

Council AGENDA

Monday, 11th October 2021 at 7.15 pm

New Rickstones Academy Theatre, Conrad Road, Witham, CM8 2SD

(A location plan has been included on Page 3)

THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Please note that this meeting will be webcast. The webcast will be available on the Council's YouTube Channel.

<http://www.braintree.gov.uk/youtube>

Members of the Council are requested to attend this meeting to discuss the business set out in the Agenda.

Membership:-

Councillor J Abbott	Councillor H Johnson	Councillor Mrs W Schmitt
Councillor J Baugh	Councillor A Kilmartin	Councillor P Schwier
Councillor Mrs J Beavis	Councillor W Korsinah	Councillor Mrs G Spray
Councillor K Bowers	Councillor D Mann	Councillor P Tattersley
Councillor G Butland	Councillor T McArdle	Councillor P Thorogood
Councillor J Coleridge	Councillor J McKee	Councillor N Unsworth
Councillor G Courtauld	Councillor A Munday	Councillor R van Dulken
Councillor Mrs M Cunningham	Councillor Mrs I Parker	Councillor D Wallace
Councillor T Cunningham	Councillor Mrs J Pell	Councillor T Walsh
Councillor C Dervish	Councillor I Pritchard	Councillor L Walters
Councillor P Euesden	Councillor M Radley	Councillor Miss M Weeks
Councillor T Everard	Councillor S Rehman	Councillor D White
Councillor Mrs D Garrod	Councillor F Ricci	Councillor Mrs S Wilson
Councillor A Hensman	Councillor B Rose	Councillor J Wrench
Councillor S Hicks	Councillor J Sandum	Councillor B Wright
Councillor P Horner	Councillor V Santomauro	
Councillor D Hume	Councillor Mrs W Scattergood	

Members unable to attend the meeting are requested to forward their apologies for absence to the Governance and Members Team on 01376 552525 or email governance@braintree.gov.uk by 3pm on the day of the meeting.

A WRIGHT
Chief Executive

INFORMATION FOR MEMBER – DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), Other Pecuniary Interests (OPI) or Non-Pecuniary Interests (NPI).

Any Member with a DPI, OPI or NPI must declare the nature of their interest in accordance with the Code of Conduct. Members must not participate in any discussion of the matter in which they have declared a DPI or OPI or participate in any vote, or further vote, taken on the matter at the meeting. In addition, the Member must withdraw from the Chamber where the meeting considering the business is being held unless the Member has received a dispensation from the Monitoring Officer.

Public Question Time:

The Agenda allows for a period of up to 30 minutes for Public Question Time.

Members of the public wishing to speak are requested to register by contacting the Governance and Members Team on 01376 552525 or email governance@braintree.gov.uk by **midday on the second working day** before the day of the Committee meeting. For example, if the Committee meeting is due to be held on a Tuesday, the registration deadline is midday on Friday, (Where there is a bank holiday you will need to register by midday the previous Thursday).

All registered speakers will have 3 minutes each to make a statement.

The Council reserves the right to decline any requests to register for Public Question Time if they are received after the registration deadline.

The Chairman of the Committee has discretion to extend the time allocated for Public Question Time and to amend the order in which questions/statements are presented to the Committee.

Public Attendance at Meeting:

Public attendance is welcomed but is subject to restrictions due to the Council's arrangements for keeping meeting venues COVID secure and safe for visitors.

Public attendance is limited and will be on a first come first served basis with priority given to Public Registered Speakers. In order to maintain safe distances, the Council may have to refuse entry to members of the public.

Public Speakers and public attendees are required to attend on their own, and where possible, only one representative of any community group, family household or company should attend.

Members of the public intending to come to the meeting venue to observe the meeting are recommended to contact the Governance and Members Team to reserve a seat within the public gallery.

The Council request Members of the public to use face coverings, unless an exemption's applies, as they move around the venue and when using communal areas. Once seated, face coverings can be removed. Please do not attend the meeting if you are feeling unwell. The Council would recommend that anyone who is intending to attend the meeting take a lateral flow test on the morning of the meeting. This will help to protect you and others.

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Any person attending meetings are requested to take a few moments to familiarise themselves with the nearest available exit, indicated by the fire evacuation signs. In the event of an alarm you must evacuate the building immediately and follow all instructions provided by Officers. You will be assisted to the nearest designated assembly point until it is safe to return to the building.

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Documents: Agendas, Reports, Minutes and Public Question Time questions and statements can be accessed via www.braintree.gov.uk

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Your Comments: We welcome comments to make our services as efficient and effective as possible. If you have any suggestions regarding the meeting you have attended, you can send these to governance@braintree.gov.uk



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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 Full Council held on 26 th July 2021 (copy previously circulated).	
4 Public Question Time	
(See paragraph above)	
5 To receive any announcements/statements from the Chairman and/or Leader of the Council	
6 Motion by Councillor T Cunningham - Government's Commitment to Uniting and Levelling Up Every Part of the United Kingdom	5 - 6
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8 Planning Committee - To Approve a Change in the Membership for the Green and Independent Group	87 - 88
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11 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.	

Agenda Item: 6

Report Title: Motion by Councillor Tom Cunningham Government's commitment to uniting and levelling up every part of the United Kingdom	
Report to: Council	
Date: 11 th October 2021	For: Debate
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: Not applicable
Motion Presented by: Councillor Tom Cunningham Motion Seconded by: Councillor Richard van Dulken Motion Support by: Councillors G Butland, J McKee and Mrs G Spray	
Enquiries to: Emma Wisbey, Governance and Members Manager	

1. Motion:

With the establishment of the new Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, this Council welcomes and fully supports the Government's commitment to uniting and levelling up every part of the United Kingdom.

The intention of the new Secretary of State, the Rt Hon Michael Gove, to relentlessly focus on delivering for those overlooked families and undervalued communities by spreading opportunity, improving public services, and restoring people's sense of pride in their communities sits fully alongside this Council's aspirations as we emerge from the worst of the pandemic.

This Council believes that it is vital that these aspirations are not put at risk by policies that would:

- Reduce the ability of the UK to feed itself by converting to less intensive agriculture and converting grassland to forest where possible.
- Seriously interfere in the running of private companies and the economy and hurt pensions and investments by introducing legislation to reduce the size of companies.
- Go soft on crime and pro-legalisation of drugs by requiring reparation for crimes committed rather than punishment or retribution and making powder cocaine available in fixed dosages at fixed prices to people who wish to use the drug for recreational purposes.
- Weaken the UK's defence and position in the world by taking the UK out of NATO and ending the special relationship between the UK and

the US.

- Make house purchasing even more difficult by placing ceilings on the % of a property's value and borrower's income that may be lent on mortgage.
- Effectively nationalise the banking system by bringing it under "democratic control, preferably at a local level."
- Reduce controls on immigration to the UK by progressively reducing UK immigration controls and allow Migrants illegally in the UK for over 5 years to remain.
- Introduce a "Levelling Down" taxation regime through a tax policy that creates a disincentive for employers, employees, and wealth creators with increased tax grab of £124.4 billion
- Reduce our community's sense of pride by abolishing the monarchy.

2. Constitution provisions:

Appropriate Notice of the Motion has been given to the Chief Executive in accordance with Council Procedural Rule 12.17 of Chapter 2 of the Constitution.

Notice of Motion was received on 27th September 2021 at 14:34hrs giving 9 clear working days' notice and contains the names of five Councillors supporting the Motion including the proposer and seconder

3. Amendments to Motion on Notice:

In accordance with Council Procedural Rule 12.20 of Chapter 2 of the Constitution, no amendments to the Motion shall be moved unless written notice has been given to the Chief Executive or the Monitoring Officer by 12 noon on the third working day before the meeting of Full Council, namely 12noon on Wednesday 6th October 2021.

Report Title: The Salings Neighbourhood Plan Adoption	
Report to: Council	
Date: 11 th October 2021	For: Decision
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: N/A
Report Presented by: Councillor Mrs Gabrielle Spray, Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure	
Enquiries to: Alan Massow, Principal Planning Policy Officer	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The Salings Parish Council have been working to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan, once agreed, can be used in the determination of planning applications within The Salings Neighbourhood Area.
- 1.2 Following a positive referendum result, Braintree District Council (the Council) is proposing to publish its decision to “make” The Salings Neighbourhood Plan (Appendix 2) as part of the Braintree District Council’s Development Plan in accordance with regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. This decision notice is at Appendix 1 to this report.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Decision Statement attached at Appendix 1 is approved, and The Salings Neighbourhood Plan made under section 38A (4) of the 2004 Act.

3. Summary of Issues

- 3.1 The Salings Parish Council, as a qualifying body, applied for its parish to be designated as a Neighbourhood Area under part 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Neighbourhood Area was designated on the 6th February 2017.
- 3.2 Following submission and consultation on The Salings Neighbourhood Plan the Council, in agreement with the Parish Council, appointed an independent examiner Derek Stebbing BA (Hons) DipEP MRTPI, to review if the Neighbourhood Plan met the basic conditions required in legislation, and whether or not it should proceed to referendum.

- 3.3 The examiner agreed that subject to modifications the Plan could proceed to referendum as it met the necessary “basic conditions” as set out in the Inspectors report of March 2021.
- 3.4 The Neighbourhood Plan (amended in line with the examiner’s proposed modifications) was the subject of a referendum held on Thursday 16th September 2021. 85% of those who voted, voted in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan. Paragraph 38(4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (As amended) requires that the District Council must “make” the Neighbourhood Plan if more than half of those voting have noted in favour of the Plan unless this would breach or would otherwise be incompatible with an EU obligation or any any of the Convention rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998).
- 3.6 With the examiner’s proposed modifications, the Neighbourhood Plan is judged to have met the basic conditions laid down in paragraph 8 (2) of Schedule 4B of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, is compatible with EU obligations and the convention rights and complies with the relevant provisions made by or under Section 38A and B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended.
- 3.7 The referendum held on Thursday 16th September 2021 met the requirements of the Localism Act 2011, it was held in the neighbourhood area of The Salings and posed the questions;

Do you want Braintree District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for the The Salings to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?

- 3.8 The result of the referendum was:

Response	Votes Cast	Percentage of total votes cast
YES	89	85
NO	16	15

- 3.9 The Council agrees that the Neighbourhood Plan, including its preparation, does not breach or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any of the Convention rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998) and has passed referendum.
- 3.10 Therefore, in accordance with the relevant Regulations, it is recommended that The Salings Neighbourhood Plan is “made” and shall form part of the Development Plan for Braintree District Council.

4. Options

- 4.1 The Council has two options, the first being to adopt The Salings Neighbourhood Plan for the purposes of decision making within The Salings Neighbourhood Area. This would be in line with the statutory provisions and for the reasons set out above, is the recommended option.

- 4.2 The Second option would be not to adopt The Salings Neighbourhood Plan for the purposes of decision making within The Salings Neighbourhood Area. This would mean that the Plan would be returned to the parish council. Therefore this is not the recommended option.

5. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising out of the recommendations set out in this report.

6. Legal Implications

The provisions of a neighbourhood plan are set out in the legislation provisions set out within this report. These provide a clear framework through which a Parish Council can seek to bring forward a neighbourhood plan, and the Council can adopt it. If the process is not followed correctly, it could be open to a legal challenge. However, the Council is satisfied that all appropriate steps have been adhered to throughout the process.

7. Other Implications

There are no other implications arising out of the recommendations set out in this report.

8. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 8.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when the Council makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 8.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 8.3 The Equality Impact Assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

9. List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – The Salings Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 19 Decision Statement.

10. Background Papers

- 10.1 [Report to Braintree District Council of the Independent Examination.](#)
- 10.2 [Declaration of result – The Salings Neighbourhood Plan.](#)

Braintree District Council

The Salings Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 19 Decision Statement

October 2021

Summary

Following a positive referendum result, Braintree District Council (the Council) is publishing its decision to “make” The Salings Neighbourhood Plan as part of the Council’s Development Plan in accordance with regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

Background

The Salings Parish Council as the qualifying body, applied for its parish to be designated as a Neighbourhood Area under part 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Neighbourhood Area was designated 6th February 2017.

Following the submission of The Salings Neighbourhood Plan to the Council, it was publicised and comments invited from the public and stakeholders.

The Council in agreement with The Salings Parish Council appointed an independent examiner Derek Stebbing BA (Hons) DipEP MRTPI, to review if the Neighbourhood Plan met the basic conditions required in legislation and whether or not it should proceed to referendum.

The examiner’s report concluded that, subject to certain modifications proposed in his report of March 2021, the Plan met the basic conditions and could therefore proceed to a local referendum. An addendum report was published in December 2020 which also reached the same conclusion.

The Neighbourhood Plan (amended in line with the examiner’s proposed modifications) was the subject of a referendum held on Thursday 16th September 2021. 85% of those who voted, voted in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan. Paragraph 38(4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (As amended) requires that the Council must “make” the Neighbourhood Plan if more than half of those voting have voted in favour of the Plan unless this would breach or would otherwise be incompatible with an EU obligation or any any of the Convention rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998).

Decision and Reasons

With the examiner’s proposed modifications, the Neighbourhood Plan is judged to have met the basic conditions laid down in paragraph 8 (2) of Schedule 4B of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, is compatible with EU obligations and the convention rights and complies with the relevant provisions made by or under Section 38A and B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended. The referendum held on Thursday 16th September 2021 met the requirements of the Localism Act 2011, it was held in the parish of The Salings and posed the question;

**Do you want Braintree District Council to use the
Neighbourhood Plan for the The Salings to help it decide
planning applications in the neighbourhood area?**

The result of the referendum was:

Response	Votes Cast	Percentage of total votes cast
YES	89	85%
NO	16	15%

The Council has assessed the Neighbourhood Plan, including its preparation, and conclude that it does not breach or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any of the Convention rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998).

Therefore, in accordance with the relevant Regulations, The Salings Neighbourhood Plan is “made” and shall form part of the Development Plan for the Council.



Neighbourhood Plan

‘A safe, friendly, tranquil community with a village feel’



2019 - 2034

Adopted October 2021



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Introduction

1 Introduction

1.0.1 Neighbourhood Planning was introduced in 2011 under the Localism Act. It is designed to give communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area.

1.0.2 The Plan covers the area of The Salings Parish. The Neighbourhood Plan area was designated by Braintree District Council on 6th February 2017. It covers the period 2019 to 2034.

1.0.3 Once the Neighbourhood Plan has been “made” (adopted) by Braintree District Council, following examination by an independent Examiner and a successful referendum, it will form part of the statutory planning framework for the area and its policies and proposals will be used to help make decisions on planning applications, alongside the District Local Plan.

1.0.4 A Neighbourhood Plan must meet several basic conditions if it is to pass examination and proceed to referendum and adoption. Generally, these are:

- The Plan must have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- The Plan must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- The Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area;
- The Plan does not breach and is otherwise compatible with European Union obligations;
- The making of the Plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (these relate to the impact of the Plan on designated habitat sites).

1.0.5 The Draft Salings Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared with regard to the National Planning Policy Framework as well as guidance set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The policies in the Plan are in general conformity with the strategic policies in Braintree’s current development plan and the emerging new Local Plan. The Plan has been prepared to help to achieve sustainable development. The Plan period is 2019 to 2034 to broadly coincide with the end date of the emerging Braintree District Local Plan. Further details of the current and emerging national and local planning framework are set out below.

National and Local Planning Policies

1.0.6 As indicated above the Plan must have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State. The principal national planning policy document is the National Planning Policy Framework published in February 2019. The Neighbourhood Plan has therefore been prepared in the context of the policies and guidance set out in that document.

1.0.7 The Plan must also be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area. The current development plan for the Braintree District is the Core Strategy adopted in September 2011 read together with the saved policies of the Braintree District Local Plan Review adopted in 2005. The District Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan for the District and a Publication Draft Local Plan was submitted for examination to the Secretary

of State in October 2017. This Plan is in two parts: Part One prepared jointly with Colchester Borough Council and Tendring District Council sets out a strategic growth strategy for north Essex. Part Two contains detailed policies for the Braintree District.

1.0.8 The relationship with the Local Plan is important because evolving Government policy and the continuing pressure for housing in the North Essex area means that the new Local Plan for Braintree District will probably need to be reviewed during the next five years. Any implications for the Neighbourhood Plan will then need to be considered. If necessary, the Neighbourhood Plan will be reviewed to ensure that it remains an important part of the statutory development plan for the Parish.

1.0.9 The Braintree District Core Strategy Development Plan Document was adopted in 2011 and covers the period 2009 to 2026. It is the most up to date part of the Development Plan and sets out strategic policies for the development of the District. The Strategy classifies Great Saling as an 'Other Village' where limited development which can be justified by local need to support local services should be located within the village envelope. Bardfield Saling is classified 'Countryside' where development will only be permitted if it would have clear economic benefits, support needed services and promote local environmental quality.

1.0.10 The Local Plan Review was adopted in 2005 and covers the period 1996 to 2011. However, some of its policies remain part of the Development Plan because they have yet to be replaced by more up to date detailed policies. In this respect the Plan includes a village inset map for Great Saling which, amongst other things, defines a village envelope. Policies RLP2 and RLP3 apply which seek to restrict development outside the village envelope and RLP sets out criteria for development within it. Bardfield Saling is classified as 'Countryside'. Policy RLP16 provides for limited infill development in hamlets of at least 10 dwellings in certain circumstances.

1.0.11 The Publication Draft Local Plan was submitted in October 2017 and hearings were held in January and May 2018. In a letter dated 10th December 2018 the Inspector advised the North Essex Planning Authorities that he was suspending the examination to enable further work to be carried out on the evidence base and sustainability appraisal. No hearings have yet been held on Part 2 of the Plan. The hearing for Part 1 of the Plan resumed in January 2020. The Publication Draft Local Plan does not therefore yet form part of the Development Plan and there is some uncertainty as to when further progress will be made. However, it includes proposals which, if taken forward will have a significant effect on the Neighbourhood Plan area. There is no requirement for a Neighbourhood Plan to be examined against emerging policy. However, Planning Practice Guidance (PPG para 009 ref id 41-009-20160211) advises that the reasoning and evidence informing the Local Plan process may be relevant to the consideration of the basic conditions against which the Neighbourhood Plan is tested. Furthermore, Parish Councils and local Planning Authorities should aim to agree the relationship between policies in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan, the emerging Local Plan and the Adopted Development Plan with appropriate regard to national policy and guidance. This Salings Neighbourhood Plan has therefore been prepared to reflect the emerging Publication Draft Local Plan although it is recognised that this could change significantly before it is adopted.

1.0.12 Guidance from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government⁽¹⁾ provides for 'material modifications' to be made to Neighbourhood Plans via a process which could include examination but not a further referendum.

1.0.13 We also note that the Inspector has endorsed the housing requirement put forward by BDC.

1.0.14 We also note that Essex County Council is the Waste Planning Authority (WPA) for the Plan area and is responsible for preparing planning policies and assessing applications for waste management development. The Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan (WLP) was adopted in July 2017 forming part of the statutory Development Plan and should be read alongside the Braintree Local Plan. The WLP covers the period from 2017 to 2032. It sets out where and how waste management developments can occur and contains the policies against which waste management planning applications are assessed.

1.0.15 Essex County Council is the Minerals Planning Authority for the Plan area and is responsible for preparing planning policies and assessing applications for mineral development. The Essex Minerals Local Plan 2014 (EMLP) forms part of the statutory Development Plan and should be read alongside the Braintree Local Plan. Active and unworked sand and gravel deposits are subject to a Minerals Safeguarding policy (Policy S8), which seeks to prevent deposits being sterilised by on mineral development. Part of the NP area are covered by sand and gravel deposits, and hence subject to Policy S8. Mineral Consultation Areas seek ECC to be consulted on all non-mineral related development within a distance of 250m around active quarries, mineral infrastructure and mineral deposits permitted for extraction.

Consultations with the community and our evidence base

1.0.16 Community involvement in the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan began with an event in the Millennium Village Hall in Great Saling on October 29th 2016. Throughout this process we have focused on working with the community to identify which aspects of life in the Salings are valued, the issues that need to be addressed to improve our community life, and how we can preserve and enhance our unique heritage and environment in the face of the growing urbanisation pressures being faced by North Essex. This exercise has been undertaken by a steering group drawn from the local community supported by specialists.

1.0.17 To achieve this, we carried out Residents and Business Surveys between March and May 2017 to determine views. The Residents Survey had 115 responses, with a response rate of about 50%, and the Business Survey had 14 responses. We also ran information stalls at the May Day Celebration and Fete & Classic Car Display in 2017, and again in 2018 to determine residents' views and to discuss progress.

1.0.18 We have also commissioned technical assistance packages and consultancy support to ensure a sound evidence base for our policy recommendations⁽²⁾ These covered:

- Housing Needs Assessment from Urban Vision (commissioned as part of the technical assistance available to us) - November 2017-February 2018

1 See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2#updating-neighbourhood-plan>, updated May 2019

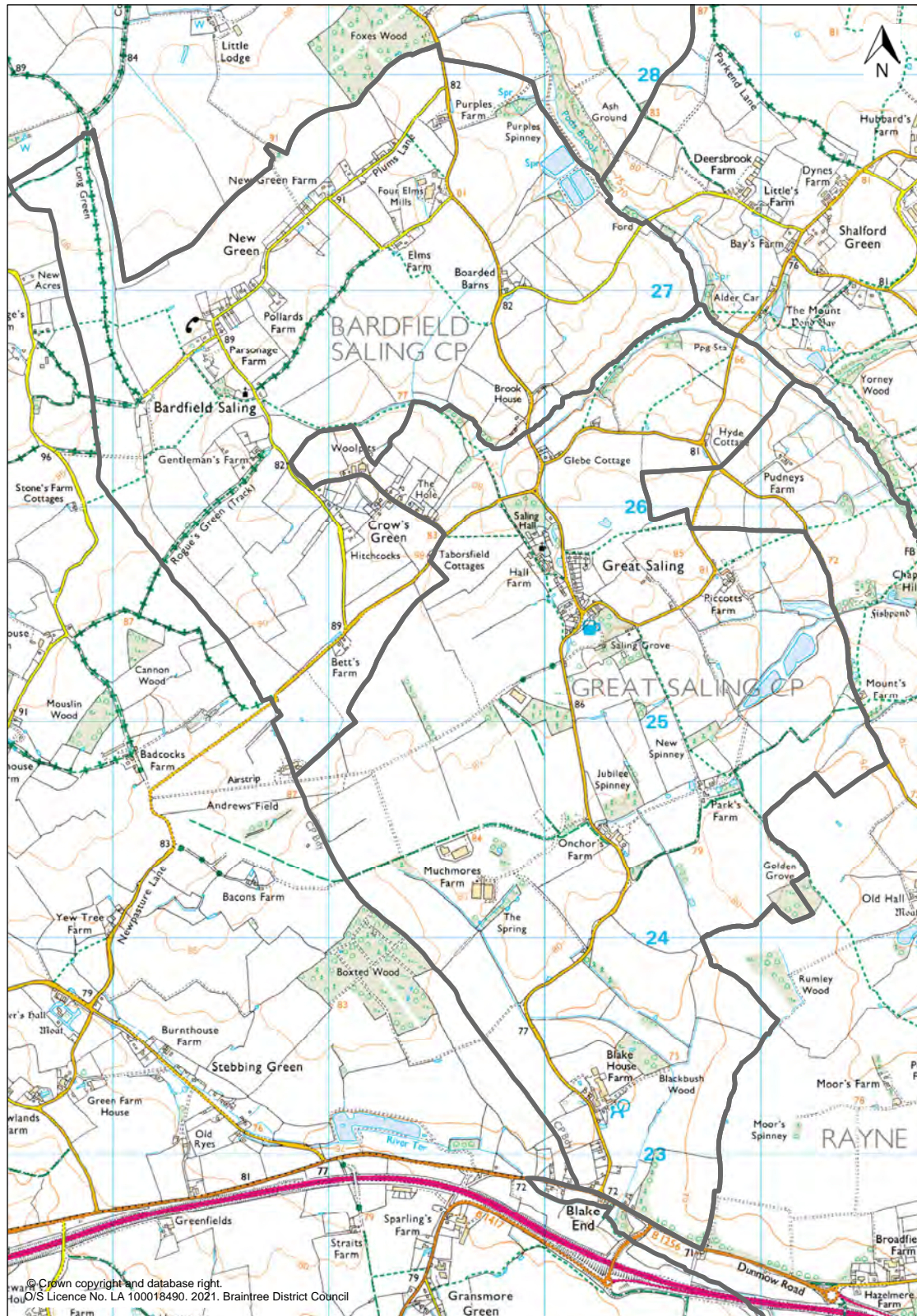
2 This evidence base is available on The Salings Neighbourhood Plan website – see <https://www.thesalings-np.co.uk>.

- Landscape Assessment Study (Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) and landscape sensitivity assessment) by Liz Lake Associates - January to May 2018
- Ecology Survey - undertaken by t4technology, May to August 2018
- A Housing Needs Survey carried out by the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE), completed in June 2019, which achieved a response rate of 28% among Salings residents
- The paper produced by DAC Planning on our Local Landscape Protection Zone, February 2020

1.0.19 We have also now completed our Pre-Submission consultation on the Draft Salings Neighbourhood Plan with local people and interested parties, and amended the Plan as required. Braintree District Council will now complete a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening Exercise. The Parish Council will then submit the Plan to Braintree District Council who will carry out a further consultation (known as Regulation 16 Consultation) on this revised version of the Plan. The Plan will then be examined by an independent Inspector. If the Inspector finds that the Plan meets the basic conditions, it will then go forward to a local referendum. If more than 50% of those who vote, vote in favour of the Plan it will then be “made” (i.e. adopted) by Braintree District Council. It will then form part of the Development Plan and carry statutory weight when decisions are made on planning applications in the plan area.

1.0.20 The structure of the rest of this document is as follows:

- **Section 2** gives an overview of the Salings today, our vision for the Salings and our objectives for the different policy areas listed below, while Section 3 provides a stocktake of the issues facing us in key areas.
- **Section 4** sets out the land use policies we recommend for each of these areas
- **Section 5** sets out a programme of community actions to realise objectives not directly related to land use which have emerged during the preparation of this plan.



The Salings Neighbourhood Area

The Salings Today and in the Future

2 The Salings Today and in the Future

2.0.1 In this section we describe the Salings as they are today, and the vision that has been developed - from the Residents Survey - for the future.

2.1 The Salings Today

2.1.1 The Salings - Great Saling and Bardfield Saling (also known as Little Saling) are two villages nestling in the North Essex countryside between Braintree to the east and Great Dunmow to the west. Historically they were agricultural villages, with the main employment opportunities being in farming or associated activities.

2.1.2 In terms of **landscape**, the Salings have a strongly undeveloped rural character. There is an extensive network of winding lanes, ancient byways and paths with mature trees and hedgerows which all provide a strong sense of historic continuity, integrity and cultural value. The landscape is typically flat and open in character with medium to large fields divided by hedgerows, meadows, small woodland copses and mature woodland blocks. Hall Farm Meadows, Golden Grove and Pods Brook are the areas of highest ecological value.

2.1.3 **Great Saling** developed as a small nucleated village between Saling Hall and Saling Grove, surrounding a central green which was once been home to an elm tree reputed to be the largest elm tree in England. **Bardfield Saling** is more dispersed, with attractive views over open landscape and its historic church of St Peter & St Paul at its heart.

2.1.4 The **population** of the Salings (at the time of the 2011 Census) was 475 'usual residents'; compared to England, we have fewer residents in the 25-44 age range, and a higher number who are 45 and over (55% of total residents). This is consistent with the overall impression of the Salings as somewhere people choose to move to as they become more financially secure later in life.

2.1.5 The Salings also have a rich **heritage**, with two listed, historic churches (St James the Great in Great Saling, St Peter & St Paul in Little Saling). St James adjoins **Saling Hall**⁽³⁾, a small timber-framed country manor house, faced with red and blue brick under a red-tiled roof (with a Grade II* listing), and its five hectares of landscaped gardens. At the opposite end of the Great Saling Conservation Area lies **Saling Grove**, built by John Yeldham in 1754: it is Grade II listed and has gardens laid out by Humphrey Repton. In total, there are over 60 Listed Buildings in the Salings: in addition to those listed above, they include historic houses, barn conversions and agricultural buildings⁽⁴⁾.

2.1.6 This heritage is complemented by a range of **leisure and community assets** which the community of the Salings has worked hard to create and protect - including the Salings Millennium Village Hall, the Playing Fields, the allotments, and Andrewsfield.

3 Dating back to Elizabethan times - see http://www.salinghall.com/saling_hall_history.html

4 See <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england/great-saling-braintree-essex#.XUxZWY2ZPUo>, and <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england/bardfield-saling-braintree-essex#.XUxpSS2ZPUo>

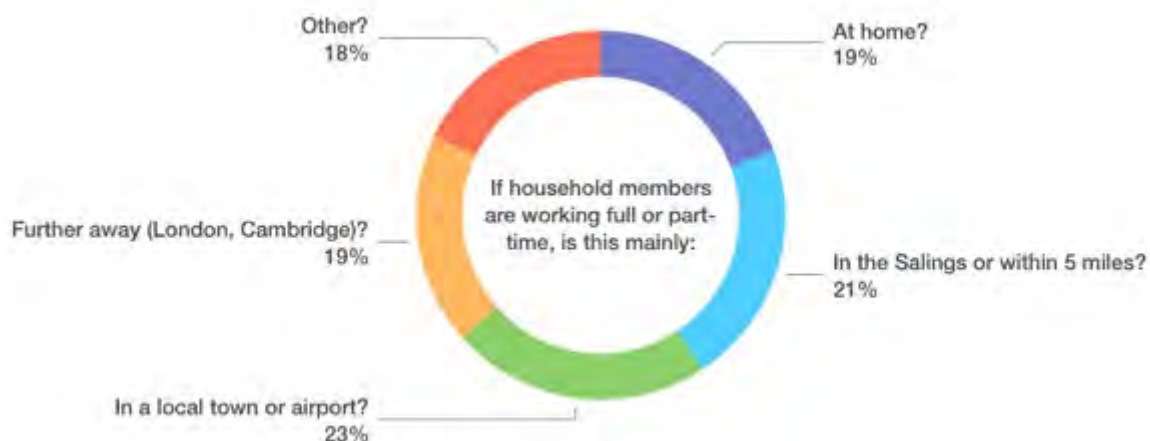
2.1.7 The Salings have changed significantly in the last 100 years: a major change came in 1942, with the creation of **Andrewsfield** - the first of fourteen "Type A" airfields built by the United States Army Air Forces in the United Kingdom during the Second World War. The airfield fell into disuse after 1945, but in 1972 aircraft again returned to Andrewsfield when a 915m grass strip along part of the line of the original main runway was constructed. As flying increased, a clubhouse and flying control were erected in 1975 and the airfield was licensed by the CAA in 1976. In addition to the flying activities, which include a flight school, there is also a clubhouse and Millibar (now registered as an Asset of Community Value) serving food and drinks which is open to non-flyers and is a popular local meeting point.



Picture 1

2.1.8 The facilities at Andrewsfield (the runway, clubhouse and hangers) are on land owned by two local farming families. One of these families owns the airfield itself and runs Andrewsfield Air Operations Limited, the company which holds the CAA license for Andrewsfield. The airfield is operated and managed by Andrewsfield Aviation Ltd. The land on which the clubhouse sits and the hangers and other land at Andrewsfield is owned by a different family.

2.1.9 Other changes to the Salings have been more gradual: the increasing mechanisation of agriculture has led to less employment on the land, and there has been a growth of other businesses and leisure and tourism activities such as the craft centre at Blake End. As a result, the Residents' Survey found that more people work away from the Salings (in a local town or airport or even further afield) than work at home, in the Salings, or within a 5 mile radius. This has had an impact on local services: the Salings no longer have a blacksmith, a post office, a shop, or a local pub.



2.1.10 So, the Salings now have a high proportion of people who have made a conscious decision to live in the area. It is important that we preserve and enhance the features our community values.

2.2 Our Vision for The Salings

2.2.1 In our Residents Survey, we asked a number of questions about what residents valued in the Salings, and how they would like the Salings to develop:

- **Question 2:** *Please tell us what you most value about living in the Salings?*
- **Question 4:** *Thinking of the future of the Salings - how would you like to see it evolve over the next 15 years?*
- **Question 5:** *Which words or phrases would you like to be able to use to describe the Salings in 15 years' time? Please choose up to 5*

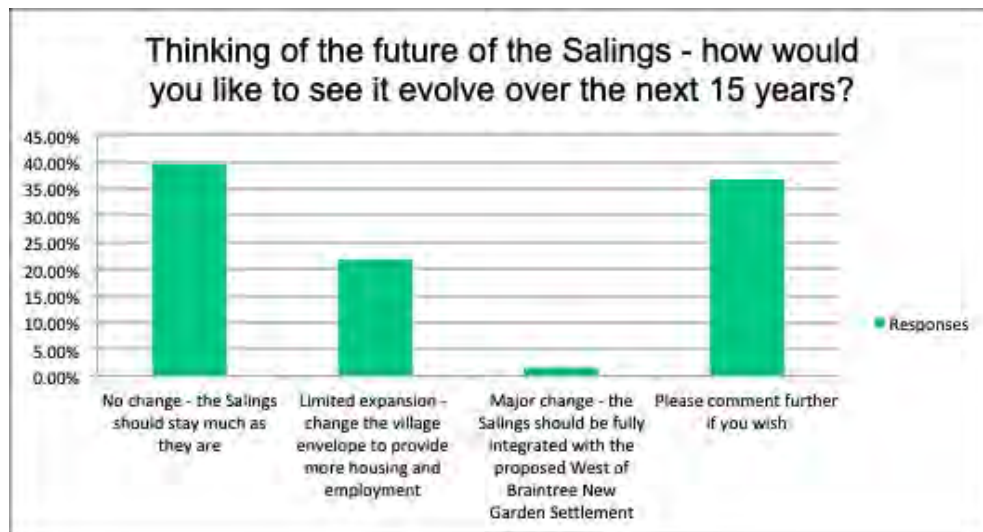
2.2.2 The following 'word cloud' for Question 2 illustrates a number of the themes which emerged:

Q2 Please tell us what you most value about living in the Salings

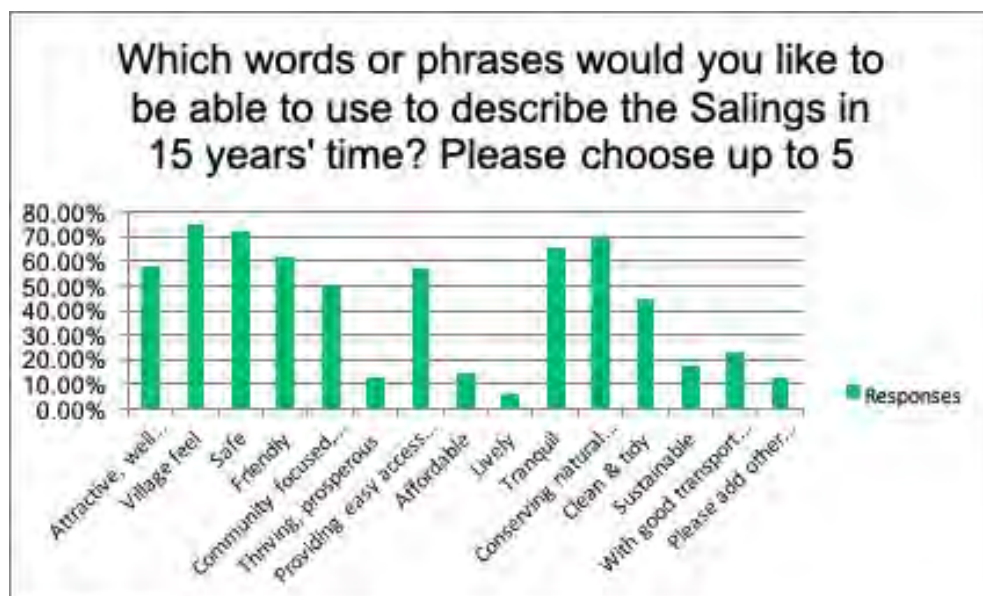
Answered: 110 Skipped: 3

Environment Living Beautiful Lots
 Community Wildlife Country Side
 Green Peace and Quiet Clean Air
 Rural Space Village Noise Tranquility Nature
 Church Scenery Traffic Historic Wildlife Towns
 Rural Friendly Countryside Natural
 Quiet Village Community Dark Skies
 Walks Residents Local Sense Surrounding
 Tranquility
 Footpaths Town Andrewsfield Hall
 Easy Access Light Countryside Shops
 Peaceful Place Village Small Population
 Community Playing Field Wildlife Air
 Local Safe Traffic Unspoilt
 Friendly Neighbours Braintree Beautiful Houses
 Good Neighbours

2.2.3 In terms of how residents would like to see the Salings evolve, while 40% wanted it to 'stay the same', 20% thought there should be limited expansion:



2.2.4 When asked what words or phrases they would like to use to describe the Salings in 15 years' time, the top five answers paint a picture of a safe, friendly, tranquil locality with a village feel, conserving natural habitats. Later in the survey, over 90% of respondents wanted to protect the historic and natural environments of the Salings - including its wildlife and woodlands - as much as possible, and the views over open countryside.



2.2.5 This leads to our vision for the Salings:

'Our vision for the Salings is for a safe, friendly, tranquil community with a village feel, which conserves our historic buildings and natural habitats- particularly our wildlife and woodlands - and with easy access to the open countryside.'

Issues Facing The Salings

3 Issues Facing The Salings

3.0.1 In this section we set out the issues facing the Salings, based on:

- The responses to the Residents and Business Surveys
- The specialist input we have commissioned:
 - Housing Needs Assessment carried out by Urban Vision
 - Landscape Assessment Study done by Liz Lake Associates
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal carried out by t4ecology; and
 - Housing Needs Survey conducted by RCCE
- The issues raised by BDC's plans, particularly insofar as the West of Braintree Garden Community is concerned.

3.1 Heritage

The History of The Salings

3.1.1 The heritage of the Salings is indelibly entwined with those people who worked and lived off the fertile farmland that surrounds us. Farmers and landowners set out field boundaries and helped to create the landscape that we enjoy today. The same people who farmed the land also built homes, some grand, some small by which to sustain their lives. Small communities, as they were then and remain now, came together in secular and non-secular ways to improve and protect their lifestyles under the guidance of landowners who at that time had a direct interest in the success and longevity of those communities. In this way landowners, the Church and the community worked together to invest in our heritage for the greater good of all.

3.1.2 The heritage we enjoy today embraces our buildings, their setting and connectivity and the lives of the people who owned and occupied the land. Our heritage is a living record and the sum of their work and influence.

3.1.3 In many ways the heritage of the Salings is little different to that of many English villages but in 1941 that peace and order was shattered by the construction of Andrewsfield Airfield, which at a stroke destroyed much of the traditional landscape in the vicinity of Great Saling and added a fresh chapter to our heritage.

3.1.4 Historic maps of the Salings show some 12 recorded farmsteads. Each farm would have had a range of outbuildings and stores for housing of livestock and produce. Many of these outbuildings are lost but fortunately the Salings have over 60 buildings and artefacts recorded by Historic England as being of historic or architectural interest.



Picture 2 Historic Map

3.1.5 Up and until the end of the 19th Century, the lives of the Saling community would have progressed relatively unchanged. At one time Great Saling boasted a general store, post office, smithy, coachmaker, baker, wheelwright, butcher and shoemaker. Both villages had a beerhouse and schools. The old Post Mill in Bardfield Saling is believed to have been constructed prior to the 1770s and stood in the grounds of Mill House in Crows Green until it had to be demolished in 1960.

3.1.6 Records suggest that both Bardfield Saling and Great Saling lay on important trade routes involving the transport of wool to Coggeshall or Colchester and the East Coast ports or forming part of a Pilgrim trail en-route to Canterbury Cathedral. Trade and local enterprise are considered to be responsible for the wealth of the village as perceived in the quality of its Church and buildings dating back to the 18th Century.

The Heritage of the Salings Today

3.1.7 The Salings retain their rural character, with relatively little change to the landscape. They have not seen the level of development that has occurred in other settlements within Braintree District and retain much of their original medieval content and appearance. The historic core of Great Saling, contained within the designated Conservation Area, remains compact and relatively unaltered.

3.1.8 Bardfield Saling has a more linear pattern of development with winding narrow country lanes studded with irregularly placed cottages and houses set behind mature hedges. The majority of the older cottages are listed and benefit from good sized, well defined plots and views into the open countryside. Even the more modern 1930's housing is set back from the road thus providing off

street parking and good separation from the adjacent dwellings. Our Neighbourhood Plan policy will seek to maintain and preserve these important local features rather than following inappropriate standardised Design Guide policies

3.1.9 Great Saling Conservation Area⁽⁵⁾ was designated in 1989 for its special architectural and historic interest, in order to preserve or enhance its character through strict control of new development, protection of trees, and the need for demolition of buildings or walls to be subject to Conservation Area Consent. The Conservation Area includes the two Registered Parks and Gardens of Saling Hall and Saling Grove, the cluster of mixed residential development along Grove Villas, the Grade II* Church of St. James the Great, Hall Farm Green and a number of Listed Buildings. Outside the Conservation Area, at Piccotts Farm, the barn also has a Grade II* listing. The brick walls adjacent to St James' churchyard, the Farmhouse, the cartlodge and the large barn conversion at 10 Hall Farm Green are all Grade II. In addition to this there are a further six Grade II listed buildings along Grove Villas and The Street including the White Hart Inn and the Old Post Office.

3.1.10 Saling Hall is situated within this Conservation Area at the northern end of Great Saling. It is a seventeenth century manor house with gardens to the north and south which have been extensively and skilfully re-planted since 1971. The 5-hectare site includes woods, a walled garden (dated 1698) a valley garden, a water garden, a rose glade and other compartments. The garden walls were built in 1698, for a house then already over a century old, with its name in Domesday Book. Access to the Hall and the nearby Church of St James is shared.

3.1.11 The church of **St James, Great Saling**, while heavily restored in Victorian times, possesses clear evidence of its Anglo-Saxon foundations in the stonework at the base of the clock tower. Other historic features include its 15th century font and the recently restored Yeldham Memorial.

3.1.12 At **Saling Grove**, which lies on the south side of the village of Great Saling, there are a number of Grade II Listed Buildings and features associated with the registered Park and Garden which include The Grove, the entrance gateway, the lodge, iron railings and gate, and the stable as well as a number of outbuildings, walls and railings. It was built in c 1754 by John Yeldham and was extended in the mid C19 by William Fowke. The south facade faces formal gardens and looks out over the Park, primarily to the south of the house.

3.1.13 The park and pleasure ground were designed by Humphrey Repton in 1791 for which he produced a Red Book. It occupies virtually flat ground, bounded to the north by the main village streets, to the west by the minor road connecting Great Saling to the A120, and to the east and south by farmland. The park is predominantly screened along its road boundaries by thin plantations. It remains principally under grass and retains some mature parkland trees of mainly C19th origin. The boundary plantations proposed by Repton to the west and north survive, while the eastern boundary is defined by a dense plantation of more recent origin. Although Repton's influence on the landscape stretched as far south as the boundaries of Onchor's and Park's farms, the area of the park associated with Saling Grove was later contracted to half its size. However, in April 2018 the boundary of the Registered Park and Garden was extended to include the central strip of parkland known as The Lawn which forms the principal vista in the designed landscape and has not changed since Repton's involvement in the early 1790s.

5 Shown in Policy Map 5 in Appendix 1

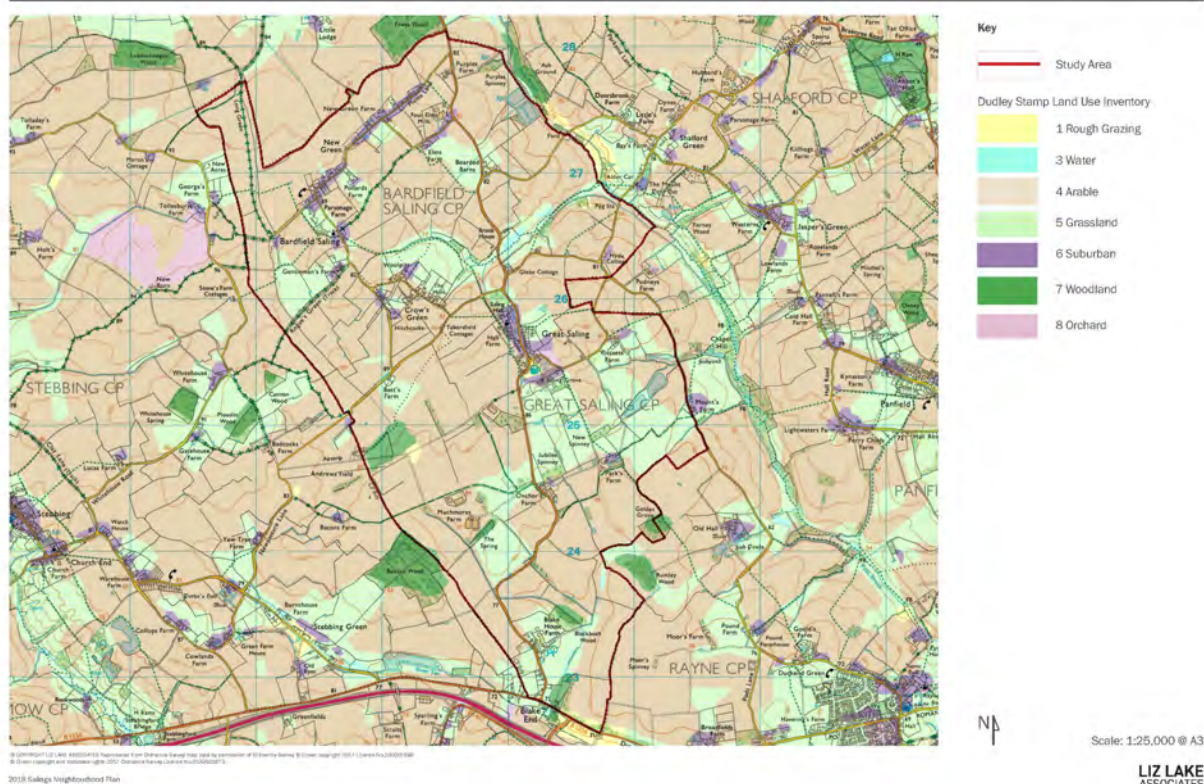
3.1.14 St. Peter and St. Paul Bardfield Saling is a classic 14th century parish church, Grade 1 listed, and constructed of flint and some local stone. The round tower is one of a group of six remaining in Essex. Of all the round tower churches in the UK this is the only example of the decorated period and therefore apparently the last of its kind to be built in mediaeval times. Inside there is an Elizabethan carved pulpit and fine examples of a 14th century piscina and sedilia. There is also an 18th century chamber organ once the property of Sir George Elvey, composer and organist at the Chapel Royal. At the West end of the South aisle there is some magnificent straw work, a local craft in the 19th century.

3.1.15 As well as these buildings, the Salings contain a wealth of other noteworthy Listed Buildings each with their story and contribution to make to the heritage of the Salings. Some of these buildings such as Arundels and Parks are as old as Saling Hall.

3.1.16 We are also fortunate to have a number of locally recognised avenues of trees which when combined with these buildings create a unique sense of shared heritage.

3.2 Natural Environment

3.2.1 The rural landscape of the parishes generally comprises a gently undulating agricultural landscape with large fields under various cropping regimes and with large grazing fields situated predominately to the east and north east of Bardfield Saling (see the map below). Despite rationalisation, the landscape largely reflects pre-18th century agricultural practices with irregular field patterns, enclosed meadow pastures along the river valley, occasional scattered small wooded areas (some of which go back to the Middle Ages), intimate ancient pathways and mature trees and hedgerows, all of which provide a strong sense of historic continuity, integrity and cultural value.

Figure 5
Landcover and Vegetation

3.2.2 Key characteristics which contribute towards the landscape's special qualities include its:

- Strongly undeveloped rural character, with some areas of considerable time-depth; historic field patterns, enclosed meadow pastures along the river valleys, extensive network of lanes and pathways and mature trees and hedgerows which all provide a strong sense of historic continuity, integrity and cultural value;
- Visual amenity value, with attractive panoramic views across the countryside as well as more intimate, enclosed views within the valleys. Closer-range views of the edge of villages, the registered Parks and Gardens and listed buildings;
- Biodiversity value; and
- Agricultural value.

3.2.3 Other land uses within the Parishes include a number of commercial ventures: Andrewsfield Airfield situated to the south west of Great Saling, overlapping the boundary with Stebbing Parish in Uttlesford District. Silverton Aggregates is situated just to the south west of Great Saling, whilst FH Nash Ltd (trading as 'Baileys Horse Feeds') employs around 80 staff at the Four Elms Mills site, located in the east of Bardfield Saling Parish. Smaller business and land uses, such as nurseries/light industrial are also scattered across both parishes.

3.2.4 Over 75% of land use is agricultural, broken by occasional blocks of plantation (coniferous and mixed with deciduous) woodland, which tend to be isolated 'islands' in a wider agricultural landscape. Hedgerows and scattered tree lines are also present in the landscape along lanes, and

on the edges of fields. Whilst the hedgerows vary in quality and continuity, they present ecological features in an otherwise intensively arable landscape, in conjunction with the isolated blocks of woodland previously mentioned.

3.2.5 The Landscape Assessment Survey conducted by Liz Lake Associates used a combination of landscape baseline desktop study, fieldwork and stakeholder consultation to divide the landscape of the Salings into 16 broad parcels of land with common characteristics, hereafter referred to as Local Parish Landscape Character Areas (LPLCAs) – see Appendix 1, Map 2. This analysis showed that the majority of the Salings has an overall High sensitivity which reflects its rural landscape character and historic integrity. LPLCAs in the southern part of the project area have a Medium overall sensitivity, while LPLCA 4 - Andrewsfield - has a Low sensitivity due to the complete loss of its landscape features and low visual amenity.

3.2.6 There are no statutory designated locations within the boundaries of the Parishes - i.e. sites and areas of countryside which have special status as protected areas because of their natural and cultural importance. However, non-designated sites are also of importance. For example, **Ancient semi natural woodland (ASNW)** can provide habitat for a range of species including bats, birds, invertebrates and protected and or ancient woodland indicator species including wood anemone and bluebell. The sole ASNW designation in the parishes is Golden Grove - to the south of Parks on the boundary of our Parish. Rumley Wood and Boxted ASNW woodlands are located outside of the Parishes, but boundaries are situated in close proximity Great Saling Parish to the south east and south west respectively.

3.2.7 There are other areas of woodland within the Parishes⁽⁶⁾ comprising coniferous and mixed with deciduous woodland and plantations, which tend to be isolated 'islands' in a wider agricultural landscape. Nonetheless, they present refuges for wildlife within the wider arable landscape, in addition to potential habitat for nesting and roosting.

3.2.8 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) are used in the planning system to protect areas that have substantive nature conservation value at a local level. There are 2 LWS locations within the boundaries of the Parishes⁽⁷⁾ :

- **Hall Farm Meadows (BRA 23)** Located in the central north of Great Saling Parish, on the boundary with Bardfield Saling Parish. These damp grasslands overplanted with willows support a varied flora and represent an increasingly rare Essex habitat. As a meadow grassland, the LWS has potential to provide habitat for reptiles and amphibians, invertebrates, bird (ground and tree nesting), bat commuting and foraging habitat. It is also situated adjacent to a small water course and is subject to a flooding/drying regime altering and adding to potential habitat richness.
- **Parsonage Farm Meadow (BRA 15)** Located in Bardfield Saling village approx. 100m to the north of St Peter & St Paul's Church. This meadow is a smaller LWS and contains a good mix of grasses and herbs. However, it is in private ownership, and management prescriptions are unknown. As a managed meadow, it is likely to provide potential habitat for a range of species.

⁶ See p25 of the Ecology Survey which has a map showing these

⁷ These are shown in Appendix 1, Map 4

3.2.9 Of the two non-statutory LWS locations situated within the Parishes, Hall Farm Meadows is by far the largest, most significant and ecologically interesting location within the survey area.

3.2.10 Other features of ecological interest include green lanes, hedgerows, water bodies/courses, buildings and arable land. **Green lanes and hedgerows** and the designated **Protected Lanes** are a notable feature along lanes and field margins in the Parishes. Hedgerows and green lanes provide the invaluable linkages for wildlife to disperse across the landscape, providing networks for bats between roosting sites, in addition to providing habitat for invertebrates, birds and shelter/transport networks for mammals. Ancient/established hedgerows can also support an array of ground flora species.

3.2.11 The relevant green lanes in the Salings⁽⁸⁾ are:

- Long Green and Rogues Green, the wide and ancient byways which once lead north and west from the village towards Great Bardfield and Stebbing
- Paulsies Lane, an ancient 700 year old green lane with hedgerows situated in the north of Bardfield Saling Parish, running in a north easterly direction from St Peter and St Paul's Church Bardfield Saling

3.2.12 There are also two Protected Lanes within the study area⁽⁹⁾.

- **Pods Lane** from the west of Rayne runs northwards along the Great Saling district boundary to the junction of the lane to Shalford Green near Hyde Cottage; and
- **Littles Lane** from Shalford Green west across Pods Brook to the junction with Bardfield Road near Boarded Barns, (the ford is locally known as the 'Splash').

3.2.13 The main **water course** comprises Pods Brook situated along the north eastern perimeter of Great Saling. This brook has connectivity with the small seasonal water course that runs adjacent to the eastern perimeter of Hall Farm Meadows LWS. There are also ditches and drains adjacent to arable fields and woodland blocks. Water courses, and other small ponds scattered around the Parishes, provide potential habitat for a range of species, including invertebrates, as well as providing a valuable feeding resource and transport network for bird and bats species in addition to water vole, for which there are records within the survey area.

3.2.14 The Ecology Survey identified a range of **buildings** within the survey area with potential for/records of bats. These comprise:

- Older buildings within both villages
- St James The Great Church in Great Saling
- St Peter & St Paul's Church in Bardfield Saling
- Barns/other suitable buildings located on private land situated within the Parishes.

8 We plan to designate these as local green spaces – see Section 4.2

9 These are shown in Appendix 1, Map1

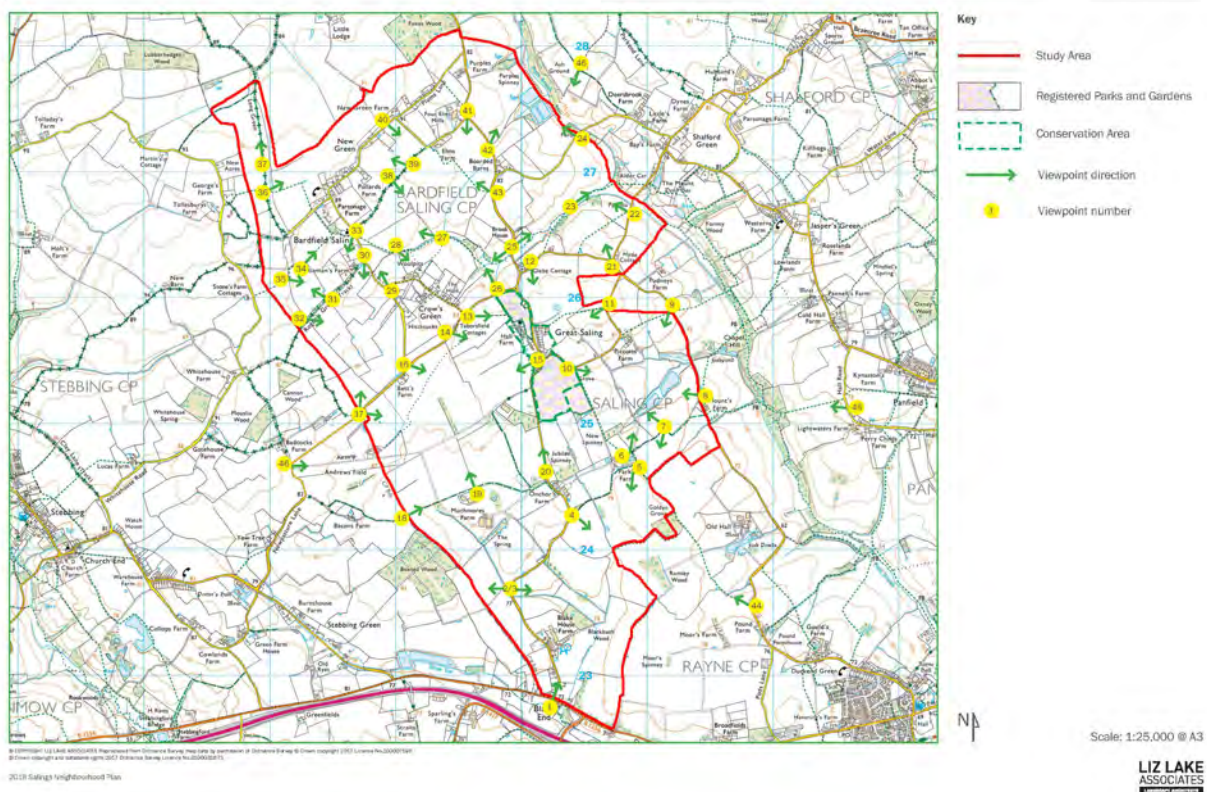
3.2.15 Whilst much **arable land** within the Parishes is ecologically poor given intensive mono-cropping, arable field with margins and/or land that has been left in set aside can provide both nesting and foraging resources - for example, Skylark were clearly visible and audible during the survey visit undertaken in June 2018, and residents report seeing a number of red kite. The presence of priority species including yellowhammer, barn owl and little owl is also a reasonable likelihood.

3.2.16 The visual amenity value of the landscape, referred to above, is highly prized by the residents of the Salings: in our survey, 85% of the respondents thought that the views we listed (which included views across open fields to Andrewsfield and views from the Stebbing Road of Boxted Wood) were 'very important'. Further work on local views was undertaken as part of the Landscape Assessment Survey, which noted 'The mature evergreen trees within both Salings Grove and Salings Hall are a feature of many views towards Great Saling and are particularly visible in winter providing a varied skyline.' The survey listed over 40 views from roads and Public Rights of Way – see the map below. Later in the plan (see Section 4.2) a number of these views are identified as Key Views.

Landscape Assessment Study: The Salings Neighbourhood Plan

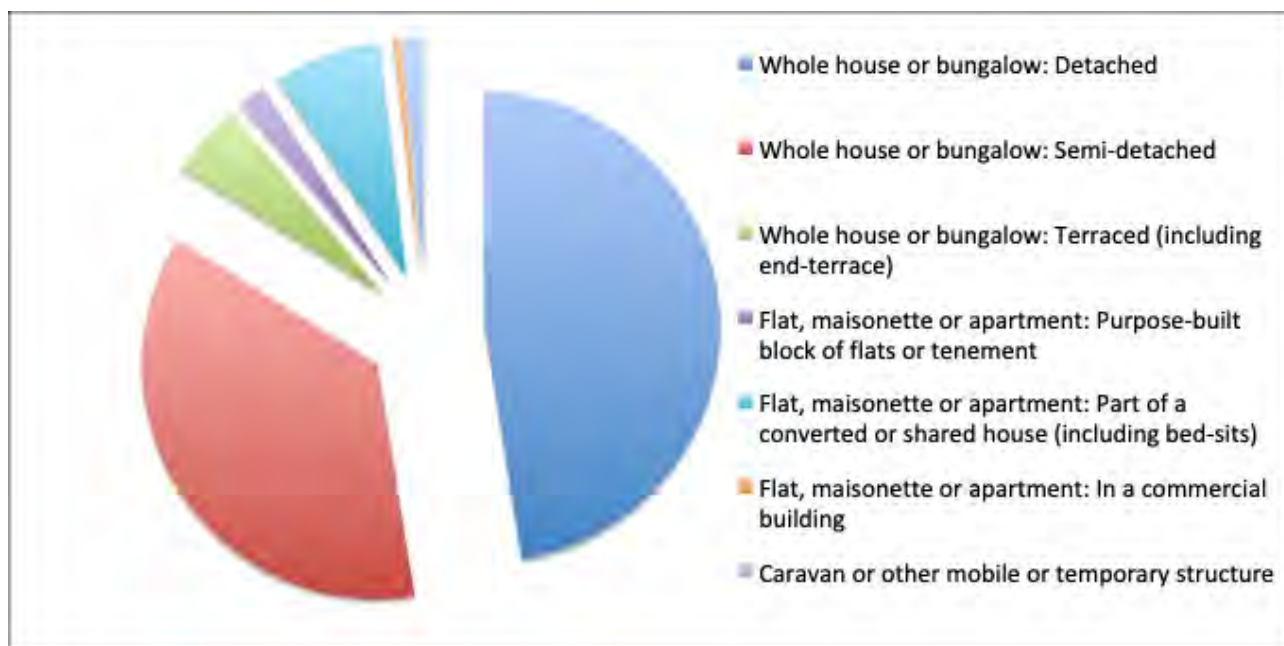
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Figure 9
Views and photograph locations



3.3 Housing

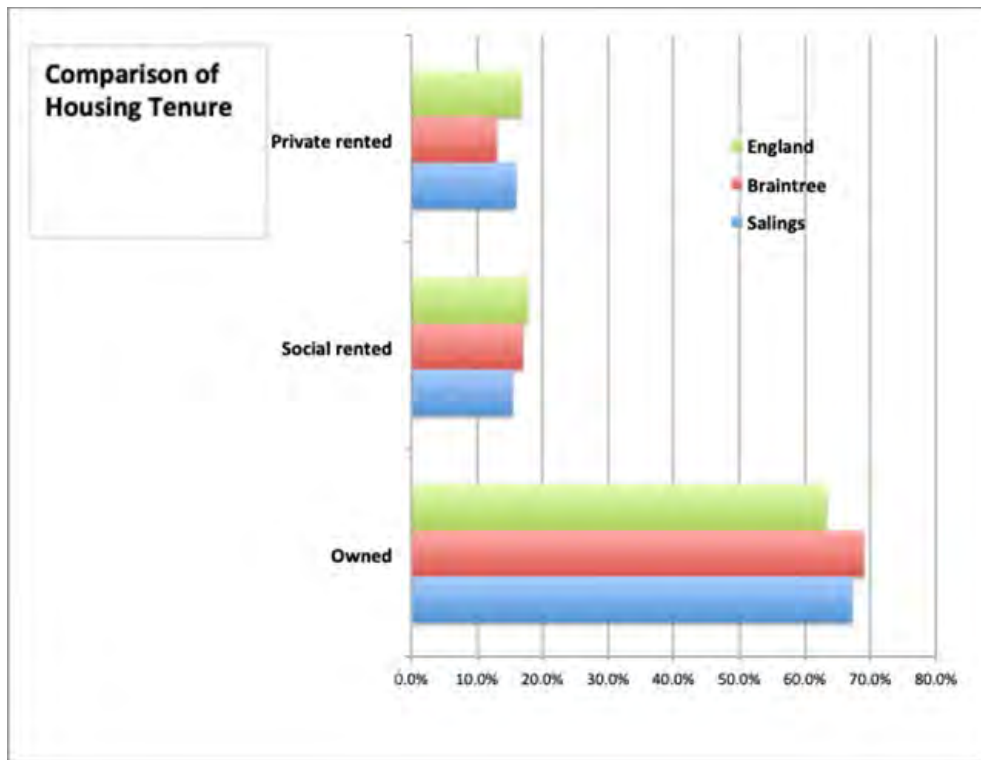
3.3.1 Overall, there are 217 dwellings in the Salings – 137 in Great Saling, and 80 in Bardfield Saling⁽¹⁰⁾. Most of the housing provision in the Salings comprises either detached or semi-detached dwellings, with an average household composition (2.3 for Great Saling, 2.5 for Bardfield Saling). This is close to the Braintree and England average - although in Great Saling a third of households are single person, which is twice the Braintree average.



Dwellings by Type

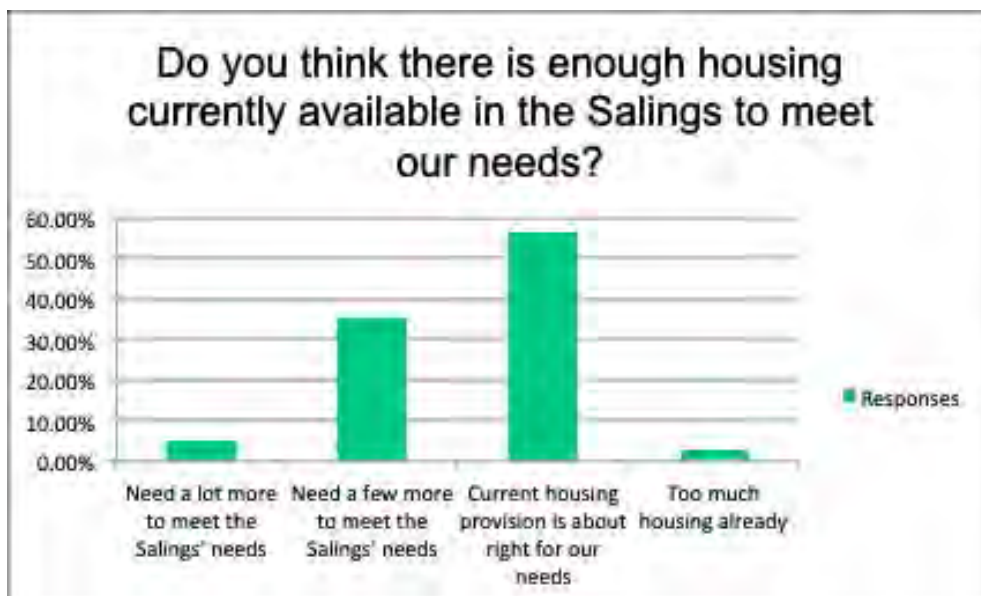
3.3.2 Across the two parishes there is a good mix of housing tenures. The overall shares are close to the Braintree and England averages, although the share of social rented housing is slightly lower

¹⁰ The data in this Section comes from the Housing Needs Assessment prepared by Urban Vision

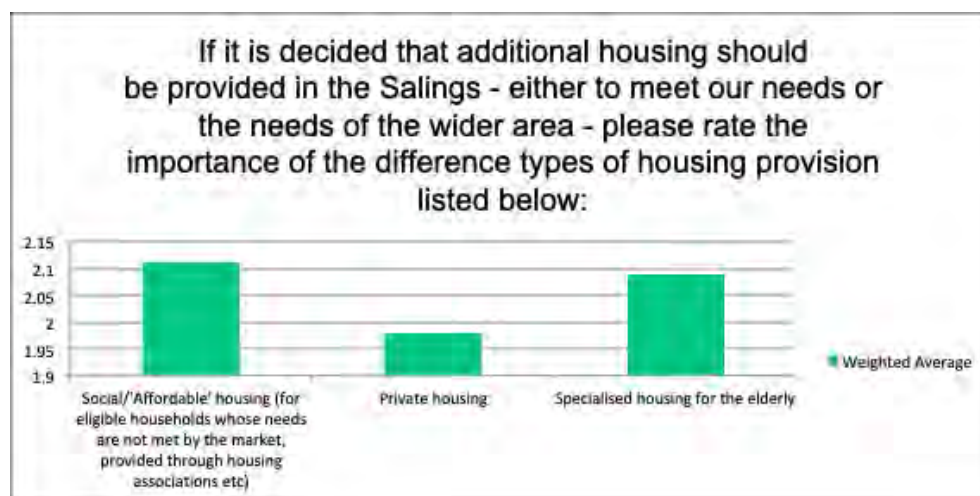


Resident's Views

3.3.3 In our residents' survey, we asked two questions about housing provision – firstly, about the adequacy of current provision, and secondly, about the importance of different kinds of provision should additional housing be decided upon.



3.3.4 Overall, over 50% of respondents thought current provision was 'about right', although over a third (36%) thought we needed 'a few more' to meet Salings' needs.



3.3.5 Some of the comments in the survey requested that affordable and social housing should be 'for the villagers'. Some respondents thought the Salings unsuitable for housing for the elderly because of the lack of public transport.

3.3.6 To investigate housing needs further, an independent Housing Needs Assessment was undertaken in June 2019 by the Rural Community Council for Essex. Its recommendations include:

"There is currently a need for one 2 bed open market property within the parish within the next two years.

The assessed need for affordable rented housing units was two 1 bed units and one 2 bed unit, a total of three units. One respondent expressed a desire to own their own 2 bed property, however, upon reviewing their financial situation we have recommended they are allocated for the affordable home ownership model of a one bed shared ownership property instead. Our affordable housing recommendation therefore would be for a scheme of up to 4 units, one of which it could be considered to be shared ownership and the rest affordable rented. Please note that some of the respondents who wanted affordable housing aspired to more bedrooms than their current need is suggested by the data. With regards to this recommendation, housing associations also tend to think of the long term sustainability of the scheme, therefore there may be further exploration around the possibility of bringing forward more 2 bed units rather than any 1 bed units."

3.3.7 This is consistent with earlier work done by Urban Vision in its 'top down' assessment of our housing needs⁽¹¹⁾, which also recommended a focus on smaller dwellings, and noted:

¹¹ The HNA by Urban Vision recommended 14 units (based on a 'fair share' calculation of needs from the BDC 2011 Core Strategy - 44 'Other Villages' to deliver 300 units at an average of 7 per village). However, Bardfield Salings is *not* a third tier village – it is countryside. So the adjusted figure is 7 units.

‘Circumstances where it may be appropriate to provide housing within the village could include:

- *Affordable housing for people working in rural industries such as farming or forestry (housing provision in such circumstances could be prescribed through a s106 agreement); and*
- *Housing for people with very specific needs (e.g. older people whose care provision is provided by family or other people within the Neighbourhood Area). It should be recognised that any requirements for extra care or sheltered accommodation would have to be addressed elsewhere. The economics of delivering such provision would mean that the smaller needs of places like the Salings would have to be provided within a larger proposal.’*

3.4 Community and Leisure Facilities

3.4.1 The Salings are fortunate in being well endowed with a range of community and leisure facilities - some commercially operated, some provided through Council provision, and some community led.

3.4.2 Within the centre of Great Saling, we have:

- the Millennium Village Hall, hosting a wide variety of village events, including a monthly coffee morning, an annual Plant Sale, Fete & Classic Car Show, and Christmas Bazaar;
- a Play Area with swings and a zip wire for local children to enjoy, for which the Great Saling Action Group secured the funding;
- a large Playing Field, marked out with a full size football pitch
- an allotments area providing ten allotments for local residents;
- the Gallery in the Garden, within the grounds of Saling Grove, showcasing the work of contemporary British artists and craftsmen.

3.4.3 The Play Area and large Playing Field means that the Salings meet the BDC requirement for Open Space provision (Policy LPP 44 in the BDC Draft Strategy 2017).

3.4.4 Within the wider community, we have a variety of services and facilities available, including the Palm Trees Restaurant, Timbers Restaurant within the Blake End Craft Centre complex, a local petrol station and retail outlet (Oak Service Station), and our two historic churches, which hold services on a regular basis.

3.4.5 The Salings are also fortunate in having Andrewsfield within our parishes, which we described in Section 3.1 above.

3.4.6 Within the Salings, there are two places which have been designated as Assets of Community Value (ACV)⁽¹²⁾ at some point:

¹² An Asset of Community Value (ACV) is land or property of importance to a local community which is subject to additional protection from development^[1] under the Localism Act 2011.

- The White Hart Tearooms in Great Saling
- The Andrewsfield Clubhouse and Millibar⁽¹³⁾

3.4.7 However, the designation for the White Hart Tearooms, which are closed at present, has now lapsed (see Section 5.2 for a discussion of their current status)

3.4.8 ACV status is a material consideration in a planning application and can be used by the Planning Inspectorate as a factor in refusing planning permission for change of use or demolition. In addition, the community has a right to bid for the asset if it is put up for sale, and an ACV-registered building can be compulsorily purchased by the local authority or council 'if the asset is under threat of long-term loss to the community.'

3.4.9 As the bar chart below from the Residents' Survey shows, these facilities are valued very highly. The top facilities from the survey are Andrewsfield (two thirds of respondents value this very highly, the top score across all facilities), the Millennium Hall, the playing field and the new play area, and our local churches (90% of respondents valued these facilities highly or very highly):



¹³ The facilities span the boundary between Uttlesford and Braintree Districts; both Braintree and Uttlesford DCs have specified these facilities (but not the airfield itself) as an ACV.

3.4.10 However, residents are also concerned about the lack of some key facilities - particularly a village pub and shop. In response to the question 'Are there other facilities, suitable for a community of our size, that you believe are currently missing?', 39% of the survey respondents requested a local pub, and 23% a local shop. The comments were frequently linked - for example 'village shop and pub' was a typical comment.

3.5 Highways

3.5.1 The survey also indicated that over 70% of respondents had safety concerns over walking or cycling. When asked to select the reasons for these concerns, residents highlighted the following factors:

3.5.2 Our survey indicates that most residents use a car for transport to school or work. However, the comments respondents made indicate a more nuanced picture - the school bus is clearly important (included in 'Other'), and several commented that they used a car to get to public transport (for example, to commute to London).

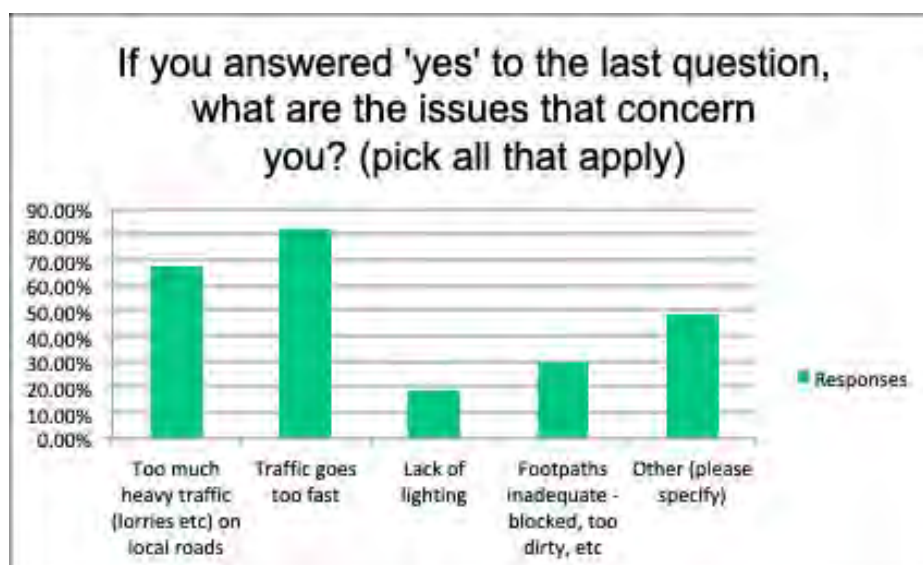
3.5.3 There is a bus service from Great Saling to Braintree, Monday to Friday, at 6.30 and 7.30 with a return bus at 5.50 and 6.30pm⁽¹⁴⁾. Braintree District Council also operates a Dial-a-Ride service⁽¹⁵⁾. The journey time to Braintree bus terminal is one hour (a journey that takes 12 minutes by car). The nearest train services are Braintree (7 miles) and Chelmsford (15 miles) and Stansted Airport (12 miles).

3.5.4 All the surrounding roads are of a rural nature and are narrow and winding. There are no designated cycle routes and cycling to work or school could not be recommended. There are two Protected Lanes, three green lanes, and a number of footpaths in the parish. The footpaths are well used and provide access to the surrounding countryside. A number of the green lanes have suffered damage due to use by off-road vehicles.

3.5.5 Great Saling lies on the minor road running from the old A120 (now the B1526) to Great Bardfield, just south of the crossroads that connects Shalford and Stebbing. The hamlets of Bardfield Saling lie to the north west of the crossroads.

¹⁴ In addition, Bardfield Saling has one bus service a week.

¹⁵ https://www.braintree.gov.uk/info/200300/community_transport/139/dial-a-ride



3.5.6 The comments made referred to problems with cyclists riding two abreast, the lack of footpaths beside the roads, and speeding and dangerous driving.

3.5.7 Detailed records going back twenty years⁽¹⁶⁾ show that the volume of traffic has doubled through the village in the last 20 years, from approximately 1,500 to 3,000 vehicles each day. Although some of this increase can be attributed to a small increase in the number of houses within the village envelope, by far the larger proportion is due to commuter traffic, especially during the morning and evening rush hours. There is evidence that the road is used as a “rat run” during commuter times, mainly due to the lack of a north to west route round Braintree.

3.5.8 The number and size of HGV's passing through the village is also of concern. The size and frequency of such vehicles has been shown to have increased in the last 20 years. A significant proportion of vehicles are associated with the Baileys Horse Feed business. In the past years, considerable damage has been done to road surfaces, pavements and grass verges. According to a report carried out for the “Campaign for Better Transport”, HGV's are up to 160,000 times more damaging to roads than cars, and five times more likely than cars to be involved in accidents on local roads.

3.5.9 Vehicles travelling at excessive speed through the villages was also of concern to residents⁽¹⁷⁾. The records referred to above show that, in spite of a number of traffic calming initiatives by BDC and Essex highways, the average speed of vehicles has increased. According to the latest figures from Essex highways relating to 2017, in excess of seventy percent of drivers exceed the speed limit in Great Saling of 30 mph. However, the speeding was not high enough to justify a Speed Indicator Device or Vehicle Activated Device: the 7 day mean average speed was 31.5mph south bound and 33.3mph north bound - to implement a device permanently, the 7day average needs to be 5mph over the posted limit. Of course, speeding is not only a concern in the centre of Great Saling where the 30 mph speed limit applies: many of the winding lanes elsewhere in the Salings are not suitable for the national speed limit of 60 mph.

¹⁶ Based on data from Essex County Council's Annual Traffic Monitoring Programme

¹⁷ See Q17 from residents' survey, where speeding is mentioned in the comments

3.5.10 With the doubling of vehicle volumes over the same period the outlook is troubling to say the least especially at commuter times. There have been three fatal accidents on the road to the south of the village in recent years.

3.5.11 The lack of an effective public transport system was regarded as a problem by a number of residents. Although the current bus service consists of two buses each day, (Monday to Friday), the times are only appropriate to users that are commuting to places of employment.

3.5.12 The Salings Residential Survey also asked about Quiet Lanes, asking which of the existing roadways should be classified as a Quiet Lane.

- 24 respondents specifically mentioned Plums Lane, the main artery of Bradfield Saling;
- 15 referred to Woolpits Road;
- 11 highlighted Crows Lane, a continuation of Plums Lane
- 11 mentioned Piccotts Lane, to the east of Great Saling
- 7 replies said New Green Lane, connecting New Green Farm to Bradfield Road

3.5.13 Subsequent to the Residents Survey, many commented on the state of our three green lanes, all in the north east of our area. Designated Byways, Long Green, Paulsies Lane and Rogue's Green have been in existence for up to 700 years. A Facebook survey was carried out to establish support or otherwise of the damage caused over years of neglect and use by the non-walking public - the results are discussed further in para 199.

3.6 The Rural Economy

3.6.1 The Salings have a rich farming heritage with land ownership split by several local farming families and a substantial area managed and owned by an institutional investment company. Over 95% of the land is designated Arable or Grassland. Most of the land in the Salings is Grade 2 Agricultural Land – classed as “very good” by Natural England. But very few of the farm workers live within our two villages.

3.6.2 Gradually over time farm building, stores and barns have been let for commercial usage or barn conversions, and today, over 50 businesses, manufacturing and service, occupy three main groups of farm outbuildings situated south of Great Saling, which form our industrial unit centres.

3.6.3 From those who responded to our Business Survey it was noted that all had been at these premises for over 5 years, and named the advantages of operating from the Salings as a rural, quiet, scenic and safe area with good access to the A120 and M11

3.6.4 Blake House Farm, Blake End incorporates the many units within the Blake House Craft Centre, Timbers Restaurant, several Agricultural Suppliers and service units and other commercial and health ventures. Other ventures relate to Recreation and Tourism to include a Maize Maze, children's golf and an Archery Club. Nearby is a well known and popular Chinese restaurant attracting customers to the area.

3.6.5 Muchmores Farm has brick cutting specialists, an automotive garage, woodworking units and storage.

3.6.6 New Pastures Lane features the heavy end of industry, with a Waste Management and Recycling centre of a large Demolition company, a Building and Landscaping suppliers and large storage units.

3.6.7 To the north of our area, **at Four Elms Mills**, an Equine Nutrition manufacturer is our largest employer, with 80 employees, but only two live within the Salings.

3.6.8 Further businesses relating to Tourism and Recreation are to be found with **Saling Grove**, where there is the Golden Grove Caravan Park; The Gallery in the Garden, showcasing contemporary art and other exhibitions, and the Orangery which is a venue for other events.

3.6.9 Andrewsfield Airfield offers a Flying School, general aviation for recreation and career training with a Café and Bar, used by locals as the Salings are two villages with no Public House or local grocery shop

3.6.10 From the Census in 2011, 71% of our working age population are economically active, close to the average for England of 70%. Self-employment is high (18.4%), almost twice the average for England (9.8%). However, the majority of these economically active residents commute and work out of the area. From those who responded to our Business survey, 86% of the local employees commute into the Salings. Few are noted as working from home.

3.7 The Design Character of the Salings

3.7.1 The **public realm** in the Salings is characterised by hedges, large mature trees and green spaces that provide a soft natural landscape character. It is rural in character with few hard-landscaped areas. There is clear definition between public and private space marked by boundary treatments. A key characteristic of the neighbourhood area is that there is always a degree of setback from the highway with all development.

3.7.2 Within this public realm, the key features of **Great Saling's** housing design character are:

- Varying boundary treatments: low brick walls, palisade wooden fencing, hedgerows or flint and brick walls.
- The predominance of chimneys (although some may be for aesthetic reasons) and porches.
- Good pedestrian permeability throughout the village, particularly to community facilities.
- 'Soft' transition to the open countryside.

3.7.3 The design character of **Bardfield Saling** predominantly consists of larger detached and semi-detached properties set within good sized gardens. Some of the other key design characteristics in Bardfield Saling include:

- A distinct rural character to the area which is a mixture of residential and agricultural uses.
- Pastel coloured render, often with an inlaid pattern with brick as the predominant building material.

3.7.4 Dormer windows are also a key feature of many houses in both villages, although they tend to be modest in scale.

3.7.5 The materials used in the Salings tend to be brick or render, and roofing materials include clay tiles, terracotta pantiles or thatch. Most windows are timber frame, with the use of UPVC windows being limited.

3.7.6 Outside the main villages, where there are concentrations of **agricultural buildings**, some sites are solely commercial uses, others residential and some are mixed use. The appearance of new buildings in these developments tends to be agricultural in character. The design characteristics of these agricultural buildings often include:

- An orientation to maximize views into the open countryside and to coppices of trees.
- The re-use of agricultural railings as boundary treatments.

Land Use Planning Policies

4 Land Use Planning Policies

Introduction

4.0.1 In this section we set out the land use planning policies the Salings Parish Council ('we' in the paragraphs that follow) will pursue to achieve the vision and objectives set out in this section.

4.0.2 Policies are in bold and are referred to as POLICY SAL1 etc; supporting text has a subheading ('Background' or 'Justification') before it.

4.1 Heritage

Objectives

Protect and conserve the historic character and appearance of the Salings, and their heritage assets

Minimise unnatural urban intrusions in order to maintain the village streetscape

4.1.1 We have demonstrated, in Section 3, the rich historic heritage of the Salings. Our heritage policy - SAL 1 - aims to protect and conserve the historic character and appearance of the Salings, and their heritage assets.

Policy SAL 1

PROTECTING OUR HISTORIC HERITAGE

Within the plan area, development proposals affecting designated or non-designated heritage assets should show that great weight has been placed on the preservation and enhancement of those assets, demonstrate that there is an understanding of the historic significance of the assets and their settings and how the development will respect their historical attributes in ways that are beneficial to maintaining or improving the historic character of The Salings. Applicants should also demonstrate how heritage assets will be put to viable and appropriate use.

Development proposals will also be assessed to ensure that the character and integrity of the Great Saling conservation area, as shown on policy maps 1 and 5, including views both from and within it are safeguarded.

Within the special character area at Bardfield Saling, as shown on policy maps 1 and 6, development proposals should seek to conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the historic character of that area.

Proposals for signage and lighting within the plan area will be supported where it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse effects upon the character, appearance and setting of any heritage assets, including the Great Saling conservation area and the Bardfield Saling special character area.

Background SAL 1

4.1.2 These policies are in line with both local and national policies⁽¹⁸⁾, with the views of residents as expressed in the Residents' Survey, and with the Design Codes we have proposed (see paragraphs on Design in Section 4.3). In the Residents' Survey, over 90% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement 'The historic environment of the Salings (its churches, listed buildings and conservation areas) is very important', and 88% strongly agreed with the statement it should be as protected as possible.

4.1.3 The designation of a Special Character Area (SCA) in Bardfield Saling recognises the significant number of listed properties in the area, many sited within large grounds, and the overall impact that these properties have on the visual landscape. The designation means that any proposed development would need to have a positive impact on the SCA (as well as meeting other policy objectives).

18 See NPPF 2018, Section 16, p54; BDC Draft Strategy 2017, Section 2, Policy LPP 50; and BDC Core Strategy 2011, Policy CS9

4.2 Natural Environment

Objectives

Protect and enhance the landscape and setting of the Salings and their key ecological features

Maintain key views and visual connectivity with the surrounding countryside from all areas accessible by the public

Protect green spaces of importance to the community

Policy SAL 2

CONSERVING OUR LANDSCAPE AND ITS KEY ECOLOGICAL FEATURES

Within the plan area, development proposals should demonstrate how they will:

- Conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the rural character and appearance of the landscape;
- Protect the traditional dispersed rural settlement pattern, small pastoral fields, paddocks and meadows associated with peripheral farmsteads; and
- Conserve and enhance historic field patterns and existing hedgerows.

Within the local landscape character areas as defined on policy map 2, and described in the landscape assessment study, development proposals in areas of high, medium and low sensitivity will be supported where they will not lead to coalescence between existing settlements or the loss of local green spaces and/or key views as defined on policy maps 1, 3, 4a and 4b.

Additionally, development proposals within areas of high sensitivity must ensure that existing positive landscape features are protected and enhanced.

All development proposals should include measures to safeguard existing wildlife habitats, increase the connectivity for wildlife and mitigate any impacts on key ecological features. Where required, a site-specific ecological appraisal should be submitted as part of a planning application.

All proposals should seek to achieve net environmental and biodiversity gains, in addition to protecting existing habitats and species.

Background SAL 2

4.2.1 The Landscape Assessment Study (LAS) conducted by Liz Lake Associates has shown that the Salings have an overall high sensitivity, based on a range of landscape and visual amenity criteria, reflecting its rural landscape and historic integrity.

4.2.2 As discussed in Section 3, the LAS also identified sixteen different Local Parish Landscape Character Areas (LPLCAs)⁽¹⁹⁾ and graded them into high, medium and low. Our landscape policy for the different areas is based on the recommendations of the LAS. Within areas of Low Sensitivity, opportunities to restore or create new landscapes will also be sought where the existing landscape has been degraded.

4.2.3 The policy also seeks to ensure that wildlife habitats and other ecological features are safeguarded, and that environmental and biodiversity gains can be achieved. Species enhancement will be encouraged and supported through measures such as low impact lighting, hedgehog gaps in fences, reinforced boundary treatment and buffer strips with native species, new meadows and ponds and measures to limit external light pollution and the impact of any overhead cables.

Policy SAL 3

PROTECTING KEY VIEWS AND ENSURING VISUAL CONNECTIVITY WITH THE SURROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE

New development should be designed to have a positive and distinctive character by designing the development to respond to site features such as views into or out of the area, trees, landscapes and existing buildings. Key views valued by the community are shown on the policies maps (appendix 1, maps 1 & 3). Development which affects these highly valued views must ensure that key features of the view can continue to be enjoyed including distant buildings, areas of landscape and the boundaries between the village edge and the countryside.

Background SAL 3

4.2.4 As the LAS shows, the Salings have a high visual amenity value. We have examined the over 40 different views it identified and selected fourteen as 'key views' that we believe summarise the views over open countryside valued by residents. These include the four views which we consulted on in the Residents' Survey. The policy is intended to prevent any visual degradation of these views. The views are shown on the Policies Maps (see Appendix 1, Maps 1 & 3) and listed, together with their key features and value to the community, in Appendix 2.

19 See Appendix 1, Map 2

Policy SAL 4

PROTECTING LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The following sites are identified on the Policies Maps (see Appendix 1, Maps 1, 4A & 4B) as Local Green Spaces⁽²⁰⁾ and will be protected from development. Any buildings on these sites are excluded.

- Playing field adjacent to Millennium Hall
- The village green between The Street and Grove Villas
- The grass area at Vicarage Close
- Allotments to the North of Vicarage Close
- St. James Churchyard
- St. Peter and St. Paul's Churchyard
- Open area in front of St. Peter and St. Paul's Church
- Bardfield Saling old playing fields
- The Chase
- Long Green Lane⁽²¹⁾
- Rogues Green Lane
- Paulsies Lane

Background SAL 4

4.2.5 The NPPF allows communities to designate land as Local Green Spaces in their Neighbourhood Plans where certain criteria are met.

4.2.6 A defining characteristic of the Salings is the rural setting which includes green spaces that have real community value. So all of the Local Green Spaces listed in Appendix 3 and designated in this Neighbourhood Plan have been tested against the requirement to be 'demonstrably special and hold a particular local significance'⁽²²⁾. Each of the proposed green spaces also meet the NPPF criteria that the green space should be in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves, local in character and not an extensive tract of land.

4.2.7 They include the two churchyards, the playing fields (both the one currently in use in Great Saling and the old village playing field in Bardfield Saling), and a number of other green spaces which contribute to the rural look and feel of the Salings.

4.2.8 We have, however, excluded a number of areas of common registered land which do not meet these criteria⁽²³⁾.

20 Appendix 3 lists these green spaces in more detail

21 The three green lanes listed here are shown in Appendix 1, Map 1- Policies Map

22 See paras 99, 100 p29 of Revised NPPF February 2019

23 These are grass verges near Hitchcock's, Betts Farm, and Four Elms

4.2.9 Some of these proposed Local Green Spaces are already protected by other designations (for example, the churchyards.) National Planning Policy Guidance states⁽²⁴⁾

‘Different types of designations are intended to achieve different purposes. If land is already protected by designation, then consideration should be given to whether any additional local benefit would be gained by designation as Local Green Space.’

4.2.10 These sites are included in our proposed Local Green Spaces because the local community does place special value on them. For example, many residents have family members buried in the two churchyards.

4.2.11 They also include the three green lanes (Rogues Green, Long Green, Paulsies), which meet in the area around Bardfield Saling church, Arundels, and Parsonage Farm, and which are believed to be the original Anglo-Saxon and medieval byways which connected Bardfield Saling to neighbouring parishes. For example, Long Green Lane runs north towards Great Bardfield, and would have connected the church there with its daughter church in Bardfield Saling. Similarly, Paulsies Lane is the most direct route connecting Bardfield Saling with the road running down from Great Bardfield towards Great Saling, connecting via Pods Lane and Littles Lane with Braintree. Rogues Green Lane would have been the main connection of Bardfield Saling with the neighbouring parish of Stebbing. These historic routes have now been superseded by the modern road network, but remain the most direct route by foot to neighbouring settlements.

4.2.12 These local green spaces will be protected from any development.

4.2.13 We also note that this policy on protecting local green spaces is consistent with the National Trust’s policies for Hatfield Forest, a nearby Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and National Nature Reserve (NNR)⁽²⁵⁾. The policy emphasises the need for alternative green space provision to Hatfield Forest itself.

General Landscape Planning Guidelines in relation to the natural environment

4.2.14 The LAS also suggested some general landscape planning guidelines which will be applicable to all areas and which are reflected in policies of this Plan:

- Conserve the strongly nucleated character of Great Saling by encouraging new development to take place within the existing settlement boundary where possible.
- Conserve and protect the rural and undeveloped character of the landscape within the Salings.
- Any development on the edge or approaches to the village needs to protect important views to the village and its rural landscape setting and the Registered Parks and Gardens.
- Explore possible opportunities to improve some existing visually poor urban edges.
- Protect the view across farmland from near Bardfield Saling Church.

24 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space/#Local-Green-Space-designation>

25 Part of the designated area lies within the Zone of Influence of Hatfield Forest. On 30th April 2019, Nina Crabb from the National Trust wrote to local planning authorities about the need to agree mitigation measures to minimise the impact of future housing development on Hatfield Forest.

- Provide traditional locally sensitive boundary treatments, to integrate potential development into the local context.
- Small scale development should be carefully sited in relation to existing farm buildings.
- Consider cumulative effects of developments on landscape character and visual amenity.
- Ensure that new development is sympathetic, complementary and responds to the intrinsic local character of the Salings in terms of its location, scale, density, design layout/settlement pattern and use of traditional materials (for example the use of colour-washed render and pegtiles).
- Consider the vulnerability of the visually prominent valley landscapes to insensitive development.
- Consider the visual impact of new residential development upon the farmland plateau, utilising existing or new native buffer planting as a screen.
- Incorporate green infrastructure that provides opportunities for wildlife, public access and climate change adaptation which screens intrusive urban influence (especially on the periphery of settlements), with the use of substantial and appropriate landscaping, such as native woodland planting, earthworks and green roofs.
- Raise the design quality of new development.

4.3 Housing and Design

Objectives

Housing Development - Accommodate sustainable housing development through limited and controlled growth on an 'exceptions' basis (i.e. without designating specific sites) and ensure that the development of sites is appropriate for this rural location; no specific new homes target.

Housing Density and Design – Ensure that the design, style and density of new housing are in keeping with the Salings and the rural environment and that it is sustainable, free from flood risks with adequate parking provision and appropriate landscaping.

Housing Need – Ensure that the mix of housing types and supply of social, affordable and elderly housing meets the needs of the Salings and that any new housing is prioritised for local people.

SPATIAL POLICY FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

4.3.1 This section considers the appropriate level of new housing growth for the neighbourhood plan area. It examines recent rates of development, existing commitments and the findings of a local housing needs survey carried out by the Rural Community Council for Essex.

4.3.2 Para.29 of the NPPF states:

'Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area or undermine those strategic policies.'

Para. 65 of the NPPF states:

'strategic policies should also set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations.'

4.3.3 As noted above the 2011 Core Strategy for Braintree District classifies Great Saling as an 'other village' where limited development which can be justified by local need to support local services should be located. The 2017 Publication Draft Local Plan classifies Great Saling as a third-tier village where the tests of sustainable development will not normally be met. Both Plans include the same village envelope for Great Saling. Bardfield Saling is classified as 'Countryside' in both Plans where development is normally restricted to that which supports countryside uses.

4.3.4 Policy LPP 17 of the Publication Draft Local Plan sets out the strategic housing locations for the District. There is no specific reference to Great Saling or Bardfield Saling and it is therefore considered that there is no specific housing requirement to be met. It is therefore for this Neighbourhood Plan to determine the appropriate level of local growth. To do this the Plan considers recent completion rates, existing commitments and the results of the housing need survey carried out by the Rural Community Council for Essex in June 2019.

4.3.5 According to data from Braintree District Council, in the period April 2009 to March 2019 six dwellings were completed in the plan area. And as at 1st April 2019 there was planning permission for 5 dwellings in the plan area which had not been implemented, and one dwelling (at Kitchen Farm) which is under construction.

4.3.6 The Housing Needs Survey carried out by the Rural Community Council for Essex in June 2019 concluded that there was a need for 5 dwellings in the plan area comprising one open market dwelling, 1 shared ownership dwelling and 3 affordable rented dwellings. The report states that these should be delivered as a mixture of 1 and 2-bedroom dwellings with at least one dwelling being arranged at ground floor only.

4.3.7 On the basis of the above information it is concluded that the appropriate level of growth for the neighbourhood plan area is about 5 dwellings. In the absence of clear affordability evidence and having regard to the results of the survey and local needs, we conclude that at least one of these dwellings should be provided as a lower cost social rented dwelling.

4.3.8 Housing development should take place either within the development boundary ('the village envelope') for Great Saling⁽²⁶⁾, or on rural exception sites that comply with Policy LPP 34 of the Publication Draft Local Plan and the definition in the Glossary of the NPPF, or on sites which meet the criteria set down in the NPPF for isolated housing in the Countryside⁽²⁷⁾ which are:

1. There is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;
2. The development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;

26 See Appendix 1, Map 5. There is no village boundary in Bardfield Saling - it is classified as 'Countryside'.

27 See revised NPPF, February 2019, para 79, p22 for the relevant criteria

3. The development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;
4. The development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential dwelling; or
5. The design is of exceptional quality, in that it:
 - i. Is truly outstanding or innovative, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and
 - ii. Would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and would significantly enhance its immediate setting and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area

Policy SAL 5

SPATIAL POLICY FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

This plan provides for the provision of around 10 dwellings in the neighbourhood plan area between 2019 and 2034. This figure includes those where planning permission has already been given and the additional 4 dwellings for affordable and social housing needs. The latter need will be met through the development of sites within the Great Saling village envelope as defined on the policies maps (see Appendix 1, Map 5), on a rural exception site or sites that comply with the definition set out in the glossary in the NPPF and on other isolated sites that comply with para 79 of the NPPF.

Where appropriate contributions from new housing developments will be required to provide mitigation measures identified in the Essex coast recreational disturbance avoidance and mitigation strategy (RAMS) once it has been adopted. Prior to RAMS completion contributions will be required, where appropriate, through project level HRSA or otherwise, to mitigate any recreational disturbance impacts at the Blackwater Estuary special protection area (SPA) and RAMSAR site, in compliance with the UK Habitats Regulations 2017.

Background - SAL 5

4.3.9 This policy is consistent with the BDC Core Strategy 2011, where the Spatial Strategy (Section 4, p29), emphasises a focus on 'growth locations', but notes that development to meet 'purely local needs' may take place 'within development boundaries' of villages like Great Saling⁽²⁸⁾. Policy LPP1 of the BDC Draft Strategy 2017 similarly emphasises the importance of the development boundary or 'village envelope'.

4.3.10 We also note that part of our designated area is located within the Zone of Influence (ZOI) for the Blackwater Estuary SPA and Ramsar, as identified in the Strategy and SPD⁽²⁹⁾. Consequently, any future development will be required to make a proportionate financial contribution towards delivery of mitigation measures at the coast in perpetuity (to avoid recreational disturbance).

28 See para 4.21, page 35

29 See <https://essexcoast.birdaware.org/article/31618/Our-Strategy--SPD>

Policy SAL 6

AFFORDABLE HOUSING - MEETING LOCAL NEEDS

The development of new affordable housing in the plan area will be supported where such proposals are in accordance with other policies contained in this plan and the adopted Braintree Local Plan. Proposals should take account of the housing needs survey (June 2019), or any subsequent updated housing needs survey.

Background - SAL 6

4.3.11 A key objective of the Plan is to seek the provision of new housing developments which meet the needs of the local community. A Housing Needs Survey was undertaken in 2019 by the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) which confirmed a need for new affordable homes in the Parish to meet local need.

4.3.12 It is possible for rural exception sites, and sites which are subject to a Section 106 agreement, to impose a local connection criteria, giving preference to those with a local connection who are registered with Braintree District Council's Choice Based Lettings Scheme ('on BDC's housing register'). A 'local connection' means someone living in the Salings, or who has previously lived here; or who has permanent employment in the Salings; or who has close family living in the Salings.

DESIGN

4.3.13 In order to ensure that the design, style and density of new housing are in keeping with the Salings and the rural environment and that it is sustainable, free from flood risks with adequate parking provision and appropriate landscaping, a Design Policy based on the work of Urban Vision⁽³⁰⁾ is set out below for infill development and for larger strategic developments (6 dwellings or more)

4.3.14 Any new development proposals must follow this Design Policy.

Policy SAL 7

DESIGN POLICY FOR NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS

New residential development in the plan area must be designed to a high quality which responds to the heritage and distinctive character of The Salings by way of:

- Height, scale, spacing, layout, orientation, design and materials of buildings to reflect the local context and locally used materials
- Incorporates garden space between and around buildings (or groups of buildings) to avoid an over dense or cramped character
- Incorporates sustainable drainage systems with maintenance regimes to minimise vulnerability to flooding and climate change.

In addition, the incorporation of rainwater harvesting and stormwater harvesting systems to further delay and reduce flows will be supported, as will other measures of sustainable design listed in section 4.5 of The Salings design codes, February 2019

Justification for Policy SAL7

4.3.15 The Residents Survey gave strong support to the importance of living in a rural village environment.

4.3.16 The natural landscape is a key element of the character of the neighbourhood area.

4.3.17 The local character is based strongly on the rural character and setting of the two villages set within the natural landscape.

4.3.18 The Community considers that protecting and enhancing the character and appearance of all buildings of architectural and historic interest and their setting is paramount to preserve the character of the area.

4.3.19 The Salings Neighbourhood Plan is aimed at ensuring that all new development is of a high quality and sustainable whilst maintaining and enhancing the character and local distinctiveness of the parish. Any new development should be carefully considered to ensure that good place-making is at the heart of any proposal.

4.3.20 The Plan expects any new development to contribute positively to the creation of well-designed buildings and space.

4.3.21 The design of any new development should complement and enhance the character and design of the existing surrounding development and / or rural space and utilise local materials.

4.4 The Rural Economy

Objectives

To encourage and support local businesses including home working, in order to retain them within the Salings, thus reducing the dependency on local transport infrastructure.

To promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.

Policy SAL 8

LOCAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Proposals for new and existing businesses and employment which are appropriate in scale and environmental impact (noise, light, flooding and waste emissions) to a countryside setting will be encouraged, provided that:

- Adequate roadways for loading and unloading and parking are available.
- Existing trees and hedgerows are maintained, and any additional planting and landscaping is be compatible with existing environment, particularly where the buildings can be viewed from the roads and footpath network or effect strategic village views.

Background SAL 8

4.4.1 New development will be encouraged to use previously developed land, and sites that are that are physically well-related to existing settlements, in accordance with NPPF paragraph 84.

4.4.2 This policy is in accordance with the Braintree Draft Local Plan, Policy LPP 8 (Rural Enterprise)

Policy SAL 9

TOURISM AND LEISURE DEVELOPMENT

Tourism and leisure development proposals for sustainable rural tourism and leisure development that benefit businesses in the community, especially within existing settlement boundaries, will be supported.

The continued use of Andrewsfield, as both an operational airfield for light aircraft and as a restaurant and bar will also be supported.

Background SAL 9

4.4.3 We have outlined in Section 3 the local community facilities available at Andrewsfield, and have highlighted the importance the local community places on its facilities - not just for flying-related activities but as a social centre. We also note that Andrewsfield is considered an ideal location for training existing and future pilots plays an important role in protecting the Salings from aircraft noise from Stansted. We are also pleased to note that both Uttlesford and Braintree District Councils have now registered the Clubhouse, Millibar Cafe, ancillary buildings and carpark as assets of community value⁽³¹⁾

4.4.4 We would therefore be keen to ensure that the facilities currently on offer there (light aircraft flying, the training school, parking of aircraft, and the Millibar Restaurant) continue. This would be in line with the NPPF's policy of 'recognis[ing] the importance of maintaining a national network of general aviation airfields'⁽³²⁾.

31 See <https://uttlesford.moderngov.co.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AllId=1784> .

32 See Revised NPPF February 2019 para 104

Community Actions to Achieve the Salings Neighbourhood Plan Vision

5 Community Actions to Achieve the Salings Neighbourhood Plan Vision

5.0.1 In Section 4 we set out the land use policies we wish to adopt for the Salings under this Neighbourhood Plan. In addition to these policies, a number of other issues have arisen during the Neighbourhood Plan process where residents have expressed their views on local issues.

5.0.2 In the sections below, we set out our objectives in these areas. Most of the actions will be for the Salings Parish Council⁽³³⁾ to pursue ('we' in the paragraphs below) - on occasion by making representations to the relevant statutory authorities (for example, on highways, to Essex County Council).

5.1 Health and Wellbeing

5.1.1 We will support the Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group in pressing for suitable and sustainable provision of healthcare services for the residents of the Salings and will encourage residents to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

5.2 Community and Leisure Facilities

Objectives

To preserve and enhance the community & leisure facilities currently enjoyed in the Salings
To use our community and leisure facilities to foster our rural character and sense of community
To encourage the provision of new facilities where these are financially viable
To enhance current levels of biodiversity

What we Plan to do - Community Actions

5.2.1 To preserve and enhance the community & leisure facilities currently enjoyed in the Salings we intend to ensure that the open spaces we enjoy (the Play Area, Playing Fields, allotments, parks and gardens and churchyards) are maintained to a high standard.

5.2.2 Residents are encouraged to help in this by observing the rules and regulations for the different open spaces (for example, by cleaning up after their dogs) and by drawing to the attention of the manager of the relevant facility any shortcomings they notice. We, the Parish Council will have the ultimate responsibility for ensuring this objective is met.

5.2.3 To use our community and leisure facilities to foster our rural character and sense of community we intend to protect the play area and playing fields from unauthorised use. To achieve this, we plan to purchase the Playing Fields from BDC using CIL funds if and when these become available in order to exert greater control over access.

33 Following a recent BDC Governance Review, the Salings Parish Council now includes Bardfield Saling.

5.2.4 We also intend to encourage greater access by Salings residents to our two major historic buildings - Saling Hall and Saling Grove. The new owners of Saling Hall have agreed to open up their grounds on two afternoons a year for local residents to enjoy. Saling Gove is already providing a gallery space within its grounds and holding a number of events there.

5.2.5 To encourage the provision of new facilities where these are financially viable we will:

- Support any planned expansion of the Millennium Village Hall (such as provision of training rooms or a social club).
- Resist the change of use of other highly valued community assets unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the asset is no longer financially viable or considered necessary or of value to the community or a suitable replacement can be provided elsewhere.
- Support any planning applications that meet the residents' requests for a pub and village shop.

5.2.6 We note that these policies are in conformity with LPP 65 (Local Community Services and Facilities) in the BDC Draft Strategy 2017, which states 'The Council will seek the retention of all existing community facilities and services where they meet an identified local need.'

What we Plan to do - Proposed Community Actions for the White Hart Tea Rooms

5.2.7 The White Hart Tea Rooms - which were registered as an ACV, but have now lost that registration - are currently subject to a change of use planning application to change them to solely A3 use (i.e. as a restaurant or café) and to drop the D1 use for part of the building as a gallery, as Saling Grove opposite now houses the gallery. We understand that the future of the White Hart as a restaurant or café will depend on finding the right owner.

5.2.8 We want to ensure its continued use for the community unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the asset is no longer financially viable or considered necessary or of value to the community or a suitable replacement can be provided elsewhere

5.3 Highway

Objectives

1. To protect the village from the impact of ever-increasing volumes of traffic through the village
2. To minimise the impact of HGV's through the village, with relation to noise, pollution, and damage to roads and pavements.
3. To tackle the problem of vehicles speeding
4. To improve public transport networks through the Salings

What we plan to do – Proposed Community Actions

To protect the village from the impact of ever increasing volumes of traffic through the village

5.3.1 The volume of traffic has doubled through the village in the last 20 years. Although some of this increase can be attributed to the increase in the number of houses within the Salings, by far the larger proportion is due to commuter traffic, especially during the morning and evening rush hours.

To minimise the impact of HGV's through the village, with relation to noise, pollution and damage to roads and pavements

5.3.2 The number and size of HGV's passing through the village is also of concern to residents. The size and frequency of such vehicles has been shown to have increased in the last 20 years. In the past years, considerable damage has been done to road surfaces, pavements and grass verges. According to a report carried out for the "Campaign For Better Transport", HGV's are up to 160,000 times more damaging to roads than cars, and five times more likely than cars to be involved in accidents on local roads.

To tackle the problem of vehicles speeding

5.3.3 According to the latest figures from Essex highways relating to 2017, in excess of seventy percent of drivers exceed the speed limit of 30 mph. With the doubling of vehicle volumes over the same period the outlook is troubling to say the least especially at commuter times. There have been three fatal accidents on the road to the south of the village in recent years.

To improve public transport networks through the Salings.

5.3.4 In spite of the high car ownership recorded in the residents' survey (the average is over 2 cars per household), the lack of an effective public transport system has been noted as a problem as a problem by residents⁽³⁴⁾. The current bus service consists of two buses per day and does not serve Bardfield Saling.

5.3.5 As a Parish Council, we will continue to make representations to Essex County Council on each of these issues

To protect Quiet Lanes, Green Lanes, and Footpaths

5.3.6 The Parish Council have put forward one road as a Quiet Lane, Woolpits Road, but this has not yet been approved by Braintree District Council. We will continue to push for this designation.

5.3.7 A Facebook campaign on the Salings Magazine page to consider the future of the three Green Lanes was successful in attracting over 160 comments, but no clear result could be established, as there was a fairly even number of supporters for the 4x4 off road driving clubs (although many lived outside the Salings) as well as the local horse riders and walkers who were keen to see restrictions imposed⁽³⁵⁾ so that the Byways were not as rutted and dangerous as they are now (especially in winter). Before further action can be taken, the Neighbourhood Plan Group recommend

34 See for example Great Saling Parish Plan (2010), page 10

35 These Green Lanes are currently BOATs – Byways Open to All Traffic;

that a report on the current state and future possibilities of these Green Lanes is undertaken by the Parish Council. This will enable risk assessments to be carried out to assess the feasibility of and need for speed or seasonal access restrictions to ensure safe access for all users.

5.3.8 Footpaths continue to be popular walking routes and are looked after by the Parish Paths Partnership, with local farmers keeping the routes open and regularly cut. However, as the Landscape Assessment Survey notes, ‘the southern part of Great Saling parish has a notable absence of public rights of way’⁽³⁶⁾.

Parish Council Actions on Highways

5.3.9 The Parish Council will continue to make representations to BDC and Essex County Council on these issues, including the appropriate coverage of the 30 mph limit, and will work with local residents and other interested parties to ensure safe access for all users to our Green Lanes.

36 See para 4.6.1

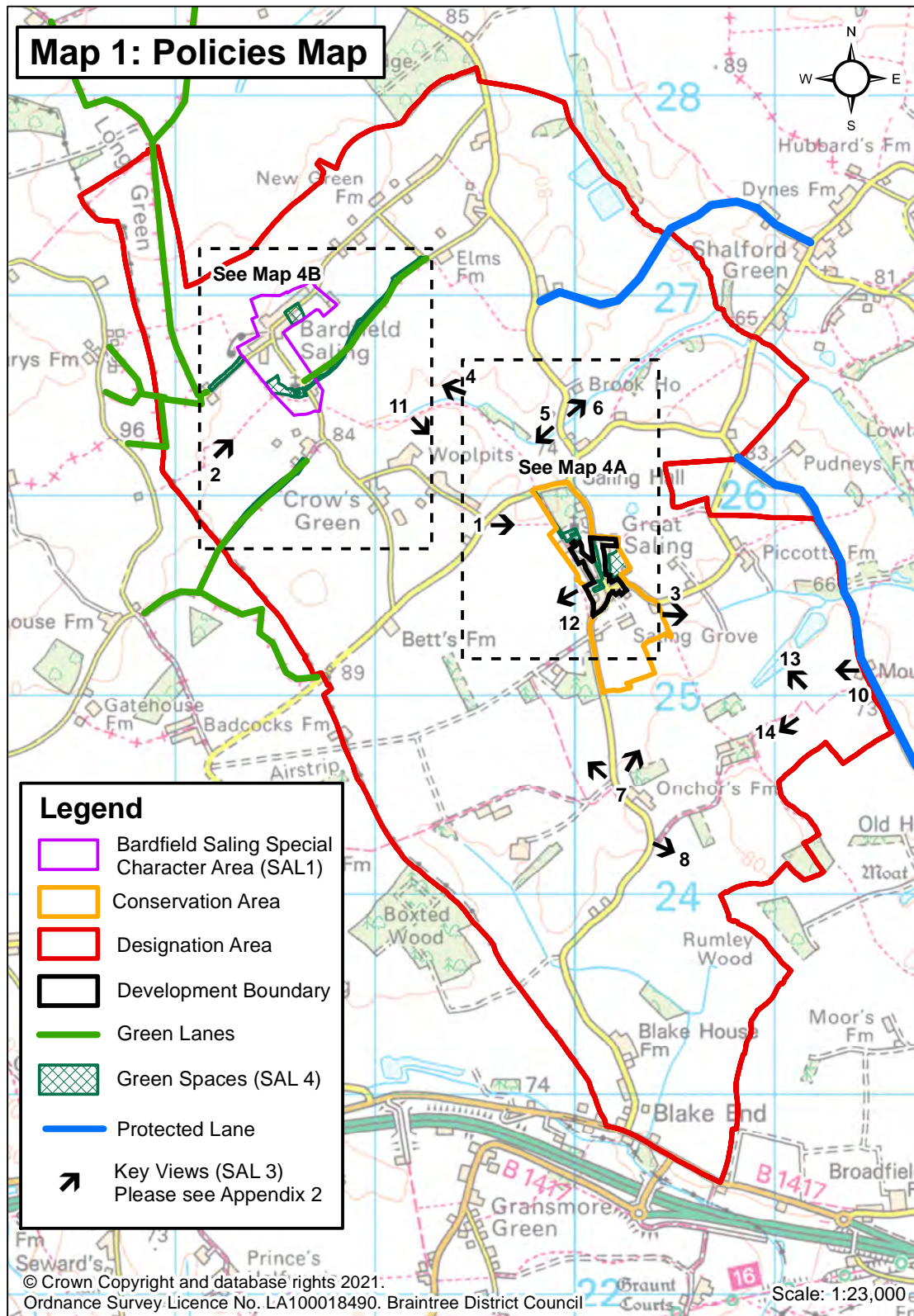
Appendices

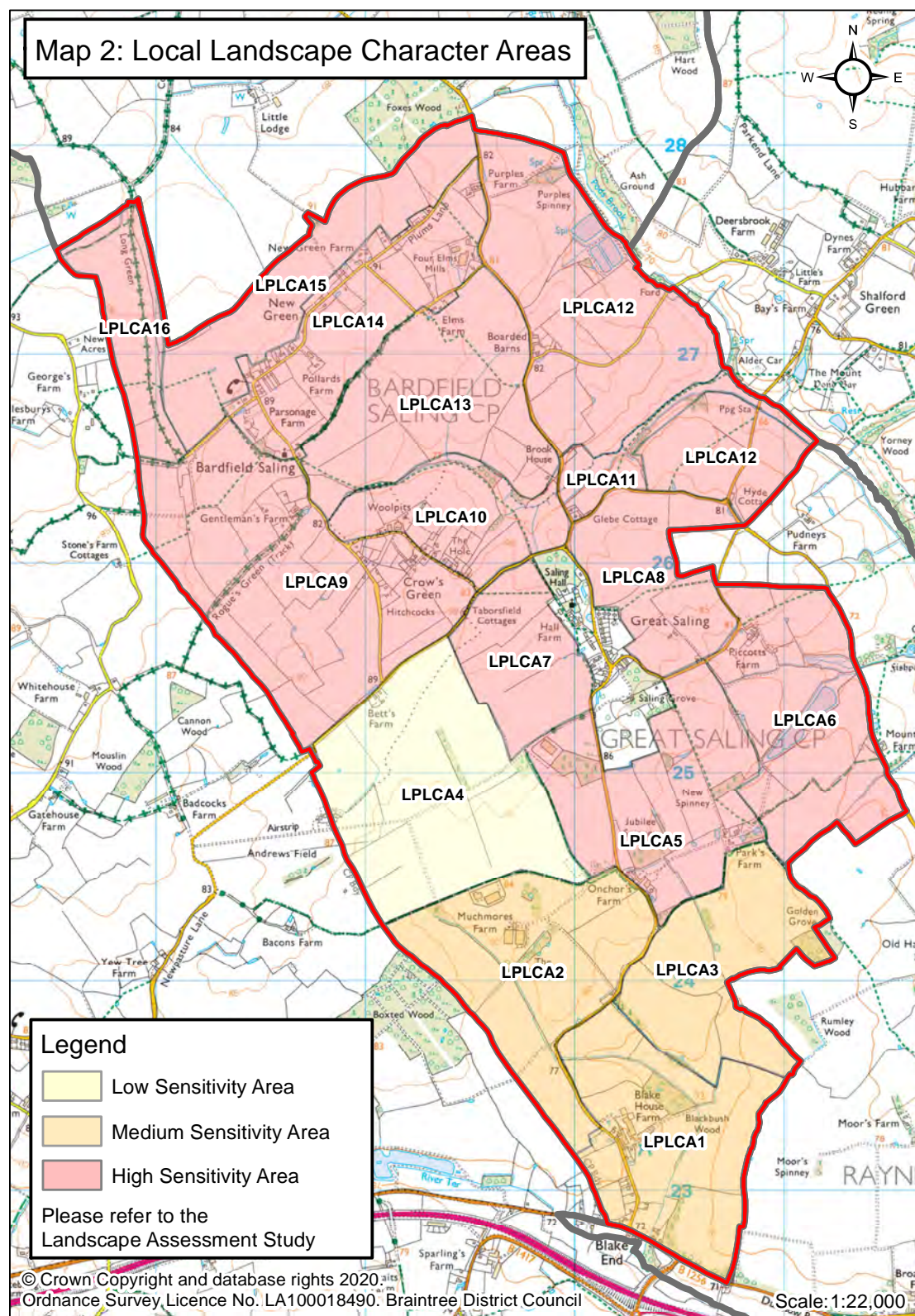
6 Appendices

Appendix 1	Policies Maps
Appendix 2	Key Views
Appendix 3	Listing of Local Green Spaces

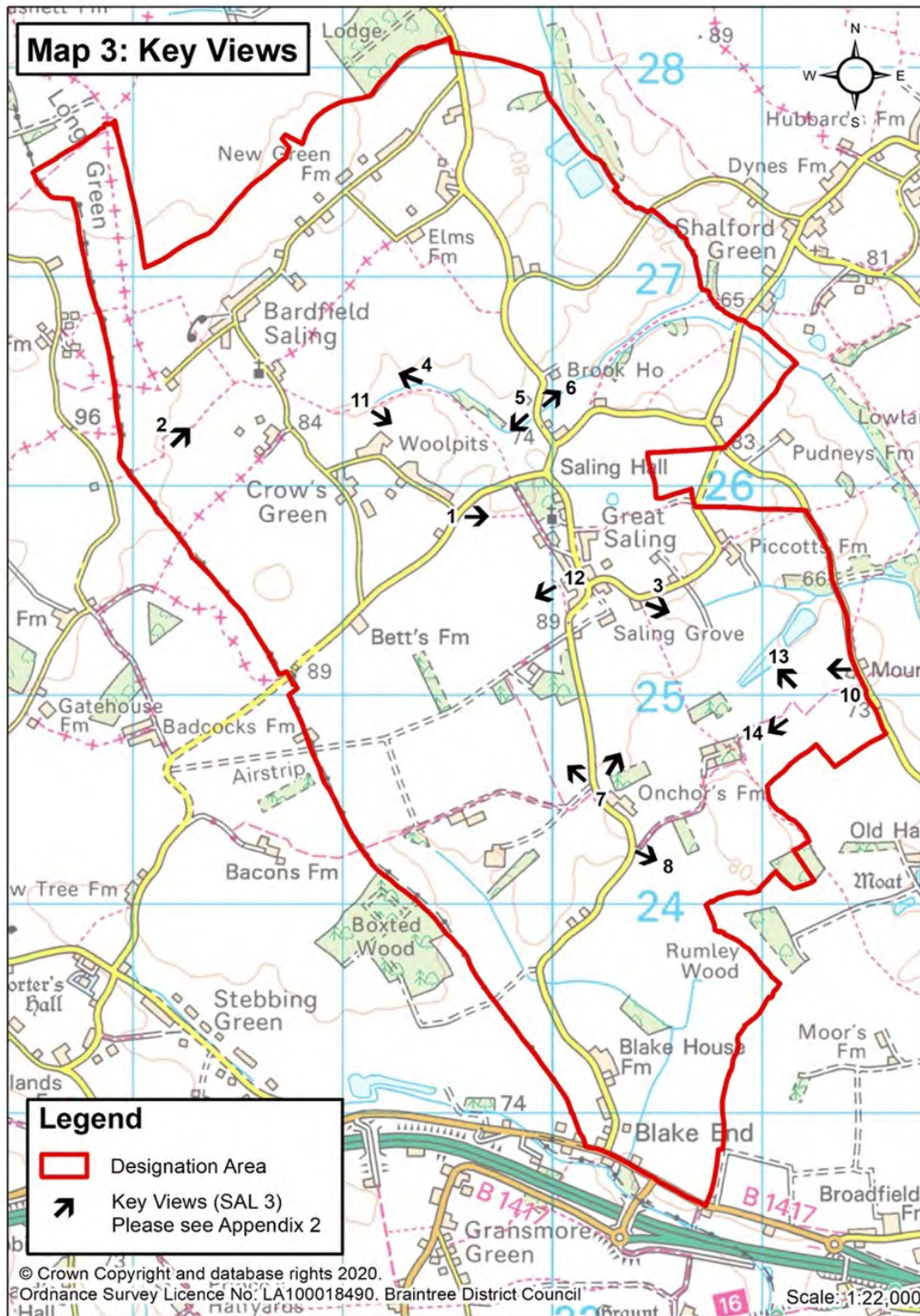
6.1 Appendix 1 Policies Maps

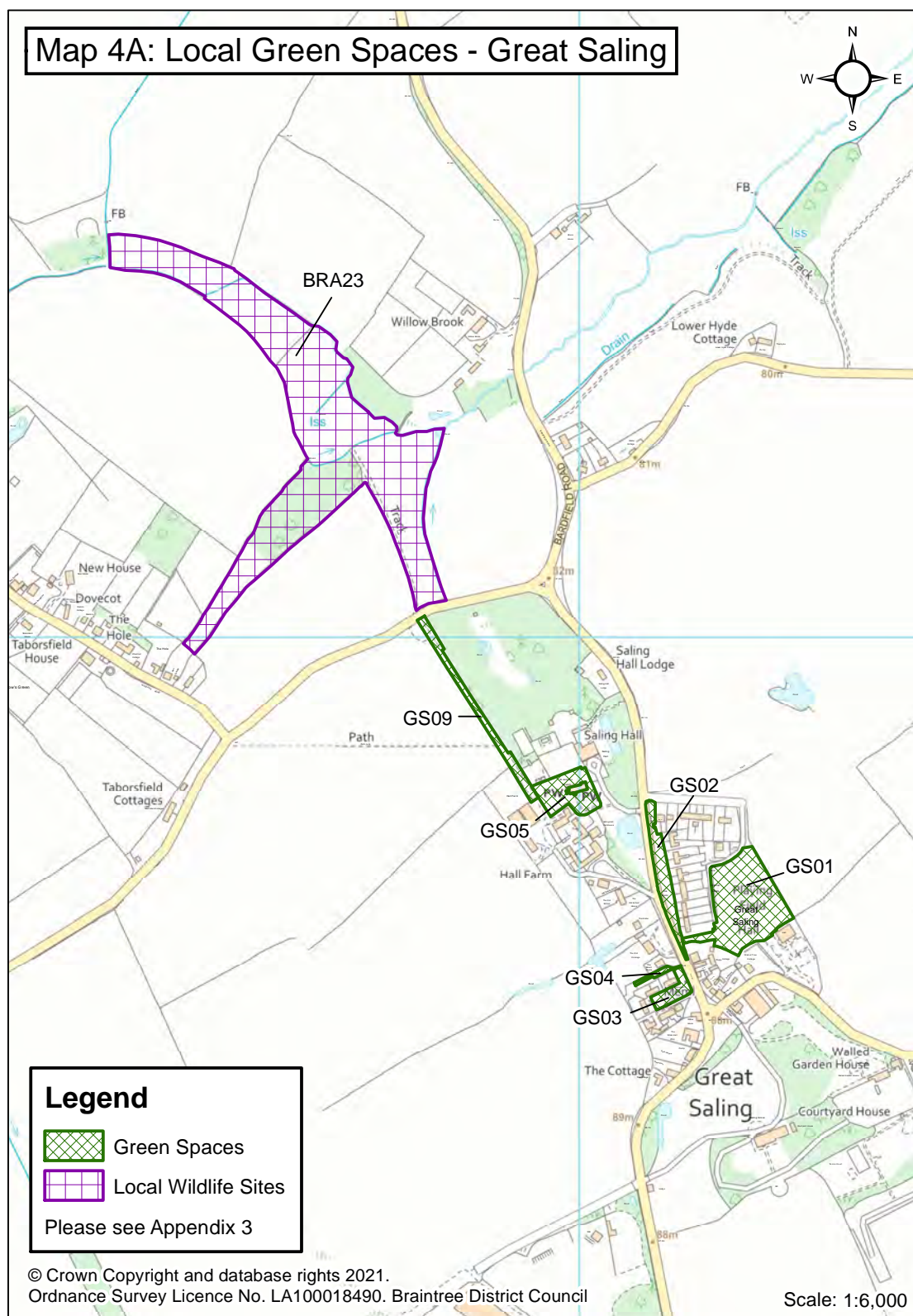
Map 1	Policies Map
Map 2	Local Landscape Character Areas
Map 3	Key Views
Map 4a	Local Green Spaces - Great Saling
Map 4b	Local Green Spaces - Great Bardfield
Map 5	Great Saling Development Boundary/Conservation Area
Map 6	Bardfield Saling Special Character Area

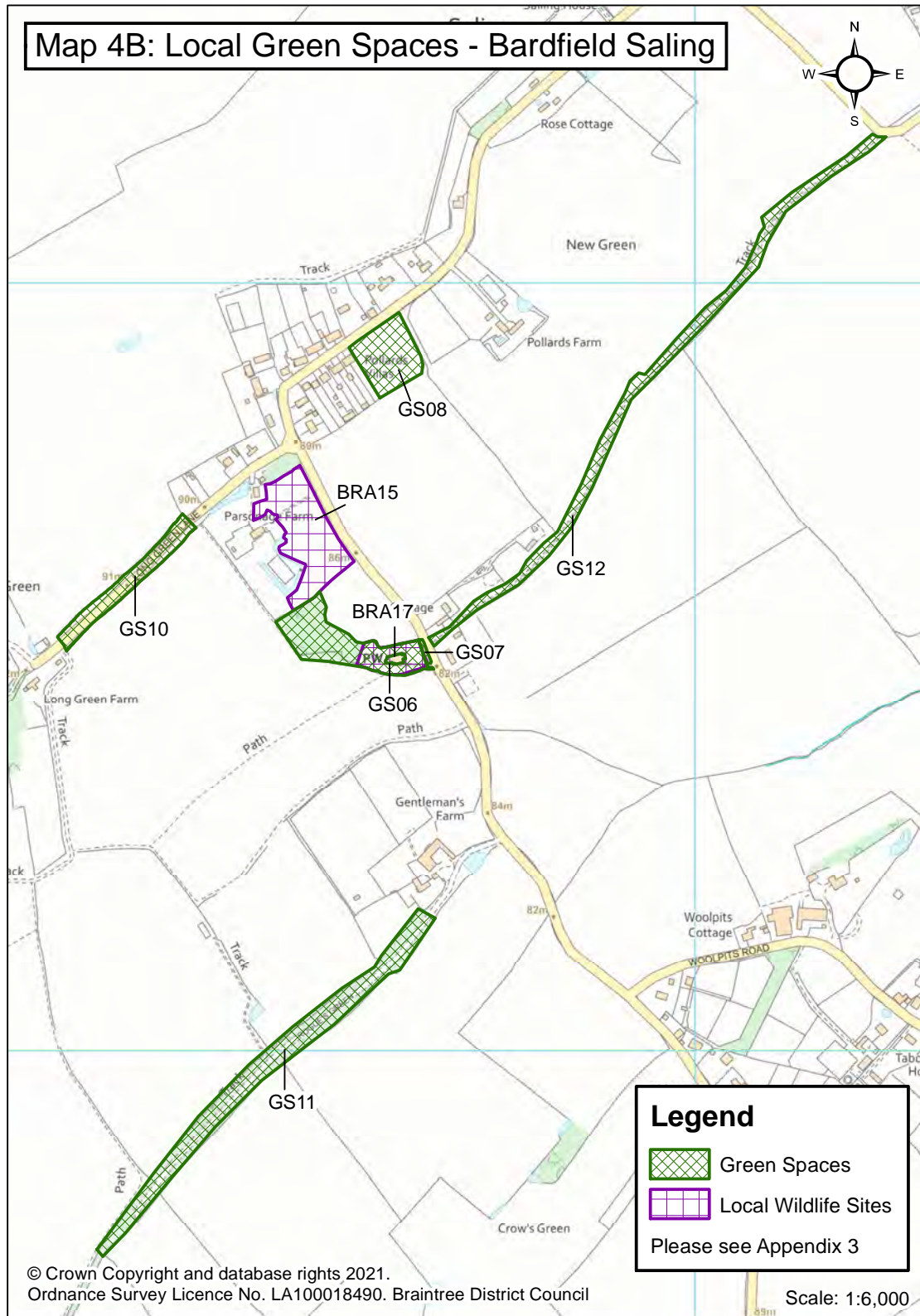


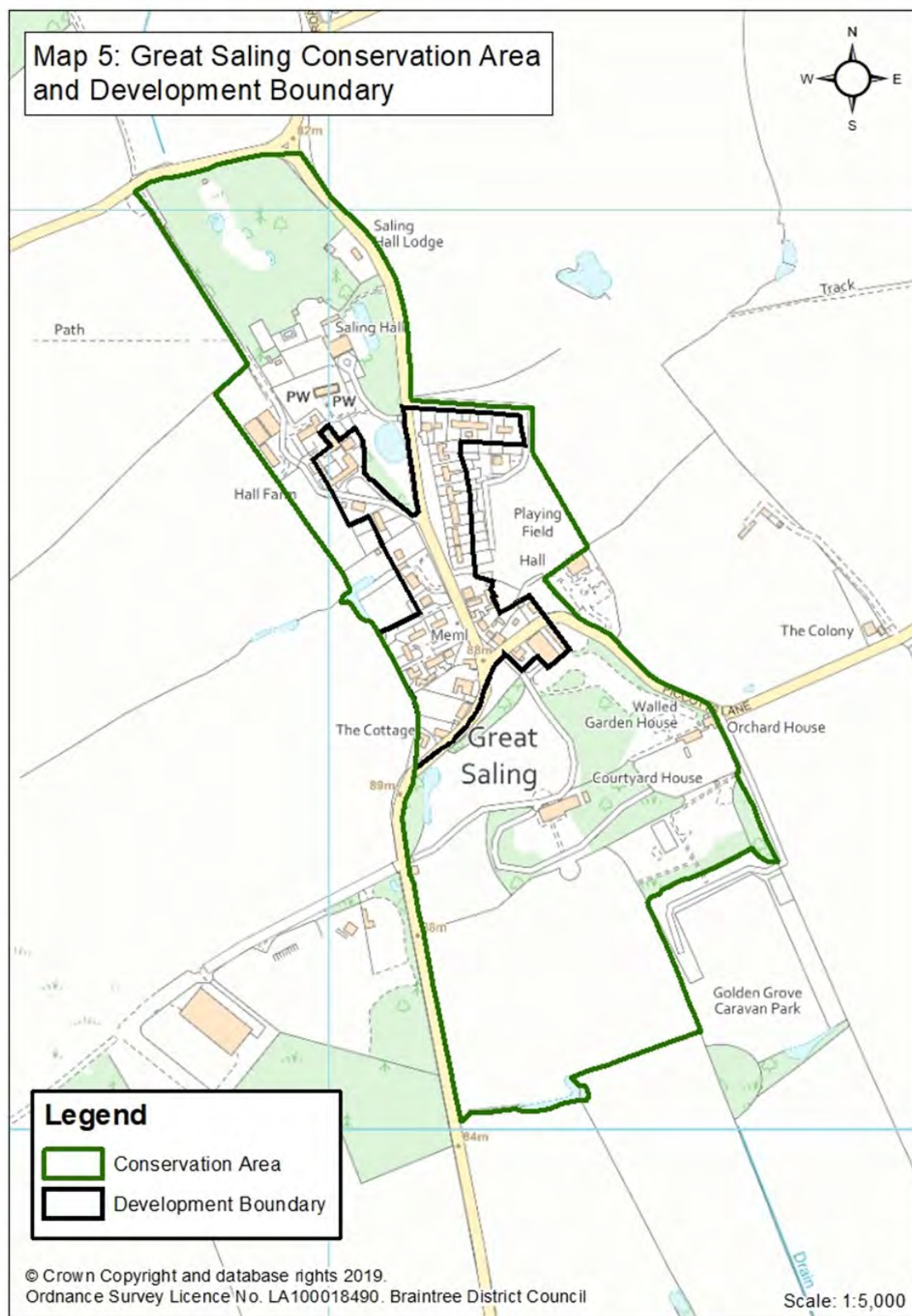


Picture 3











6.2 Appendix 2 Key Views

No. on Map	Site	Key Features	Value to the Community
	Preserving Historic Views		
1	View across Giddy Field from corner of Woolpits Lane and Stebbing Road along footpath PRow 86/4 (<i>View 13 in Landscape Assessment Survey, {LAS}.</i>)	View East towards Saling Hall and St James Church, both Grade II listed, and Hall Farm Green	Popular area for dog walkers, with views to the church and Saling Hall; historic thoroughfare from Bardfield Saling to Great Saling
2	View from footpath (PRow 60/3) behind Bardfield Saling Church (<i>View 34 in LAS</i>)	View north east towards St Peter & St Paul (Grade I listed), and Arundels (Grade II listed Elizabethan house)	Gives historic view of one of six 'round tower' churches in Essex, in its countryside setting
3	View East from footpath (PRow 86/5) alone Saling Grove Boundary Wall (<i>View 10 in LAS</i>)	Open views towards Pods Brook Lane and New Spinney	Of Historic Interest as an unchanged view from the original Humphrey Repton Garden of Saling Grove, and a popular footpath for walkers and dog walkers alike
4	View west from footpath (PRow 60/7) to north of Woolpits Lane (<i>View 27 in LAS</i>)	View north west towards Bardfield Saling Church and Paulsies Lane a 700 year old Green Lane	Popular local walk with views to Grade I listed church



View 1



View 2



View 3



View 4

	Views approaching the Salings' setting in open countryside		
5 & 6	Views from Bardfield Road 500m north of Great Saling (<i>Views 25A and 25B in LAS</i>)	Views south west over Local Wildlife Site and north east across open countryside	Demonstrates setting of the Salings in open countryside
7	Views from Bardfield Road 1,000m south of Great Saling (<i>View 20 in LAS</i>)	Views north west and north east across open countryside	Demonstrates setting of the Salings in open countryside



View 5



View 6



View 7

	Views residents wish to preserve to prevent coalescence between the Salings and proposed West of Braintree Garden Community		
8	View from corner of Blake End Road and bridleway (PRoW 86/7) to Parks Farm (<i>View 4 from LAS</i>)	View over open pastures south east to Golden Grove, Rumley Wood (both Local Wildlife Sites) and Blackbush Wood	Gives views for walkers and horse riders over open countryside; demonstrates setting of the Salings in open countryside; an area the residents wish to preserve to maintain 'buffer strips' between the Salings and

			proposed West of Braintree Garden Community
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View 8

	Views demonstrating the Salings' setting in open countryside	View west towards Registered Parks & Gardens of Saling Grove and Parkes, Parks Farm (Grade II listed)	Gives views of historic buildings across open countryside
9	View from Pods Lane towards Parks Farm & Saling Grove (<i>View 8 in LAS</i>)	View west towards Registered Parks & Gardens of Saling Grove and Parkes, Parks Farm (Grade II listed)	Gives views of historic buildings across open countryside
10	View from footpath (PRoW 86/10) looking South to Crows Green (<i>View 28 in LAS</i>)	View East to north of Great Saling with Woolpits Farm on the left	Gives views over open countryside on the major footpaths used by residents between the two villages, traversing the Local Wildlife Site
11	Views to Andrewsfield from footpath (PRoW 8) on western side of Great Saling (<i>View 15 in LAS</i>)	View over open countryside from footpath traversing village envelope of Great Saling, with WWII hangar	Heavily used by local dog walkers
12 & 13	Views from bridleway (PRoW 86/7) to north east of Parkes Farm (<i>Views 7A & 7B in LAS</i>)	Views north east to Saling Grove and Piccotts Farm and south west to Golden Grove and Parkes Farm	Well used bridleway giving views over open countryside



View 9



View 10



View 11



View 12



View 13

6.3 Appendix 3 Listing of Local Green Spaces

Green Space Reference	Name	Adjacent to the Millennium Hall, behind Grove Villas	Reasons Demonstrably Special and Holds Local Significance
GS01	Recreational Playing Field	Adjacent to the Millennium Hall, behind Grove Villas	Used regularly throughout the year for football (has marked full size football pitch), village events, May Day celebrations, Summer fete and Classic Car show, Children's play area with quality play equipment and zip wire presented by the Village Action Group. Biodiversity planting by eastern boundary.
GS02	Village Green	Grass area with mature trees between the street and grove villas	The open space in the centre of the village extends tranquillity by the roadway, where the traditional red telephone box still stands, now used as a defibrillator
GS03	Vicarage Close	Grass in front of community housing bungalows	Grass area featuring the WWII memorial and flower bed, pillar box
GS04	Allotments	To the north of vicarage close, behind the bungalows	Many allotments taken and producing crops
GS05	St James the Great Churchyard, Great Saling	churchyard	A burial place for over a millennium enabling flora to establish
GS06	St Peter and St Paul Churchyard, Bardfield Saling	churchyard (which includes the field behind church, which is part of the registered churchyard)	A burial place for over a millennium enabling flora to establish designated local wildlife site

Green Space Reference	Name	Adjacent to the Millennium Hall, behind Grove Villas	Reasons Demonstrably Special and Holds Local Significance
GS07	Area in front of Bardfield Saling church	open space with ancient stone in situ	Maintains views to St Peter and St Pauls and Arundels (listed c16 house)
GS08	Barfield Saling old playing field	south of Plums Lane opposite Brick Cottage	historic old playing field for Bardfield Saling and the only area of green space with road access in Barfield saling
GS09	The chase	Prow 86/13	popular with walkers horse riders dog walkers
GS10	Long Green Lane	Byway open to all traffic running north from centre of Barfield Saling	Historic byway linking Barfield Saling with Great Barfield
GS11	Rouges Green Lane	Byway open to all traffic running west from centre of Barfield Saling	Historic byway linking Barfield Saling with Stebbing
GS12	Paulsies Lane	Byway open to all traffic running east from centre of Barfield Saling	Historic byway linking Barfield Saling with road running south from Great Barfield to Great Saling and Braintree



Agenda Item: 8

Report Title: Planning Committee - To approve a change in the committee Membership for the Green and Independent Group	
Report to: Council	
Date: 11 th October 2021	For: Decision
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: DP/2021/33
Report Presented by: Councillor Graham Butland, Leader of the Council	
Enquiries to: Kim Cole, Head of Governance and Monitoring Officer	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The Council has a number of Committees and Sub-Committees whose membership is determined to by the Council. The purpose of this report is to obtain approval to an amendment to the Green and Independent appointment to the Planning Committee.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Council approves the proposed changes to the Planning Committees as set out in paragraph 3.3 below.

3. Summary of Issue

- 3.1 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires that the allocation of seats on Council Committees and Sub-Committees are assigned to Political Groups on a politically proportionate basis. The changes set out in this report do not alter the political proportions identified at the Councils Annual General meeting on 19 April 2021.
- 3.2 The Planning Committee membership was agreed by the Council at its Annual General Meeting, as follows:
- Cllr Abbott
 - Cllr Horner
 - Cllr Mann
 - Cllr Parker (VC)
 - Cllr Scattergood (C)
 - Cllr Spray
 - Cllr Wrench
 - Cllr Bowers
 - Cllr Johnson
 - Cllr Munday
 - Cllr Ricci
 - Cllr Schwier
 - Cllr Unsworth

- 3.3 Since that time, the Governance Team has been notified that it is necessary to make a change to the Green and Independent Group appointment to the Planning Committee as follows:

Stepping Down	Proposed Member
Cllr Nick Unsworth	Cllr Jo Beavis

- 3.4 All Members who sit on the Planning Committee are appointed on the basis that they shall participate in the appropriate training, before undertaking their duties and continue to participate in on-going training as necessary. The Planning Team will ensure that Councillor Beavis will undertake the required training before participating in a meeting of Planning Committee.

4. Options

- 4.1 The Council could decide not to approve the new appointment, however, this could result in the Planning Committee not sitting at full capacity or there being a heavy reliance on the Planning Committee Substitutes. Accordingly this is not the recommended option at this time.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations set out in this report.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations set out in this report.

7. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 7.1 The determination of the political proportionality on Committees is determined in accordance with the statutory provisions. It is a matter for Political Groups to determine the membership of individual Committees within the proportionate allocation to the Groups, accordingly an Equality Impact Assessment is not required in this instance.

Agenda Item: 9

Report Title: Contract Award for the Provision of Insurance Services	
Report to: Council	
Date: 11 th October 2021	For: Noting
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: N/A
Report Presented by: Councillor Graham Butland, Leader of the Council	
Enquiries to: Kim Cole, Head of Governance and Monitoring Officer	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform the Council that it became necessary to use the Special Urgency Provision as set out in Braintree District Councils (the Council) Constitution.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the use of the Special Urgency Provision as set out in the Constitution, and
- 2.2 To note the decision taken by the Leader, relating to the Councils insurance provisions.

3. Summary of Issues

- 3.1 The Councils arrangements set out that Cabinet are responsible for taking Key Decisions. In doing so it is necessary that the Council give 28 days' notice of that decision. This is achieved through the publication of the Council's Decision Planner.
- 3.2 However, in accordance with the Special Urgency Procedure, set out within paragraph 15.17 of the Constitution, it became necessary for the Monitoring Officer, on 27th September 2021, to seek consent from the Chairman of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee, to dispense with the 28 day notice period, and agree that the decision should be taken.
- 3.3 Further, in accordance with paragraph 13.11, the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chief Executive, agreed that a matter of urgency had arisen in connection with the work of the Cabinet, and that it required a decision to be taken before the next available meeting of Cabinet. Accordingly, authority to take the urgent Key Decision was invested in the Leader of the Council, Councillor Graham Butland.

- 3.4 Notice of the use of the Special Urgency Provision was published on the Councils website and at its offices on 28th September 2021.
- 3.5 The decision relates to the Council's current insurance services, whose provision was through a Long term Agreement (LTA) from 1st December 2020 to 30th September 2023 (with an option to extend until 30th September 2025). However, during the annual renewal preparations the Councils incumbent insurer for the two largest lots elected to break the LTA and sought to bring in significant increases to the premium rates.
- 3.6 The Council through its Broker, entered into negotiations with the Insurer, but these were unsuccessful. As a result of the insurer's refusal to extend the Insurance Cover or negotiate their premiums, the Council have had to undertake a full procurement exercise in order to obtain insurance cover for the three areas, Motor, Combined Liability, and Casualty. The procurement exercise was completed using the YPO Insurance Services Framework reference.
- 3.7 Due to the limited notice the Council had in having to undertake a procurement exercise, and uncertainty that it would result in a better price for the Council, it was not possible to give the necessary 28 days' notice of its intention to take a Key Decision or take the matter before Cabinet. In view of the fact that the current insurance cover is now due to expire on 30th September 2021, the Council had little option but to use its Special Urgency Procedure, in allowing this decision to be taken by the Leader of the Council.
- 3.8 Accordingly on 28th September 2021, the Leader of the Council approved the following decisions:
- 3.8.1 To approve the award of three contracts for the provision of Insurance Services, for the values set out in the Confidential Appendix, commencing on 1st October 2021 for a period of 2 years, with the option to extend in 12 months increments up to a further 2 years, namely:
- a. Combined Liability insurance to Travelers;
 - b. Motor insurance to Protector; and
 - c. Fidelity Guarantee to Zurich Municipal.
- 3.8.2 To delegate to the Head of Finance to agree to extend the contracts in accordance with the provisions set out above.
- 3.9 A copy of the decision report is available on the Councils website.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 The use of the Special Urgency provision and the decision taken by the Leader of the Council, was in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising out of this report. All financial implications arising out of the decision taken by the Leader were considered, and are set out within that decision report.

Report Title: Cabinet's Report to Full Council	
Report to: Council	
Date: 11th October 2021	For: Noting
Key Decision: No	Decision Planner Ref No: N/A
Report Presented by: Councillor Graham Butland, Leader of the Council	
Enquiries to: N/A	

1. **Introduction**

This report covers the main activities of all Cabinet Members since the last ordinary meeting of full Council.

2. **Councillor Graham Butland - Leader of the Council**

1) **Essex Leaders' and Chief Executives' Meeting – Thursday 9th September 2021**

The main agenda items were as follows: -

Appointment of Chairman & Vice-Chairman

The meeting agreed the appointment of Councillor Neil Stock, the Leader of Tendring District Council as Chairman with myself as Vice-Chairman.

COVID Update

The meeting received a presentation from Dr Mike Gogarty, Director of Public Health Essex, on the latest position regarding COVID-19. Members will be aware that throughout the whole of the pandemic I have circulated the weekly briefings from Essex Public Health.

Establishment of Integrated Care Systems (ICS's)

There followed a lengthy discussion, introduced by Nick Presmeg, Executive Director for Adult Social Care Essex County Council on the establishment of Integrated Care Systems (ICS'S).

The meeting was advised of the current proposals for greater collaboration within the NHS and between the NHS, Local Government and other partners. These proposals recognise that the whole health and care system, including Local Government, has a vital role in addressing the health and wellbeing challenges of our populations. The meeting looked at proposals on the design of the public health system.

An ICS will have four core purposes:

- i. improving outcomes in population health and healthcare;

- ii. tackling inequalities in outcomes, experience and access;
- iii. enhancing productivity and value for money; and
- iv. contributing to broader social and economic development.

Integrated Care Boards (ICB's) will replace NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's). They will also take on responsibility for commissioning some services that are currently done at a regional level. Local Government must be represented.

The general function of ICBs is that of "arranging for the provision of services for the purposes of the health service in England". The ICB holds a duty to "exercise their functions with a view to ensuring that health, social care and health-related services are provided in an integrated way where this would improve the quality of the services."

ICBs will be responsible for commissioning:

- Acute hospital services
- Primary care services
- Community health services
- Mental health services
- Ambulance services
- Dental services
- Nursing services

Funding allocations will be made by the ICB and it can choose to delegate budgets and decision-making down to place-based partnerships. ICBs must prepare a 5 year plan and must consult local health and wellbeing boards

Local Government is expected to be an "equal partner" of the ICS Health and Care Partnership. The ICS Health and Care Partnership will have a specific responsibility to develop an 'integrated care strategy' for its whole population using best available evidence and data, covering health and social care (both children's and adult's social care), and addressing the wider determinants of health and wellbeing.

Councils will continue to have their role in co-ordinating and developing a joint strategic needs assessment and hosting a local health and wellbeing board. Public Health Directors are expected to play a key role in shaping the ICS Health and Care Partnership Plan; in guiding and informing the development of population health management and health improvement; and are expected to be key members of each place-based alliance (i.e be a member of the ICS at system-level and be a key player at place-level).

Local Government will be represented on the NHS ICS Body (which will replace CCGs and be responsible for NHS financial allocations and planning decisions) and the guidance assumes this will be a Chief Executive or a DASS. We need to confirm our representation and also discuss internally, and with Southend and Thurrock, how we ensure an appropriate voice and visibility for public health and children's social care, rather than assume that 3 DASS' will represent Local Government.

At a "place-level", Local Government are key partners for delivery and also for helping to understand the needs of, and lead engagement with, communities and places. This will be done best when the district councils are around the table and are active partners.

The NHS ICS body is tasked with cultivating “a cross-system intelligence function to support operational and strategic conversations” and “agree a plan for embedding population health management capabilities and ensuring these are supported by the necessary data and digital infrastructure, such as linked data and digital interventions”.

Existing local government scrutiny functions will continue to play their role in reviewing and scrutinising work, enabling “valuable connections to be made between the experience and aspirations of residents and ICS governance, via the relationships that local councillors have with their constituents.

The Health & Care Bill is currently working its way through Parliament and it is expected that the new arrangements will take effect from 1 April 2022.

2) **Essex Anchors Network**

This item was submitted on behalf of Essex Partners. The purpose of the item was to outline the work of Essex Partners and the Essex Anchor Network to explore how through their employment, workforce development and procurement practices they can support the recovery and growth of an inclusive local economy.

3) **Appointment of representatives to the Essex Health & Wellbeing Board**

Councillor Simon Wootton, Leader of Rochford District Council, and myself were appointed to the Essex Health & Wellbeing Board.

4) **Other Meetings**

In addition, I have attended the following meetings representing the Council.

- 28 July 2021 – COVID 19 Local Outbreak Engagement Board
- 29 July 2021 – Active Travel Fund Consultation Updates & Next Steps
- 25 August 2021 - COVID 19 Local Outbreak Engagement Board
- 1 September 2021 – COP26 Visit to Gridserve
- 23 September 2021 – Covid 19 Local Outbreak Engagement Board
- 27 September 2021 – Success Essex Board
- 1 October 2021 – SELEP Strategic Board

3. **Councillor John McKee – Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation**

1) **Collection of Council Tax and Business Rates as at 31st August 2021**

Council Tax collection – 48.22% to end of August compared to 48.19% for 2020 and 49.25% for 2019. Target for the year is 98.3%. Amount collected £49.234m.

Business Rates collection – 41.19% to end of August compared to 45.13% for 2020 and 49.16% for 2019. Target for the year is 98.6%. Amount collected £15.741m.

Amount of Retail Relief and Nursery Relief (children) awarded increased to £8.197m (£7.542m at end July). The rate of discount reduced from 100% to 66% from July

which required businesses to be rebilled. This adjustment will impact on the collection rate as payment plans are re-adjusted to reflect the higher amount now due over the remainder of the year.

2) NHS Track and Trace payments

As at 31st August, the Benefits Team had received a total of 2,231 (July 1,990) applications from residents, who had been told by NHS Test and Trace to self-isolate, for a payment of £500. Of these 946 applicants received payments totalling £473,000, and 1,070 applications were rejected as they did not meet the eligibility criteria for either the standard or discretionary schemes. 215 applications were awaiting further information being submitted before determining the claims.

3) Business Support Grants

A further £510,482 for a Phase 3 of the Business Adaptation Grant funding from ECC was received. The funding will allow businesses to adapt their premises and operations so that they can continue to operate safely and in-line with government guidance. Marketing commenced ahead of the scheme going live on 18th August, which included the Council notifying businesses via our Business Newsletter (4410 recipients) and Braintree District Business Facebook group (1,828 members). By Friday 7th September 2021 the scheme had been oversubscribed and additional top-up funding agreed with Essex County Council. The scheme has now closed and, in this phase, has supported 167 businesses with £643,500 of funding.

4) Customer Services Centre

The average call answering time for July was 46 seconds, with 58% of calls answered within 15 seconds. The number of calls received in the month was 9,825, the number of emails received was 868 and the number of online enquiries dealt with was 3,216. The percentage of calls resolved at first point of contact was 79%. The service is reviewing the Customer Service improvement plan. A draft has been compiled and has been shared with the service for their comments/feedback. The CSC Manager is having ongoing discussions with Service Unit Managers regarding the CSC staff's difficulty to transfer calls through to members of their teams which is impacting on the call answering times. A technology solution is under investigation to ensure the hybrid model of working runs smoothly and the CSC can see the availability of staff and services answer calls when transferred to them.

5) ICT Service

Following Cabinet approval on 12th July 2021 approval to procure updated Office 365 Licences, these have been purchased and have been rolled out to pilot users to understand impact on our general users and the systems that interact with MS Office products, before wider roll out commences.

6) Refinancing of borrowing

Opportunity to refinance existing borrowing is currently being assessed with the support of the Council's treasury management advisors, Arlingclose Ltd. Existing loans totalling £6million are held on what are referred to as LOBO terms; these give the lender the option to increase the interest rate at set intervals, which then triggers

the option for the Council to accept the proposed new rate, or repay the loans in full. Whilst to date the lender has not exercised their option, refinancing would transfer control back to the Council over future management of its debt. The prevailing low interest rates also means that savings on interest costs is more than the premium charged to repay the debt early. Terms for early repayment will need to be agreed, which will also be evaluated against the potential for changes in interest rates to ensure that a deal is still expected to produce savings.

4. Councillor Mrs Wendy Schmitt – Cabinet Member for Environment

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

1) COVID

Covid Ambassadors are being used in more innovative ways as the controls on Covid are lessened.

The Council has been given a large supply of lateral flow test kits to distribute to the public. The Ambassadors have been setting up a stall in heavily trafficked areas in our District to distribute the free kits. It has come as a surprise to find that the majority of the public are unaware of the existence of the free kits.

The Ambassadors are also being used in Causeway House to offer reassurance to staff and the public about the control measures in place to make the offices a safe place to be whilst the number of Covid-19 cases remains high in the District.

Officers secured a successful prosecution against a public house which was in breach of the Covid Regulations at the time. Officers used body camera footage from Police Officers who were called to a “party” going on in the pub whilst social distancing, restriction of numbers and the 10pm curfew were in force. In total, the public house was fined over £7,000.

2) LICENSING

An Officer and Member Working Group will be set up to review the Council’s existing Taxi Licensing Policies to ensure it reflects current best practice and where possible fits with the Council’s emerging Climate Change Strategy.

SUSTAINABILITY

3) EV charging points in car parks

The EV charging station in Braintree Station car park is now completed and commissioned with 4 dual charging posts (serving 8 vehicles). Mill Lane is now complete, so this brings a close to this phase of our fully funded car park EV project. The Council has now installed a total of 32 additional EV charging bays across the District.

GREEN HEART OF ESSEX

4) Love Parks Week (23 July - 1 August 2021)

Braintree District Council has supported Keep Britain Tidy's 'Love Parks Week' campaign to call on everyone to love, protect and respect their local parks. Banners and posters were displayed in Halstead Public Gardens, Witham Town Park, Maldon Road, Witham and Weavers Park, Braintree, to encourage visitors to enjoy the outdoors but have consideration for the environment.

5) Cleaner Essex Group, Love Essex Litter Campaign – NOW LIVE

Braintree District Council is working in partnership with authorities across Essex to remind the public of the consequences of littering on the local environment and wildlife. Love Essex campaign banners and posters are displayed within parks and open spaces across the District asking, **“Love it here? Don’t leave it here...”**

6) Communication

Communicating change in service message: [Recycling glass bottles and jars at Braintree District's local Recycling Centres just got easier!](#) Now you can mix clear and coloured bottles or jars and place them into any of the glass recycling bins provided, instead of having to separate the colours beforehand.

OPERATIONS

STREET CLEANING

7) Community Clean – Templars Estate

A community clean up, in conjunction with Eastlight Community Homes and Templars Community Association, took place on the Templars Estate in July. This involved litter-picking and the removal of weed growth from paved areas, fly-tipping and detritus. The Recycling team were also on hand to promote recycling and answer questions from residents about recycling and/or waste reduction.

TRANSPORT

8) Unannounced DVSA visit

On Thursday 24th June 2021, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) carried out an unannounced inspection of the Council's Transport Service. DVSA officers inspected 6 vehicles for roadworthiness and, the following day, the vehicle files of 6 different vehicles for compliance with the Council's Operator's Licence. The Council was deemed to be a fully SATISFACTORY operator and there were no recommendations or actions. This is a brilliant achievement of which we can all be extremely proud.

9) Vehicle Replacement Programme

The Council has taken delivery of 8 new refuse vehicles and these have been put into service. Two new narrow track refuse vehicles are on order and we expect delivery by 11th December 2021.

WASTE MINIMISATION & RECYCLING

10) Trial Small WEEE Collections

The collection scheme is proving popular with residents and 6,060 kgs of small WEEE have been collected to date, generating an additional income of £10k as a result of promotions/marketing. A further WEEE collection has been added at Braintree Hockey Club at their request.

11) Freegle

In May, there were 1,999 members in the Braintree Freegle group. July has seen that number increase to 2,146 members. This clearly shows that people are increasingly considering more environmentally friendly options to dispose of their unwanted items.

CEMETERIES

12) Memorial Testing in Cemeteries

Memorial testing in Halstead Cemetery has been completed and 80 memorials were deemed unsafe/requiring attention. This is an essential area of work to ensure public safety in our cemeteries and overall the response from the public has been positive, although we have received some negative comments via social media which are being dealt with by Marketing and Comms. Testing will begin at Bocking Cemetery in September, followed by Witham Cemetery.

PARKS & OPEN SPACES

13) Verge Cutting Trial

The rural verge cutting programme is due to start w/c 13 September 2021 marking the seasonal end to the two year trial of reduced verge cutting (from twice to just once a year in the Autumn). Stakeholder feedback is being sought from Parish and Town Councils, and District and County Councillors via an on-line questionnaire, the response deadline for which is 30 November 2021.

Following receipt of the feedback, a report on the outcome of the trial will be shared with Members and presented to Essex County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways who will decide if a single cut will become the 'norm' for Braintree District from April 2022.

14) **In-Bloom Competitions**

This year's Anglia in Bloom Competition is a virtual campaign, with entries being judged using a maximum of 5 photos and supporting comments of up to 50 words per entry. Operations is again working in partnership with Halstead in Bloom and between us we have entered all 10 categories.

15) **AIB Entry: Wildlife Garden in Halstead Public Gardens**

This is a haven for moths, butterflies, hoverflies and bees. Children play hide and seek and call it The Maze! Local school children helped to plant sunflowers, cosmos, and runner beans. There are commemorative benches and a quiet place at the centre.

16) **AIB Entry: Halstead Cemetery**

Halstead Cemetery is home to an array of mature trees which provide a wealth of habitat to a wide variety of wildlife. It is well kept, although the perimeter is left as much as possible to naturalise. Composting takes place on site which is used for the annual bedding.

17) **AIB Entry: Sustainable Planting, Sudbury Road, Halstead**

The mixed shrub/bedding areas on the main A134 Sudbury Road at Churchill Avenue, Halstead, were looking tired and in need of a revamp. The beds managed by Braintree District Council (on Essex Highway land) have been planted up with new, more sustainable plants and these are growing well.

STREET SCENE PROTECTION

18) **Enforcement Action**

The information below shows the work undertaken by the Enforcement Team from 1 April 2021 to 31 July 2021.

- 60 Dog barking complaints investigated
- 13 Dog fouling complaints investigated
- 9 Stray dogs detained (8 BDC / 1 UDC)
- 30 Statutory Notices served (4 x S34 EPA (requesting duty of care paperwork), 9 S108 EA (requesting information), 5 x Microchipping and 2 x S59 requiring waste to be removed from land), 5 x ASB, 1 x commercial waste, 2 x unauthorised encampments, 1 x fly tip, 1 x abandoned vehicle)
- 33 Fixed Penalty Notices served (general litter x 11), (littering of cigarette butts x 8) (Unauthorised Deposit of Waste (fly tipping) x 9). (Smoking in a smoke free place x 2), (Unauthorised Waste Carrier x 3)

19) **Prosecutions**

Following a report of fly-tipping of waste in Baythorne End, Baybrook on 14th July 2021, at Basildon Magistrates Court a male was fined and ordered to pay the Council's costs which in total came to £1,156.

20) **Lobbying the Sentencing Council re fly-tipping**

Braintree District Council has joined with other authorities in lobbying the Sentencing Council to impose harsher and more consistent penalties for fly-tipping. There have been many occasions when the Courts impose fines that are less than a fixed penalty notice that would be served for a low level fly-tipping offence. One recent example is the prosecution mentioned above where it was a large amount of commercial waste fly-tipped, but the defendant's fine was just £120. The costs were granted but the fine was less than a fixed penalty notice which is £400.

5. **Councillor Tom Cunningham – Cabinet Member for Economic Growth**

The Council has commissioned consultants to undertake research on the District to support a refresh of the Councils economic plan, a Plan for Growth. The first results of this research will be available soon, after which the Council will engage with a wide range of stakeholders to pull together a Plan to reflect the changing priorities for the economy and enable us to continue to deliver a strong economic growth agenda for the District and we support our businesses continue to bounce back from the impacts of the Covid 19 pandemic.

The Council continues to work with partners on the I-Construct innovation in Construction project and events have been held in Braintree to ensure that local businesses are able to take advantage of the opportunities that the centre will bring to local businesses.

Work continues in Braintree town centre to complete the pedestrianisation of the High Street. New street lights have now been installed which will be able to hold a range of advertisement banners and pop up power units have been added so that more events and market stalls can be placed in the area. Paving is being installed and the ground is being prepared for the final areas of resin to be laid. New benches and other street furniture and trees are also to be installed to complete the new look.

6. **Councillor Kevin Bowers – Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Skills**

a. **Victoria Square**

The construction works at Victoria Square are continuing as planned with minimal delays. As we near completion of the buildings later this calendar year, we have begun the marketing of the restaurant and retail units in the building and are working positively with the Mid Essex CCG who have reported positive interest from GPs wishing to be located in the Live-Well Hub.

b. **Horizon 120**

With the council's main infrastructure works at Horizon 120 completed in July, our focus on the sale of plots on site to businesses continues. Earlier this month we were very pleased to announce British Offsite, a subsidiary of Weston Group, as the third employer to confirm they have signed up to move a new facility onto the Horizon 120 Business and Innovation Park. Including this most recent sale, 50% of the land currently available at Horizon 120 is now let or under offer.

c. **Skills**

Officers are working with Braintree Information Advice and Guidance Group to deliver the annual Braintree District Careers Fair on Wednesday 29th September 2021 at Chelmsford City Racecourse. The event aims to raise awareness of the local and regional post 16 opportunities available to year 11 students including Apprenticeships, Further & Higher Education, and to inform them of the routes they may take in order to achieve their goals. All eight of the districts secondary schools will be attending with a potential footfall of over 1,300 students.

As part of the North Essex Economic Board skills workstream, officers at BDC are working with local authorities across North Essex (including Colchester, Chelmsford, Tendring, Uttlesford and Maldon districts) and the existing South East Local Enterprise Partnership Skills COVID-19 recovery fund providers, in a call off process to deliver enhanced digital and other skills training provision in the North Essex area. It is likely that this work will be progressed and implemented before the end of the year and will provide support to residents to explore new careers and training opportunities

d. **Housing**

There were 30 affordable housing completions in August 2021 on sites in Braintree, Witham, Coggeshall, Finchingfield and Witham, which makes a total of 142 completions for the year to date. For September 2021 we expect there will be around 30 further completions.

All local authorities have been asked to help with accommodation offers for two resettlement schemes, the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme and the new Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and the Council is currently working with partners to see how we can assist.

7. **Councillor Mrs Gabrielle Spray – Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure**

The Council is hoping to receive a list of proposed main modifications to the Local Plan Section 2 from the examining Inspectors shortly, which will need to be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal. Both the modifications and revised Sustainability Appraisal will then be subject to a six week public consultation period later this year. Members will be kept informed on the timings for next steps as soon as we have them.

As Members will be aware a Member Reference Group has been set up to review what kind of planning enforcement service the Council seeks to deliver. Two very positive and informative meetings have been held where Members have had the opportunity to put forward their views and participate in discussions, and a further two meetings are scheduled over the next few weeks. The outcome of the MRG will be a report for me to consider as the portfolio holder for planning as to the changes which the MRG recommends to be made and the resources that may be needed to achieve the required level of service.

The Planning Enforcement team meanwhile continues to be very busy, with two high court injunctions secured on rural sites in the District. These sites continue to be

monitored and the Council is taking further legal advice in relation to the continued breach of the injunction on one of the sites. Actions are also proceeding on a number of other high profile cases, as well as continuing to work through the considerable number of other cases in the District. We take breaches of planning control very seriously and officers are continuing to take all the legal steps necessary to deal with situations.

Following an independent examination undertaken by written representations, it has been confirmed that The Salings Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions and other legislative requirements. It was therefore subject to a Neighbourhood Planning Referendum on 16th September 2021. The results were 16 votes No and 89 votes Yes, which means the referendum has been passed and the Council will now need to consider adoption.

The hearing into the Kelvedon Neighbourhood Plan has begun this month and the Council is working with the Neighbourhood Plan to provide information requested by the independent examiner.

8. Councillor Peter Tattersley – Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing

1) Leisure Contract

At its meeting on 6th September 2021, the Cabinet agreed to extend the current contract with Fusion Lifestyle for the management of the Councils leisure centres and swimming pools for a further 5 years, with an optional break clause after 3 years. The Contract is worth over £1 million income to the Council over the 5 years. The Contractor has also indicated it will invest over £1.1 million in gym/studio refurbishments, sports equipment and lifestyle works.

The Contract supports many of the Council's strategic objectives including providing specialist equipment and support for those living with mental or physical issues, the young, elderly and women.

2) Covid Recovery in Leisure services

Participation in the Leisure Centres is now starting to get back to pre-pandemic levels with increased activities in our target groups, although gym usage remains slow whilst Covid booking restrictions remain and confidence builds. Group exercise, swimming lessons and casual swimming demand is good with swim school sessions fully booked and a waiting list has had to be introduced.

New projects supporting cancer and cardiac rehabilitation have started in the leisure centres to support waiting lists with the NHS on routine pre-habilitation and rehabilitation for these conditions.

The Bocking and Blackwater 3k family run/walk took place on 15th August 2021, paving the way for similar events across the district to recommence.

The Colne Vally Primary Care Network has invited the Council to participate in a pilot scheme for population health management. More details will be provided as the scheme develops.

The Halstead Cinema has restarted its dementia friendly film screenings. The Active Braintree Foundation has appointed a new trustee who currently works as the school games co-ordinator for the Braintree District. It is expected that this appointment will help reintroduce many of the healthy living activities in our schools which have diminished during the lockdowns.

3) **Funding for Leisure Activities**

The Active Braintree Foundation and Active Essex has introduced a Covid recovery funding pot for clubs and organisations. Funds for this and other community schemes may also be available from the jointly funded Eastlight and Braintree District Council Community Fund, administered on our behalf by the Essex Community Foundation.

4) **Gold Olympic Medal Winner and World Champion**

The Council is extremely proud of the Olympic Gold Medal winner, and World Champion BMX rider, Bethany Shriever from Finchingfield. Bethany trained at the Braintree BMX Club and the Council has supported a BMX Try Out event at the Club to encourage more youngsters into the sport.

5) **Primary Care Network Websites**

New bespoke Primary Care Network (PCN) websites are being rolled out across the mid and south Essex area to support patients with accessible information and advice on a range of topics.

The content of each PCN website has been curated and tailored to each local population. This will help patients improve their health, wellbeing and social welfare by connecting them to the full range of services available in their community. This includes support available from the voluntary and charity sector, local authority and other partners.

The new PCN websites also include information about new healthcare roles available in PCNs to help patients get the right care first time. These new social prescribing link workers, physiotherapists, clinical pharmacists and more.

The Braintree PCN website was launched in August 2021 and you can view it here: www.braintreepcn.nhs.uk The Braintree PCN is a collaboration of five GP practices serving approximately 57,000 patients, across Braintree Town and Silver End.

The Colne Valley PCN website has also launched – www.colnevalleypcn.nhs.uk The Colne Valley PCN is a collaboration of six GP practices serving approximately 54,000 patients, from the Kelvedon, Finchingfield, Halstead, Earls Colne, Coggeshall, and Hedingham areas.

There are two other websites that will cover parts of the Braintree District, and these are due launch mid-October. They are Witham and Maldon PCN and Aegros PCN (which will cover Great Notley, Hatfield Peverel and part of Witham).

9. **Councillor Frankie Ricci – Cabinet Member for Communities**

1) **Bocking Windmill**

Bocking Windmill will celebrate its 300th Birthday this year, with an open event on Sunday 10th October, it's first since summer 2019.

In time for the event, the windmill has also had its sails reinstated after undergoing repair work following damage caused by Storm Ciara in February 2020. Works were completed by Suffolk Millwright, Tim Whiting at his workshop in Saxmundham.

2) **Crisis Café**

Officers are working with Rethink Braintree, First Stop & Community360 to establish a crisis café in Braintree. Feedback from those living with a mental health condition has highlighted the need for an out of hours service for individuals that are in crisis and need a safe, calm and local place to attend to seek support and someone to listen.

The group are looking to establish a separate charity for this project and will soon be advertising for trustees to support the development of this project, apply for funding and identify a potential premise to operate from.

3) **Community Engagement Events – Getting Back into the Community**

Officers have continued to hold events in the community with a range of partners including Essex Police, Essex Fire Service, Community360, Eastlight Community Homes and United in Kind to engage with local residents. The aim of the engagement events is to understand local issues & what impact Covid has had on them and the community they live in. The events during July and August have been in Stambourne, Feering and Rayne. They have also engaged with families as part of the 3 Xplorer events that took place in Braintree, Halstead & Witham during the summer holidays.

Officers are in discussion with other Parish Councils to book further community engagement events.

4) **Councillors Community Grants**

Members will be aware that we are in the process of reviewing the Councillors Community Grants scheme and that a questionnaire was sent out at the end of August. Response to date has been good and I would encourage those Members that have not yet completed the questionnaire to do so. Officers will also be seeking the views of groups that have benefitted from this funding and looking at other schemes from across the country before providing an options report for Members to consider.