







## District Councilor Talking Notes JULY 2024 – Finchingfield 23 JUL 2024

### General Election

3 Fields located in the Braintree constituency was retained by the Conservatives and James Cleverly.

Voter turnout was down by 6% at 63.4% vrs other recent General Elections .

	<b>James Cleverly</b> (Conservative)	<b>17,414</b>
	<b>Matthew Wright</b> (Labour)	<b>13,744</b>
	<b>Richard Thomson</b> (Reform)	<b>11,346</b>
	<b>Kieron Franks</b> (Lib Dem)	<b>2,879</b>
	<b>Paul Thorogood</b> (Green)	<b>2,878</b>
	<b>David Heather</b> (Independent)	<b>767</b>

- Conservative majority: 3,670
- Turnout: 63%

The next election is 1 MAY 2025 for Essex County Council

### County

### Public Transport

#### DigiGo will replace the scheduled 9 and 9A bus service on 28 JUL 2024

We await feedback on our suggestion to Essex County Council that DigiGo claim the £1m (over 5 years) S106 monies from the Towerlands development to fund a Public shuttle bus between Towerlands and Braintree as the new service supports this area and will add a welcome boost to the 2+1+1 years funding to the ECC DIGIGO service which will support many 3 fields communities and 000' more residents (than a shuttle).

**Wethersfield will be hosting a DigiGo session TOMORROW in their Village Hall from 6pm – 7.30pm.**



**digi go** on demand

Book, Track, Ride via the TravelEssex app

www.digigo.uk

## Introducing DigiGo

Learn how DigiGo enhances accessibility and establishes essential connections to key services. Unlike conventional buses with fixed timetables, stops, and routes, DigiGo offers full flexibility to fit your schedule.

Wednesday 24 July  
6 - 7:30pm  
Wethersfield Village Hall



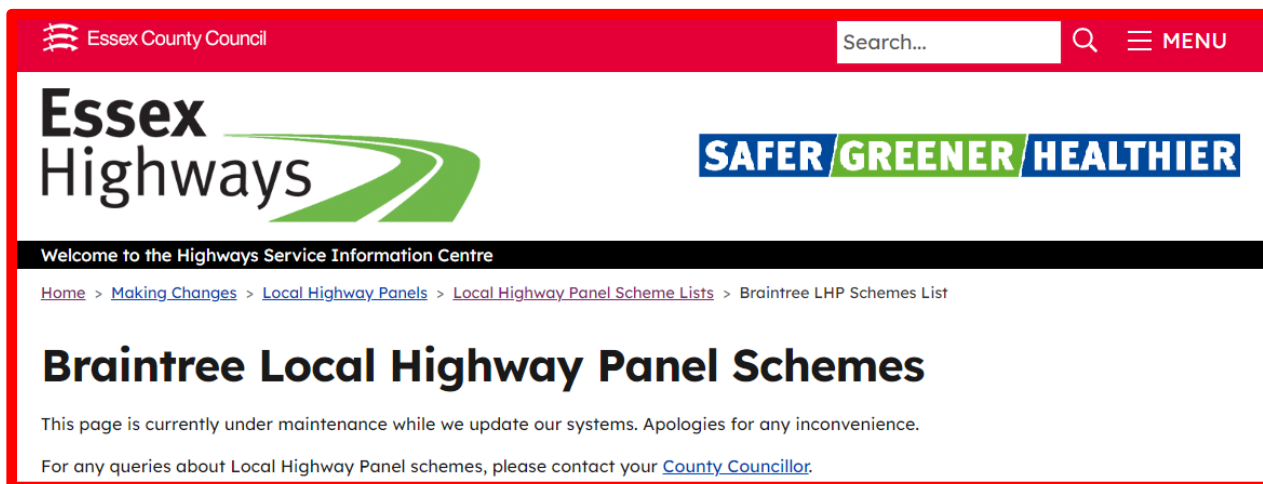
www.digigo.uk

Book, Track, Ride via the TravelEssex app

Michael (with Cllr Merryweather – Shalford) attended the County Bus virtual Meeting on MON 15 JUL 10 – 12 to discuss Braintree District Transport lead by Essex County Council’s Tatiana Cullingford - Local Bus Network Community Engagement Lead, Integrated Passenger Transport Unit.

Useful session – significant effort has gone into the new Travel Essex website – check it out. <https://www.travelessex.co.uk/>

The Local Highways Panel list of schemes is STILL “under maintenance”



Essex County Council

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**Essex**  
Highways

**SAFER GREENER HEALTHIER**

Welcome to the Highways Service Information Centre

[Home](#) > [Making Changes](#) > [Local Highway Panels](#) > [Local Highway Panel Scheme Lists](#) > Braintree LHP Schemes List

## Braintree Local Highway Panel Schemes

This page is currently under maintenance while we update our systems. Apologies for any inconvenience.

For any queries about Local Highway Panel schemes, please contact your [County Councillor](#).

So I cannot see the progress on Finchingfield Bridge EWRO ...

## District

### 1. Wethersfield Enforcement

**We await feedback on the BDC Enforcement Action against Home Office after their visits etc ~19 JUN 2024.**

The Case reference is 24/00307/UBW3.

Abigail Da'Bell, who is one of BDC’s Senior Planning Enforcement Officers will be the Case Officer and will update us further in due course.

### **BDC’s effective role as Local Planning Authority for Wethersfield**

We look forward to BDC enforcing the Home Office activities where appropriate e.g. demolition, contamination, site travel plans etc etc

### *Wethersfield Enforcement Update 24 JUN 2024*

Wethersfield Clerk (Donna) completed a detailed form to BDC Enforcement to enable them to start their action on FRI 21 JUN. [This process differs from BDC enforcement self-generated work – where no complaint is necessary for them to start or pursue] i.e. The Fox Inn Gazebo's, Gt Notley Fete signs etc

BDC Development Manager\* visited site on FRI 21 JUN  
(\*currently solely responsible for conducting planning enforcement in the district)

Abigail Da'Bell Senior Enforcement Officer will lead

The Wethersfield Enforcement Case Reference is 24/00307/UBW3

**Important** : We have requested that the Wethersfield enforcement action is conducted in public with full cooperation with [and is directed by] the BDC Planning Committee due to the high level of Public Interest, Loss of Public Amenity and material heritage and other harm resulting from the HO actions – rather than the usual approach to enforcement activity where things are conducted in a an opaque delegated capacity – with no member involvement.

## **2) Securing HO grant money for Communities impacted by Asylum activities**

Michael & I&G Cllr Wendy Taylor (Hedingham) met the x2 new PR folks employed at BDC using the HO grant money and discussed details of how to get money into the Community. [Ciaran and Rachel]

A costed proposal has been submitted re Asylum staff speeding through Wethersfield ward – an important matter forward in Blackmore End and Beazley End communities (villages impacted by the opening of Gate 7 for Asylum staff access) – no feedback yet.

### 3) Local Plan Extension

#### **BDC push to extend the Local Plan to 2041**

The BDC Call for Sites to extend the Local Plan to 2041 concluded at the end of May.

A key step in the process – **The Statement of Community Involvement** – appears to follow the process outlined from page 6 however we think that the time allowed is insufficient in normal times, but is particularly challenging in the peak holiday season.

We are also looking at a review of planning decisions in relation to Communities with a “Made” Neighbourhood Plan – as these should direct all planning efforts there.

We hope our learnings will also inform communities going through their own Neighbourhood Plan process (like Shalford, Wethersfield with Finchingfield) in particular what ongoing defence may be required to ensure your plan can deliver the expected results in the short, medium and long term.

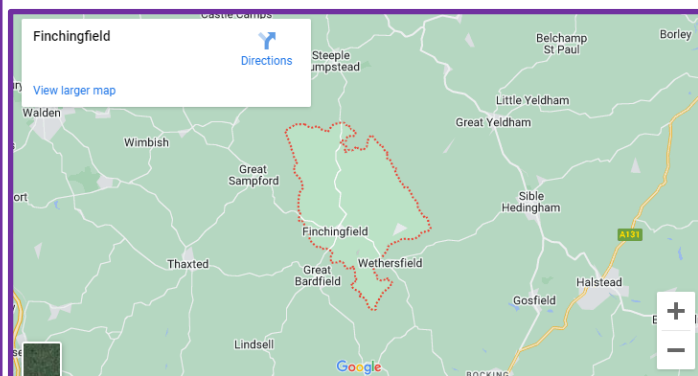
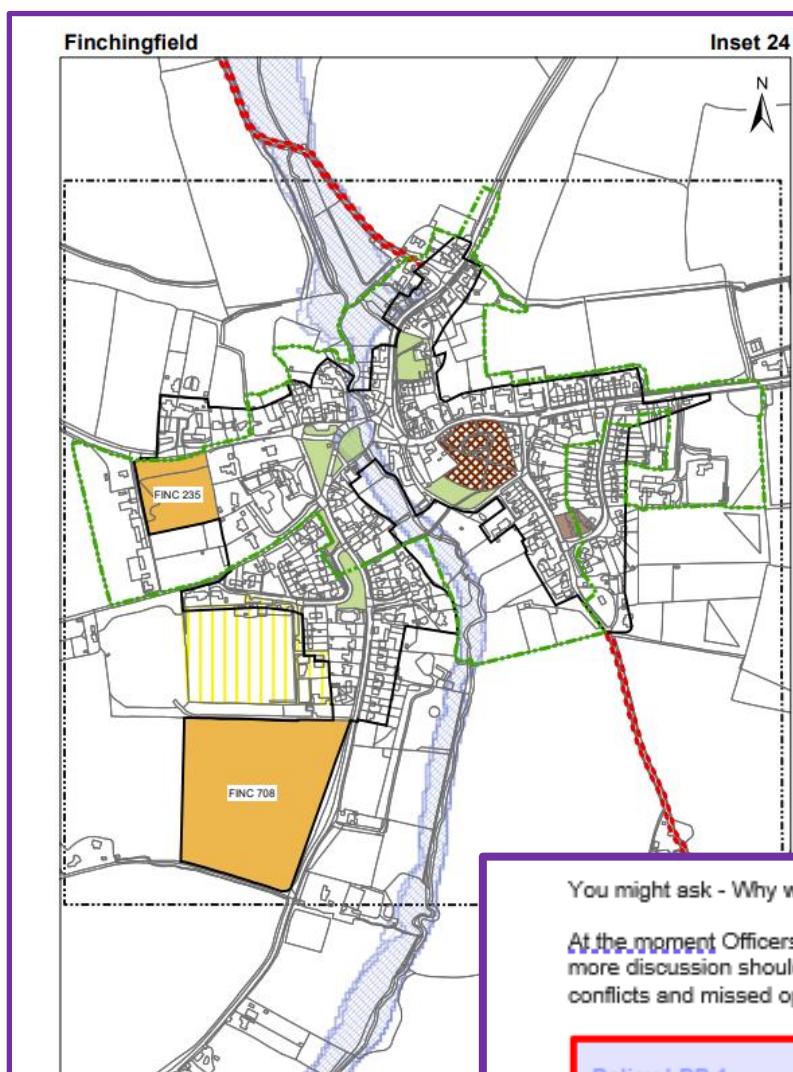
Finchingfield with Wethersfield application to start the Neighbourhood Plan process was approved on the 10 JULY 2023 and is well underway.

Some notes suggesting feedback to BDC planning regarding the Local Plan Review will be issued shortly.

*Finchingfields current LOCAL PLAN is MAP 24 in Local Plan 2013 – 2033 and is much SMALLER AREA THAN its Parish Boundary.*

It is not alone – there is a challenge that outside this single black line - everything else is considered countryside and subject to LPP1 – potentially blocking sustainable “development” actually supported by the Community (WIMBY) also impacting LPP 7 Rural Enterprise, LPP 8 Tourist Development, LPP 13 Leisure (only currently within towns), LPP 50 Open Space, LPP 61 Local Community Services and Facilities)... this will continue *unless Finchingfield REDRAW THEIR MAP* in the Local Plan

Local Parishes and Communities should decide these things and not remote civil servants.



You might ask - Why would officers and Communities ever disagree?

At the moment Officers are not required to consult with Parishes or their NP teams... more discussion should take place to inform and direct the planning process to avoid conflicts and missed opportunities.

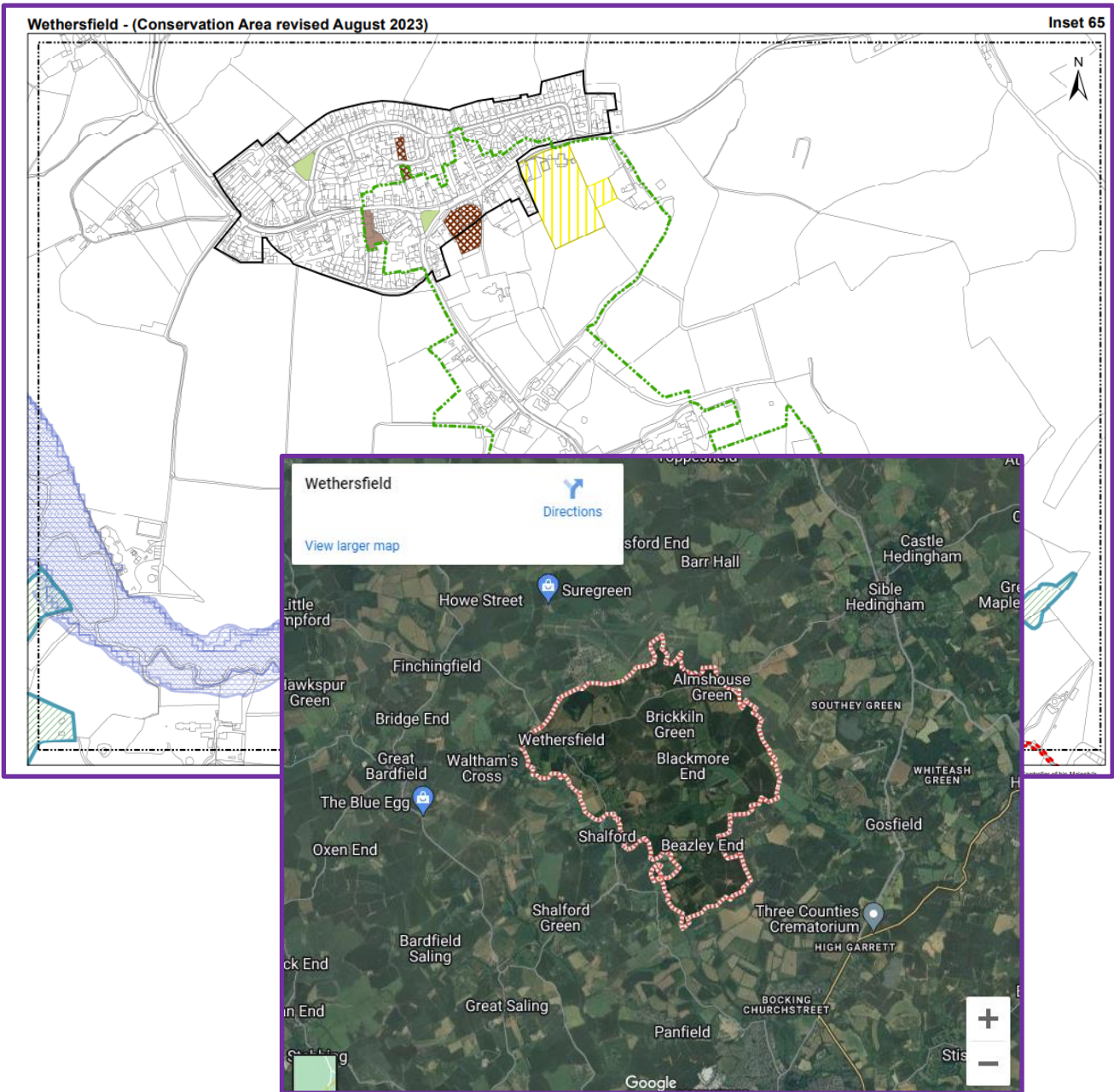
**Policy LPP 1**

**Development Boundaries**

Within development boundaries, development will be permitted where it satisfies amenity, design, environmental and highway criteria and where it can take place without material adverse detriment to the existing character and historic interest of the settlement.

Development outside development boundaries will be confined to uses appropriate to the countryside whilst also protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Rural Communities that want appropriate GROWTH outside their historic centres need to say so in this Local Plan review – using all the tools available to fulfil potential across their entire Parish.



ON FRI 5 JULY we received the following from BDC

As you will be aware, Braintree District Council is in the process of updating its Local Plan. The current Local Plan is a two-part plan which runs until 2033 and serves as the strategic framework that guides the growth and development in the Braintree district. It addresses crucial aspects such as housing, employment, infrastructure, and environmental considerations.

A link to the current Local Plan is included below: [www.braintree.gov.uk/localplan2033](http://www.braintree.gov.uk/localplan2033)

### **Why are we reviewing the Local Plan?**

The Council is reviewing its plan because it will be considered “out of date” in February 2026 as it will have been 5 years from the date of its original adoption. As such we need to get a plan submitted to the **Planning Inspectorate by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025**. This was agreed by Local Plan Sub-Committee in 7 March 2024.

## Who is on the Local Plan Sub-Committee?

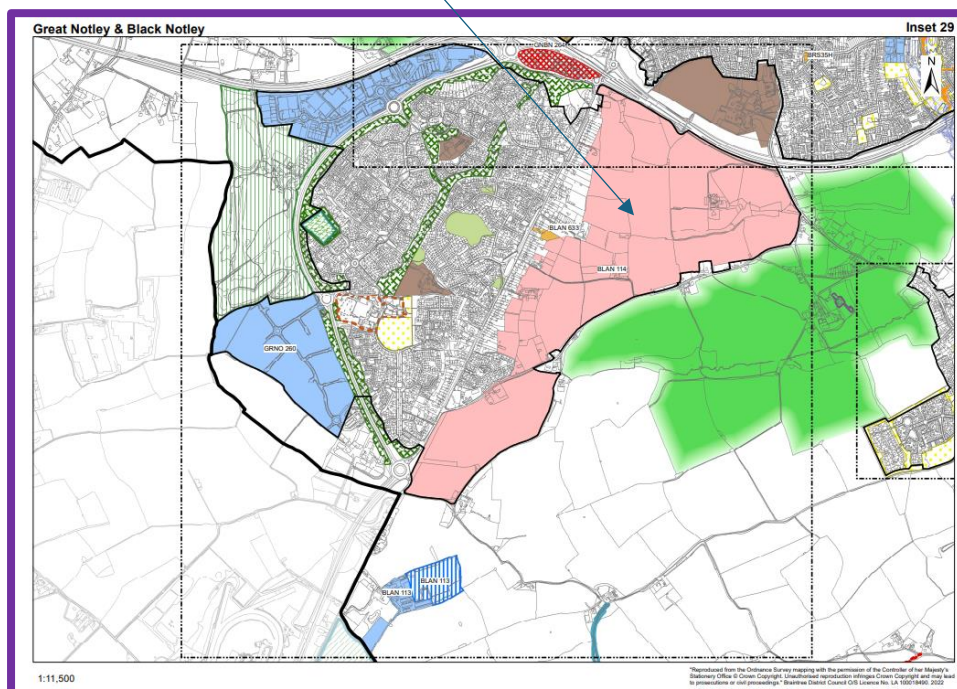
## Is it currently representative of the Development Areas?

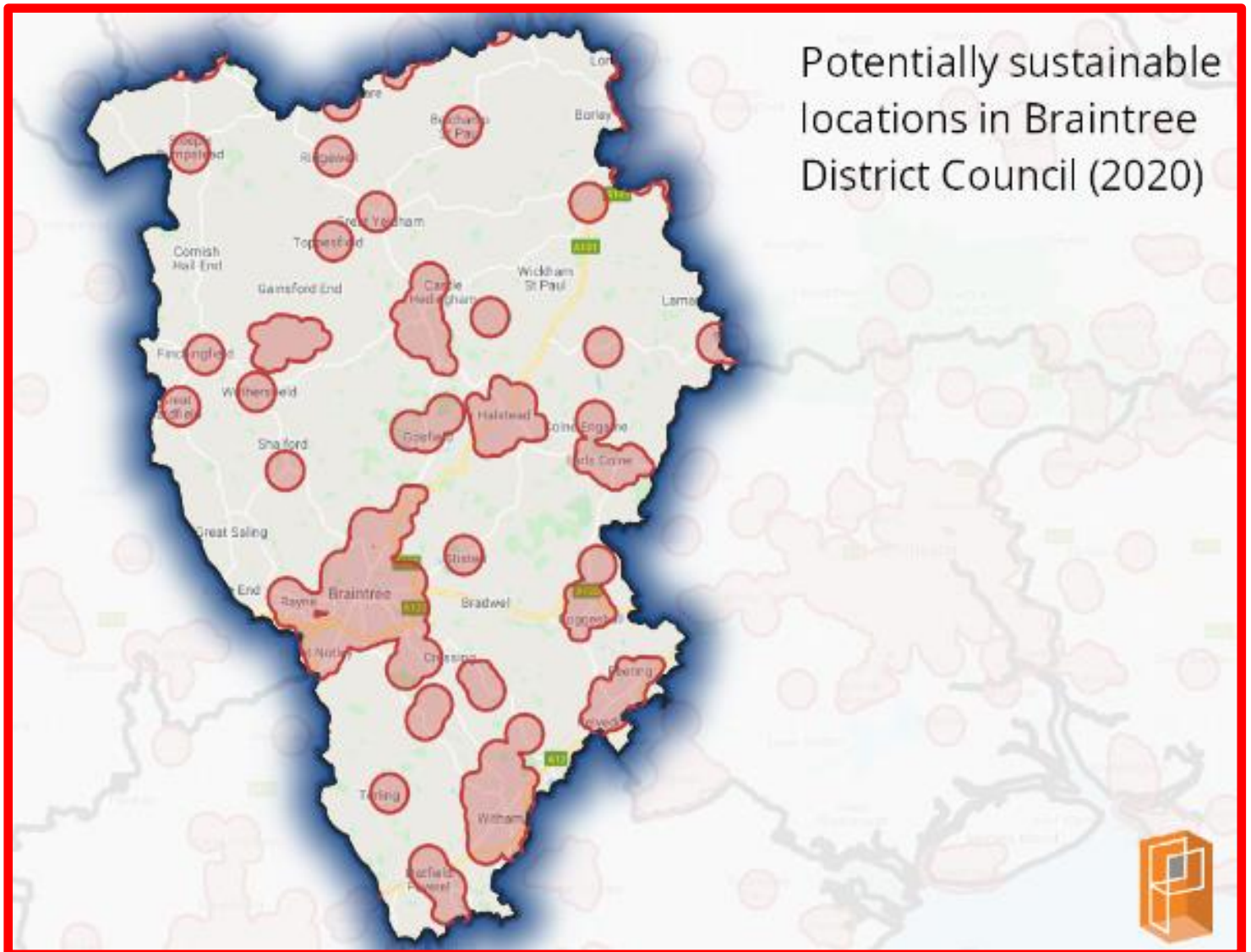
Local Plan Sub-Committee (as of 7 MAR 2024)

	Councillor	Ward	Party	Urban / Rural *
1	Abbott	Silver End and Cressing	I&G	Rural
2	K Bowers	Braintree South	CON	Urban
3	L Bowers-Flint	Bocking Blackwater	CON	Urban
4	G Butland	Great Notley and Black Notley	CON	Rural**
5	J Coleridge	Hat Peverel & Terling	CON	Rural
6	T Cunningham	Great Notley and Black Notley	CON	Rural**
7	M Finken	Halstead Trinity	LAB	Urban
8	J Martin	Witham South	LAB	Urban
9	A Munday	Halstead St Andrews	HRA	Urban
10	I Parker	Stour Valley North	CON	Rural
11	F Ricci	Great Notley and Black Notley	CON	Rural**
12	G Spray (Chair)	The Colnes	CON	Rural
13	T Walsh	Coggeshall	I&G	Rural

\*As specified in the most recent Parish Ward Profile

\*\* To move to Urban post BLAN 114 (see map inset 29 below)





Once a plan is 5 years old, its policies have less weight in the planning application process. To get a plan prepared by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025 is a significant challenge but it is important that we review and keep the plan up to date so that communities can have certainty as to what development will happen and where in the district.

The review of Braintree's Local Plan will extend its timeframe from 2033 to 2041.

As we are reviewing an existing Local Plan, we are looking to provide growth post 2033. As such, most changes to the document will be updating the text and policies in line with the new National Planning Policy Framework, deleting policies which are no longer required and allocating some new sites for delivery post 2033 to meet longer-term needs.



In support of the updating of one of these evidence bases, a household telephone survey is being carried out until 22<sup>nd</sup> July by an independent market research company NEMS market research on our behalf that will help us understand shopping and leisure need in the district. This will be used as part of the evidence base to help inform the Local Plan Review. If residents have any concerns about receiving a call related to this survey, they can call the Planning Policy team on 01376 552525.

## Community engagement

BDC want to ensure stakeholders, residents and businesses are provided with opportunities to input throughout the Local Plan Review process, to help shape the district's future and to ensure that the Local Plan reflects local need and views.

BDC will be abiding by the commitments set out in our **current Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)** and will be fully engaging with residents and stakeholders through the preferred options and pre-submission consultations later in 2024 and early in 2025, which will follow on from the recently completed call for sites.

A dedicated communication strategy has been prepared to promote opportunities for residents to engage with the council for the forthcoming consultations, which will be available digitally as well as in-person.

**Community views are important to BDC** and as such they are keen to hear the views of our residents, communities and businesses throughout the review process.

Therefore, at this evidence gathering stage of the review, BDC are encouraging parish and town councils, stakeholders and communities to informally share any ideas or suggestions of what they would like to be considered as we update the Local Plan looking forward to 2041.

These comments will be considered by the team in preparing the draft Local Plan **[Who are they and to whom do they report]** document ahead of the Preferred Options consultation later this year.

Ideas and suggestions could include housing, employment, green spaces, transportation, infrastructure, or any other aspect of the community e.g. B1053.

We are therefore encouraging residents, businesses and communities to email us with their views at [planningpolicy@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@braintree.gov.uk) or write to us by post: Planning Policy, Braintree District Council, Causeway House, Bocking End, Braintree, Essex CM7 9HB by 5pm on **Friday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2024.**

## How residents can keep updated

We will be sharing this update on our Local Plan Review next steps with residents via our communication channels from next week, and we'd appreciate your support in amplifying this message on your own channels to your constituents.

Here is a link where you can download Local Plan Review graphics to use on your social media channels and a timeline

graphic: <https://braintree-district-council.sharepoint.com/:f:/s/ExternalSharing/EiMRsrCx22VAiWIG0jSgpYMBPxQp7jB2d9SyAGLqU8sn3g>

A summary of the Local Plan Review timeline, where we are now and next steps is available on our website: [www.braintree.gov.uk/localplanreview](http://www.braintree.gov.uk/localplanreview) which will be updated as we move through the process. We would encourage you to share this link with your communities.

Residents can [register](#) at any time to comment on consultations and receive alerts on future consultation launches of planning policy documents, including future Local Plan consultations, online here: <https://braintree-consult.objective.co.uk/kse/>

Residents can also sign up to our planning e-newsletter to keep updated on wider planning related news and updates from the council at [www.braintree.gov.uk/tellmemore](http://www.braintree.gov.uk/tellmemore).

If you have any questions, please contact the Planning Policy Team at [planningpolicy@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@braintree.gov.uk).

## WARD Request

Can you please highlight by email ANY Planning related issues which you feel should be referred to Braintree District Planning Committee?

There is a potential opportunity to Call-In planning applications to the X-party Planning Committee which may be useful where the Parish Council / Neighbourhood Plan Leads may have a different perspective to that of officers.

We feel we need to improve this process and test some examples to achieve the best results for Parish / NP and residents' views in a transparent and public way.

I'd like to walk through an application which seems to have gone the right way but I think this was "lucky" - it also appears on your agenda later as item 177/2024 Planning Applications 22/03278/FUL

## Why lucky?

22/03278/FUL is outside the Development Area

FAILED SP 3 (Development Area)

FAILED - LPP1 development in the Countryside (outside development area)

FAILED – SP7 – no public access – no lit streets?! Limited Public Transport

FAILED LPP 37 (only replacement – not new – very high bar)

FAILED LPP 40 (may be possible to convert other buildings to C3 dwelling – but not really)

LPP 47 and LPP 52 local features architecture? Acceptable amenity to surrounding dwellings – OK (no objections)

LPP 35 Mixed communities?

LPP 53 – OK from a Conservation Area perspective – PLACE Services were consulted and found in favour

LPP 63 – landscaping – ecology survey required ??? (how much was this?!) – would not have had a material impact on decision.

BDC could not show a five year housing supply – so that trumped the Development Plan / pick n mix approach was taken - replacement house OK (aligned with the Development Plan) and then new dwellings ok because of the lack of 5yHS.

## In summary

21 pages of summary....

Under delegated authority - BDC would have turned down the new dwellings (and possible risked the redevelopment)

Even though the FPC had no objection (see below) – it would not automatically get to Planning Committee – so officers would decide for you.

You need to call these cases in through ME or MARK.

Under Labour Housing Policy and Targets may trump Development Policy more frequently and even massive new towns in or straddling the District may not help our rural communities – so we need to get prepared and use the LOCAL PLAN to support our communities (and keep on-top-of-it).

22/03278/FUL would likely have won on appeal (5YHS) – costs, delay and acrimony....

Date: 26/01/2022

Planning Dept  
Braintree District Council

Dear Sirs,

**Reference:** 21/03528/FUL

**Proposal:** Redevelopment of existing site comprising extensions to existing dwelling, conversion of existing barn buildings from commercial to 5 No. dwellings and associated extensions and development.

**Location:** Great Wincey Farm, Brent Hall Road, Finchingfield

Finchingfield Parish Council has no objections to this planning application

Yours faithfully,

*C Waters*

Claire Waters –Clerk to the Council, CILCA