management Plan³. This information has been amended, where relevant, to take account of new information that has

³ SA and SEA of Braintree District Pre-submission Site Allocation and Development Management Plan, Place Services for Braintree District Council, February 2014, <http://bit.ly/139ewLd>

become available since the earlier SA work. As well as providing a snapshot of the current social, economic and environmental situation in the District, it can also be taken as the likely evolution of the environment without the implementation of the Plan unless otherwise stated. This chapter also highlights key items of forthcoming evidence which will be reflected in future stages of the SA once they become available.

- 3.6 A selection of the environmental assets and constraints in Braintree District is shown in Figure 1. This is included for illustration only; comprehensive digital mapping of all relevant environmental assets and constraints in relation to site allocations will be carried out at a later stage in the SA process, as described in Chapter 4 and Appendix 3.

Biodiversity and geodiversity

- 3.7 There are no international biodiversity designations (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas or Ramsar sites) or Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs) in Braintree District. As noted above, an HRA will be undertaken during the plan preparation process and its results used to inform the SA.
- 3.8 There are four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in Braintree District at Belcher's and Broadfield Woods; Bovingdon Hall Woods; Chalkney Wood; and Glemsford Pits. The condition of these SSSIs is generally favourable, with Belcher's and Broadfield Woods, Chalkney Wood, and Glemsford Pits assessed as 100% favourable and Bovingdon Hall Woods as 93% favourable. The 7% of Bovingdon Hall Woods assessed as being in 'unfavourable – no change' condition is due to inappropriate deer grazing/browsing rather than development pressure.
- 3.9 There are seven National Nature Reserves (NNRs) located in Essex; none of these is in Braintree District. Braintree District has a total of seven Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) at: Bocking Blackwater; Brickfields / Long Meadow, Earls Colne; Brockwell Meadows, Kelvedon; Colne Valley (dismantled Railway); Cuckoo Wood, Great Notley; Sandpits, Gosfield; Whetmead, Witham. There are three further LNRs located on the border between Essex and Suffolk; Rodbridge Picnic Site, Borley; The Railway Walks from Sudbury to Long Melford where the former railway crosses through Borley parish and the Haverhill Railway Walks on the border of Sturmer parish. All three are part of the Suffolk County Council LNR.
- 3.10 There are 251 Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) scattered throughout Braintree District, with many concentrated in the centre of the District.
- 3.11 There are no SSSIs designated for their geological diversity in the District nor any Local Geological Sites⁴.

Landscape

- 3.12 There is no Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in the District but proposals are under consideration to extend Dedham Vale AONB westwards towards Sudbury, crossing over into the north east part of Braintree District.
- 3.13 Braintree District is the subject of two Landscape Character Assessments; the Essex Landscape Character Assessment (2003) and the Combined Landscape Character Assessment (2006). The information contained within these can be used to determine the sensitivity of certain landscape areas to development.
- 3.14 The number of Protected Lanes in Braintree District has decreased since they were originally designated mostly due to changes in agricultural practice but also because of road improvements.
- 3.15 Roadside verges, if sensitively managed, can benefit the biodiversity not only of the verges themselves but also the wider countryside by acting as corridors interlinking fragmented or isolated habitats. With this in mind, in the 1970s, Essex County Council Highways Agency, Nature Conservancy Council and Essex Wildlife Trust identified a number of important verges which were subsequently designated as Special Roadside Nature Reserves. Once designated, wooden posts

⁴ Formerly known as Regionally Important Geological Sites

are erected on the verges with warning plaques and arrows. There are over 100 special verges designated in Essex and these are reviewed annually.

Forthcoming evidence

- 3.16 The Council has commissioned an updated Landscape Character Assessment which is expected to be available in spring 2015.

Soils

- 3.17 The majority of agricultural land in Braintree District is classified as Grade 2 or 3, with 65.8% (40,243 hectares) of agricultural land classified as Grade 2 and 29.9% (18,304 hectares) as Grade 3. Grade 1, 2 and 3a agricultural land is considered to represent the best and most versatile agricultural land (note the national agricultural land classification maps do not distinguish between grade 3a and 3b agricultural land, which can only be established through more detailed survey work).
- 3.18 The existence of large historical manufacturing industries in the Braintree District, has led to some degree of contamination of sites through associated industrial processes, or activities which are now defunct. Contamination of land can have adverse impacts on health and well-being as well as damaging wildlife and contributing to pollution of water bodies.

Open space

Forthcoming evidence

- 3.19 The Council has commissioned an Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy which is expected to be available in autumn/winter 2015.

Air Quality

- 3.20 Air Quality in Essex is generally good. There are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) located in Braintree District. The main air quality issues in the District relate to nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate emissions from vehicles travelling on the A12 and A120.
- 3.21 There are five potentially significant junctions with daily flows of more than 10,000 vehicles in 2004. They are Newland Street, Witham; Crossing road, Witham; Head Street, Halstead; Railway Street, Braintree; and Rayne Road, Braintree.
- 3.22 Of the 12 passive diffusion NO₂ monitoring tubes located in the District, five exceeded the annual mean NO₂ objective concentration of 40 g/m³ but relevant exposure levels did not. Three of these were sited along the A12 at Hatfield Peverel, Rivenhall Hotel, and Foxden in Rivenhall while the other two were sited at Bradwell on the A120 and at Chipping Hill in Witham.

Climatic factors

- 3.23 Climate change predictions for the East of England for the 2080s, based on medium (current) emissions scenarios, are for an increase in winter mean temperature of approximately 3.0°C and an increase in summer mean temperature of approximately 3.6°C. The central estimate of change in winter mean precipitation is an increase of 20% whilst the central estimate of change in summer mean precipitation is a reduction of 20%.
- 3.24 Braintree District has a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (2009). The Action Plan is reviewed annually to determine progress against its indicators and actions. The Action Plan objectives cover four areas:
- **Reduce the Carbon Footprint** from all Council services and operations, and reduce CO₂ emissions across the District.
 - **Community Leadership** through sharing best practice with businesses and residents and leading by example.
 - **Sustainable Services** to ensure that the Council's assets and operations are able to cope with the impacts of climate change.

- **Using its Regulatory Powers** and influence to ensure future development in the District is sustainable and prepared for climate change

- 3.25 In 2011, Braintree District consumed more energy than the County average and was the 5th highest consumer amongst all local authorities in the County. A total of 1,245.5 GWh of the District's total 3,092.3 GWh energy consumption was from transport related petroleum products. In contrast only 5 GWh of energy consumed is generated from renewable sources. However this is a higher amount than the local authority average for Essex at 2.46 GWh and the second highest amount amongst all local authorities in the County.
- 3.26 The industry and commercial, domestic and road transport sectors each produce roughly one third of the total CO₂ emissions from the District in 2008. The industrial and commercial sector produces the smallest amount at 30.3% while road transport produces the most at 36.6%. When compared to the County average of 35.8%, proportionately more emissions of CO₂ are produced by road transport in the District. Domestic production is proportionally less in the District at 33.1% than the County average of 34.5%.
- 3.27 At 6.7 tonnes in 2010, residents of Braintree District emitted a slightly higher amount of CO₂ per capita than the Essex average, which itself reported a return of 6.6 tonnes. Road transport in Braintree District produces the 4th highest amount of CO₂ per capita across the County's Districts/Boroughs at 2.5 tonnes, which is only just higher than the County-wide average of 2.4 tonnes.
- 3.28 Braintree District consumed 0.14% of its total energy from renewable sources in 2010, the 2nd highest amount amongst Essex Districts/Boroughs and higher than the District/Borough average of 0.09%.
- 3.29 Up until Sept 2013, Braintree District had issued 847 certificates related to the Code for Sustainable Homes, the fifth highest amongst local authorities in Essex and above the local authority average of 608. Of these, 511 certificates were issued at the design stage and 336 post construction.

Water quality and water resources

- 3.30 The main water courses running through Braintree District are the Rivers Blackwater, Colne, Brain, Pant, Stour and Ter. Braintree District contains Source Protection Zones and major aquifers within the northern half of the District, together with scattered minor aquifers in the south of the District.
- 3.31 Following a national review of Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies (CAMS) boundaries, water resources in the South Essex CAMS (excluding the Mardyke catchment) are now incorporated with the North Essex CAMS into the Combined Essex CAMS. The Combined Essex CAMS document sets out the issues for the whole of Essex. The document splits the County into Water Resource Management Units (WRMU), of which two relate to areas which include watercourses within Braintree District. These are WRMU1 and WRMU2.
- 3.32 The integrated WRMU status for WRMU 1 was 'over-abstracted' and for WRMU 2 it was 'no water available' at February 2007. The Combined Essex CAMs Annual Update (March 2008) noted that the availability of water within the Roman River / Layer Brook catchment had changed, however the water availability and restrictions for the remainder of WRMU 1 had not changed since the publication of the CAMS in February 2007.
- 3.33 Essex falls within the Anglian River Basin District. The Anglian River Basin District is subdivided into catchment areas and the Essex Rivers catchment area lies within the counties of Essex and Suffolk, as well as a small part of Cambridgeshire. The Combined Essex catchment area is further subdivided into water body catchment areas. The water bodies which are associated with Braintree District are: R1, Doomsey Brook; R4, Ter; R16, River Chelmer; R23, Blackwater Pant; R91, Brain; R102, Boreham Tributary; and R115, River Blackwater. The majority of water bodies within Braintree District are given a 'moderate' current overall potential Water Framework Directive (WFD) status. However the River Blackwater and the River Chelmer are both given a 'poor' current WFD status.

- 3.34 The open character, nature conservation importance and recreational importance of the floodplains of the River Stour, Colne, Brain, Pent, Blackwater, Ter Valley and their tributaries and the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation are potentially sensitive to inappropriate development close to these watercourses.

Forthcoming evidence

- 3.35 The Council has commissioned an addendum to the 2011 Water Cycle Study to take account of increased levels of housing relative to the Core Strategy. This is expected to be available in 2015.

Flooding

- 3.36 The risk of flooding posed to properties within the District arises from a number of different sources including river flooding, sewer and surface water flooding.
- 3.37 The Mid Essex Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), which includes Braintree District, was published in October 2007, with an Appendix relating to Braintree District in July 2008. Flood risk issues and flood management strategies identified in this document are outlined below but the SFRA provides a detailed analysis of flood risk associated with individual sites identified as potential locations for development at that time. This analysis, together with the planned addendum to the SFRA to analyse new sites, will be referenced in the SA of site allocations.
- 3.38 Between April 2011 and March 2012 the Environment Agency objected to four planning applications on flood risk grounds, of which one was granted. Two applications were refused on the grounds of flood risk on site and one application was withdrawn.

Fluvial flood risk

- 3.39 The dominant fluvial systems within the District are the River Blackwater, the River Brain and the River Colne. These rivers run close to a number of settlements. The River Brain flows through the towns of Braintree and Witham. The River Blackwater flows through Braintree, Coggeshall, Kelvedon and to the south of Witham. The confluence of the Rivers Brain and Blackwater is situated to the south east of Witham town centre. The River Colne flows through Great Yeldham, Sible Hedingham and Halstead.
- 3.40 Northern areas of Braintree town are within Flood Zones 2 and 3. These and other areas identified by the Mid Essex SFRA are subject to a higher risk from fluvial flooding.

Surface water flood risk

- 3.41 Surface water flooding can occur from sewers, drains, or groundwater and from runoff from land, small water courses and ditches as a result of heavy rainfall.
- 3.42 The Mid Essex SFRA found no indication that groundwater flooding forms a significant risk within the District. Approximately 70% of the District is underlain by London Clay, including all of the main settlements. This forms an impenetrable barrier to groundwater at depth, limiting the risk from this source.
- 3.43 Typically, a Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) is prepared to identify the causes and effects of surface water flooding and recommend the most cost effective way of managing surface water flood risk for the long term. A SWMP identifies areas where the surface water flood risk is most severe and designates them as Critical Drainage Areas (CDAs). Essex County Council is currently working on a SWMP and its findings will be reflected in the SA once it becomes available.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

- 3.44 The 2007 SFRA recommended that runoff rates should be restricted for both greenfield and brownfield developments in Bocking, Braintree, Witham and Coggeshall in particular. This is also likely to be appropriate within other settlements to ease surface water flooding and drainage capacity exceedance.
- 3.45 Infiltration techniques are unlikely to be appropriate where the site is underlain by London Clay, such as in Bocking, Braintree, Witham, Halstead, Coggeshall and Kelvedon. Attenuation techniques should be imposed in these circumstances.

Forthcoming evidence

- 3.46 The Council has commissioned an addendum to the 2007 SFRA to assess new locations for growth. This is expected to be available in 2015. In addition, Essex County Council is currently working on a SWMP.

Cultural heritage and townscape

- 3.47 Braintree District is an area of undulating countryside, bordered by the River Stour valley to the north. The area is also drained by the upper reaches of the River Colne and the River Pant/Blackwater, as well as many smaller streams and tributaries creating a landscape of gentle slopes and small valleys.⁵ The historic features of this landscape and of the urban areas described below are potentially sensitive to development.
- 3.48 The urban areas of the District comprise Braintree, Witham, Kelvedon, Coggeshall and Halstead, all of which were medieval market towns, some having their origins in Roman times. The rural settlement pattern was historically very dispersed, comprising church/hall complexes, manors, farms, moated sites and small hamlets strung out along extensive network of linear and triangular greens, the latter located at road junctions. Post-1950s boundary loss varies widely.⁶
- 3.49 The River Stour and River Colne valley bottoms are characterised by extensive meadows or meadow pasture. The higher ground between them is characterised by a complex mix of pre-18th century irregular fields of probable of medieval origin or older, and common arable field enclosed by agreement largely before the mid-19th century. The Upper Pant/Blackwater valley, and the area to the southwest of Braintree town, are characterised by pre-18th century irregular fields. The Coggeshall area is complex, comprising a mix of pre-18th century irregular fields and pre-18th century co-axial fields. The southern part of the District has a more complex fieldscape with a mixture of irregular and regular fields, including some coaxial fields, and enclosed heathlands and commons. The area around Gosfield is notable for its Ancient Woodland and a number of large landscaped parks, some of which are medieval in origin, including Gosfield Hall, Gosfield Place and Marks Hall park.⁷
- 3.50 In 2013 there were 3,184 listed buildings within Braintree District, the majority of which were Grade II. Listed buildings within the District are fairly widely spread. Clusters of listed buildings can be found in the historic settlements such as Coggeshall and linear patterns are identifiable along historic transport routes. In 2011 there were 22 listed buildings on the 'at risk' register which is a slight increase from the previous year total of 19. Braintree District Council is currently working on a Local List.
- 3.51 The Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) contains approximately 3,459 archaeological records relating to Braintree District out of a total of 24,699 for the County. The 2013 National Heritage List for England shows that there are 40 Scheduled Monuments within the District, 37 Conservation Areas and eight Historic Parks and Gardens.

Health

- 3.52 Life expectancy is increasing and residents in Braintree District have higher life expectancies at birth than the national averages, with men living for an average of 79.6 years and women on average living 82.8 years. The health of the population in Braintree District is generally better than the England average, but is significantly worse than the England average in respect of road injuries and deaths and hip fractures in the over 65s.
- 3.53 Obesity in Year 6 children increased from 7.0% to 15.6% between 2008/09 and 2010/11, which reflected similar changes to the national average. The level of adult obesity at 25.9% is higher than the national average of 24.2% for the period 2006-2008.
- 3.54 Participation in sports and active recreation in Braintree District declined between the first Active People Survey from 16.3% to only 13.0% in Active People Survey 3; however the latest period

⁵ Essex Historic Landscape Characterisation Project, Essex County Council and English Heritage, 2013.

⁶ Essex Historic Landscape Characterisation Project, Essex County Council and English Heritage, 2013.

⁷ Essex Historic Landscape Characterisation Project, Essex County Council and English Heritage, 2013.

corresponding to Active People Survey 4 saw a rise in sports participation and active recreation in the District above the County, region and national averages for the first time. The most recent survey also ranks Braintree District as having the third highest rate of sports participation in the County.

- 3.55 As of Nov 2011, 3.2% of the working age population of Braintree District claimed benefits. This is a smaller proportion than those claiming benefits in the East of England and in England which were recorded as being 3.4% and 4.3% respectively. However, the District did receive a higher proportion of residents claiming severe disablement at 19.5% compared to 14.4% of total claimants in the region and 12.6% in England. Of those receiving benefits in Braintree District, the majority were seeking incapacity benefits, accounting for 80.5% of total claimants.
- 3.56 As of 2010, Braintree District met and exceeded its target to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents by 40% of the baseline figure; a reduction of 43.7% was achieved.

Population and social issues

- 3.57 As of 2011 the estimated population for the District of Braintree was 147,514 which accounts for approximately 10% of the County's estimated population. In 2011, the largest proportion of the population in Braintree District was aged 25-49. There was approximately the same number of under 16 year olds as those aged 65 plus (males) and 60 plus (females).
- 3.58 Braintree District has experienced higher population growth during 2001-2011 at 11.3% than the County, the region and England as a whole with 6.4%, 8.6% and 7.4% respectively. The population is predicted to continue to increase, with the 2010 ONS Sub-national Population Projection estimating an increase of 23.3% from 2011 to 2035. The age group projected to see the largest growth is those over 65, suggesting increased demand for supported housing, support services and need for adaptations to existing housing⁸. Household growth projections are described under the Housing topic below.
- 3.59 5,803 households migrated into Braintree District from outside the area over the last three years. The highest proportion had moved from Chelmsford (9.6%), followed by 9.0% who had moved from elsewhere in the UK and 7.4% from elsewhere in Essex; only 1.4% had migrated in from abroad. Out-migration from the District was mainly to elsewhere in the UK; the main reasons for leaving the District were family reasons and employment / access to work. In terms of migration patterns from Census 2001 and ONS 2011 data, the main in and out migration to and from the District was in Chelmsford, Colchester, Uttlesford and Greater London.⁹
- 3.60 In 2010, Braintree District was ranked 212th out of the 354 Local Authorities (LAs) in England by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (1 being most deprived). This represents a worsening level of deprivation relative to other local authority areas in England than in the 2007 rankings but a relatively low level of deprivation overall. Across Essex, serious deprivation is most prevalent in relation to 'Barriers to housing and services' and 'Education, skills and training'. In Braintree District 26 of 84 small areas are seriously deprived with regards to 'Barriers to housing and services', and 23 are seriously deprived with regards to 'Education, skills and training', however both of these levels of deprivation show an improvement on 2007 figures.
- 3.61 All crime in the District has increased between 2011/12 and 2012/13. The largest increase is in Domestic Burglary which has increased by 47.2%. All figures are worse than the County figures which generally show a decrease, although burglary has increased countywide by 11.2%.
- 3.62 In 2011, 73.9% of pupils in Braintree District achieved 5 or more A* to C GCSE grades or equivalent; a 14.8 percentage points increase relative to the 2008 figure, indicating improvements in education during this period. However the proportion achieving at least 5 A* to C grades or equivalent in Braintree District is lower than the County, regional and national levels of 79.9%, 78% and 80.8% respectively. In contrast the percentage of pupils in the District

⁸ Braintree District Council Strategic Housing Market Assessment Final Report 2014

⁹ Braintree District Council Strategic Housing Market Assessment Final Report 2014

achieving 5 or more A*-G grades in 2009 was higher at 95.6% than the County, regional and national levels.

- 3.63 The population of Braintree District has, in general, more qualifications than the overall sub-national and national populations. 87.9% of the working age population of Braintree District which accounts for 80,300 people are qualified to at least level 1 or higher compared to 82.8% across the UK. Level 1 represents foundation GNVQ, NVQ 1 or up to 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C.
- 3.64 Braintree District has a slightly larger proportion of the population qualified at Level 2 and Level 3 than the County average and a slightly lower percentage than the County at Level 4. However compared to the region and the UK the percentage of qualifications in Braintree District at Level 2 and above is lower than average.

Economy

- 3.65 At 60.08% of the total population, the percentage of the District population that is of working age is higher than the Essex average. The percentage is in line with the region but lower than that of the Country.
- 3.66 The percentage of the District's population that are economically active at 83.1% is higher than the regional and British averages. The percentage of the District's population that are in employment is higher at 76.1% than both the British and the regional averages.
- 3.67 There are fewer available jobs per single person in the District at 0.60 than the regional average of 0.76 and Great Britain at 0.78. The District's Core Strategy aimed to deliver 14,000 new jobs by 2026¹⁰.
- 3.68 In a survey of 2008 the largest proportion of people work in the 'Services' industry for all geographical areas. The proportion is the lowest in Braintree District at 76.7%, compared to 82.5% in the East of England and 83.5% in Great Britain.
- 3.69 The general proportion of full-time to part time jobs, at approximately 2:1, is in line with regional and national averages.
- 3.70 There were 690 business births in the District in 2012, the 4th highest amongst the Essex districts. The business formation rate in Braintree District is consistently above the Essex average.
- 3.71 Factories and warehouses accounted for the majority of industrial and commercial floorspace. Factory floorspace accounted for a higher proportion in the District than the average for the region and for England, whereas retail and offices accounted for a lower proportion in Braintree District than the regional and national averages.

Minerals

- 3.72 Seven sites within Braintree District have been identified as preferred or reserved sites for primary mineral extraction of sand and gravel in the Essex Minerals Plan, which was adopted in July 2014¹¹. These include five sites at Bradwell Quarry, Rivenhall Airfield; one site at Broadfield Farm, Rayne; and one site on land at Colemans Farm. The volume of sand and gravel extracted from these sites will need to meet the minerals demand for the whole of Essex created by major development and new infrastructure projects within the County.
- 3.73 The provision of other forms of development in the District may be constrained by the need to safeguard mineral resources for extraction.

Forthcoming evidence

- 3.74 The East of England Forecasting Model (EEFM) developed by Oxford Economics, provides projections of economic, demographic and housing trends in a consistent fashion. The Spring 2014 baseline forecasts are due to become available shortly.
- 3.75 The Council is preparing an Employment Land and Economic Strategy which is expected to be available in 2015.

¹⁰ Braintree District Economic Development Prospectus 2013/2026, Braintree District Council

¹¹ Essex Minerals Local Plan, Essex County Council, adopted July 2014.

Housing

- 3.76 Braintree District is considered to be a single housing market area by the 2014 SHMA. There are predicted to be 8,000 (13.1%) more households in the District in 2021 than in 2011, driven by population growth (see Population and Social Issues topic above) and a reduction in average household size from 2.42 persons per household in 2011 to 2.36 in 2021. The population projection analysis carried out by Edge Analytics suggests that the dwellings projection figure for Braintree District is that there will be a need for 824 additional dwellings per annum from 2009 to 2026. The SHMA 'stock flow analysis' suggests a need range of 761 to 883 additional dwellings per annum to 2026. The 2013 housing needs survey identified a shortfall of 362 market units per annum, based on market demand and supply data. The 2013 Affordable Housing Assessment Model identified a shortfall of 399 units a year. The Council has agreed that work on the new Local Plan will proceed on the basis of an objectively assessed housing need figure for the District in the period 2014-2033 in the range of 750-950 dwellings per year.
- 3.77 Evidence suggests that an overall affordable housing target of 40% can be justified to be negotiated from all suitable sites within the District, subject to viability. The overall affordable tenure target balance could be set at 65% for social rent (including affordable rents) and 35% intermediate housing. The SHMA also provides guidance on appropriate property size targets as follows:¹²

Table 3.1 SHMA guidance on property size targets

Type of housing	1 to 2 bedrooms	3 to 4 bedrooms
Social rented	70%	30%
Intermediate market housing	65%	35%
Market housing	70%	30%

- 3.78 In relation to meeting the housing needs of older people, the SHMA also recommends that the Council considers:
- The type and quality of existing sheltered stock in meeting today's housing standards and preferences and the scale of need and demand for 648 units by 2018.
 - The large future on-going requirement for 'extra care' accommodation to meet the significant growth in the number of people over 85.¹³
- 3.79 Flats are considered to be the entry level stock in the District and the price for a one bedroom flat starts at £73,000. This would require an income of £19,800 and 61.4% of newly forming households earn below this amount. The need for a significant deposit has been a major factor in preventing access to the market for new forming households since 2008. 93.8% had less than £10,000 in savings and unless significant family financial support is available, these households will find it very difficult to access the local market and will be limited to the rental or intermediate market. Access to the private rented housing market is also restricted by cost.¹⁴
- 3.80 The District has above average owner occupation (68.8%). Social rental is 16.4% and private rental 13.6%. In terms of property types, 65.0% of dwellings are detached and semi-detached houses, 24.0% are terraced properties and 10.7% are flats. 38.9% of all stock in Braintree District is three bedrooms with 23.4% four or more bedrooms and two bedrooms accounting for 27.9%. 89.1% of existing households said their current property was adequate for their needs.¹⁵
- 3.81 Data from Braintree District's 2013 Housing Needs Survey shows that 5,272 existing households are planning on moving to market housing in the District during the next five years, with the most

¹² Strategic Housing Market Assessment, David Couttie Associates (DCA) for Braintree District Council, 2014

¹³ Strategic Housing Market Assessment, David Couttie Associates (DCA) for Braintree District Council, 2014

¹⁴ Braintree District Council Strategic Housing Market Assessment Final Report 2014

¹⁵ Braintree District Council Strategic Housing Market Assessment Final Report 2014

popular destinations being Braintree, Bocking and Great Notley. 2,188 existing households are planning on moving to affordable housing in the District with the most popular location choices being Bumpstead, Upper Colne, Yeldham, Stour Valley North, Hedingham and Maplestead, Gosfield and Greenstead Green, Stour Valley South, and Three Colnes, followed by Braintree, Bocking and Great Notley.

- 3.82 In 2012/2013 there were 178 net additional dwellings (taking into account losses/demolitions) within the District. As at April 2013 the Managed Delivery Target for the District is 169 additional dwelling per annum to meet their minimum total housing requirement of 9,625 dwellings between 2001 and 2026, as set out in the Core Strategy. The most recent annual completion figure is above the annual target.
- 3.83 The current trajectory shows that by 2026 there will be 9,625 completions across the plan period (since 2001). Projected annual completion figures will be generally lower than the completion rates reported between 2001 and 2011 but Braintree District will still exceed its minimum housing requirement by 816 dwellings or 108% for the whole plan period. This is due to supply up to 2012 substantially exceeding the annual average required to meet the overall housing requirement. Current national policy requires local planning authorities to provide a five year land supply of deliverable sites which excludes the current reporting year.
- 3.84 A total of 1,584 dwellings have been identified on deliverable sites over the next five years starting from 2013/14. This figure increases to 1,755 when the current year is also included. This equates to an average annual completion rate of 292 which is above the current published target of 247.
- 3.85 In 2012/13, 35% of the net dwelling completions, which accounts for 63 dwellings, were affordable within the District. To date, the highest proportion of affordable housing achieved within the District was in 2009/2010 at 36.7% which accounted for 157 of the total number of dwellings completed.
- 3.86 Of the 322 new gross dwellings built during 2011/12, 206 were built on previously developed land (PDL). Proportionately this is the smallest number of dwellings built on PDL since 2009/10. PDL figures no longer include dwellings built on gardens of existing dwellings following a change of definition by the Government in June 2010. The previous figures for PDL are therefore not comparable with the adjusted figures from 2009/10.
- 3.87 In 2011/12 this accounted for 63.98% of the total dwelling provision while the previous year dwelling completed on PDL represented 71.25% of the total provision. Under the old definition this would have been 75.78% and 77.29% respectively.
- 3.88 The number of homeless people accepted in priority need in Braintree District in 2012/13 was 164. Although this is the fourth lowest figure across the study period with the lowest being the three previous years (2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12) at 103, 104 and 137 homeless acceptances. Prior to this, numbers were either near to 200 or significantly more. The latest figure shows a rise in homeless acceptances of 19.7%.
- 3.89 As of July 2013 there were 26 Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpersons pitches on 2 authorised sites in the District. The total number of caravans in the District was 106, of which 78 were located on authorised sites and 28 on unauthorised sites. All caravans on the unauthorised sites were situated on land owned by Gypsies. Of the 78 caravans on authorised sites, 40 were private while the remaining 38 caravans were socially rented. The total number of caravans in Braintree District represents 10% of the total amount within the County and less than 1% of those within England. Evidence shows that 40 additional pitches are needed in the District by 2033.¹⁶

Forthcoming evidence

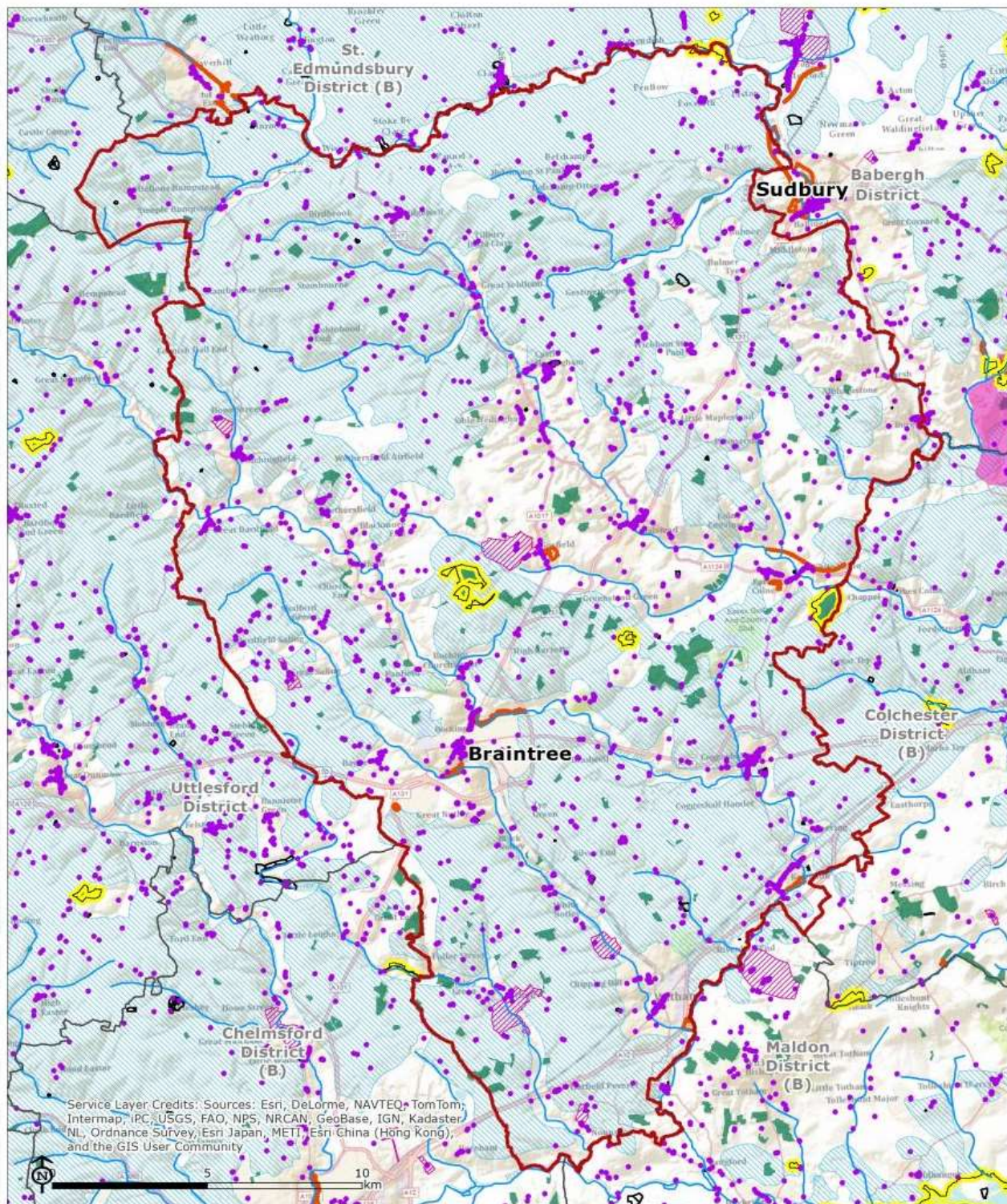
- 3.90 The Council is drafting a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment which is expected to be available after May 2015.

¹⁶ Essex Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment on behalf of Essex Planning Officers Association, Opinion Research Services for Essex County Council, July 2014

Transport

- 3.91 Accessibility by public transport or walking to key services and educational facilities is improved considerably within and in close proximity to the three main towns of Braintree, Halstead and Witham. Just over half of residents live in these three main urban areas, leaving a substantial proportion living in rural areas where the private car is often the main means of transport. As such the private car is the most common means of getting to work and levels of private vehicle ownership are high.
- 3.92 Public transport networks in the towns are adequate during the day on weekdays but during the evening and in rural areas, the availability of public transport can be limited. This can make it difficult for those without access to a car to access key services and facilities, including the less well-off and the District's growing elderly population. Cycle networks are fragmented and mainly available in Witham and Braintree towns.
- 3.93 More than 80% of the population of Braintree District lives within 30 minutes travel time by public transport or walking to of each of five key services: primary school, secondary school, employment site, retail centre, GP surgery. The proportion of residents living within 15 minutes travel time of these services is primary school 79%, GP surgery 64%, retail centre 62%, employment site 59%, secondary school 41%.
- 3.94 The proportion of residents of Braintree District who work mainly at or from home is higher than the regional and national figures.
- 3.95 The major road routes in the District are the A120 and A12. Rail services between Braintree town and London are infrequent, being constrained by its location on a single track branch line.
- 3.96 Stansted Airport is located within Uttlesford District but it is a major employer of Braintree District residents and it is therefore a major cause of out-commuting, with potential negative effects on road congestion and road traffic-related air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. The airport plans to address these issues by improving the attractiveness of public transport to the airport for both staff and passengers, for example offering discounted travel opportunities and working with bus, coach and rail operators to provide scheduled services that match working patterns where possible¹⁷.

¹⁷ Draft Sustainable Development Plan – Environment, August 2014



- | | |
|--|--|
| Braintree district boundary | Local Nature Reserve |
| • Listed building | Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty |
| — River | Ancient woodland |
| Sites of Special Scientific Interest | Agricultural Land Classification |
| Registered Park and Garden | Grade 2 (very good quality) |
| Scheduled Monument | |

Braintree District SA

Figure 1: Environmental Assets & Constraints

Source: English Heritage, Natural England

LUC

CB:VG EB:Goosen V LUC:ON Fig 1 EnvironmentalAssets Constraints 22/09/2014 **Map Scale @ A4: 1:180,000**
 © Natural England copyright 2014. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2014
 Contains, or is based upon, English Heritage's National Heritage List for England data © English Heritage.

4 Proposed approach to the SA

- 4.1 As described in Chapter 1, the SA work will incorporate the requirements of the SEA Regulations. The approach to carrying out the SA for the Braintree District Local Plan will be based on current best practice and Government SA/SEA guidance¹⁸.
- 4.2 The SA will be undertaken in close collaboration with the Braintree District Council officers responsible for drafting the Local Plan in order to fully integrate the SA process with the production of the Plan.
- 4.3 The SEA Regulations set out consultation requirements at the SA Scoping stage.

Part 3 of the SEA Regulations 12(5) states that:

"when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies."

- 4.4 The 'scope' includes the range of SA objectives that will be used to assess the effects of the Local Plan and the approach to that will be taken to the appraisal of 'reasonable alternatives' (see below). The 'detail' includes the assumptions that will be made in assessing the Plan against each of the SA objectives. All of this information is contained within the SA Scoping Report which will be subject to consultation with the statutory environmental bodies.

Overarching approach to the assessment

- 4.5 Our SA work on the Local Plan will be mindful of the sustainability issues facing the District, such as those set out in Chapter 3, and of the need to weigh up potentially opposing sustainability effects that are often associated with development. For example, whilst there may be environmental disadvantages associated with some aspects of proposed housing and economic development, it is important to strike a balance with the likely social and economic advantages of, for example, addressing deprivation and housing need. Another area where such tensions often need to be considered is in weighing up the need to seek support from developers for infrastructure and affordable housing against the need to ensure that delivery of housing is not threatened by the level of obligations placed on developers.

Reasonable alternatives

- 4.6 In relation to the overarching approach to the assessment, the SEA Regulations require the following.

Part 3 of the SEA Regulations 12(2) require that:

"The report shall identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of:

(a) Implementing the plan or programme; and

(b) Reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the Plan or Programme."

Schedule 2 (h) of the SEA Regulations requires that the Environmental Report includes a description of:

"(h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with"

¹⁸ Contained within the National Planning Practice Guidance website (<http://bit.ly/1zsrfEo>).

- 4.7 Therefore, the SA must appraise not only the policies or site allocations preferred by the Local Plan but “reasonable alternatives” to those policies and allocations. This implies that alternatives that are not reasonable do not need to be subject to appraisal. There is no requirement in the SEA Regulations for all possible reasonable alternatives to be subject to appraisal. Part (b) of Regulation 12(2) above notes that reasonable alternatives will take into account the objectives of the plan, as well as its geographical scope. Therefore, alternatives that do not meet the objectives of the Local Plan or national policy, or are outside the Plan area are unlikely to be reasonable.
- 4.8 The objectives, policies and site allocations of the Local Plan and reasonable alternatives are still being defined. The Council’s reasons for selecting the alternatives to be included in the Draft Plan and for preferring particular alternatives for inclusion in the Proposed Submission Plan will be reported at a later stage in the SA process.

Types of effect

- 4.9 For those alternatives deemed reasonable, the SA will set out their sustainability effects in comparative terms.

The SEA Regulations, Schedule 2(6) require the Environmental Report to consider:

The likely significant effects on the environment, including short, medium and long term effects, permanent and temporary effects, positive and negative effects and secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects, on issues such as (a) biodiversity, (b) population, (c) human health, (d) fauna, (e) flora, (f) soil, (g) water, (h) air, (i) climatic factors, (j) material assets, (k) cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, (l) landscape and (m) the inter-relationship between the issues referred to in sub-paragraphs (a)–(l).

SA framework

- 4.10 The development of a set of SA objectives is a recognised framework within which the likely environmental and other sustainability effects of a plan can be described, analysed and compared. The SA will therefore take an ‘objectives-led’ approach to the assessment i.e. the effects of the policies and allocations within the Local Plan on the baseline will be assessed in relation to a set of sustainability objectives.
- 4.11 A set of SA objectives was presented in the February 2014 SA Report for the Council’s now-withdrawn Pre-submission Site Allocations and Development Management Plan. These were subject to consultation with the statutory consultees at that time and no comments were received on them. They were developed from the review of plans and programmes and an analysis of the baseline information and key sustainability issues.
- 4.12 An up to date review of international and national policy objectives has been carried out, as presented in Chapter 2 and Appendix 1. The baseline information and key sustainability issues identified in the February 2014 SA Report have been reviewed and updated to reflect new evidence that has become available since that date, as set out in Chapter 3. Based on this information, two amendments have been made to the previously defined SA objectives, namely addition of an objective in relation to soil quality and clarification of the wording of the objective in relation to sewerage capacity. This SA framework is set out in Table 4.1 and will form the basis of the SA of the Braintree District Local Plan. Each of the SA objectives is supported by indicative appraisal questions to illustrate the types of consideration that will be relevant when assessing Plan policies (see Appendix 2) and allocations (see Appendix 3). Some additions and amendments to the appraisal questions have been made since the earlier SA work to broaden their scope, for instance in relation to avoiding the sterilisation of mineral reserves.

Table 4.1 SA framework for Braintree District Local Plan

SA objectives
1) Create safe environments which improve quality of life and community cohesion
2) To provide everyone with the opportunity to live in a decent home
3) To improve the health of the Districts' residents and mitigate/reduce potential health inequalities
4) To promote the vitality and viability of all service centres throughout the District
5) To achieve sustainable levels of prosperity and economic growth
6) To conserve and enhance the biological and geological diversity of the environment
7) To promote more sustainable transport choices and uptake
8) Promote accessibility and ensure the necessary transport infrastructure to support new development
9) To improve the education and skills of the population
10) To maintain and enhance cultural heritage and assets within the District
11) To reduce contributions to climate change
12) To improve water quality and address water scarcity and sewerage capacity
13) To reduce the risk of flooding
14) To improve air quality
15) To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes and townscapes
16) To safeguard and enhance the quality of soil

Form of assessment and use of SA matrices

- 4.13 Each policy and site allocation option in the Local Plan will be assessed and a judgement made as to the likely effect of the option on the baseline in relation to the SA objectives. At the Issues and Scoping stage, the Local Plan consultation document focuses on presenting issues to the public and gathering any ideas they might have on how these might be addressed. As discussed in Chapter 5, it does not yet present genuine alternative policy approaches to addressing the identified issues and the SA at this stage is therefore limited to a high level commentary.
- 4.14 At subsequent stages, the Local Plan is likely to describe detailed options and their reasonable alternatives. At these later stages, the findings of the SA will be presented in SA matrices, which will include a colour coded score for the alternatives against each of the 15 SA objectives, along with a concise justification for the score given. The detailed SA matrices will be presented as an appendix to the full SA report.
- 4.15 The SA scores will differentiate between significant effects and other more minor effects through the use of colour coded symbols, as shown in the key below. Mixed effects will be recorded for an SA objective where there is potential for positive effects in relation to one aspect of the objective but potential for negative effects in relation to another. Temporary effects will be denoted by the letter 'T' in brackets after the score.

Key to sustainability scores to be used in the SA of the Local Plan

++	Significant positive effect likely
+	Minor positive effect likely
0	No or negligible effect likely
-	Minor negative effect likely
--	Significant negative effect likely
+/-	Mixed effect likely
?	Likely effect uncertain
(T)	Temporary effect

- 4.16 The dividing line between sustainability scores is often quite small. Where we distinguish significant effects from more minor effects this is because, in our judgement, the effect of the allocation or policy on the SA objective will be of such magnitude that it will have a noticeable and measurable effect compared with other factors that may influence the achievement of that objective.

Approach to the SA of site allocations

- 4.17 The approach described above applies to the SA of all aspects of the Local Plan. The Local Plan is likely to contain large numbers of site allocation options and a more detailed approach is described below for the SA of these. By setting out clear assumptions to be applied in arriving at SA scores for sites, this approach is intended to ensure that the assessed effects are objective, transparent, consistent between sites and assessors, and able to be arrived at efficiently.

Context

- 4.18 Braintree District Council has identified a large number of site options that are being considered for the Local Plan through its site assessment process – initial estimates suggest that there may be in the region of 300 site options to be subject to SA for various land uses. A large proportion of these sites were previously proposed during the development of the Council's Site Allocation and Development Plan and the Council does not intend to re-assess sites for which a decision on whether to allocate it has previously been made as part of the earlier plan-making process. Where these previously proposed sites represented reasonable alternatives, they have already been subject to SA, as reported in the February 2014 SA Report accompanying consultation on the Pre-submission Site Allocation and Development Plan and earlier versions of that Plan.
- 4.19 The SEA Regulations state that the assessment is concerned with likely significant effects on the environment. They further state that the information to be included in the environmental report should take account of the stage of the plan in the decision-making process and the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process. This is in order to avoid duplication of the assessment and information may therefore be provided by reference to relevant information obtained at other levels of decision-making. In addition, national Planning Practice Guidance on the level of detail required in an SA states that the SA *"should focus on the environmental, economic and social impacts that are likely to be significant. It does not need to be done in any more detail, or using more resources, than is considered to be appropriate for the content and level of detail in the Local Plan."*
- 4.20 As a guide to what effects may be considered significant, LUC has made reference to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) guidance. Although EIA is a separate process to SA/SEA

with different regulatory requirements, the screening stage of EIA is nonetheless concerned with whether a proposed project is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. This is recognised in Regulation 5(2) of the SEA Regulations which requires SEA of certain types of plan or programme which "*set[s] the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annex I or II to Council Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of certain public and private projects on the environment, as amended by Council Directive 97/11/EC(a)*" (i.e. the EIA Directive).

- 4.21 Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations sets out 'exclusion thresholds' below which EIA does not need to be considered, provided that the proposed development is not in a 'sensitive area' (see definition below). Further guidance is provided by national Planning Policy Guidance, comprising indicative thresholds and criteria to help local authorities determine whether significant effects are likely from a proposed development and hence whether EIA will be required. LUC proposes to refer to these indicative thresholds and criteria to assist in judgements about the potential for site allocations to have significant effects.
- 4.22 Taking all of the above into account, LUC proposes an approach to the SA which is designed to meet the requirements of the SEA Regulations, focus on those effects which are likely to be significant, and draw on previously completed SA work to avoid duplication of assessment. The key features of this approach are described below.

Reference to relevant information already obtained

- 4.23 Although the Council is no longer taking forward its Site Allocation and Development Plan, that Plan reached an advanced stage of preparation in 2014, and was published for consultation at Draft Plan and Proposed-submission stages in January 2013 and February 2014 respectively. Each of these stages was accompanied by an SA Report.
- 4.24 The earlier SA work on baseline environmental conditions, sustainability issues facing Braintree District and the framework of sustainability objectives against which the effects of the Braintree District Local Plan were assessed have been reviewed and remain valid. They will therefore continue to form the basis for the SA of the new Local Plan.
- 4.25 Where the Local Plan is now considering sites which have already been assessed during the SA Site Allocation and Development Plan, the results of that earlier SA will also be carried forward into the SA Report for the new Local Plan. In placing reliance on this earlier work we will ensure that site boundaries have not altered and any representations on the February 2014 SA of the Pre-submission Site Allocation and Development Management Plan have been taken into account.

Focus on effects that are likely to be significant

- 4.26 In order to focus the resources available to carry out the SA on those effects that are likely to be significant, the SA will apply a tiered approach to appraisal of those allocated sites and their reasonable alternatives which have not already been appraised by the earlier SA. Sites will first be subject to a high level, screening assessment to determine whether they are individually capable of having significant effects. If the potential for significant effects exist then the site will be subject to detailed assessment; the remaining sites will not be subject to further individual assessment, although a separate assessment of cumulative effects will be carried out (see paragraph 4.41 below). Screening out of individual allocations from the SA does not imply that they will not have any sustainability effects but rather that such effects are not significant in the context of the content and level of detail in the Local Plan; minor effects that may arise from development at these sites are more appropriately considered through the development consent process.

High level screening assessment of sites

- 4.27 An initial, high level assessment will be used to determine whether sites are individually capable of having significant effects. All sites exceeding certain criteria and thresholds will be deemed to have the potential for significant effects and will automatically be flagged for detailed assessment. The SA will use the indicative thresholds and criteria for determining significant effects that are set out in EIA guidance, as referred to above. The main EIA thresholds likely to be of relevance

to the types of allocation made by the Braintree District Local Plan are the two categories of 'Infrastructure Projects' reproduced in Table 4.2. Exceedance of one of the exclusion thresholds will not be taken to imply that the proposed development will have significant effects but rather that more detailed assessment is necessary to determine whether such effects are likely.

Table 4.2 EIA thresholds indicating the potential for significant effects

Development type	EIA Regulations Schedule 2 criteria and thresholds	Indicative criteria and thresholds in national Planning Policy Guidance on EIA
(a) Industrial estate development projects;	The area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectare.	Site area of the new development is more than 20 hectares.
(b) Urban development projects, including the construction of shopping centres and car parks, sports stadiums, leisure centres and multiplex cinemas;	The area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectare.	<p>Environmental Impact Assessment is unlikely to be required for the redevelopment of land unless the new development is on a significantly greater scale than the previous use, or the types of impact are of a markedly different nature or there is a high level of contamination.</p> <p>Sites which have not previously been intensively developed:</p> <p>(i) area of the scheme is more than 5 hectares; or</p> <p>(ii) it would provide a total of more than 10,000 m² of new commercial floorspace; or</p> <p>(iii) the development would have significant urbanising effects in a previously non-urbanised area (e.g. a new development of more than 1,000 dwellings).</p>

4.28 National Planning Practice Guidance on use of the indicative criteria and thresholds in Table 4.2 states that in judging the potential for a proposed development to have a significant effect consideration should also be given to whether it is in a 'sensitive area'. The guidance on EIA Screening defines sensitive areas as:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest and European sites.
- National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- World Heritage Sites and scheduled monuments.

4.29 The EIA guidance goes on to say that other local designations which are nonetheless environmentally sensitive, may also be relevant in determining whether EIA is required. In considering the sensitivity of a particular location, regard should also be had to whether any national or internationally agreed environmental standards (e.g. air quality) are already being approached or exceeded.

4.30 Taking this EIA guidance on the potential for significant effects as a reference point, the criteria in

- 4.31 Table 4.3 will be used by the SA to indicate whether an allocated site is in a sensitive area and should therefore be flagged for detailed assessment. It should be noted that these criteria are additional to the site size/scale of development-based criteria and thresholds in Table 4.2, providing an additional check for smaller scale proposals. We have included all of the 'sensitive area' criteria listed in EIA guidance. Many of the environmental receptors which will be considered for the types of larger development set out in Table 4.2 have been excluded. This is on the basis that that effect of smaller development would not be significant on the asset/receptor as a whole (for example the effect of small scale development in relation to loss of high quality agricultural land or sterilisation of mineral reserves). We have, however, included certain other environmental receptors which, in our judgement, are sensitive in a local context and where even small development sites may be capable of effects that are significant.

Table 4.3 'Sensitive area' criteria indicating the potential for significant effects

Type of 'sensitive area'	Criteria indicating potential for significant effects	Justification for criteria
Sites of Special Scientific Interest and European sites	Any part of allocation falls within a SSSI or European site, or Allocation falls within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the relevant type of development.	EIA screening guidance. Impact Risk Zones have been developed by Natural England as an initial assessment of the potential impacts of development proposals on SSSIs. They define zones around each SSSI according to the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified and specify the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts. They therefore provide a more nuanced approach to screening than the EIA guidance. Since all European sites in England are also designated as SSSIs, these Impact Risk Zones will also be used to flag the potential for adverse impacts on European sites from development beyond their boundaries.
Other biodiversity assets	Any part of allocation falls within a locally designated wildlife site (Local Wildlife Site, Local Nature Reserve), or area of Ancient Woodland.	Stipulation in EIA guidance that other local designations which are environmentally sensitive may also be relevant.
National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty	Any part of allocation falls within a National Park, the Broads or an AONB.	EIA screening guidance. The area of search for the proposed extension of Dedham Vale AONB will be treated as an existing AONB for the purposes of this test.
World Heritage Sites and scheduled monuments	Any part of allocation falls within a World Heritage Site or scheduled monument.	EIA screening guidance.
Flood zone	Any part of allocation falls within Flood Zone 3a or 3b or any Critical Drainage Areas identified by a future Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP).	The importance of potential risk to life or property warrants inclusion of smaller scale sites/developments in detailed assessment.
Other heritage assets	Any of allocation falls within a Registered Park and Garden or Conservation Area or a listed building falls within the allocation.	Stipulation in EIA guidance that other local designations which are environmentally sensitive may also be relevant.

Overarching approach and assumptions for SA of site allocations

Having identified sites with the potential for significant effects by reference to the site size criteria in Table 4.2 and the 'sensitive area' criteria in

- 4.32 Table 4.3, we will then assess their sustainability effects, taking into account factors such as the nature of nearby features, pathways between sources of effects and receptors and the vulnerability of receptors to effects. We will use a Geographic Information System (GIS) to undertake the assessment of sites. Appendix 3 sets out the detailed assumptions that will be made in assessing the sustainability effects of the reasonable alternative site options for housing and for employment that have the potential for significant effects. The assumptions generally relate to the proximity of the site to relevant receptors such as designated biodiversity sites. Further assumptions may be developed during the SA process in relation to other land uses.
- 4.33 The detailed assumptions in Appendix 3 are based on those developed by Place Services for the SA of Braintree District's now-withdrawn Site Allocations and Development Management Plan. The detailed assumptions and the sustainability objectives and key criteria to which they relate from the earlier SA work have already been subject to stakeholder consultation and found to be fit for purpose. They also take account of the particular spatial data sets that are available for the District. As previously described, LUC has reviewed the SA objectives and made two amendments. We have also made some modifications to the key criteria and assumptions developed by Place Services for SA of site allocations for the following reasons:
- To amend the significance of effects attributed to certain criteria where LUC's professional judgement differs from that of Place Services. This has resulted in more criteria giving rise to significant rather than minor effects compared to the assessment framework devised by Place Services.
 - To reduce the total number of criteria used to assess effects in relation to the SA objectives, particularly criteria that will not result in a significant or uncertain but potentially significant effect in any circumstances. This helps to ensure that significant effects are not lost amongst large numbers of insignificant effects and that the resources required to carry out the SA are appropriate for the content and level of detail in the Local Plan.
 - Where the evidence / data used by Place Services to inform the test are not available to the Council.
- 4.34 The larger an individual new housing allocation is, the less likely that it can be accommodated within the boundary of an existing settlement where it is likely to be closer to existing services and facilities. In general, we have not made any assumptions about new services and facilities that will be required as part of large new housing developments, with the following exceptions¹⁹:
- Allocated housing sites with a capacity of at least 700 new houses or 1,000 units (mixture of flats and houses) are assumed to incorporate a new primary school and a bus stop with at least one bus per day, seven days per week.
 - Allocated housing sites with a capacity of at least 3,000 new houses or 4,000 units (mixture of flats and houses) are assumed to incorporate at least one new primary school, a new secondary school, a bus stop with at least one bus per hour, seven days per week, plus an appropriate level of community facilities.
- 4.35 Notwithstanding the changes made to the site assessment criteria, they remain broadly the same as those used for previous SA of the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan, allowing for a degree of consistency with the site appraisals carried forward from that work.
- 4.36 In appraising the effects of potential site allocations, each site will be assessed on its own merits. This will facilitate comparison of the positive and negative effects likely to be associated with each site, thereby assisting the Council in considering sustainability as part of the site selection process. The potential for the sustainability effects of sites to be modified by other policies in the Local Plan will not form part of the assessment of individual sites but rather be considered through an assessment of cumulative effects (see below).
- 4.37 We have assumed that most of the land area of each allocated site is likely to be developed, giving limited scope to avoid constraints. Accordingly, we have assumed that where 25%

¹⁹ Based on conversation between Braintree District Council and Essex County Council dated 7th November 2014, in relation to developer contributions.

(typically) or more of an allocated site overlies a constraint, a significant effect is likely to occur. Uncertainty exists as to whether significant adverse effects can be avoided by layout of development within the site boundary and this is reflected in the detailed site assessment criteria.

- 4.38 Many of the detailed appraisal assumptions are proximity based and consider whether an allocated site is within 'walking distance' of various services, facilities and environmental features. Various pieces of research provide a variety of recommended guidance distances for walking. For example, the Institute of Highways and Transportation categorises distances depending upon location and purpose of the trip, and 'desirable', 'acceptable', and 'preferred maximum' as set out in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Institute of Highways and Transport recommended walking distances

	Town centres (m)	Commuting/School/Sight-seeing (m)	Elsewhere (m)
Desirable	200	500	400
Acceptable	400	1,000	800
Preferred maximum	800	2,000	1,200

- 4.39 For the purposes of the appraisal, a standard straight line 'walking distance' of 800 m will be assumed, unless otherwise stated. Professional judgement has been used to vary this standard distance in relation to certain services and facilities. For example, the standard distance of 800 m has been used for railway stations but a shorter distance of 400 m has been used for bus stops, reflecting the fact that individuals are likely to be prepared to walk greater distances to larger scale facilities. Increasing cycling is also an important sustainability objective for the District and positive sustainability scores relating to development allocations being within convenient walking distance of services and facilities also reflect the fact that such allocations are also likely to increase the proportion of trips made by bike.
- 4.40 The SA assumptions include analysis of the proximity of residential areas to main employment areas. Major employment opportunities will be located throughout the District, not only in the areas allocated for employment, but also in the Town Centres, retail parks, hospitals, and in small scale premises around the towns as well as large scale businesses concentrated at the employment areas. Although there is no guarantee that people will find jobs at the employment areas closest to them, it is considered that provision of homes close to major sources of employment would support people in making shorter journeys to work.

Assessing cumulative effects of site allocations

- 4.41 All of the methodological steps above aim to assess each site allocation on its own merits. Once the Local Plan development reaches a stage where preferred sites are identified, the cumulative effects of all allocated sites at each settlement in the settlement hierarchy will also be assessed. This will involve considering the total amount of land and/or development capacity allocated for each type of development and the potential for that development as a whole to have significant effects on baseline social, economic and environmental conditions in that locality, in relation to the SA objectives. Consideration will also be given to the SA scores assigned to each individual site in that locality through the detailed site assessment process described above.
- 4.42 The cumulative effects assessment will also consider the extent to which the effects identified are likely to be mitigated by strategic or development management policies set out elsewhere in the Local Plan, by national planning policy, or by other regulatory mechanisms.
- 4.43 Cumulative effects of site allocations on the Plan area as a whole (as opposed to individual settlements) will not be considered within the SA of site allocations but through the SA of the strategic policies that prescribe the total amount of development of each type to be provided. This will also take into account the potential cumulative effects of development with existing or

planned development in neighbouring authorities, particularly where settlements adjoin Braintree District (e.g. Haverhill and Sudbury).

5 Sustainability commentary on Braintree District Local Plan Issues and Scoping Document

- 5.1 The Issues and Scoping document primarily serves to present issues to the public and gather any ideas they might have on how these might be addressed, rather than presenting substantive policy options. Given the nature of the consultation document we believe that a meaningful SA of it is not possible at this point. The appraisal process of the policies and site allocations proposed by the Braintree District Local Plan and their reasonable alternatives, as described in Chapter 4, will therefore commence during the Draft Plan stage and include a full appraisal of reasonable alternative sites allocations and policies being considered by the Council, as well as their preferred options. At this early stage of the plan-making process we have, instead, provided a high level commentary for each topic area covered by the Issues and Scoping document. These commentaries, which are set out below, discuss the types of sustainability issues that should be taken into account when drafting policy options in each topic area and provide a point of reference for consultees commenting on the Issues and Scoping document but do not attempt to appraise any of the 'options' put forward by the consultation document at this stage.

A prosperous District

A strong economy

- 5.2 The baseline information shows that the population of Braintree District is forecast to grow significantly over the Plan period. Policies to attract new businesses and jobs to the District should help to meet the employment needs of these new residents, with economic and well-being benefits for those employed and for the wider local economy. This may also help to reduce deprivation in some communities where there are barriers to accessing jobs and training.
- 5.3 In order to attract new businesses and to meet the needs of existing businesses that wish to expand, the Local Plan's economic policies will need to ensure that there is enough employment land. The amount to be provided will be informed by a future Employment Land Needs Assessment. Equally, economic policies could lead to the over-provision of employment land. Allocating too much employment land may reduce the amount of land available for housing development needed to accommodate the forecast population growth during the Plan period, with negative effects on meeting housing need. Other negative effects of over-provision may arise in relation to urban sprawl.
- 5.4 In considering the location for new employment development, the Local Plan should consider the needs of the types of business it is seeking to attract to secure positive economic effects, whilst balancing these against potential negative environmental or social effects. For example ensuring that sites for warehousing and logistics are close to the trunk road network and rail services will enhance their attractiveness to business (with positive economic effects) and help to limit additional pressure on local road congestion (with positive effects for the economy, air quality, climate change mitigation and health). Employment sites for businesses with a large workforce, such as large service companies (the service sector is the District's largest employer), will need to be close to the main centres of population and public transport hubs to make it easier to attract employees (with positive social and economic effects) and to reduce commuting by unsustainable modes (with positive effects for air quality, climate change mitigation and health).
- 5.5 Factories and warehouses make up the majority of industrial and commercial floor space in Braintree District. Locational policies for this form of employment development will need to

consider its potential negative effects on the amenity of nearby residential areas, for example due to noise, air pollution, increased traffic congestion, as well as potential negative effects to the architectural character or heritage assets of settlements.

- 5.6 Another locational consideration is whether to disperse employment sites widely across the District or to consolidate employment across fewer sites. The Local Plan consultation document and the Braintree District Economic Development Prospectus 2013-2026 highlight significant infrastructure constraints to economic development. A policy of concentration could improve the financial viability of new infrastructure provision, such as high speed broadband, with positive economic effects.
- 5.7 Flood risk considerations are described under the 'Climate change and renewable energy' policy topic area below.
- 5.8 Local Plan policies could also seek high density development on employment sites and prefer previously developed land to greenfield sites. This could have positive effects in relation to the efficient use of land. It could also limit potential negative effects on the countryside such as in relation to the landscape, wildlife or the setting of heritage assets. This would help to safeguard designated wildlife sites across Braintree District.
- 5.9 Economic policies might also ensure that, where appropriate, there is targeted growth in rural communities. This could help improve their prosperity by enhancing access to jobs and also support the use of sustainable transport modes by rural residents. Policies for rural economic development could also support the tourism sector by helping to provide for the needs of visitors to the District's natural and cultural assets. This would need to be managed carefully to avoid potentially negative effects on heritage sites and local character.
- 5.10 Local Plan policies in relation to a 'Strong Economy' may also address the needs of business for different types of business premises and the potential conversion of one use to another. For example, the Local Plan consultation document identifies increasing requirements for homeworking which may lead to policies that support development of live-work units. As well as positive effects on the economy, this might reduce travel times and car usage, which is particularly high amongst households in Braintree District. This could lead to a reduction in traffic flows at busy junctions, town and village centres and in doing so, reduce travel times, improve local air quality, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Potential Local Plan policies to release derelict or unneeded employment sites for other uses, such as residential development, could have positive effects in relation to the efficient use of land, provision for the new use (e.g. housing), settlement vibrancy, and enhancement of landscape/townscape. In order to avoid potential negative economic effects, such policies would need to be carefully worded to ensure that careful consideration is given to whether a site might still help to meet the need for employment land, perhaps by other regeneration initiatives such as infrastructure provision.
- 5.11 Local plan policies which seek to ensure that educational facilities are provided and protected should have positive effects in relation to education and to the local economy. This might help to ensure quality educational premises and environments are available which in turn could indirectly help to support an increase in the proportion of the population with 5 A*-C grades, which at present, is the lowest in the County and the percentage of the population with qualifications at level 2 and above, which is also lower than average. Having a well-educated population would provide a positive effect for the economy, by attracting future businesses and ensuring that there is an adequate supply of suitable labour force.
- 5.12 A potential indirect positive effect of securing educational facilities is that they could provide opportunities for young people to engage in extra-curricular activities, with potential positive effects in relation to education, well-being and crime reduction. It might also provide opportunities for people to engage in sports and recreational activities in a safe and supervised environment. This would contribute to the positive effects of the health and wellbeing of communities in Braintree District where obesity levels are particularly high and there is a low level of participation in physical activity. With respect to young people, it may also reduce the likelihood of anti-social behaviour and criminal activity.

- 5.13 Policies which seek to avoid development which sterilises potential mineral resources could have positive economic effects in relation to agriculture and construction respectively.

Shops and services

- 5.14 The population of Braintree District is forecast to grow significantly over the Plan period. Having policies that support retail and other town centre uses (e.g. restaurants, leisure uses, cultural uses) will help to ensure that the needs of the growing population are met.
- 5.15 In terms of location, concentrating retail and other town centre uses in town and village centres should help to ensure that unnecessary travel to access these services is reduced. This should have positive effects on traffic congestion and on traffic-related emissions of air pollution and greenhouse gases. This might be based on the settlement hierarchy with the uses likely to experience greatest demand directed to main town centres whilst ensuring that provision in smaller centres and villages meets smaller scale local need.
- 5.16 Support for retail and other town centres uses would result in positive economic and employment effects by retaining spending within the District's economy rather than in competing centres in neighbouring districts. It might also provide opportunities to increase tourism and support the development of associated infrastructure such as hotels. This could increase diversification in the economy and boost the supply of jobs to serve the predicted population growth over the plan period.
- 5.17 An appropriate balance of uses will need to be sought so that, for example, demand for facilities by businesses in the tourist sector does not hinder the availability of space and facilities available for local community and cultural facilities, which could have negative effects on local communities and the vibrancy of centres.
- 5.18 Enhanced town centres could also increase traffic flows and congestion. Potential negative effects include a loss of character, reduced access to services and facilities, and air pollution, all of which could reduce the attractiveness of town centres relative to out of town or out of District alternatives. Loss of retail customers could then negatively affect businesses and the economy. Therefore, policies designed to boost the attractiveness of town centres, will need to be implemented alongside transport and infrastructure improvements. This might be informed by the East of England Forecasting Model, Employment land and economic strategy, and Employment Land Needs Assessment or their updated versions.
- 5.19 Town centre policies may identify key areas for regeneration. This might encourage the creation of new facilities and refurbishment of existing ones. It could also lead to the provision or restoration of social spaces, lighting and seating. These improvements could have positive effects on settlement character and vibrancy. It might also create opportunities for social interaction and reduce social exclusion. Other benefits might include an increase in passive surveillance which can prevent anti-social behaviour and levels of crime.
- 5.20 The regeneration of town centres might also lead to mixed development which includes the provision of live-work spaces. This could benefit the high proportion of people who work from home, by providing them with more opportunity to access suitable accommodation from which they can conduct their business. Mixed developments could also include the provision of community facilities, with potential positive effects on ensuring that communities have access to community facilities, jobs and training opportunities. It could also produce positive effects of the type described above by reducing unnecessary travel.
- 5.21 Potential undesirable effects of supporting growth in certain town centre uses such as pubs, restaurants and other licensed premises include increased noise, anti-social behaviour and crime suffered by people living within the town centre.
- 5.22 Concentrating provision of retail and other town centre uses in the District's main centres will also help to avoid pressure for greenfield development and the accompanying potential for negative effects on landscape, wildlife or loss of high quality agricultural land. Regeneration of brownfield sites for town centre uses could have positive effects in relation to the efficient use of land and provide opportunities to remediate contaminated land, with potential positive effects on air quality

and water quality. It could also have positive effects on the landscape, townscape and settlement vibrancy.

Homes

- 5.23 The baseline information shows that the population of Braintree District is forecast to grow significantly over the plan period, average household size is set to decline and there will be a substantial need for additional housing over the Plan period. Therefore, policy which significantly boosts the supply of housing will have direct positive effects on meeting the accommodation needs of local people as well as indirect ones in terms of residents' health and wellbeing. In order to secure these benefits, Local Plan policies will also need to ensure that the mix of sizes and tenures of new housing matches identified need and that the predicted increase in the number of older people is catered for through appropriately designed new housing and specialist care accommodation, as well as conversions to the existing housing stock. Potential negative effects are strongly dependent on the location and design of new housing, as described below. Housing growth can also provide positive effects in relation to the economy by ensuring that businesses can attract local labour and that there is a continued supply of training and job opportunities in the construction sector. This may help to reduce deprivation in some communities where there are barriers to accessing jobs and training.
- 5.24 Baseline information identifies housing affordability issues in the District and identifies a need for delivery of affordable housing. Local Plan policies that address this need would have positive effects in relation to meeting the accommodation needs of local people as well as indirect ones in terms of residents' health and wellbeing and a reduction in the number of households experiencing deprivation in relation to housing. By drawing on the forthcoming Affordable Housing Viability Study, policies should be able to avoid potential negative effects in relation to deterring housing development in general by placing excessive demands on them to provide affordable housing and contribute to essential infrastructure.
- 5.25 Policies that provide for specialist accommodation needs, such as those of older people and the social rented sector, will also need to consider whether to cluster these together (potential positive effects in relation to securing economies of scale and in ensuring the viability of services and facilities that cater for this group) or to distribute them through the wider community (potential positive effects in relation to social integration).
- 5.26 There is a need for 40 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches in the District by 2033. Local Plan policies that address this need would have positive effects in relation to meeting the accommodation needs of local people as well as indirect ones in terms of residents' health and wellbeing and a reduction in the number of households experiencing deprivation in relation to housing. Local Plan policy could also set out criteria to address the location of Gypsy and Traveller sites so that they are in close proximity to services. Providing that this policy adheres to national policy guidance and the findings of the Essex GTAA, it could ensure that these communities enjoy the same benefits as settled communities in relation to employment, transport and climate change mitigation, while also providing opportunities for greater interaction and thereby supporting positive effects in relation to social cohesion. Furthermore, positive planning for the location and design of these sites could result in a reduction in the use of unauthorised sites and contribute positive effects in relation to crime. It might also have positive effects in relation to a number of and associated impacts upon the landscape, heritage, water quality and water efficiency.
- 5.27 Policies setting out the spatial strategy for housing growth may choose to provide most new housing within or adjacent to existing settlements. This could have positive effects in relation to new residents' access to local services and their integration within existing communities. It is also likely to help ensure that new housing development is in close proximity to public transport networks. Both of these factors would be likely to help to reduce unnecessary travel and make it easier for residents to choose sustainable transport modes. This would have positive effects in relation to the economy, transport congestion, traffic-related emissions of air pollution and greenhouse gases, and greater take up of cycling and walking which could contribute positively to health and wellbeing and support efforts to reduce obesity levels within the District. The Council's planned infrastructure study, in tandem with evidence on demographic change and housing need

should help to ensure that these benefits can be secured through integrated planning. To the extent that housing at existing main settlements can be accommodated on brownfield land, this type of spatial strategy would also offer potential positive effects in relation to efficient use of land and a reduced risk of negative effects on the landscape and biodiversity.

- 5.28 Conversely, additional development within existing settlements may lead to increase pressure upon community services; this could result in negative effects in relation to health and wellbeing and continuation of deprivation amongst households who face barriers to accessing services. Furthermore the expansion of existing settlements may also lead to increased pressure to expand the capacity of road networks. This could lead to negative effects upon air quality particularly on the A12 at Hatfield Peverel, and other parts of the road network such as at Rivenhall and Bradwell on the A120 where NO₂ exceeds target levels. It will therefore be important to ensure that the Local Plan makes provision for appropriate infrastructure and service provision at areas identified for significant housing growth.
- 5.29 In relation to rural areas, Local plan policies could set out the location of villages where increased housing development would be permitted, informed by evidence on demographic change (the forthcoming Edge Analytics-Essex population scenarios), housing need (the 2014 Joint SHMA), and the function of and service provision within different settlements across the District. This would help to ensure positive effects in relation to the sustainability and vibrancy of these communities and the continued viability of local service provision, whilst avoiding large scale development away from the main centres with its potential negative effects in relation to sustainable travel patterns, village character, landscape and biodiversity.
- 5.30 Flood risk considerations are described under the 'Climate change and renewable energy' policy topic area below.
- 5.31 Local Plan policies on housing location could target development of derelict or contaminated land and abandoned buildings. This could have positive effects in relation to the landscape, townscape, reduced pollution, crime reduction and enhanced settlement vibrancy. Policy support to make such 'difficult' sites more attractive to developers would also help to ensure that sufficient land for housing development is made available with the generic positive effects of housing development previously described. Such regeneration policies could also support local economic growth, by increasing the provision of live work units, which could also have positive impacts upon transport and community vibrancy.
- 5.32 Another potential policy option in relation to housing provision would be support for people who wish to build their own homes. This could result in innovative designs, which could contribute to the local character of a particular community or include sustainable construction materials, which improve energy efficiency, control ground water, and limit the potential and impact of flooding to people and properties.
- 5.33 Local Plan policies could set sustainable design standards for new housing. This could deliver positive effects in relation to flooding, energy efficiency/ climate change mitigation, water quality and water resource efficiency. As discussed in relation to affordable housing, such requirements would need to be informed by a viability assessment to avoid potential negative effects on housing delivery.

Transport and infrastructure

- 5.34 Braintree District is substantially rural and outside of the three main towns of Braintree, Halstead the private car is often the primary mode of transport. Public transport services are limited outside of these main towns and cycle networks are fragmented.
- 5.35 The Local Plan is limited in its ability to directly influence transport issues since road networks are under the responsibility of the County Council and Highways Agency and rail networks are the responsibility of Network Rail. Nevertheless, the Local Plan has the potential to deliver positive sustainability outcomes in relation to transport by seeking to direct forms of development with a high demand for transport to locations that are well served by transport networks, by locating homes, jobs and services/facilities close to one another and by supporting development of safe and convenient walking and cycling routes.

- 5.36 In terms of the kinds of policies that could be included, Local Plan Policies could focus on increasing the capacity of the existing transport network. For instance increasing the provision and frequency of local buses within rural areas will help to ensure that residents can travel around the District using sustainable transport, which is particularly important in the evenings when current services are limited. This could help to increase these communities engage in the night time economy within town centres, providing positive effects in relation to social cohesion and economic development.
- 5.37 Local Plan policies might safeguard land for new transport infrastructure to be provided by other bodies, for example developments such as a Braintree rail loop to allow more frequent train services to the town. This would help increase the choice of available transport reduce road congestion and in doing so provide positive effects in relation to transport. It might also boost the attractiveness of Braintree Town centre enabling to better compete for business and investment with other town centres. There might also be positive effects in relation to the environment (climate change mitigation, air quality and biodiversity). However Braintree District has a significant number of conservation areas, listed building and other heritage assets and there these policies could negatively change the setting of these within towns and villages.
- 5.38 However, the expansion and provision of services will need to be made on a robust evidence base of need, which could be informed by the forthcoming Infrastructure study.
- 5.39 Statistics show that Braintree District has a higher than average obesity level and that there is a lower than average participation in physical activity. Local plan policies could help to improve the health outcomes of Braintree District residents by supporting the development of the cycleway network. Local plan policies might also include measures to address the fragmentation and condition of existing cycleways in Braintree and Witham. In addition to potential positive effects on health and well-being, this could have positive effects upon transport by reducing congestion and road accidents.
- 5.40 A significant number of District residents work from home and therefore Local Plan policies could provide support for this type of working pattern, for example through provision of live-work units and securing developer contributions to high speed internet infrastructure. This might be particularly important in rural communities, where access to services, education, and training might be limited due to a lack of communications or access to transport. This might help households in some of these communities; overcome barriers to training and employment, which is a major cause of deprivation in the District.
- 5.41 In line with national trends, the population of Braintree District is ageing. Local plan policies could include strategies to address access for an ageing population and individuals with reduced mobility. For instance, policies might include the upgrading of stations and buses for step free access or improvements to pedestrian walkways so that they are more accessible for people who are visually impaired. These kinds of initiatives can result in positive effects upon the landscape and social cohesion as well as improving health and wellbeing of these groups.
- 5.42 Local Plan policies should consider current and future business needs and the types of businesses it is seeking to attract as well as those of major employers of the District's residents that are located outside the District, such as Stansted Airport. This could be informed by the forthcoming Employment Land Needs Assessment study and updated Employment Land and Economic Strategy Review. The service sector is the largest employer within Braintree District and often relies on the availability of high speed broadband and communications infrastructure. Positive effects on employment and the economy are therefore likely from policies which support development of such infrastructure.
- 5.43 Factories and warehouses make up the majority of commercial / retail spaces within the District. These businesses often rely on being close to trunk roads and railway services. Therefore, transport requirements should inform employment land allocation to ensure that they produce positive economic effects, while limiting potential negative effects on the environment in relation to air quality, climate change mitigation, health and transport congestion.
- 5.44 Although not within the remit of the Local Plan, plans for housing and employment development should be accompanied by consideration of transport infrastructure capacity and joint working

with the responsible bodies to avoid negative effects in relation to economic growth, air pollution (particularly at some junctions where the level of NO₂ exceeds targets) and access to services and facilities. Local Plan policies might also include mechanisms to gather developer contributions towards infrastructure required to support development, including new road schemes, schools, community services, sports and leisure facilities and green infrastructure. This will be important in terms of meeting the needs of an increasing population and provide a wide variety of positive effects. This will need to be informed by an updated evidence base, including the forthcoming Infrastructure Study.

Creating better places

Community facilities

- 5.45 The baseline information suggests that the population of Braintree District is expected to grow significantly over the plan period. Policies that are designed to provide protection of community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports facilities, public houses, religious buildings and designated green spaces will help to ensure that there is sufficient social infrastructure to meet the needs of communities.
- 5.46 When considering the location of development, local plan policies could help to ensure that community facilities are fully integrated into new residential development or within easy access to them. This could have positive effects in relation to transport by reducing the number of journeys and road traffic congestion. Other related positive effects of this relate to air quality, greenhouse gas emissions and health. It may also help to reduce deprivation in some communities where there are barriers to accessing housing and services. Locations for provision of community facilities should therefore make reference to the District's settlement hierarchy, public transport network, and the findings of housing evidence reports such as the Joint SHMA and forthcoming SHLAA. It will also be important to ensure that community facilities, especially those serving young people or older people as well as sports and recreation facilities, are in environmentally suitable locations, for example in relation to air quality. This is particularly relevant in known air pollution 'hotspots' on the road network such as at Foxden in Rivenhall, Bradwell on the A120 and at Chipping Hill in Witham where NO₂ exceeds target levels.
- 5.47 Local Plan policies could also help to ensure that rural communities have access to vital community services such as grocery shops, a post office, and where appropriate primary schools and pubs. This would help to ensure that these communities remain places that people want to live and support more sustainable travel patterns. It would also support local economies by ensuring that there is the availability of local business and employment opportunities. Conversely, if not subject to appropriate criteria, policies to support development of community facilities serving rural communities could have a negative effect upon land use and biodiversity as dispersing development could result in large scale out-of-town development in rural areas designed to attract people from beyond the local area.
- 5.48 In terms of the type of development of community facilities to be supported, Local Plan policies could identify communities where there is a need for provision or expansion of commercial services such as local shops, informed by the forthcoming updated Employment Land and Economic Strategy and Employment Land Needs Assessment. The scope of facilities which could be considered as a community facility is quite broad. Local plan Policies might therefore identify services which are deemed important for communities and set out which ones are important to communities based on their size, social make up or location within the District.
- 5.49 Local Plan policies could also include measures, which protect Community Orchards and woodlands such as Chalkney and Bovington Hall Woods, or enhance other elements of green infrastructure networks. This would provide residents and visitors with the chance to enjoy natural greenspace and engage with local wildlife with positive effects for health and wellbeing and provided they are appropriately managed, with limited potential negative effects for local biodiversity.

Creating high quality spaces

- 5.50 It is anticipated that there will need to be significant built development in the form of housing, employment, retail facilities and accompanying infrastructure in order to cope with the expected increase in the population in Braintree District over the plan period. Local Plan policies that encourage good design in this development should have positive effects for townscape and heritage.
- 5.51 In terms of location, baseline data suggests that heritage assets are scattered across the District, with some large clusters of Listed Buildings focused within historic settlements like Finchingfield and Coggeshall, with the majority of conservation areas contained within major towns and villages with historic centres. Local Plan policies could seek to conserve and enhance these assets and also identify undesignated sites and buildings within towns for inclusion in local heritage designations. As well as delivering positive effects in relation to the conservation of heritage assets, this could support efforts to improve the local setting and attractiveness of town centres to tourism, which could aid business growth and employment.
- 5.52 Braintree District does not include any AONBs but an application for westward extension of the Dedham Vale AONB into the District is under consideration by Natural England. Local Plan policies could give consideration to protecting the landscape of the area of search and other areas of high landscape value, for example by avoiding large scale greenfield development and by establishing design guidance so that development proposals in sensitive locations respect local buildings styles, with positive effects for the landscape and townscape. However if too stringent, design restrictions could have a negative effect on development viability or limit the provision of affordable housing. To overcome this risk, these policies will need to be based on evidence regarding landscape sensitivity found within the forthcoming update to the District's Landscape Character Assessment.
- 5.53 Local Plan policies could also support efforts to improve the townscape of undesignated town centres and villages to tourists, including through redevelopment of derelict sites and bringing vacant buildings back into positive use, which could have positive effects on business growth and employment. This could be particularly beneficial in those communities where barriers to training and employment are the main cause of deprivation amongst some households. Local Plan policies could also encourage the appropriate re-use of vacant Listed Buildings for retail and offices and in doing so support investment for their maintenance. This might be of particular benefit for the service sector, which is the largest within Braintree District, yet retail and office space accounts for the lowest proportion of business units in use within the District. As well as positive effects on heritage assets, this could have positive effects in relation to efficient use of land by reducing the need for greenfield development and in relation to the local economy by providing employment space. Such policies would need to be informed by robust evidence which sets out the local supply of and demand for employment space, including the forthcoming Employment Land and Economic Strategy.
- 5.54 Local Plan design policies might be considered, for example to encourage the use of locally sourced, sustainable building materials. This could have positive effects in relation to the cultural heritage settlements by emphasising local building styles and practices. Use of sustainable design, materials and construction methods can also reduce building and maintenance costs, although it may be necessary for the Council to work with partner organisations to secure or publicise grant assistance or tax incentives to encourage uptake of these construction practices. Such policies could result in positive effects in relation to the economy, heritage, townscape and climate change mitigation.
- 5.55 Where appropriate, Local Plan policies could support the provision of community facilities and open space into new development, with positive effects in relation to access to services, health and wellbeing and settlement vibrancy.
- 5.56 Local Plan policies in this topic area could also address the question of development density. Higher density development and its ability to support more compact settlements can have positive sustainability effects in relation to efficient use of land and the related avoidance of negative effects on landscape, biodiversity and high quality agricultural land; the ability to locate housing, employment and community services more closely to each other and to transport hubs with

related positive effects in relation to sustainable travel patterns, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions and avoidance of traffic congestion. However, negative effects may arise from higher density development in relation to reduced daylight/sunlight, inadequate room sizes in dwellings, increased noise levels, insufficient open space provision (both private and communal), and negative effects on townscape or the setting of heritage assets. To reduce the risk of such negative effects, Local Plan policies that seek high density development should also provide design guidance to protect residential amenity and to ensure adequate infrastructure provision alongside development.

A healthy and active District

- 5.57 Statistics show that Braintree District has a higher than national average obesity level and a lower than average participation rate in physical activity. Local Plan policies which seek to retain or enhance sports and recreational facilities are likely to increase opportunities for local residents to engage in physical activity and therefore create direct positive effects in relation to health and wellbeing and a potential indirect positive effect in relation to the economy by helping to ensure that they are fit and healthy to participate in the labour market.
- 5.58 Braintree District is predominately rural and therefore provides opportunities for informal recreation in the open countryside. Local Plan policies in this topic area could help to protect and enhance publicly accessible green spaces in the countryside and facilitate sustainable travel options to them from the main centres of population. This could be informed by the Council's forthcoming Open Space Study.
- 5.59 Local Plan policies could also support access to the District's wildlife sites. Potential positive effects in addition to those described for sport and recreation above include economic benefits of increased visitors and more local training and job opportunities in wildlife management and tourism. Increased access to wildlife sites would need to be carefully managed, for example by Local Plan policies that secure developer contributions for site wardening, to avoid potential negative effects in relation to increased visitor pressure on vulnerable sites.
- 5.60 Where the need for additional or enhanced provision is identified by the forthcoming Open Space Study, Local Plan policies could support the provision or enhancement of publicly accessible open space within or adjacent to settlements with similar positive effects to those described for sport and recreation facilities above. Provision at smaller, rural settlements could help to promote business within certain sectors (e.g. outdoor sports or festivals) and provide a venue for community events. This could provide positive effects for village economies by increasing business for local shops and restaurants in these centres, as well as positive effects in relation to community vibrancy.
- 5.61 Local Plan policies could also support opportunities for people to grow their own food, for example by protecting or creating allotment spaces. Alternatively, Local Plan policies might include design principles which encourage the integration of green roofs, flowerbeds and community garden areas within new housing developments. Such policies could have positive effects in relation to health and wellbeing and reduction of food miles and indirect benefits in relation to townscape and community cohesion.
- 5.62 Local Plan policies could restrict certain developments in order to help residents make healthier choices or limit the impact of the environment upon their health. For instance, it could place restrictions on fast food restaurants in proximity to schools or restrict development of vulnerable uses such as playing fields, schools and hospitals close to busy roads that generate high levels of air pollution.
- 5.63 Local Plan policies could also help community health facilities to promote the use of parks, leisure centres and community gardens by locating them in close proximity to each other and through working with partner bodies. For instance, healthcare professionals could collaborate with local leisure centres and park managers to provide a referral service for patients on low incomes to participate in subsidised sport or 'green gyms'. This would result in positive effects for the access to community services and open spaces as well as for health and wellbeing by increasing activity levels, helping to address related forms of deprivation within the District.

Protecting the environment

Climate change and renewable energy

- 5.64 The Mid Essex SFRA identifies a number of areas of the District that are subject to high flood risk, for example northern areas of Braintree town within Flood Zones 2 or 3. Local Plan policies that seek to avoid locating vulnerable uses in areas of high flood risk, following the Technical Guidance to the NPPF, will have positive effects in relation to flood risk and adapting to the effects of climate change. Local Plan policies could also seek to reduce flood risk posed to communities from new developments upstream and provide adaptation to the effects of climate change by requiring SuDS measures or new planting designed to reduce surface runoff rates, store rainwater and increase infiltration of rainwater where these are technically feasible. In addition to positive effects in relation to flood risk, such measures could have positive effects in relation to biodiversity, air quality, climate change mitigation and water quality by providing additional habitats, absorption of pollutants, shading and natural water cleansing. Flood risk policies should be informed by the forthcoming addendum to the SFRA, which will assess new locations for growth, and by the Surface Water Management Plan being produced by Essex County Council.
- 5.65 In relation to renewable energy, there is a variety of energy sources and technologies, not all of which will be suitable for implementation within Braintree District. Local Plan policies could set out what forms of renewable energy might be used and where. These could help to avoid potential negative effects on the landscape, character and setting of historical or cultural heritage assets, or on high quality agricultural land whilst delivering positive effects in relation to climate change mitigation and addressing fuel poverty. There are a number of communities in the north of the District which would benefit from measures to improve access to cheaper and more efficient energy sources, in order to reduce the impact of fuel poverty. Local Plan policies could identify these communities and set out strategies to support community energy initiatives. This could enable efforts to reduce fuel poverty and thereby contributing positive socio-economic effects as well as climate change mitigation.
- 5.66 An understanding of the energy infrastructure needs of the District and the potential opportunities to pursue them will need to be informed by the forthcoming Infrastructure Study and updated Landscape Character Assessment, as well as economic studies and the recently published Joint SHMA.
- 5.67 Water resources are scarce in the East of England and climate change and increased levels of development are likely to exacerbate this. The Local Plan could specify where water efficiency measures in new development with potential positive effects on this aspect of sustainability. Depending on the reasons for the current 'poor' Water Framework Directive status of the River Blackwater and River Chelmer, it may be appropriate to target such measures to particular catchments within the District. Braintree District has a large number of heritage assets, including Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas which are scattered throughout the District. Where appropriate, Local Plan policies could identify concentrations heritage assets where there might be a particular need to provide added to protection against the risk of flooding. It could also set out policies to ensure that measures to improve the energy efficiency of buildings or to generate renewable energy do not harm historic buildings. This would have positive effects in relation to heritage assets, local townscape and character, and climate change mitigation.
- 5.68 Braintree District has three major towns with a number of villages scattered across the landscape. Local Plan policies which seek to encourage decentralised and renewable energy source might target compact settlements and those with major heat or power users such as Braintree Leisure Centre or Braintree town's hospitals. This would provide positive effects in relation to climate change mitigation, renewable energy, air quality and health and wellbeing.

Nature conservation and landscape character

- 5.69 Braintree District is predominately rural with distinctive and attractive landscapes. The landscape will be placed under increased pressure from development over the plan period as the population in Braintree District increases. Policies which encourage development that respect the local landscape through appropriate scale, design and use of materials are likely to ensure that the

potential negative effects of development on the landscape are reduced. This will also help to ensure that the District's towns and villages remain distinctive in character, form and pattern. Policies that ensure development respects landscape and townscape could also have positive effects in relation to the visitor economy.

- 5.70 In terms of location, Local Plan policies will need to establish principles for identifying suitable housing, employment and retail land which limits potential negative effects on the landscape and biodiversity. This is likely to be important in relation to the area of Braintree District which includes the Upper Stour Valley, the candidate area for extension of the Dedham Vale AONB. Local Plan policies could include design criteria specifically for development within this area which is consistent with the environmental, social and economic objectives of the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Management Plan. This could also result in wider economic and social benefits for the communities in the surrounding villages, and could help to ensure that there is improved access to work, which is a cause of deprivation in some communities. However, promoting the attractiveness of this area via its designation as an AONB could have unintended consequences in terms of the effects of additional visitors on road traffic congestion and local habitats. It could also increase demand for holiday homes, creating affordability issues for local people. Local Plan policies which seek to conserve and enhance the landscape of the Upper Stour Valley will need include measures to manage these potential negative effects.
- 5.71 Legislation and national guidelines rather than Local Plan policies address the potential risks in relation to water quality and flood risk of development within or nearby watercourses. However, the Local Plan could include policies to address potential negative effects on water quality and aquatic biodiversity from increased discharges of treated wastewater associated with housing development. The Water Cycle Study and forthcoming addendum should identify locations where insufficient wastewater treatment capacity may be an issue and the Council can then work with the water company and Environment Agency to determine whether capacity issues can be overcome and the timetable for this to inform the Local Plan's timetable for housing delivery, thereby avoiding potential negative effects on the aquatic environment.
- 5.72 Another locational factor which could be addressed within this topic area of the Local Plan is the need to avoid development in areas of high biodiversity value, wherever possible, and to mitigate or compensate for negative effects on biodiversity if harm from development cannot be avoided. In addition to avoiding harm, Local Plan policies are required by the NPPF to seek to enhance biodiversity. This may take the form of policies which seek to allocate new areas of natural greenspace or to enhance existing ones, including via support from developer contributions, so that ecological networks can be restored. Such policies, which would have direct positive effects in relation to biodiversity and indirect ones in relation to delivery of ecosystem services, should be informed by evidence of the current location and condition of BAP priority habitats and other valuable biodiversity assets.
- 5.73 Other measures which might be included in the Local Plan, could promote the remediation of contaminated land and set out environmental standards which developers must meet in relation to reusing these sites, and acceptable uses for them. These policies would bring about positive effects in relation to the landscape, townscape, efficient use of land and pollution prevention. Positive effects in relation to soils could also be secured by Local Plan policies that seek to avoid the loss of high quality agricultural land to development, avoid the pollution of soils and ensure effective soil protection during construction and development.

6 Consultation and next steps

- 6.1 To meet the requirements of the SEA Directive, the views of the three statutory consultees (Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency) should be sought in relation to the scope and level of detail to be covered by the SA of the Braintree District Local Plan. This requirement is being met by publishing this SA Scoping Report for consultation with the three statutory bodies for a five week period.
- 6.2 As the Issues and Scoping document can be considered to be early draft of the Local Plan and we have provided commentary on the sustainability issues it raises, consultation on this SA Report should also be extended to the public.

Consultees are asked to consider the following questions in particular:

- Are any significant sustainability issues or opportunities missing or misrepresented in the sustainability profile for the area covered by or potentially affected by the Local Plan? If so, please provide evidence to support suggested additional issues. (**Chapter 3**)
- Do the SA objectives and associated SA methodology provide a reasonable framework with which to address the likely **significant** sustainability effects of the Local Plan? (**Chapter 4, Appendix 2, Appendix 3**)

- 6.3 Comments should be sent to:

**Planning Policy
Causeway House
Braintree
Essex
CM7 9HB**

Email: planningpolicy@braintree.gov.uk

- 6.4 Responses from the consultees will be addressed in the subsequent stages of the SA. The next formal output of the SA process will be at the Draft Plan stage, during which preferred and reasonable alternative policy and site allocation options for the Local Plan will be appraised. The results of this assessment will inform the Braintree District planning team in their preparation of subsequent iterations of the Local Plan. The SA of the Draft Local Plan will be presented in an SA report which will be published for public consultation alongside the Draft Plan (currently scheduled for consultation in late 2015). A further SA report will accompany consultation on the Proposed Submission Local Plan.

Appendix 1

Review of other relevant plans and programmes

Plan or programme	Key objectives relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Key targets and indicators relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Implications for the Local Plan	Implications for the SA
INTERNATIONAL				
EU Directives				
<i>SEA Directive 2001</i> Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment	Provides for a high level of protection of the environment and contributes to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.	The Directive must be applied to plans or programmes whose formal preparation begins after 21 July 2004 and to those already in preparation by that date.	Develop policies that take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive at the national level.	Requirements of the SEA Directive must be met in Sustainability Appraisals.
<i>The Industrial Emissions Directive 2010</i> Directive 2010/75/EU on industrial emissions (integrated pollution prevention and control)	Lays down rules on integrated prevention and control of pollution arising from industrial activities. It also lays down rules designed to prevent or, where that is not practicable, to reduce emissions into air, water and land and to prevent the generation of waste, in order to achieve a high level of protection of the environment taken as a whole.	The Directive sets emission limit values for substances that are harmful to air or water.	Develop policies that take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.	Include sustainability objective / appraisal question for reducing pollution.
<i>Energy Performance of Buildings Directive 2010 on the energy performance of buildings 2010/31/EU</i>	The Directive aims to promote the energy performance of buildings and building units. It requests that member states adopt either national or regional methodology for calculating energy performance and minimum requirements for energy performance.	No targets or indicators.	Policies and site allocations should take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.	Include SA objective relating to the energy performance/efficiency of existing and proposed buildings.
<i>The Birds Directive 2009</i> Directive 2009/147/EC is a codified version of Directive 79/409/EEC as amended	Requires the preservation, maintenance, and re-establishment of biotopes and habitats to include the following measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of protected areas. • Upkeep and management in accordance with the ecological needs of habitats inside and outside the protected zones. • Re-establishment of destroyed biotopes. • Creation of biotopes. 	No targets or indicators.	Policies should make sure that the upkeep of recognised habitats is maintained and not damaged from development. Should also avoid pollution or deterioration of habitats or any other disturbances affecting birds.	Include sustainability objective / appraisal questions for the protection of biodiversity.
<i>The Waste Framework Directive 2008</i>	Aims to prevent or reduce waste production and its harmfulness and to increase the recovery of waste by	Development of clean technology to process waste and promote recycling.	Develop policies that take account of the Directive as	Include sustainability objective / appraisal

Plan or programme	Key objectives relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Key targets and indicators relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Implications for the Local Plan	Implications for the SA
Directive 2008/98/EC on waste	means of recycling, re-use or reclamation. Aims to achieve recovery or disposal of waste without endangering human health and without using processes that could harm the environment.		well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.	questions that minimise waste production as well as promote recycling.
<i>The Air Quality Directive 2008</i> Directive 2008/50/EC on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe	Avoid, prevent and reduce harmful effects of ambient noise pollution on human health and the environment.	No targets or indicators.	Allocate sites and develop policies that take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.	Include sustainability objective / appraisal questions to maintain and enhance air quality.
<i>The Floods Directive 2007</i> Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risks	Establishes a framework for the assessment and management of flood risks, aiming at the reduction of the adverse consequences for human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity associated with floods.	Preliminary Flood Risk Assessments to be completed by December 2011. Flood Hazard Maps and Flood Risk Maps to be completed by December 2013. Flood Risk Management Plans to be completed by December 2015.	Develop policies that take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.	Include sustainability objective / appraisal questions that relate to flood management and reduction of risk.
<i>The Water Framework Directive 2000</i> Directive 2000/60/EC establishing a framework for community action in the field of water policy	Protection of inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwaters.	All rivers, lakes, streams, canals, and groundwater (known as waterbodies) must be in good ecological status (i.e. clean and healthy) by 2027. The UK has a legal obligation to meet this target and Local Authorities have a duty to work to achieve this.	Develop policies that take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.	Include sustainability objective / appraisal questions to protect and minimise the impact on water quality.
<i>The Landfill Directive 1999</i> Directive 99/31/EC on the landfill of waste	Prevent or reduce negative effects on the environment from the landfilling of waste by introducing stringent technical requirements for waste and landfills.	Reduce the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill to 75% of the 1995 level by 2010. Reduce this to 50% in 2013 and 35% by 2020.	Develop policies that take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.	Include sustainability objective / appraisal questions to increase recycling and reduce the amount of waste.
<i>The Drinking Water Directive 1998</i> Directive 98/83/EC on the quality of water intended for human consumption	Protect human health from the adverse effects of any contamination of water intended for human consumption by ensuring that it is wholesome and clean.	Member States must set values for water intended for human consumption.	Develop policies that take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.	Include sustainability objective / appraisal questions to protect and enhance water quality.
<i>The Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive</i>	Harmonise the packaging waste system of Member States. Reduce the environmental impact of packaging	By June 2001 at least 50% by weight of packaging waste should have been recovered, at least 25% by weight of	Develop policies that take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies	Include sustainability objective / appraisal questions to minimise the

Plan or programme	Key objectives relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Key targets and indicators relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Implications for the Local Plan	Implications for the SA Plan
1994 Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste	waste.	the totality of packaging materials contained in packaging waste to be recycled with a minimum of 15% by weight for each packaging material.	derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.	environmental impact of waste and promote recycling.
<i>The Habitats Directive 1992</i> Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora	Promote the maintenance of biodiversity taking account of economic, social, cultural and regional requirements. Conservation of natural habitats and maintain landscape features of importance to wildlife and fauna.	No targets or indicators.	Develop policies that take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.	Include sustainability objective / appraisal questions to protect and maintain the natural environment and important landscape features.
<i>The Nitrates Directive 1991</i> Directive 91/676/EEC on nitrates from agricultural sources.	Reduce water pollution caused or induced by nitrates from agricultural sources and prevent further such pollution.	Identification of vulnerable areas.	Develop policies that take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.	Include sustainability objective / appraisal questions to reduce water pollution.
<i>The Urban Waste Water Directive 1991</i> Directive 91/271/EEC concerning urban waste water treatment	Protect the environment from the adverse effects of urban waste water collection, treatment and discharge, and discharge from certain industrial sectors.	No targets or indicators.	Develop policies that take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.	Include sustainability objective / appraisal questions to reduce water pollution.
European plans, policies and programmes				
EU Seventh Environmental Action Plan (2002-2012)	The EU's objectives in implementing the programme are: (a) to protect, conserve and enhance the Union's natural capital; (b) to turn the Union into a resource-efficient, green and competitive low-carbon economy; (c) to safeguard the Union's citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and wellbeing; (d) to maximise the benefits of the Union's environment legislation;	No targets or indicators.	Develop policies that take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.	Include sustainability objective / appraisal questions to protect and enhance the natural environment and promote energy efficiency.

Plan or programme	Key objectives relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Key targets and indicators relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Implications for the Local Plan	Implications for the SA
	<p>(e) to improve the evidence base for environment policy;</p> <p>(f) to secure investment for environment and climate policy and get the prices right;</p> <p>(g) to improve environmental integration and policy coherence;</p> <p>(h) to enhance the sustainability of the Union's cities;</p> <p>(i) to increase the Union's effectiveness in confronting regional and global environmental challenges.</p>			
European Spatial Development Perspective (1999)	Economic and social cohesion across the community. Conservation of natural resources and cultural heritage. Balanced competitiveness between different tiers of government.	No targets or indicators.	Develop policies that take account of the Directive as well as more detailed policies derived from the Directive contained in the NPPF.	Include sustainability objective / appraisal questions to conserve natural resources and cultural heritage.
European Landscape Convention (Florence, 2002)	The convention promotes landscape protection, management and planning.	No indicators or targets.	Develop policies that take account of the Convention.	Include sustainability objective / appraisal questions to protect the archaeological heritage.
European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valletta, 1992) <i>Revision of the 1985 Granada Convention</i>	<p>Protection of the archaeological heritage, including any physical evidence of the human past that can be investigated archaeologically both on land and underwater.</p> <p>Creation of archaeological reserves and conservation of excavated sites.</p>	No indicators or targets.	Develop policies that take account of the Convention.	Include sustainability objective / appraisal questions to protect the archaeological heritage.
Other international plans, policies and programmes				
Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development (2002)	<p>Commitment to building a humane, equitable and caring global society aware of the need for human dignity for all.</p> <p>Renewable energy and energy efficiency. Accelerate shift towards sustainable consumption and production.</p>	<p>Greater resource efficiency.</p> <p>New technology for renewable energy.</p> <p>Increase energy efficiency.</p>	Develop policies that take account of the Declaration.	Include sustainability objective / appraisal questions to enhance the natural environment and promote renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Plan or programme	Key objectives relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Key targets and indicators relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Implications for the Local Plan	Implications for the SA
Aarhus Convention (1998)	<p>Established a number of rights of the public with regard to the environment. Local authorities should provide for:</p> <p>The right of everyone to receive environmental information</p> <p>The right to participate from an early stage in environmental decision making</p> <p>The right to challenge in a court of law public decisions that have been made without respecting the two rights above or environmental law in general.</p>	No targets or indicators.	Develop policies that take account of the Convention.	Ensure that public are involved and consulted at all relevant stages of SA production.
NATIONAL				
White Papers				
<p>Natural Environment White Paper, 2011</p> <p><i>The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature</i></p>	<p>Protecting and improving our natural environment;</p> <p>Growing a green economy; and</p> <p>Reconnecting people and nature.</p>	No targets or indicators.	Protect the intrinsic value of nature and recognise the multiple benefits it could have for communities.	Include a sustainability objective / appraisal question relating to the enhancement of the natural environment.
<p>Electricity Market Reform White Paper 2011, <i>Planning our Electric Future: A White Paper for Secure, Affordable and Low-Carbon Electricity</i></p>	<p>This White Paper sets out the Government's commitment to transform the UK's electricity system to ensure that our future electricity supply is secure, low-carbon and affordable.</p>	<p>15 per cent renewable energy target by 2020 and 80 per cent carbon reduction target by 2050.</p>	<p>Develop policies that support renewable energy generation and encourage greater energy efficiency.</p>	<p>Include sustainability objective / appraisal questions to reduce carbon emissions and increase proportion of energy generated from renewable sources.</p>
<p>The Future of Transport White Paper 2004: A network for 2030</p>	<p>Ensure we can benefit from mobility and access while minimising the impact on other people and the environment, now and in the future.</p> <p>Get the best out of our transport system without damaging our overall quality of life.</p> <p>Develop strategies that recognise that demand for travel will increase in the future.</p> <p>Work towards a transport network that can meet the challenges of a growing economy and the increasing demand for travel but can also achieve the</p>	<p>20% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2010 and 60% reduction by 2050. Transport is currently responsible for about a quarter of total emissions.</p>	<p>Develop policies that provide for an increase in demand for travel whilst minimizing impact on the environment. Policies also needed to promote public transport use rather than increasing reliance on the car.</p>	<p>Include sustainability objective / appraisal questions to reduce the need to travel and improve choice and use of sustainable transport modes.</p>

Plan or programme	Key objectives relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Key targets and indicators relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Implications for the Local Plan	Implications for the SA
	government's environmental objectives.			
Water White Paper, 2011 <i>Water for Life</i>	<p>Objectives of the White Paper are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paint a clear vision of the future and create the conditions which enable the water sector and water users to prepare for it; • Deliver benefits across society through an ambitious agenda for improving water quality, working with local communities to make early improvements in the health of our rivers by reducing pollution and tackling unsustainable abstraction; • Keep short and longer term affordability for customers at the centre of decision making in the water sector; • Protect the interests of taxpayers in the policy decisions that we take; • Ensure a stable framework for the water sector which remains attractive to investors; • Stimulate cultural change in the water sector by removing barriers to competition, fostering innovation and efficiency, and encouraging new entrants to the market to help improve the range and quality of services offered to customers and cut business costs; • Work with water companies, regulators and other stakeholders to build understanding of the impact personal choices have on the water environment, water resources and costs; and <p>Set out roles and responsibilities – including where Government will take a stronger role in strategic direction setting and assessing resilience to future challenges, as well as clear expectations on the regulators.</p>	No targets or indicators.	Ensure that site allocations and policies will support the wise use of water, and improvement of water quality.	Include sustainability objective / appraisal questions that relate to water quality and quantity.
Urban White Paper 2000, <i>Our Towns and Cities: The Future – delivering an urban renaissance</i>	New, sustainable homes that are attractive, safe and practical. Retaining people in urban areas and making them more desirable places to live. Improving quality of life, opportunity and economic success through	3.8 million more homes needed by 2021. Local strategies needed to meet the needs of local people developed through partnerships. 60% of new homes on brownfield sites or through	Allocate sites that will effectively deliver better towns and cities taking into account the key aims of the	Include sustainability objective / appraisal questions to prioritise new development on brownfield sites or conversion of

Plan or programme	Key objectives relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Key targets and indicators relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Implications for the Local Plan	Implications for the SA
	tailored solutions in towns and cities.	conversions of existing buildings.	White Paper.	existing buildings; and to improve the quality of life in urban areas.
Rural White Paper 2000, <i>Our Countryside: The Future – a fair deal for rural England</i>	Facilitate the development of dynamic, competitive and sustainable economies in the countryside. Maintain and stimulate communities and secure access to services for those who live and work in the countryside. Conserve and enhance rural landscapes. Increase opportunities for people to get enjoyment from the countryside.	No targets or indicators.	Allocate sites that will increase employment and services in the rural parts of the Borough whilst conserving the landscape.	Include sustainability objective / appraisal questions that aim to improve the economies of rural areas with minimal impact to the environment.
Policies and Strategies				
DCLG (2012) National Planning Policy Framework	Presumption in favour of sustainable development. Delivering sustainable development by:	No targets or indicators.	Development plan has a statutory status as the starting point for decision making.	Sustainability appraisal should be an integral part of the plan preparation process, and should consider all the likely significant effects on the environment, economic and social factors.
	Building a strong, competitive economy.	No targets or indicators.	Set out clear economic visions for that particular area.	Include a sustainability objective / appraisal question relating to strengthening the economy.
	Ensuring vitality of town centres.	No targets or indicators.	Recognise town centres as the heart of their communities.	Include a sustainability objective / appraisal question relating to the vitality of town centres.
	Promoting sustainable transport	No targets or indicators.	To implement sustainable transport modes depending on nature/location of the site, to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure.	Include a sustainability objective / appraisal question relating to sustainable transport.

Plan or programme	Key objectives relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Key targets and indicators relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Implications for the Local Plan	Implications for the SA
	Supporting high quality communications infrastructure.	No targets or indicators.	Enhance the provision of local community facilities and services by supporting the expansion of electronic communications networks.	Include a sustainability objective / appraisal question relating to improving communications infrastructure.
	Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes.	No targets or indicators.	Identify size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations.	Include a sustainability objective / appraisal question relating to housing availability and quality.
	Requiring good design.	No targets or indicators.	Establish a strong sense of place to live, work and visit.	Include a sustainability objective / appraisal question relating to good design.
	Promoting healthy communities.	No targets or indicators.	Promote safe and accessible environments with a high quality of life and community cohesion.	Include a sustainability objective / appraisal question relating to health and well-being.
	Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding, and coastal change.	No targets or indicators.	Use opportunities offered by new development to reduce causes/impacts of flooding.	Include a sustainability objective / appraisal question relating to climate change mitigation and adaption.
	Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.	No targets or indicators.	Recognise the wider benefits of biodiversity.	Include a sustainability objective / appraisal question relating to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment.
	Conserving and enhancing the historic environment	No targets or indicators.	Sustain and enhance heritage assets and put them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. A local plan may be	Include a sustainability objective / appraisal question relating to the conservation of historic features.

Plan or programme	Key objectives relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Key targets and indicators relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Implications for the Local Plan	Implications for the SA
			considered unsound if there has been no proper assessment of the significance of heritage assets in the area, and the plan does not contain a positive strategy for the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the historic environment.	
	Facilitating the use of sustainable materials.	No targets or indicators.	Encourage prior extraction of minerals where practicable and environmentally feasible.	Include a sustainability objective / appraisal question relating to avoiding sterilisation of identified, viable mineral reserves.
National Planning Practice Guidance, DCLG, 2014	Provides further guidance to be read along side the NPPF on a range of topics that link to the promotion of sustainable development including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air quality • Climate change • Conserving and enhancing the historic environment • Flood risk • Health and well being • Housing and economic development • Natural environment • Minerals • Rural housing • Open space • Transport • Waste • Water supply, wastewater and water quality 	No targets or indicators.	The NPPG sets out a range of social, economic and environmental considerations for the preparation of the Local Plan. It also includes information on preparation of local plans which can be taken into consideration.	The NPPG sets out a range of social, economic and environmental considerations for the preparation of the Local Plan. It also includes information on undertaking sustainability appraisals which can be taken into consideration.
DfT (2013) <i>Door to Door: A strategy for improving sustainable transport integration</i>	The strategy's vision is for an inclusive, integrated and innovative transport system that works for everyone, and where making door-to-door journeys by sustainable means is an attractive and convenient option. Four key areas to address are highlighted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving availability of information; • simplifying ticketing; • making connections between different steps in the journey, and different modes of transport, easier; and 	No targets or indicators.	Enhance public transport provision and encourage active modes of travel such as walking and cycling.	Include a relevant sustainability objective / appraisal question relating to sustainable transport.

Plan or programme	Key objectives relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Key targets and indicators relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Implications for the Local Plan	Implications for the SA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing better interchange facilities. 			
DCLG (2012) Planning Policy for Traveller Sites	<p>Government's aims in respect of traveller sites are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> That local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purposes of planning. To ensure that local planning authorities, working collaboratively, develop fair and effective strategies to meet need through the identification of land for sites. To encourage local planning authorities to plan for sites over a reasonable timescale. That plan-making and decision-taking should protect Green Belt from inappropriate development. To promote more private traveller site provision while recognising that there will always be those travellers who cannot provide their own sites. That plan-making and decision-taking should aim to reduce the number of unauthorised developments and encampments and make enforcement more effective for local planning authorities to ensure that their Local Plan includes fair, realistic and inclusive policies. To increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission, to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply. To reduce tensions between settled and traveller communities in plan-making and planning decisions. To enable provision of suitable accommodation from which travellers can access education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure. For local planning authorities to have due regard to the protection of local amenity and local environment. 	No targets or indicators.	Ensure that relevant considerations are taken into account when producing Local Plan.	Include relevant sustainability objective / appraisal questions relating to social inclusion and environmental protection.
DEFRA (2011) <i>Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services</i>	<p>The strategy aims to guide conservation efforts in England up to 2020, and move from a net biodiversity loss to gain. The strategy includes 22 priorities which include actions for the following sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agriculture; 	The strategy develops ambitious yet achievable goals for 2020 and 2050, based on Aichi Targets set at the Nagoya UN Biodiversity Summit in October 2010.	Develop policies that promote conservation and enhancements of biodiversity.	Include sustainability objective / appraisal question that relates to biodiversity.

Plan or programme	Key objectives relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Key targets and indicators relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Implications for the Local Plan	Implications for the SA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forestry; • Planning and Development; • Water Management; • Marine Management; • Fisheries; • Air Pollution; and • Invasive Non-Native Species. 			
National Planning Policy for Waste (2014)	<p>Key planning objectives are identified within National Planning Policy for Waste, requiring planning authorities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help deliver sustainable development through driving waste management up the waste hierarchy • Ensure waste management is considered alongside other spatial planning concerns • provide a framework in which communities take more responsibility for their own waste • help secure the recovery or disposal of waste without endangering human health and without harming the environment, • ensure the design and layout of new development supports sustainable waste management 	<p>No targets or indicators.</p> <p>Requires planning authorities to implement targets set through the national waste strategy</p>	Develop policies that promote sustainable waste management and use of the waste hierarchy.	Include sustainability objective / appraisal question that relates to waste reduction.
DCLG (2011) <i>Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England</i>	Aims to provide support to deliver new homes and improve social mobility.	No targets or indicators	Develop policies that encourage development of residential properties.	Include sustainability objective / appraisal question that assesses whether housing need is being met.
DEFRA (2011) Securing the Future: Delivering UK Sustainable Development Strategy	<p>Enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life for future generations. There are 4 shared priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustainable consumption and production; • climate change and energy; • natural resource protection and 	Sets out indicators to give an overview of sustainable development and priority areas in the UK. They include 20 of the UK Framework indicators and a further 48 indicators related to the priority areas.	Develop policies that meet the aims of the Sustainable Development Strategy.	Include sustainability objective / appraisal questions to cover the shared priorities.

Plan or programme	Key objectives relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Key targets and indicators relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Implications for the Local Plan	Implications for the SA
	<p>environmental enhancement; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sustainable communities. 			
Department of Health (2010) <i>Healthy Lives, Healthy People: our Strategy for public health in England</i>	Protect the population from serious health threats; helping people live longer, healthier and more fulfilling lives; and improving the health of the poorest, fastest. Prioritise public health funding from within the overall NHS budget.	No targets or indicators.	Policies within the Local Plan should reflect the objectives of the strategy where relevant.	Include a sustainability objective / appraisal question relating to health and well-being.
Building a Greener Future: Policy Statement (DCLG, 2007)	This Statement confirms the government's intention to achieve 25% more energy efficient homes by 2010, 44% more efficient homes by 2013 and zero carbon (net carbon emissions should be zero per annum) homes by 2016.	25% more energy efficient homes by 2010, 44% more efficient homes by 2013 and zero carbon (net carbon emissions should be zero per annum) homes by 2016.	Policies should seek to promote zero carbon residential development.	Include sustainability objectives / appraisal questions relating to renewable energy generation and energy efficiency.
DECC (2011) UK Renewable Energy Roadmap (updates setting out progress and changes to the strategy dated 2013 and 2013)	<p>Make the UK more energy secure Help protect consumers from fossil fuel price fluctuations. Help drive investment in new jobs and businesses in the renewable energy sector. Keep the UK on track to meet carbon reduction objectives</p>	15% of UK energy use from renewables by 2020	Encourage developments that would support renewable energy provision including electricity, heat and transport.	Include sustainability objectives / appraisal questions relating to renewable energy generation and energy efficiency.
Community Energy Strategy (DECC, 2014)	<p>Sets out plans to promote and facilitate the planning and development of decentralised community energy initiatives in four main types of energy activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generating energy (electricity or heat) Reducing energy use (saving energy through energy efficiency and behaviour change) Managing energy (balancing supply and demand) <p>Purchasing energy (collective purchasing or switching to save money on energy)</p>	No targets or indicators.	Ensure that site allocations and policies will support community low carbon and renewable energy provision including electricity, heat and transport.	Include sustainability objectives / appraisal questions relating to renewable energy generation and energy efficiency.
The National Adaptation Programme – Making the Country Resilient to a Changing Climate (Defra, 2013)	<p>The report sets out visions for the following sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Built Environment – “buildings and places and the people who live and work in them are resilient to a changing climate and extreme weather and organisations in the built environment sector have an increased capacity to address the risks and 	No targets or indicators.	Policies should take account of the aims of the Programme.	Include sustainability objectives / appraisal questions which seek to promote the implementation of adaptation measures to make the area more

Plan or programme	Key objectives relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Key targets and indicators relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Implications for the Local Plan	Implications for the SA
	<p>take the opportunities from climate change”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure – “an infrastructure network that is resilient to today’s natural hazards and prepared for the future changing climate”. • Healthy and resilient communities – “a health service, a public health and social care system which are resilient and adapted to a changing climate. Communities and individuals, including the most vulnerable, are better prepared to cope with severe weather events and other impacts of climate change. Emergency services and local resilience capability take account of and are resilient to, a changing climate”. • Agriculture and Forestry – “profitable and productive agriculture and forestry sectors that take the opportunities from climate change, are resilient to its threats and contribute to the resilience of the natural environment by helping maintain ecosystem services and protect and enhance biodiversity”. • Natural Environment – “the natural environment, with diverse and healthy ecosystems, is resilient to climate change, able to accommodate change and valued for the adaptation services it provides”. • Business – “UK businesses are resilient to extreme weather and prepared for future risks and opportunities from climate change”. • Local Government – “Local government plays a central in leading and supporting local places to become more resilient to a range of future risk and to be prepared for the opportunities from a changing climate”. 			resilient to a changing climate.
The National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England (Environment Agency, 2011)	<p>This Strategy sets out the national framework for managing the risk of flooding and coastal erosion. It sets out the roles for risk management authorities and communities to help them understand their responsibilities.</p> <p>The strategic aims and objectives of the Strategy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “manage the risk to people and their property; • Facilitate decision-making and action at the 	No targets or indicators.	Policies should seek to reduce and manage the risk of all types of flooding.	The SA framework should include sustainability objectives / appraisal questions which seek to reduce the risk and manage flooding sustainably.

Plan or programme	Key objectives relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Key targets and indicators relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Implications for the Local Plan	Implications for the SA
	<p>appropriate level – individual, community or local authority, river catchment, coastal cell or national;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve environmental, social and economic benefits, consistent with the principles of sustainable development”. 			
<p>Waste prevention programme for England: Prevention is better than cure – The role of waste prevention in moving to a more resource efficient economy (HM Government, 2013)</p>	<p>The aim of the Programme is to improve the environment and protect human health by supporting a resource efficient economy, reducing the quantity and impact of waste produced whilst promoting sustainable economic growth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> encourage businesses to contribute to a more sustainable economy by building waste reduction into design, offering alternative business models and delivering new and improved products and services; encourage a culture of valuing resources by making it easier for people and businesses to find out how to reduce their waste, to use products for longer, repair broken items, and enable reuse of items by others; help businesses recognise and act upon potential savings through better resource efficiency and preventing waste, to realise opportunities for growth; and support action by central and local government, businesses and civil society to capitalise on these opportunities. 	No targets or indicators.	Primarily an issue for the County Waste Plan and Waste Management Strategy rather than the Local Plan.	N/A.
<p>Future Water: The Government’s Water Strategy for England (DEFRA, 2008)</p>	<p>Sets out how the Government want the water sector to look by 2030 and an outline of the steps which need to be taken to get there.</p> <p>The vision for 2030 is one where we, as a country have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “improved the quality of our water environment and the ecology it supports, and continue to maintain high standards of drinking water quality from taps; Sustainably managed risks from flooding and coastal erosion, with greater understanding and more effective management of surface water; Ensure a sustainable use of water resources, and 	No targets or indicators.	Policies should aim to contribute to the vision set out in this Strategy.	Include sustainability objectives / appraisal questions which seek to protect, manage and enhance the water environment.

Plan or programme	Key objectives relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Key targets and indicators relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Implications for the Local Plan	Implications for the SA
	<p>implement fair, affordable and cost-reflective water charges;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut greenhouse gas emissions; and • Embed continuous adaptation to climate change and other pressures across the water industry and water users". 			
Water for People and the Environment: Water Resources Strategy for England and Wales (Environment Agency, 2009)	<p>The Strategy vision for water resource "is for there to be enough water for people and the environment, meeting legitimate needs".</p> <p>Its aims include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To manage water resource and protect the water environment from climate change. • Restore, protect, improve and value species and habitats that depend on water. • To contribute to sustainable development through good water management. • People to understand how water and the water environment contribute to their quality of life. 	No targets or indicators.	Policies should reflect the aims of the strategy where relevant.	Include sustainability objectives / appraisal questions which seeks to promote water management and efficiency.
Safeguarding our Soils: A Strategy for England (DEFRA, 2009)	<p>The vision is "by 2030, all England's soils will be managed sustainability and degradation threats tackled successfully. This will improve the quality of England's soils and safeguard their ability to provide essential services for future generations".</p> <p>The Strategy highlights the areas for priority including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better protection for agricultural soils. • Protecting and enhancing stores of soil carbon. • Building the resilience of soils to a changing climate. • Preventing soil pollution. • Effective soil protection during construction and development. • Dealing with our legacy of contaminated land. 	No targets or indicators.	Ensure that site allocations and policies will help protect and enhance the quality of soils and seek to sustainably manage their quality for future generations.	Include sustainability objectives / appraisal questions which seeks to safeguard and enhance the quality of soil.
The Code for Sustainable Homes: Setting the standard in sustainability for new homes (DCLG, 2008)	<p>The Code is a standard designed to improve the sustainability of new homes. This sets out the assessment process and performance standards required for the Code for Sustainable Homes.</p> <p>In January 2014 the Government responded to the Environmental Audit Committee's report on the Housing Standards Review consultation, stating that</p>	No targets or indicators.	Develop policies that promote the implementation of the Code (or corresponding sustainability requirements in the Building Regulations) for all residential development.	Include sustainability objectives / appraisal questions which promote sustainable development and seek to achieve higher levels of efficiency (e.g. in energy, water etc.) where

Plan or programme	Key objectives relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Key targets and indicators relevant to the Local Plan and SA	Implications for the Local Plan	Implications for the SA
	necessary standards would, as far as possible, be consolidated into Building Regulations.			appropriate.
DEFRA (2007) <i>The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland</i>	Make sure that everyone can enjoy a level of ambient air quality in public spaces, which poses no significant risk to health or quality of life. Render polluting emissions harmless.	Sets air quality standards for 13 air pollutants.	Develop policies that aim to meet the standards.	Include sustainability objective / appraisal questions to protect and improve air quality.
Legislation				
Housing Act 2004	Protect the most vulnerable in society and help create a fairer and better housing market. Strengthen the Government's drive to meet its 2010 decent homes target.	No indicators or targets.	Develop policies that help to create a fairer and better housing market.	Include sustainability objective / appraisal questions to improve access to good quality and affordable housing.

Appendix 2

Proposed assessment framework for SA of policies

Sustainability objective	Sustainability issues	Indicative appraisal questions	Potential indicators
1) Create safe environments which improve quality of life and community cohesion	<p>Percentage increases in the offences of violence against the person, burglary of dwellings, theft from a motor vehicle, and sexual offences between 2009/10 and 2010/11.</p> <p>Lack of community facilities for young people.</p> <p>Lack of cultural facilities.</p>	<p>Does it seek to improve / supply community facilities for young people?</p> <p>Does it seek to increase cultural activities or suitable development to stimulate them?</p> <p>Does it seek to reduce inequalities between areas and support cultural identity and social inclusion?</p> <p>Will there be measures to increase the safety and security of new development and public realm?</p>	<p>Recorded key offences.</p> <p>KSI casualties for adults and children.</p> <p>Public perceptions on leisure / community facilities.</p> <p>Street level crime statistics.</p>
2) To provide everyone with the opportunity to live in a decent home	<p>Lack of social housing 0.1% of housing stock owned by the Local Authority (7.6% nationally).</p> <p>Housing should respond more to demographics in population growth.</p> <p>Lack of care homes and capacity in existing care homes.</p> <p>Rural affordable housing is currently not suitable for rural areas and those who require them.</p>	<p>Will it increase the range and affordability of housing for all social groups?</p> <p>Does it respond to the needs of an ageing population?</p> <p>Does the site respond to a housing type shortage as identified in the SHMA and responding to demographics in population growth?</p> <p>Does it seek to provide appropriate rural affordable housing?</p> <p>Does it seek to provide additional capacity in or of care homes?</p> <p>Will it promote an increase in social housing?</p> <p>Will it support development of homes that are adapted to a changing climate?</p>	<p>House Prices.</p> <p>Indices of Multiple Deprivation Score – particularly Housing and Services Domain and the Living Environment Deprivation Domain.</p> <p>Number of affordable dwelling completions.</p> <p>Annual dwelling completions.</p> <p>Population projections and forecasts.</p>
3) To improve the health of the District's residents and mitigate/reduce potential health inequalities	<p>Increases in obesity in Year 6 children and adult obesity higher than the national average.</p> <p>Uptake of sports and leisure facilities.</p> <p>35% of households within Braintree District do not have any access to natural greenspace.</p> <p>Greenspace in urban areas to be</p>	<p>Will it improve access to high quality health facilities?</p> <p>Will it increase access to sport and recreation facilities, open space and/or SANG?</p> <p>Will it encourage access by walking or cycling, and will it increase the overall rates of walking and cycling?</p>	<p>Life Expectancy.</p> <p>Indices of Multiple Deprivation – Health and Disability sub-domain scores.</p> <p>Residents opinion on availability of open space/leisure facilities.</p> <p>Natural England Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt).</p>

Sustainability objective	Sustainability issues	Indicative appraisal questions	Potential indicators
	<p>safeguarded against development for other means.</p> <p>Lack of walking and cycling infrastructure.</p>		<p>Location and extent of recreational facilities to development site.</p> <p>Location and extent of accessible greenspace to development site.</p> <p>Proximity of site to healthcare facilities</p> <p>Percentage of population obese.</p> <p>Number of GPs and dentists accepting new patients.</p> <p>Number or % of open spaces receiving Green Flag Award.</p>
4) To promote the vitality and viability of all service centres throughout the District	<p>Lack of retail and non-commercial office floorspace in relation to the total proportion of commercial and industrial floorspace.</p> <p>Significantly lower than county and national averages.</p>	<p>Does it prevent further loss of retail and other services in rural areas?</p> <p>Does it promote and enhance the viability of existing centres by focusing development in such centres?</p> <p>Will retailing in town centres be enhanced in areas of identified need?</p> <p>Does it seek to increase the proportion of retail and non-commercial office floorspace (as a proportion of total commercial and industrial floorspace) in the District?</p>	<p>Amount of retail, leisure and office floorspace in town centres.</p> <p>Implemented and outstanding planning permissions for retail, office and commercial use.</p> <p>Number and type of services from Rural Services Study.</p> <p>Number of post offices closed down.</p> <p>Number of village shops closed down.</p> <p>Pedestrian footfall count.</p>
5) To achieve sustainable levels of prosperity and economic growth	<p>Braintree District has a lower job density than both the region and Britain.</p> <p>The District displays a significantly higher percentage of employment in 'manufacturing' and 'construction' in comparison to the region and the country and significantly lower employees in the 'finance, IT and other business activities' sector.</p> <p>Factories and warehouses account for the majority of industrial and commercial floorspace in 2008.</p> <p>Too much employment land being developed for other uses, particularly</p>	<p>Will new housing be supported by adequate local employment opportunities?</p> <p>Does it support small businesses to grow and encourage business innovation?</p> <p>Will it make land and property available for business development?</p> <p>Will it enhance the District's potential for tourism?</p> <p>Will it encourage the rural economy and diversification of it, whilst minimising impacts on the rural environment?</p> <p>Will it lead to development having an</p>	<p>Employment land availability.</p> <p>Typical amount of job creation (jobs per ha) within different use classes.</p> <p>Percentage change and comparison in the total number of VAT registered businesses in the area.</p> <p>Businesses by industry type.</p> <p>Amount of vacant industrial floorspace.</p> <p>Amount of high quality agricultural land.</p> <p>Travel to work flows.</p> <p>Employment status by residents and job</p>

Sustainability objective	Sustainability issues	Indicative appraisal questions	Potential indicators
	<p>housing.</p> <p>Lack of focus on tourism.</p> <p>Need for rural diversification and increased rural employment opportunities.</p> <p>Need to promote and aid the expansion of small businesses.</p> <p>Broadband inequalities across the District meaning home working and rural employment is stifled.</p> <p>The Essex Minerals Plan identified a number of primary minerals extraction sites in the District.</p>	<p>adverse impact on employment for existing facilities?</p> <p>Does it seek to increase broadband coverage / bandwidth, especially in rural area?</p> <p>Does it avoid sterilising minerals extraction sites identified by the Essex Minerals Plan?</p>	<p>type.</p> <p>Job densities.</p> <p>Economic activity of residents.</p> <p>Average gross weekly pay.</p> <p>Proportion of business in rural locations.</p> <p>Implemented and outstanding planning permissions for retail, office and commercial use.</p> <p>Number of minerals sites safeguarded for extraction.</p>
6) To conserve and enhance the biological and geological diversity of the environment	<p>There are 4 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). 5% of the Bovingdon Hall Woods SSSI is 'unfavourable no change'. Parts of both Belcher's & Broadfield Woods and Glemsford Pits SSSIs are in a state of 'unfavourable recovering'.</p> <p>There are approximately 251 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS).</p> <p>A need to increase the green infrastructure of the District.</p> <p>The fragmentation of habitats.</p>	<p>Will it conserve and enhance natural/semi natural habitats?</p> <p>Will it conserve and enhance species diversity, and in particular avoid harm to indigenous BAP priority species?</p> <p>Will it maintain and enhance sites designated for their nature conservation interest?</p> <p>Will it maintain and enhance the connectivity of habitats, their ability to deliver ecosystem services or their resilience to climate change?</p>	<p>Spatial extent of designated sites within the District.</p> <p>Achievement of Biodiversity Action Plan targets.</p> <p>Ecological potential assessments.</p> <p>Distance from site to nearest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSSIs. NNR. LWS. Ancient Woodland. Protected lanes. Other sensitive designated or non-designated receptors. Other special landscape features. <p>Condition of the nearest sensitive receptors (where viable).</p>

Sustainability objective	Sustainability issues	Indicative appraisal questions	Potential indicators
			<p>Site visit surveys on typical abundance and frequency of habitats (DAFOR scale).</p> <p>Number of % of permitted developments providing biodiversity value e.g. green/brown roof, living wall, native planting.</p>
7) To promote more sustainable transport choices and uptake	<p>Higher car ownership in Braintree District compared to county and national levels.</p> <p>Lack of parking at public transport interchanges, particularly Witham train station.</p> <p>Lack of walking and cycling infrastructure.</p> <p>Lack of public transport infrastructure.</p>	<p>Will it increase and/or improve the availability and usability of sustainable transport modes?</p> <p>Will it seek to encourage people to use alternative modes of transportation other than private vehicle?</p> <p>Will it lead to the integration of transport modes?</p> <p>Will it improve rural public transport?</p> <p>Does it seek to increase the uptake of public transport through parking standards at destinations?</p> <p>Does it seek to increase the uptake or viability of walking and cycling as methods of transportation, through new infrastructure or integration?</p>	<p>Access to services and business' by public transport.</p> <p>Indices of Multiple Deprivation.</p> <p>Travel to work methods and flows.</p> <p>Car ownership.</p> <p>Network performance on roads.</p> <p>Public transport punctuality and efficiency.</p> <p>Length of Public Rights of Way created/enhanced; number of Rights of Way Improvement Plans implemented.</p>
8) Promote accessibility and ensure the necessary transport infrastructure to support new development	<p>Large commuting outflow of Braintree District residents.</p> <p>In-commuters filling jobs in the District.</p> <p>Accessibility of GPs by either walking or using public transport.</p> <p>Accessibility to employment sites and retail centres.</p> <p>Lack of public transport infrastructure.</p> <p>Lack of major roads, and lack of quality in smaller roads.</p>	<p>Will it contribute positively to reduce social exclusion by ensuring access to jobs, shopping, services and leisure facilities for all?</p> <p>Does it seek to concentrate development and facilities in town centres or where access via sustainable travel is greatest?</p> <p>Will it assist in reducing the number of road casualties and ensure ease of pedestrian movement especially for the disabled?</p> <p>Will it improve parking conditions at destinations, particularly for commuters?</p> <p>Does it seek to minimise congestion at key destinations / areas that witness a</p>	<p>Residents opinion on availability of open space/leisure facilities.</p> <p>Access to services by public transport.</p> <p>Indices of Multiple Deprivation – sub-domain scores.</p> <p>Recorded traffic flows.</p> <p>KSI casualties for adults and children.</p> <p>Car ownership.</p> <p>Location of site with regards to areas of high deprivation.</p> <p>Transport Assessments.</p>

Sustainability objective	Sustainability issues	Indicative appraisal questions	Potential indicators
		<p>large amount of vehicle movements at peak times?</p> <p>Would the scale of development require significant supporting transport infrastructure in an area of identified need?</p> <p>Will planning controls seek to retain garages to reduce conversion to living space to reduce on-street parking?</p>	
9) To improve the education and skills of the population	<p>4 LSOAs are in the top 5% most deprived nationally in regards to education, skills and training deprivation: 1 in Halstead, 1 in Braintree and 2 in Witham.</p> <p>Lack of highly skilled jobs in the District.</p> <p>Attainment is an issue across all levels.</p>	<p>Does it seek to improve existing educational facilities and/or create more educational facilities?</p> <p>Does it seek to improve existing training and learning facilities and/or create more facilities?</p> <p>Will the employment opportunities available be mixed to suit a varied employment skills base?</p> <p>Will new housing be supported by school expansion or other educational facilities where necessary?</p>	<p>Additional capacity of local schools.</p> <p>GCSE or equivalent performance.</p> <p>Level 2 qualifications by working age residents.</p> <p>Level 4 qualifications and above by working age residents.</p> <p>Employment status of residents.</p> <p>Average gross weekly earnings.</p> <p>Standard Occupational Classification.</p>
10) To maintain and enhance cultural heritage and assets within the District	<p>3,192 designated listed buildings within the District.</p> <p>40 Scheduled Monuments located throughout the District.</p>	<p>Will it protect and enhance sites, features and areas of historical, archaeological and cultural value in both urban and rural areas?</p> <p>Does it seek to enhance the range and quality of the public realm and open spaces?</p> <p>Will it reduce the amount of derelict, degraded and underused land?</p> <p>Does it encourage the use of high quality design principles to respect local character?</p> <p>Will any adverse impacts be reduced through adequate mitigation?</p>	<p>Proximity to nearest (including its setting):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheduled Monument? Listed Building? Conservation Area? Registered Historic Park or Garden? Site identified in the Historic Environment Record? Building of local interest? Other historic feature?

Sustainability objective	Sustainability issues	Indicative appraisal questions	Potential indicators
			<p>Number and spatial extent of listed buildings.</p> <p>Number and spatial extent of scheduled monuments.</p> <p>Buildings At Risk Register.</p> <p>Heritage at risk surveys.</p> <p>Percentage of conservation area demolished or otherwise lost.</p> <p>Amount of derelict properties and/or vacant land.</p> <p>Numbers of buildings being removed from the buildings at risk register.</p> <p>Amount of damage to listed buildings or scheduled monuments.</p>
11) To reduce contributions to climatic change	<p>In 2008 Braintree District consumed more energy than the County average, largely associated with road transport.</p> <p>Road transport in Braintree District produces the 3rd highest amount of CO₂ per capita across the County's local authorities.</p>	<p>Will it reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by reducing energy consumption?</p> <p>Will it lead to an increased generation of energy from renewable sources?</p> <p>Does it ensure more sustainable modes of travel are provided?</p> <p>Will it encourage greater energy efficiency?</p> <p>Will it improve the efficient use of natural resources, minimising waste and promoting recycling?</p> <p>Will it seek to adhere to the Code for Sustainable Homes?</p>	<p>Carbon Dioxide emissions.</p> <p>Energy consumption GWh/households.</p> <p>Percentage of energy supplied from renewable sources.</p> <p>Code for Sustainable Homes certificates.</p>
12) To improve water quality and address water scarcity and sewerage capacity	<p>The majority of water bodies within Braintree District are given a 'moderate' current overall potential. However the River Blackwater and the River Chelmer are both given a 'poor' current status.</p> <p>Water scarcity is a major issue in regards to significant development in particular.</p>	<p>Will it lead to no deterioration on the quality of water bodies?</p> <p>Will water resources and sewerage capacity be able to accommodate growth?</p> <p>Does it ensure the reinforcement of wastewater treatment works or the provision of alternatives (where</p>	<p>Percentage of water bodies at good ecological status or potential.</p> <p>Percentage of water bodies assessed at good or high biological status.</p> <p>Percentage of water bodies assessed at good chemical status.</p> <p>Water cycle study capacity in sewerage</p>

Sustainability objective	Sustainability issues	Indicative appraisal questions	Potential indicators
	Sewage capacity.	required) to support growth?	and resources.
13) To reduce the risk of flooding	<p>Potential for development in Flood Risk Zones</p> <p>Surface water runoff in urban areas</p>	<p>Does it promote the inclusion of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in new developments?</p> <p>Does it seek to avoid development in areas at risk of flooding (fluvial, surface water, groundwater)?</p> <p>Does it seek to avoid increasing flood risk (fluvial, surface water, groundwater) in areas away from initial development?</p> <p>Will developer contributions be utilised for the provision and maintenance of flood defences?</p>	<p>Spatial extent of flood zones 2 and 3</p> <p>Residential properties flooded from main rivers</p> <p>Planning permission in identified flood zones granted permission contrary to advice from the Environment Agency</p> <p>Incidences of flooding and location</p> <p>Distance of site to floodplains</p> <p>SFRA results</p> <p>Incidences of flood warnings in site area</p> <p>Distance to 'Areas susceptible to surface water flooding' – EA Maps</p> <p>Number or % of permitted developments incorporating SuDS</p>
14) To improve air quality	<p>The main air quality issues in the District are found to be NO₂ and PM₁₀ emissions from vehicles travelling on the A12 and A120.</p> <p>Meeting National Air Quality Standards.</p> <p>Five potentially significant junctions with a daily flow of greater than 10,000 vehicles (2004) at Newland Street, Witham; Cressing Road, Witham; Head Street, Halstead; Railway Street, Braintree and Rayne Road, Braintree.</p>	<p>Will it improve, or not detrimentally affect air quality along the A12 or A120?</p> <p>Does it ensure that National Air Quality Standards are met at relevant points?</p> <p>Does it seek to improve or avoid increasing traffic flows generally and in particular through potentially significant junctions?</p>	<p>Number and spatial extent of potentially significant junctions for air quality in the District</p> <p>NO₂ emissions</p> <p>PM₁₀ emissions</p> <p>Recorded traffic flows on A12 and A120</p>
15) To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes and townscapes	<p>Much of the District's landscape is sensitive to change and new development.</p> <p>Open skylines with panoramic views</p> <p>Strong historic integrity with dispersed historic settlement patterns and Conservation Areas</p> <p>Coalescence between neighbouring</p>	<p>Will homes be designed to enhance the existing street scene creating a better cultural heritage & public realm?</p> <p>Will areas of special landscape character be protected?</p> <p>Will it see a loss of Greenfield land / does it promote development on previously developed land or conversion of existing</p>	<p>Developments permitted contrary to Landscape Character Assessment 'sensitivities to change'.</p> <p>Number and extent of field boundaries affected.</p> <p>Development on previously developed land or conversion of existing buildings.</p> <p>Number of permitted developments</p>

Sustainability objective	Sustainability issues	Indicative appraisal questions	Potential indicators
	<p>settlements and beyond village envelopes</p> <p>Continuation of development on Previously Developed Land (PDL)</p>	<p>buildings?</p> <p>Will development see a disruption in current field boundaries?</p> <p>Will it lead to rural expansion or development outside development boundaries/limits that increases coalescence with neighbouring settlements?</p> <p>Is the scale / density of development in keeping with the local townscape / landscape?</p>	<p>within Conservation Areas.</p>
16) To safeguard and enhance the quality of soil.	<p>Significant resource of Grade 2 agricultural land in the District.</p> <p>Existence of contaminated sites from legacy industrial uses.</p>	<p>Will it avoid the loss of high quality agricultural land?</p> <p>Will it preventing soil pollution?</p> <p>Will it ensure effective soil protection during construction and development.</p> <p>Will it support the remediation of contaminated land, avoiding environmental pollution or exposure of occupiers or neighbouring land uses to unacceptable health risk?</p>	<p>Area of high quality agricultural land in District.</p> <p>Number or area of contaminated sites remediated.</p>

Appendix 3

Proposed assessment framework for SA of site allocations

Site assessment criteria	Significant negative effect (--)	Negative effect (-)	Positive effect (+)	Significant positive effect (++)	No / negligible effect (0)	Uncertain effect (?)
SA objective 1: Create safe environments which improve quality of life and community cohesion						
<u>ALL ALLOCATIONS</u> Provision of community facilities. Source: BDC site assessment (suitability for, requirements for, relocation of).	N/A	Removal of community facilities with no relocation	Suitability for new community facilities where none exist currently	N/A	Existing community facilities remain.	Uncertainty surrounding impacts.
<u>HOUSING ALLOCATIONS</u> Nearest Post Office. Source: Post Office website or digital data showing post offices (BDC)	N/A	Distance >800 m	Distance <= 800 m	N/A	N/A	N/A
SA objective 2: To provide everyone with the opportunity to live in a decent home						
<u>HOUSING ALLOCATIONS</u> Delivery of affordable housing. Source: BDC site assessment (site potential housing yield) + applicable affordable housing requirement in Local Plan policy.	N/A	N/A	Contributes to the delivery of affordable housing (< 10 dwellings)	Significantly contributes to the delivery of affordable housing (>= 10 dwellings)	No contribution to affordable housing.	Uncertainty surrounding delivery
<u>HOUSING ALLOCATIONS</u> Delivery of housing meeting Lifetime Homes standards or equivalent Source: BDC site assessment (site potential housing	N/A	N/A	Contributes to the delivery of Lifetime Homes (<10 dwellings)	Significantly contributes to the delivery of Lifetime Homes (10+ dwellings)	No contribution to Lifetime Homes.	Uncertainty surrounding delivery

Site assessment criteria	Significant negative effect (--)	Negative effect (-)	Positive effect (+)	Significant positive effect (++)	No / negligible effect (0)	Uncertain effect (?)
yield) + applicable Lifetime Homes requirement in relevant Local Plan policy.						
SA objective 3: To improve the health of the District's residents and mitigate/reduce potential health inequalities						
<u>HOUSING ALLOCATIONS</u> Distance to nearest NHS primary health care facility. Source: NHS website or OS AddressBase Premium digital dataset showing GP surgeries (BDC).	N/A	Distance > 800 m	Distance <= 800 m	N/A	N/A	Uncertainty
<u>HOUSING ALLOCATIONS</u> Distances to accessible natural greenspace (ANG), including country park, woodland, grassland, river or canal bank, as per Natural England ANG Standards (ANGSt): <= 300m from ANG of at least 2 ha in size <= 2 km from ANG of at least 20 ha <= 5 km from ANG of at least 100 ha <= 10 km from ANG of at least 500 ha Source: digital data showing open spaces	N/A	None or one of ANGSt criteria met	Three or more of ANGSt criteria met	N/A	Two of ANGSt criteria met	Uncertainty

Site assessment criteria	Significant negative effect (--)	Negative effect (-)	Positive effect (+)	Significant positive effect (++)	No / negligible effect (0)	Uncertain effect (?)
(BDC)						
<u>ALL ALLOCATIONS</u> Net increase or loss of open space (including recreation space and allotments). Source: digital data showing open spaces (BDC) + BDC site assessment	N/A	Loss	No loss	Provision of new	N/A	Uncertain impacts
SA objective 4: To promote the vitality and viability of all service centres throughout the District						
<u>ALL ALLOCATIONS</u> Net increase or loss of retail provision on the site. Source: BDC site assessment	N/A	Loss	Increase	N/A	No change	N/A
<u>HOUSING ALLOCATIONS</u> Distances to primary shopping area boundaries (towns and Freeport) Source: digital data showing primary shopping area boundaries (BDC)	N/A	> 800 m	<= 800 m	Extension of primary shopping areas or identified regeneration	N/A	N/A
SA objective 5: To achieve sustainable levels of prosperity and economic growth						
<u>ALL ALLOCATIONS</u> Sterilisation of mineral reserves Source: sites identified as preferred and reserved for primary mineral extraction in	Significant proportion of allocated land (>= 25%) on site preferred and reserved for mineral extraction	N/A	N/A	N/A	All other sites	N/A

Site assessment criteria	Significant negative effect (--)	Negative effect (-)	Positive effect (+)	Significant positive effect (++)	No / negligible effect (0)	Uncertain effect (?)
the Essex Minerals Plan, 2014						
<u>HOUSING ALLOCATIONS</u> Distances to main employment areas (B1, B2, B8) Source: digital data showing main employment areas (BDC)	N/A	> 800 m from existing employment area Or Loss of employment site	<= 800 m from existing employment area Or Addition of employment site	N/A	N/A	N/A
SA objective 6: To conserve and enhance the biological and geological diversity of the environment						
<u>ALL ALLOCATIONS</u> Distances (impacts on) to: internationally (SAC, SPA, Ramsar), nationally (SSSI, NNR) or locally (LWS, LNR) designated wildlife site or Ancient Woodland. Source: digital data showing internationally (LUC), nationally (LUC), and locally (BDC) designated wildlife sites.	Significant negative effect (--) if significant proportion of allocated land (>= 25%) lies within designated site. Or Significant effect with uncertainty (--?) if significant proportion of allocated land (>= 25%) lies within a SSSI's Impact Risk Zone for the relevant type of development. Effects will be assumed to apply to both the SSSI and any internationally designated site overlaying it. Uncertainty relates to whether potentially significant negative effects can be mitigated.	Significant proportion of allocated land (>= 25%) is on undesignated greenfield land. Or Allocated site is <= 100 m from a designated site (other than internationally designated or SSSI which will be assessed on basis of Impact Risk Zones – see significant negative effects column).	N/A	N/A	All other allocations.	N/A

Site assessment criteria	Significant negative effect (--)	Negative effect (-)	Positive effect (+)	Significant positive effect (++)	No / negligible effect (0)	Uncertain effect (?)
	<p>Or</p> <p>Significant effect with uncertainty (--) if smaller part of allocated land (< 25%) lies within designated site. Uncertainty relates to whether significant adverse effects can be avoided by layout of development within the site boundary.</p>					
SA objective 7: To promote more sustainable transport choices and uptake						
<p><u>ALL ALLOCATIONS</u></p> <p>Loss of / creation of new footpaths or cycleways.</p> <p>Source: BDC site assessment + PROW data (BDC).</p>	N/A	Loss of public footpath or cycleway	Creation of new public footpaths or cycleways	N/A	Diversion of public footpath / cycleway or no loss	Impact unknown
<p><u>HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT ALLOCATIONS</u></p> <p>Distance to and regularity of public transport.</p> <p>Source: digital data showing bus stops and routes served (BDC to obtain from bus company) + timetables per bus company website</p> <p><i>N.B. See methodology chapter for assumed new bus service provision in large new housing</i></p>	N/A	<p>> 400 m from a bus stop</p> <p>And</p> <p>> 800 m from a railway station</p>	<= 400 m from a bus stop or <= 800 m from a railway station providing a seven day per week service	<= 400 m from a bus stop or <= 800 m from a railway station providing a frequent service (>=1 per hour, at least 5 days per week)	N/A	<= 400 m from a bus stop or <= 800 m from a railway station with unknown service frequency

Site assessment criteria	Significant negative effect (--)	Negative effect (-)	Positive effect (+)	Significant positive effect (++)	No / negligible effect (0)	Uncertain effect (?)
<i>developments.</i>						
SA objective 8: Promote accessibility and ensure the necessary transport infrastructure to support new development						
<u>HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT ALLOCATIONS</u> Is the allocation within or directly adjacent to a settlement that has a high level of provision of services and facilities, as identified by the Local Plan settlement hierarchy? Source: Local Plan. <i>* Settlement hierarchy shown is per the adopted Core Strategy – to be reviewed once the new hierarchy is defined by the new Local Plan.</i>	Allocation to the open countryside.	Allocation to other settlements not identified in the settlement hierarchy.*	Allocation to KEY SERVICE VILLAGES* Coggeshall, Earls Colne, Hatfield Peverel, Kelvedon, Sible Hedingham, Silver End.	Allocation to MAIN TOWNS* Braintree, Bocking and Gt Notley; Witham; Halstead.	Allocation to other settlements in the settlement hierarchy.*	N/A
<u>HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT ALLOCATIONS</u> Distance to and regularity of public transport. Source: digital data showing bus stops and routes served (BDC to obtain from bus company) + timetables per bus company website <i>N.B. See methodology chapter for assumed new bus service provision in large new</i>	N/A	> 400 m from a bus stop And > 800 m from a railway station	<= 400 m from a bus stop or <= 800 m from a railway station providing a seven day per week service	<= 400 m from a bus stop or <= 800 m from a railway station providing a frequent service (>=1 per hour, at least 5 days per week)	N/A	<= 400 m from a bus stop or <= 800 m from a railway station with unknown service frequency

Site assessment criteria	Significant negative effect (--)	Negative effect (-)	Positive effect (+)	Significant positive effect (++)	No / negligible effect (0)	Uncertain effect (?)
<i>housing developments.</i>						
<u>HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT ALLOCATIONS</u> Highways access information. Source: BDC site assessment.	N/A	Highway access issues identified.	No highway access issues identified.	N/A	N/A	No highway access information in SHLAA.
SA objective 9: To improve the education and skills of the population						
<u>HOUSING ALLOCATIONS</u> Distance to a primary school. Source: digital data showing primary schools (BDC). <i>N.B. See methodology chapter for assumed new school provision in large new housing developments.</i>	N/A	> 800 m	<= 800m , > 400m	<= 400 m	N/A	Uncertainty
<u>HOUSING ALLOCATIONS</u> Distance to a secondary school. Source: digital data showing secondary schools (BDC). <i>N.B. See methodology chapter for assumed new school provision in large new housing developments.</i>	N/A	> 4.8 km	<= 4.8km, > 2.4km	<= 2.4 km	N/A	Uncertainty
SA objective 10: To maintain and enhance cultural heritage and assets within the District						
<u>HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT</u>	A significant negative effect with uncertainty	Where development is between 250 m and 1	N/A	N/A	No historic asset within 1 km of	Uncertainty

Site assessment criteria	Significant negative effect (--)	Negative effect (-)	Positive effect (+)	Significant positive effect (++)	No / negligible effect (0)	Uncertain effect (?)
<u>ALLOCATIONS</u> Impact on designated historic assets. Source: digital data showing Scheduled Monuments (LUC), Listed Buildings (LUC), Registered Park and Garden (LUC), Conservation Area (BDC), or other non-statutory heritage designations (BDC).	(--?) occurs where the development location is adjacent to or includes a designated heritage asset. Uncertainty as the actual effects on historic assets will depend on the exact scale, design and layout of the new development and opportunities may exist to enhance the setting of heritage features.	km from designated heritage assets, a minor negative effect with uncertainty (-?) occurs. Uncertainty as the actual effects on historic assets will depend on whether the development is visible from the asset and the exact scale, design and layout of the new development and opportunities may exist to enhance the setting of heritage features.			allocation.	
SA objective 11: To reduce contributions to climate change						
More appropriately assessed on basis of the features and designs of individual development proposals.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
SA objective 12: To improve water quality and address water scarcity and sewerage capacity						
<u>ALL ALLOCATIONS</u> Groundwater Source Protection Zone (SPZ). Source: SPZs (LUC has this at 1:50k but BDC to provide if they hold larger scale data).	N/A	Allocation falls within SPZ1 or SPZ2	N/A	N/A	Allocation does not fall in any SPZs	Allocation falls within SPZ3
<u>HOUSING ALLOCATIONS</u> Capacities in sewage network. Source: Sewerage Network Constraint Mapping within Water	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	AS PER CHAPTER 12 'SEWERAGE NETWORK CAPACITY' IN THE WCS Site is in a key village or below in the Settlement Hierarchy ('AWS confirm that the	AS PER CHAPTER 12 'SEWERAGE NETWORK CAPACITY' IN THE WCS Limited to those sites identified in 12.2 of the WCS (Northern and western extents of

Site assessment criteria	Significant negative effect (--)	Negative effect (-)	Positive effect (+)	Significant positive effect (++)	No / negligible effect (0)	Uncertain effect (?)
<p>Cycle Study (BDC).</p> <p><i>N.B. Criteria shown are based on Water Cycle Study (WCS) Stage 2 Report 2011; to be updated once addendum to this report is completed.</i></p>					relatively low scale of the proposed growth at the key service villages is unlikely to require significant upgrades to the network.)	Bocking, central and eastern areas of Braintree, the proposed employment site at Great Notley, the majority of the proposed sites within Halstead, and sites in the northeast and southwest extents of Witham.)
SA objective 13: To reduce the risk of flooding						
<p><u>ALL ALLOCATIONS</u></p> <p>Sites within an area of high flood risk.</p> <p>Source: digital data showing high flood risk locations (BDC).</p> <p><i>N.B. Criteria shown to be reviewed once Addendum to Mid Essex SFRA and Essex CC Surface Water Management Plan become available.</i></p>	Significant proportion of allocation ($\geq 25\%$) is within Flood Zone 3a or 3b or a Critical Drainage Area and proposed use is not classified as appropriate to the Zone by Technical Guidance to the NPPF.	Significant proportion of allocation ($\geq 25\%$) is within Flood Zone 2 or smaller area (5% to $< 25\%$) is within Flood Zone 3 or a Critical Drainage Area and proposed use is not classified as appropriate to the Zone by Technical Guidance to the NPPF.	N/A	N/A	$< 5\%$ of allocation within Flood Zone 3/ Critical Drainage Area, or $< 25\%$ within Flood Zone 2, or proposed use is classified as appropriate to the Zone by Technical Guidance to the NPPF.	Uncertainty
SA objective 14: To improve air quality						
<p><u>ALLOCATIONS FOR HOUSING OR OTHER SENSITIVE USES (e.g. hospital, school, childcare)</u></p> <p>Location within an area likely to have poor air quality.</p> <p>Source: digital data showing AQMAs (currently none in District but BDC to provide boundaries if</p>	<p>Significant negative effect with uncertainty (--) assumed where significant proportion of allocation ($\geq 25\%$) is:</p> <p>a) within an AQMA (if any are designated in the future), or</p> <p>b) ≤ 200 m from the A12 or A120.</p>	N/A	N/A	N/A	All other allocations.	N/A

Site assessment criteria	Significant negative effect (--)	Negative effect (-)	Positive effect (+)	Significant positive effect (++)	No / negligible effect (0)	Uncertain effect (?)
any are designated in the future) and road corridors (LUC).	Uncertainty relates to whether mitigation will; be possible through layout of development.					
SA objective 15: To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes and townscapes						
<u>ALL ALLOCATIONS</u> High sensitivity to change per the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). Source: Landscape Character Assessment report (BDC). <i>N.B. LCA 2006 is in the process of being updated</i>	High sensitivity to change.	Moderate sensitivity to change.	Low sensitivity to change.	N/A	N/A	Unknown sensitivity to change.
<u>ALL ALLOCATIONS</u> Proposed extension to Dedham Vale AONB. Source: digital data showing extent of proposed extension (BDC).	Significant effect with uncertainty (--?) where allocation is within proposed extension to Dedham Vale AONB. Uncertainty relates to whether all of the proposed extension area meets the criteria for AONB designation.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<u>ALL ALLOCATIONS</u> Greenfield site or Previously Developed Land (PDL). Source: BDC site assessment.	N/A	Greenfield land.	PDL.	N/A	N/A	Unknown whether greenfield or PDL.
<u>ALL ALLOCATIONS</u> Visually Important Spaces. Source: digital data showing Visually Important Spaces	N/A	Allocation is located in Visually Important Space, as identified by BDC and Parish Councils.	N/A	N/A	Allocation is not located on identified Visually Important Space.	Unknown whether Visually Important Space.

Site assessment criteria	Significant negative effect (--)	Negative effect (-)	Positive effect (+)	Significant positive effect (++)	No / negligible effect (0)	Uncertain effect (?)
(BDC).						
<u>ALL ALLOCATIONS</u> Country Parks. Source: digital data showing country parks (LUC).	N/A	Allocation is located in a Country Park.	N/A	N/A	Allocation is not located on a Country Park.	N/A
SA objective 16: To safeguard and enhance the quality of soil						
<u>ALL ALLOCATIONS</u> Loss of good quality agricultural land Source: digital data showing agricultural land classification (LUC)	Significant proportion of allocated land ($\geq 25\%$) on grade 1 or 2 agricultural land	Significant proportion of allocated land ($\geq 25\%$) on grade 3 agricultural land	N/A	N/A	All other sites	N/A

Local Development Scheme		Agenda No: 7
Corporate Priority: Securing appropriate infrastructure and housing growth Portfolio: Planning and Property Report Presented by: Alan Massow Report prepared by: Alan Massow		
Background Papers: The Local Development Scheme 2014 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)		Public YES
Options: To approve, amend or not to approve the Local Development Scheme 2015.		Key Decision: NO
Executive Summary: The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a project management document, which sets out the planning documents that the Council will produce and the timetable for their production. A copy of the revised LDS is attached at Appendix 1 . This report is asking that Members approve the revised version of the LDS.		
Decision: To approve the Local Development Scheme 2015.		
Purpose of Decision: To set out the programme for preparation of Local Development documents and Supplementary Planning Documents in the District.		
Corporate implications [should be explained in detail]		
Financial:	Cost of plan preparation is being met from base budget	
Legal:	Must comply with Governments legislation and guidance on planning policy	
Equalities/Diversity	Equality Impact Assessments of plans produced through the LDS will be required.	
Customer Impact:	Sets out plan preparation timetable.	
Environment and Climate Change:	Policies in plans that are proposed to be prepared will need to have regard to the environment and climate change issues.	
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Proposed consultation for planning documents is set out in the Local Development Scheme.	
Risks:	Delay in the timetable for plan production.	

Officer Contact:	Alan Massow
Designation:	Senior Policy Planner
Ext. No.	2577
E-mail:	Alan.massow@braintree.gov.uk

1. Background

- 1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Council to prepare a Local Development Scheme (LDS). This sets out the rolling programme for the preparation of planning documents that will form Braintree District Council's Local Plan. It identifies the key stages in the preparation of the Council's Local Development Documents.

2. Changes to the previous Local Development Scheme

- 2.1 The last version of the LDS, which was published in February 2014, has been updated as follows;
- Update on the status of the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan;
 - Updated Local Plan timetable;
 - Information on evidence base documents has been updated where a review or new documents are to be produced to aid the production of the new Local Plan;
 - General updates to the wording of the LDS; and
 - An update on Neighbourhood Planning.

3. Local Plan

- 3.1 A timetable has been included and updated for the production of a new Local Plan. Once completed, this will incorporate draft work done to date on the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan and will replace the Council's Core Strategy 2011 and Local Plan Review 2005.

4. Neighbourhood Planning

- 4.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced neighbourhood development plans which help communities with or without a Parish or Town Council to establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in a neighbourhood.
- 4.2 The LDS reports on the progress which has been made by communities in preparing neighbourhood plans including the approved Neighbourhood Planning area for Cressing and that Feering has applied for a neighbourhood planning area which is currently the subject of a public consultation.

Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Local Development Scheme be approved.

Local Development Scheme

**January 2015 – December
2017**

DRAFT



Contents

1. Introduction
2. Planning Context
 - National Planning Guidance
 - County Planning Policy
 - Adopted Planning Policy
3. Local Plan and Local Development Framework
4. Supplementary Documents
5. Neighbourhood Planning
6. Evidence Base
7. Monitoring and Review
8. Resources and Risk

1. Introduction

1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Council to prepare a Local Development Scheme (LDS). This sets out the rolling programme for preparation of planning documents that together will form Braintree District's Local Plan. It identifies the key stages in the preparation of the Council's Local Development Documents.

1.2 It also sets out what resources will be required in order to try to ensure that the work will be completed in accordance with the timetable and identifies the risks that could result in delay.

1.3 This is the seventh version of the Local Development Scheme that has been prepared by Braintree District Council. The initial scheme was published in September 2005 and the last review was published in January 2014. Progress on the Local Development Scheme has been monitored and the extent to which the milestones identified have been achieved is set out in the Council's Annual Monitoring Reports.

1.4 The Braintree Local Development Scheme is therefore a project management document, which informs the public and stakeholders of the planning documents that the Council will produce and the timescale for their production. It includes;

- A timetable for the production and adoption for all Development Plan Documents within the Local Development Scheme time period (3 years).
- Identifying background studies and documents, which form the evidence base for the Local Plan.
- A list of current adopted Supplementary Planning Documents, Material Planning Guidance and Development Briefs.
- Arrangements for monitoring and review.

2. Planning Context

National Planning Guidance

2.1 National Planning Guidance is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, which was published on 27th March 2012. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Updated Planning Practice Guidance was released in March 2014.

County Planning Policy

2.2 Essex County Council are the authority responsible for production of the Waste and Minerals Local Plans, which form part of the Development Plan. At present the adopted plan for Essex is;

- The Essex Minerals Local Plan (2014)
- Waste Local Plan (2001)

2.3 More details on the waste and minerals development document can be found on the Essex County Council website www.essex.gov.uk following the links from planning to minerals and waste policy.

Adopted Local Planning Policy

2.4 Current adopted planning policy in Braintree is made up of the Core Strategy, adopted in September 2011 and Proposals Map and the Braintree District Local Plan Review, which was adopted in July 2005 and Proposals Map Insets set out in that document.

2.5 The Braintree District Local Plan Review was adopted in July 2005. In July 2008 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government decided that the majority of the Braintree District Local Plan Review policies would remain in force with the exception of the following 11 policies, which have either already been implemented, or have been superseded by more recent Government policy guidance;

- RLP23 Provision for Gypsies and Travelling Showpersons
- RLP43 Atlas Works Site, Earls Colne
- RLP57 Freeport Special Policy Area
- RLP66 Flood Risk in Developed and Urban Areas
- RLP66 Flood Risk in Undeveloped Areas
- RLP68 Functional Floodplains
- RLP130 Indoor Sport and Leisure Site, Braintree Retail Park
- RLP131 Swimming Pool, Millennium Way, Braintree
- RLP132 Community Swimming Pool, Ramsey School, Halstead
- RLP156 Community Uses Site, Colchester Road, Halstead
- RLP165 Monitoring

2.6 When the Core Strategy was adopted in 2011, it superseded the following policies in the Braintree Local Plan Review 2005;

- RLP1 Housing Provision
- RLP5 Affordable Housing in New Developments
- RLP60 Braintree Branch Line Improvement

- RLP61 New Road Schemes
- RLP78 Countryside
- RLP79 Special Landscape Areas
- RLP88 Agricultural land
- RLP110 Retail and Town Centre Development
- RLP111 Retail Development
- RLP137 Open Space Standards
- RLP139 Allotments
- RLP163 Infrastructure and Community Facilities

2.7 It was the intention that the remaining policies in the Local Plan Review 2005 would be used, until they were superseded by the adoption of new policies in the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document. However, the transitional arrangements following the publication of the NPPF in March 2012 and set out in Annex 1: Implementation of that document state;

“214. For 12 months from the day of publication, decision-takers may continue to give full weight to relevant policies adopted since 2004 even if there is a limited degree of conflict with this Framework.

215. In other cases and following this 12-month period, due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with this framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given)”.

2.8 This means that after 28th March 2013, policies in the Core Strategy and remaining policies in the Local Plan Review will have different weight depending on their compatibility with the NPPF and the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

2.9 The NPPF regime also allows for weight to be given to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

“the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced the preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);

The extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given);
and

The degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the policies in this (sic) Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in this Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).”

2.10 Following the decision to stop production of the Pre Submission Draft Site Allocations and Development Management Plan and commence work on a new Local Plan, at a Full Council meeting on the 15th September 2014, Members agreed to an interim planning policy statement. This proposed that the Pre Submission Draft Site Allocations and Development Management Plan policies and inset maps should be given weight in the determination of planning applications, during the production of the new Local Plan. The Council believes that the site allocations and policies contained within the Pre Submission ADMP are based on robust and credible evidence and have undergone as significant amount of public consultation and Member engagement. The Council therefore consider these acceptable in principle.

2.11 The Council accordingly adopted the land allocations and development management policies for their use in development management decision making.

3. Local Plan and Local Development Framework

3.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 required the preparation of new planning documents to replace the previous planning system. This new suite of documents was part of the Local Development Framework (LDF). However, following a change of government in 2010, a new set of Town and County Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations came into force in April 2012 (And amended in November 2012) and these revert to the former terminology of a 'Local Plan'.

3.2 Braintree District Council has already adopted a Core Strategy under the Local Development Framework System.

3.3 The purpose of these documents remains the same. It will set out how the Council plans for, and makes decisions about, the future of towns, villages and countryside and will set out a strategy for the future development of the District, which is based on a clear and locally distinct vision. This vision will be developed with the involvement of the local community and there should be commitment by all relevant agencies to its delivery.

3.4 The Local Plan consists of a number of documents, including Development Plan Documents (DPDs) such as the Local Plan, Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), a Local Development Scheme (LDS), an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) and a Statement of Community Involvement. Further details about each document and their progress in Braintree District are given as follows:-

3.5 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

Purpose: This document sets out the standards and approach to involving the community and stakeholders in the production of the local development framework and in the Development Management process.

Status: The Council adopted its SCI in July 2006 following agreement by an independent planning inspector, with a supplement agreed in 2009. A revised draft SCI was published in January 2013, to reflect new national guidance and changes in the way that information is accessed, particularly in relation to electronic media. The revised SCI was approved by Full Council on the 23rd September 2013.

3.6 The Core Strategy Development Plan Document

Purpose: The key document in the Local Development Framework, which sets out the key strategic vision and objectives for the District and contains strategic sites, which are essential to the delivery of the plan.

Status: The Council adopted its Core Strategy in September 2011, following examination of soundness by an independent planning inspector.

3.7 The Site Allocations and Development Management Plan

Purpose: A development plan document, which is in conformity with the Core Strategy. This allocates sites for new housing, employment, retail and other land uses and sets out non-strategic planning policies, by which planning applications are judged, to ensure that they will meet the vision set out in the Core Strategy.

Status: The Site Allocations and Development Management Plan was withdrawn on the 30th June 2014. At a Full Council meeting on the 15th September 2014 the Council agreed that the document would be considered as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

3.8 Local Plan

Purpose: Sets out strategic and non-strategic allocations for land use, and policies for the determination of planning applications.

Status: None at present, issues and options consultation to begin in early 2015.

3.9 Proposals Map

Purpose: To explain geographically the adopted policies and proposals within the Development Plan Documents.

Status: A new Proposals Map was approved with the Core Strategy in September 2011, but did not replace the Inset Maps contained within the Local Plan Review 2005. A final Proposals Map will be published in the new Local Plan.

3.10 The Annual Monitoring Report

Purpose: To set out the principal characteristics of the District and assess progress in preparing Local Development Documents and monitor progress in housing, employment and other development.

Status: Published yearly in December and covers the period of April – March.

3.11 Local Development Scheme (LDS)

Purpose: A project management document to inform stakeholders of the timetable for production of documents.

Status: This draft LDS will replace the 2014 – 2016 LDS when approved by the Council.

3.12 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

These are supplementary to the Local Development Documents. Further detail is set out in Section 4.

3.13 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule

Purpose: To set out the standard levy which the local authority will be applying to some developments and to define the infrastructure projects, which it is intended to fund.

Status: The Council will decide whether to adopt the CIL Levy in 2015 following a cost benefit analysis. If the Council agrees to adopt the levy, it will start working on preparation of a charging schedule during 2015.

3.14 Local Plan – Timetable for Production

Role and Content	Sets out strategic and detailed allocations of land for housing, employment, retail and other major land uses.
------------------	--

	Sets out strategic and non-strategic development management policies.
Status	Development Plan Document
Chain of Conformity	Must be consistent with National Policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework
Geographic Coverage	Whole of Braintree District
Timetables and Milestones	
Evidence Base Update Update of strategic level evidence base	September 2014 - May 2015
Issues and Scoping Consultation	Jan to March 2015
Member Approval of Consultation Document	Autumn 2015
Public Participation of preferred options	Winter 2015
Consideration of Representations and amendment of document	Winter 2015/Spring 2016
Council Approval of Pre Submission Document	Spring 2016
Submission Draft Consultation	Summer 2016
Member Consideration of Representations to the Submission Draft Consultation Document	Autumn 2016
Submission to Secretary of State	Autumn 2016
Hearing	Autumn/Winter 2016
Receipt of Inspectors Report	Winter 2016
Date of Adoption	Early 2017
Arrangements for Production	
Lead Department	Braintree District Council Sustainable Development
Management Arrangements	To be managed by Departmental Management Team and Sub Committee of Council Members
Resources	To be prepared by Planning Policy Team involving other services as appropriate. To be funded from base budgets.
Involvement of Stakeholders and Community	As set out in the Statement of Community Involvement
Post Production Monitoring and Review Mechanisms	Document to be monitored on an annual basis and will need to be subject to review, if monitoring highlights a need, or as required.

4. Supplementary Documents

4.1 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's) can provide further detail on particular policies or local issues. SPD's can take a number of forms, but can normally be broken down into 2 categories;

- Area based including masterplans and development briefs, which deal with specific parcels of land; and
- Topic based which provide additional information on local issues, or policies, such as design guides.

4.2 Although SPD's are not subject to examination, they are produced in consultation with the community and other interested parties and are still subject to regulations regarding their consultations. SPD's are not required to be listed within the Local Development Scheme, but it is considered appropriate to inform the public of the Council's proposals to produce new documents.

4.3 The Council also has a number of approved planning guidance documents and development briefs. These are documents, which have been either produced or consulted upon by another authority, or whilst the public and stakeholders have been involved in their production have not undergone the same strict levels of consultation as is required for an SPD.

4.4 A list of the current adopted SPD's guidance and development briefs are included in the table below;

Title and Subject	Produced by	Status	Date Approved
<u>Affordable Housing</u> . The document sets out the process and mechanisms for the delivery of affordable housing in Braintree District.	Braintree District Council	SPD	May 2006
<u>External Artificial Lighting</u> . It provides advice and guidance on what factors the Council will take into account when determining planning applications.	Braintree District Council	SPD	September 2009
<u>Open Space</u> . The document sets out the processes and mechanisms for the delivery of open space in Braintree District	Braintree District Council	SPD	November 2009 Came into effect April 1 st 2010) Action Plan approved 2011 Action Plan updated March 2014.
<u>NW Braintree Masterplan</u> . The masterplan to guide development for the strategic growth location off Panfield Lane in NW Braintree	Mersea Homes and Hills Residential & Braintree District Council	SPD	December 2012
<u>Masterplan Land west of the A131, Great Notley</u> To guide commercial development on the strategic employment site	Braintree District Council and Countryside Properties	Guidance	December 2012 subject to amendments.
<u>Sustainable Design and</u>	Braintree District	Guidance	2007 – To be

<u>Construction Checklist.</u> A checklist to help owners address sustainability implications of their planning applications	Council		reviewed in light of emerging policy requirements.
<u>Premdor/Rockways site Masterplan.</u> The masterplan to guide development on the regeneration site at Sible Hedingham	Braintree District Council and Bloor Homes	Guidance	December 2012
<u>Urban Place Supplement.</u> To build on the Essex Design Guide to provide guidance on producing high quality, attractive developments which are sustainable and reflect the local area. (Braintree District Council did not adopt sections 5.8, 6.2, 7.0, 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 of the document)	Essex County Council in partnership with Essex Planning Officers Association, East of England Development Agency, Environment Agency and Inspire East	Guidance	June 2007
<u>Parking Standards – Design and Good Practice Guidance</u> Provides car and cycle parking standards together with design guidance on accommodating parking within various types of residential and commercial development.	Essex County Council working in partnership with Essex Planning Officers Association.	Guidance	November 2009 (To be reviewed 2015.)
<u>Essex Design Guide 2005</u> Provides guidance on design and layout principles including specific information relating to structure and layout of new developments, garden sizes, building design and form, parking design and road layouts.	Essex County Council working in partnership with Essex Planning Officers Association	Guidance	November 2010
<u>Land East of the High Street, Halstead</u> Guide to development and regeneration on a site in Halstead	Built Environment Branch of Essex County Council commissioned by Braintree District Council	Development Brief	January 2005
<u>Silver End Shops Site</u> Guide to development and regeneration on a site in	Stephen Claydon and Michael Munt	Development Brief	June 2005

Silver End village.	approved by Braintree District Council		
---------------------	--	--	--

4.5 The Council intends to review and update the 3 topic based SPD's (Affordable Housing, Open Space and External Lighting) following the adoption of the new Local Plan. The level of review will vary from document to document and it may be that interim reviews are proposed to update specific parts of the documents during the production of the Local Plan.

5. Neighbourhood Planning

5.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced neighbourhood developments plans which help communities with or without Parish or Town Councils to establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in a neighbourhood. Once completed these plans will form part of the statutory development for the area and will be used in the determination of planning applications.

5.2 The first stage of developing a neighbourhood plan is to designate a neighbourhood area. The District has agreed one Neighbourhood Area with Cressing Parish Council. Other parish councils are considering developing a neighbourhood plan.

5.3 Once a neighbourhood area has been agreed preparation of a neighbourhood plan can be carried out by a parish or town council or in the case of unparished areas a neighbourhood forum.

Area	Stage	Note
Cressing Parish	Neighbourhood Area agreed	Area agreed 6 th November 2013.
Feering	Public consultation on neighbourhood area due to finish Jan 2015	

6. Evidence Base

6.1 The Local Development Documents will establish the Council's planning policies. In preparing these documents and to ensure that the proposals and policies contained within them are soundly based, a number of specialist studies and other research projects have been, or will be undertaken.

6.2 The following table illustrates the reports and studies that will be used to provide a robust and credible evidence base for the Local Development Framework. This list will be added to, if additional work is required.

Study Title	Purpose and Scope	Timescale and Review
Urban Capacity Study	This document assesses the potential for providing new housing within the existing settlement boundaries of 11 of	Completed October 2007.

	the Districts settlements, including the 3 main towns.	
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)	This document builds on the work completed in the Urban Capacity Study but includes an assessment of a sites viability and likely timescale for the site to be developed.	Completed November 2010 To be reviewed in 2015.
Brownfield Capacity Study	An assessment of likely housing capacity from brownfield sites in the main towns.	Estimated completion 2015. This will be included in the SHLAA.
Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and Housing Needs Study	Was commissioned jointly by Braintree, Colchester and Chelmsford Councils. Includes an assessment of the local housing market and recommends a level of affordable housing, along with tenure splits and the situation in the private rental market.	Completed in June 2014. Further work expected to be undertaken during 2015
Affordable Housing Viability Study	Is to assess whether the proposed affordable housing policy in the Core Strategy is viable and achievable in terms of dwelling threshold and percentage of affordable housing that is required.	Completed November 2009. Review 2015.
Essex Wide Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment	An Essex wide study commissioned by the Essex Planning Officers Association to provide information on the appropriate number of gypsy and traveller pitches to be provided	Completed in Nov 2009. Review Completed Summer 2014.
Mid Essex Economic Futures	Appraisal of the local economy and an assessment for the future outlook prepared jointly for Braintree, Chelmsford, Maldon and Brentwood.	Completed in March 2006
Braintree District Futures 2025	To present 3 visions for the future of the District to 2025, which will help to achieve a better balance between employment and population growth in the future.	Completed in 2006
Employment Land Review	It comprises a survey of existing and potential land and premises for office, industrial and warehouse uses and analyses supply, demand and land requirements from 2006 to 2026.	Completed in November 2007 Site specific update of viability completed in November

		2012. New Employment Land Needs Assessment to be produced 2015.
Rural Services Survey	The survey updates previous work done in 2005 to assess the provision of services within rural parishes.	Completed in 2011.
North Essex Authority Retail Study	Produced for Braintree, Colchester, Maldon and Tendring Councils it assesses the health of town centres and scope for further development	Completed in 2006 An update of the Braintree part of the study was completed in April 2010.
Braintree Town Centre Preliminary Analysis Report	The purpose of this report is to undertake an objective preliminary assessment of the scope of Braintree town centre to accommodate new development over the Local Development Framework plan period for town centre uses, in particular comparison retail floor space.	Completed in April 2009
Braintree District Retail Study Update 2012	An update to the previous retail study to enable robust and up to date evidence to support the retail boundaries, allocations and policies in the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan Document.	Completed in November 2012. An update will take place in 2015.
Braintree District Retail Update 2015	An update to the previous retail study to enable robust and up to date evidence to support the retail boundaries, allocations and policies in the new Local Plan.	2015
Assessment of Impact of Potential LDF Sites on Existing Junctions – Braintree and Witham LDF Allocations	Braintree District Council together with Essex County Council and the Highways Authority commissioned this study to look at the impact of increased vehicle trips on junctions in the vicinity of the proposed growth locations.	Completed in July 2008.
Assessment of Impact of Potential LDF sites on existing junctions	A follow up study to the above which included the cumulative effect of the growth locations and other growth in Braintree and Witham as well as looking at	Completed April 2010

	ways of mitigating the impacts of the development.	
Mid Essex Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	The document identifies in more detail areas of existing or proposed development which are at risk from flooding.	Completed in October 2007. Review in 2015
Water Cycle Study	Stage 1 also includes the water system around Haverhill and Clare within the St Edmundsbury District. The study looks at the provision of water and waste water infrastructure to serve proposed LDF growth and highlights any constraints and possible solutions.	Stage 1 completed in November 2008. Stage 2 completed in January 2011. Review in 2015.
Landscape Character Assessment	Prepared jointly with Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon, Uttlesford and Braintree Councils. The report identifies landscape character types and their ability to accommodate development	Completed in September 2006. Review to be completed 2015.
Landscape Character Settlement Fringe Studies	Builds on the work of the Landscape Character Assessment to provide further detail of the landscape surrounding 8 settlements of the District, including the 3 main towns.	Completed in November 2007. Review as part of 2015 Landscape Character Assessment.
Habitat Regulations Assessment and Suitable Accessible Natural Greenspace Report	The report is to identify any effects the proposed development in this District will have on European Sites of Importance for nature conservation and to suggest ways to mitigate this impact.	Completed in 2009 and 2010. HRA screening report expected to be completed in Spring 2014. Review through the production of the new Local Plan.
Braintree Green Spaces Strategy	Builds on the results of the 2006 Open Space Audit to set standards for the quality, quantity and accessibility of open space together with specific needs, surpluses or deficiencies.	Completed in September 2008. Review 2015.
Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal	Makes an environmental and sustainability appraisal of each document to report on likely impacts of the proposed policies and plans.	Ongoing process. To be undertaken as part of the production of Development Plan Documents
Highways and Transport	Identifies key issues with the	2015.

Assessment	highways and transportation network, in order to determine capacity and any improvement required to transport networks.	
Infrastructure Plan	A study of key infrastructure capacity, constraints and future improvements.	2015

6.3 In addition an Equality Impact Assessment is to be undertaken as part of the production of each Development Plan Document to ensure that all policies and documents are free from discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.

6.4 The Local Development Framework must also have regard to a number of other strategies and policies produced both by the Council and by partners. These include;

- The Braintree District Community Strategy: A Strategy for People and Places in the Braintree District to 2026
- Braintree District Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan
- Braintree District Economic Development Prospectus 2013-2026, (September 2013)
- Essex Biodiversity Action Plan
- Essex Local Transport Plan 2011
- Essex Minerals Local Plan 2014
- Essex and Southend on Sea Waste Local Plan 2001 (To be replaced by Essex Waste Local Plan)

7. Monitoring and Review

Monitoring

7.1 The local development scheme and the development plan documents that it includes will be monitored on an annual basis, in the Annual Monitoring Report with a reporting period of 1st April – 31st March.

7.2 Each year the report will set out;

- How the Council is performing against the timescales set out within the previous year's Local Development Scheme.
- Provide information on housing and employment completions and land availability.
- Provides a housing trajectory and shows the Council's 5 year supply of housing land.
- Any required update to the Local Development Scheme as appropriate.

7.3 The Local Plan programme will be managed through the Sustainable Development Service reporting to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Property and the Local Plan Sub-Committee. This will include considering progress on the preparation of Local Development Documents and identifying action to be taken if there are variations from the project programme.

Review

7.4 Following the initial adoption of each Local Development Document as set out in the Local Development Scheme, it is anticipated that any subsequent reviews will be in the form of a rolling programme. Reviews may also be necessary as a result of changes in national guidance, as an outcome of the monitoring in the Annual Monitoring Report, or pressures for development or regeneration.

8. Resources and Risk

Resources

8.1 The Local Development Framework process will be led by the Planning Policy team, part of the Sustainable Development Service at Braintree District Council.

8.2 The timetable contained within this document is based on using the full resources of the Planning Policy team at the Council, which consists of a team manager who will be responsible for the overall project, planning policy officers, technical and administration staff.

8.3 Additional resources, particularly to provide specialist input on various technical matters will be sought from time to time as required from other teams within the Council including Housing Policy and Economic Development, and other organisations including Essex County Council and the Highways Agency. In addition, external consultants may be commissioned to develop elements of the evidence base, or supplementary planning documents.

Risk

8.4 There are several factors which may impact on the achievement of this timetable. The table below considers and deals with the main risks.

Issue	Level of Risk	Impact and Mitigation
Delays to the production of background studies	Low	Would delay the preparation of development plan documents. The resources for any further studies should be in place to ensure they are commissioned at an early stage.
Changes to national guidance in relation to Braintree	Medium	Could delay the preparation of development plan documents or require an early review of those documents already produced. Review the timetable for the preparation and review of documents within the Annual Monitoring Report and review of the LDS if necessary.
Supporting Neighbourhood Planning	Medium	Staff time and other resources being diverted to support neighbourhood planning.
Problems/difficulties engaging with stakeholders and the community	Low	May delay the preparation of development plan documents. Ensure stakeholders and the community are involved at an early stage of the process, as outlined in the Statement of Community Involvement.

		Lack of agreement with other Local Authorities regarding the duty to co-operate. Need to maintain a close working relationship with neighbouring authorities.
Inability of the Planning Inspectorate to deliver hearings/ reports to the timetable.	Medium	Would delay the adoption of development plan documents. Agree early with the Planning Inspectorate that the timetable laid out for each document is acceptable. If slippage occurs this should be identified in the Annual Monitoring Report and amendments made to the timetable.
Insufficient staff resources due to staff turnover or volume of work greater than anticipated	Medium	Would delay the production of development plan documents. Consider use of consultants if financial resources allow. Revise timetable for the production of documents through the Annual Monitoring Report and review of the LDS if necessary.
Government New Homes Bonus, neighbourhood planning funds insufficient or no longer available.	Medium/High	Would delay the production of evidence base and development plan documents which need specialist advice from consultants. Increased budget bids may need to be made if Government New Homes Bonus or neighbourhood planning funds are insufficient or no longer available. Revise timetable for the preparation of documents through the annual monitoring report and review of the LDS if necessary.
Local Plan is found unsound	Low	<p>Would delay the adoption of development plan documents as they would need further work and then resubmission.</p> <p>Undertake self soundness test and maintain a close working relationship with key stakeholders.</p>

Changes to Planning Obligations		Agenda No: 8
Corporate Priority: Securing appropriate infrastructure and housing growth Portfolio: Planning and Property Report Presented by: Alan Massow Report prepared by: Alan Massow		
Background Papers: National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) (Updated 28/11/14) Core Strategy (2011) Housing Act 1985 The Housing (Right to Acquire or Enfranchise) (Designated Rural Areas in the East) Order 1997		Public Report
Options: To note national changes to planning obligations		Key Decision: NO
Executive Summary: Government has issued a revision to National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) relating to the circumstances in which Local Planning Authorities should or should not seek s106 contributions. This change in the guidance means that the Council will not be able to seek contributions for affordable housing and open space on small sites to the same extent as set out in the adopted Core Strategy policy. The changes set out in the NPPG require that affordable housing and other tariff based contributions should not be sought from sites of 10 dwellings or less (and which have a maximum floor space of 1000 sqm). Local Authorities can choose to reduce the threshold to 5 dwellings in rural areas as set out in the Housing (Right to Acquire or Enfranchise) (Designated Rural Areas in the East) Order 1997 and listed at Appendix 1 . The change in guidance has implications for the Council's Open Spaces SPD as housing development of less than a certain number of dwellings would not have to provide open spaces contributions. Contributions can still be sought from any development if they are required to make a development acceptable in planning terms.		
Decision: To note the changes to National Planning Policy Guidance, and the implication this has to current adopted Planning Policy.		

Purpose of Report:	
To make members aware of changes to national planning guidance, and the implications it has for the application of current planning policy.	
Corporate implications [should be explained in detail]	
Financial:	Reduced contributions can be sought from smaller development in rural areas, particularly in relation to open space.
Legal:	More detailed s106 negotiations required.
Equalities/Diversity	N/A
Customer Impact:	Reduced costs associated with developing smaller sites but less funding for improving local facilities, and the provision of affordable housing.
Environment and Climate Change:	N/A
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Government carried out a consultation on the changes.
Risks:	Legal costs associated with challenges to s106.
Officer Contact:	Alan Massow
Designation:	Senior Policy Planner
Ext. No.	2577
E-mail:	Alan.massow@braintree.gov.uk

1. Background

1.1 In March 2014 Government published National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG), to help Local Authorities in the interpretation of the National Planning Policy Framework and in the making of Local Plans and the determination of planning applications.

1.2 This guidance is updated as and when required by Government.

2. Changes to Planning Obligations

2.1 On the 28th November 2014, an update was issued, with immediate effect, to the section of the NPPG concerning Planning Obligations.

2.2 The changes are as follows;

- Contributions should not be sought from developments of 10 units or less, and which have a maximum combined gross floorspace of no more than 1000 sqm.
- In designated rural areas (See 3 below), local planning authorities may choose to apply a lower threshold of 5 units or less. No affordable housing or tariff style contributions should then be sought from these developments.
- In rural areas, where the lower threshold is used, on developments of 6 to 10 units affordable housing and tariff style contributions be sought from development, but not affordable housing units on site. Any financial contributions sought should be commuted until after completion of units within the development.
- Affordable housing and tariff style contributions should not be sought from any development consisting only of the construction of a residential annex or extension to an existing home.
- Contributions can still be sought from all developments if they are required in planning terms to make a development acceptable e.g. highways matters.
- Commuted contributions should be sought on completion of units

3. Designated Rural Areas

3.1 As set out in the guidance, the lower threshold of 5 units can be applied in designated rural areas as set out in the The Housing (Right to Acquire or Enfranchise) (Designated Rural Areas in the East) Order 1997.

3.2 A list of areas within the District that are designated rural areas is provided at **Appendix 1** to this report.

3.3 Within these designated areas the Local Planning Authority can choose to apply the lower threshold of 5 dwellings, which means contributions for

affordable housing and other tariff style contributions can be sought for developments between 6 and 10 units, rather than just for 11 units or more.

- 3.4 It should be noted that some parishes in the District are not considered rural as defined by the Government and are not included within the list. These include Coggeshall, Sible Hedingham, Silver End, Earls Colne, Great Notley, and Hatfield Peverel where the population is over 3,000.
- 3.5 It is therefore necessary to reaffirm that for the purposes of deciding whether or not affordable housing contributions are required, that the Council considers the areas designated as rural areas in the Housing Act (1985), as areas in which the lower threshold of 5 units applies.

4. Implications for Affordable Housing

- 4.1 The Core Strategy (2011), policy CS2 - Affordable Housing, requires the provision of affordable housing on sites in rural areas which consist of 5 or more dwellings or a site greater than 0.16ha in rural parishes. Affordable housing should be provided on the site by the developer in the first instance, but where this was impractical an off-site contribution may be acceptable.
- 4.2 In terms of the site size thresholds referenced in policy CS2, it is unlikely that any weight could be attributed to the figure of 0.16ha or 0.5ha, as the new guidance only refers to housing numbers. The guidance does however prevent the artificial reduction of a site in order to avoid the threshold of contributions.
- 4.3 Where Parishes are included as a designated rural area the District Council can continue to ask for a contribution to affordable housing on sites between 6 and 10 homes, but this must be a commuted sum payable at the completion of development, rather than on site provision.
- 4.4 However for sites in those Parishes, which have a population of over 3,000 and are therefore not a designated rural area the District Council will no longer be able to ask for an affordable housing contribution unless the development provides at least 11 new homes.
- 4.5 As the District Council has a higher affordable housing threshold for urban areas (15 dwellings), the Core Strategy policy in relation to development in urban areas remain unaffected.

5. Implications for Open Space Contributions

- 5.1 The Council's Open Spaces SPD requires contributions for the provision and maintenance of open space from the creation of 1 or more new housing units on previously undeveloped sites, the net increase in housing units from re-development sites or the conversion of existing dwellings or change of use of other buildings, institutional uses, agricultural workers dwellings, self-catering holiday accommodation (that is capable of normal residential use), and Gypsy/Traveller/Residential caravan sites.
- 5.2 Presently, therefore for every new home in the District, together with the other uses listed above the District Council seeks a Unilateral Undertaking from the

developer to provide a contribution to open space improvements which have been identified through the Open Spaces Action Plan.

- 5.3 The SPD is supported by Core Strategy policy CS10 – Provision for Open Space, Sport and Recreation.
- 5.4 As the SPD is tariff based, under the new guidance, development in urban areas and those Parishes which do not meet the criteria for a designated rural area, for less than 11 housing units would not have to provide a contribution toward open space.
- 5.5 Where Parishes are included as a designated rural area, developments of 5 units or less would not have to provide a contribution for open space. Contributions could still be sought from developments in designated rural areas of between 6 and 10 units with payment on completion.

6. Recommendation

To note the changes to National Planning Policy Guidance, and the implication this has for the application of current adopted Planning Policy.

Appendix 1 – Designated Rural Areas in the Braintree District

Alphamstone
Ashen
Bardfield Sailing
Belchamp Otten
Belchamp St Paul
Belchamp Walter
Birdbrook
Black Notley
Borley
Bradwell
Bulmer
Bures Hamlet
Castle Hedingham
Colne Engaine
Cressing
Fairstead
Faulkbourne
Feering
Finchingfield
Foxearth
Gestingthorpe
Gosfield
Great Bardfield
Great Henny
Great Maplestead
Great Saling
Great Yeldham
Greenstead Green and Halstead Rural
Hellions Bumpstead
Kelvedon
Lamarsh
Little Henny
Little Maplestead
Little Yeldham
Middleton
Ovington
Panfield
Pebmarsh
Pentlow
Rayne
Ridgewell
Rivenhall
Shalford
Stambourne
Steeple Bumpstead
Stisted
Sturmer
Terling
Tilbury Juxta Clare
Toppesfield
Twinstead
Wethersfield
White Colne
White Notley
Wickham St Paul