

2. Development and Growth

2.1 Planning Policy

Planning policy at the national, regional and local level is the means by which housing and employment growth will be delivered in a sustainable manner and, in doing so, ensure that issues relating to water management, infrastructure and flood risk are adequately addressed. In this section the planning policy context within which these issues will need to be considered is summarised. The full review of relevant planning policy can be found in Appendix B.

2.1.1 National policy

Government guidance is provided through a series of Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs) and more recent Planning Policy Statements (PPSs).

PPS 1 – Delivering sustainable development

PPS 1 sets out the Government's planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development and advises regional planning bodies and local planning authorities to ensure that development plans promote outcomes in which environmental, economic and social objectives are achieved together over time and contribute to global sustainability by addressing the causes and potential impacts of climate change. Planning authorities should seek to enhance the environment as part of development proposals; avoid significant adverse impacts and if required pursue alternative options.

Specifically development plan policies should take account of environmental issues such as the protection of groundwater from contamination and the potential impact of the environment on proposed developments by avoiding new development in areas at risk of flooding and as far as possible, by accommodating natural hazards and the impacts of climate change. The policies should also minimise the consumption of new resources by making more efficient use or reuse of existing resources. The PPS advises that regional planning authorities and local authorities should promote amongst other things the sustainable use of water resources and the use of sustainable drainage systems in the management of runoff.

PPS 25 – Development and flood risk

Planning Policy Statement 25 – *Development and Flood Risk* (PPS25) sets out Government policy on development and flood risk. It aims to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages in the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, and to direct development away from areas of highest risk. It also aims to ensure that new development does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. Where, in



exceptional circumstances, new development is necessary in such areas then the aim is to make it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere and, where possible, to reduce flood risk overall.

PPS25 stipulates that all planning applications for developments greater than 1 hectare must be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment detailing surface water management plans to demonstrate that runoff does not increase from the proposed development once it has been built and that runoff is not simply moved elsewhere.

In preparing planning strategies Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are advised to adopt the principle whereby Local Development Documents (LDDs) set out policies for the allocation of sites and the control of development which avoid flood risk to people and property where possible and manage it elsewhere, reflecting the approach to managing flood risk in this PPS and in the RSS for their region. The Allocations Document for Braintree is due for adoption in 2010 and should consider the results of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the drainage elements of this Water Cycle Study.

2.2 The Development Situation in Braintree District, Haverhill and Clare

2.2.1 The Development Plan

The East of England Plan (RSS) was produced in May 2008. It establishes the broad development strategy for the region providing a framework within which Local Planning Authorities should prepare their LDF for the period to 2021. Until such time as the Development Plan Documents (DPDs) are adopted, the Local Plan Review 2005 will, in respect of its saved policies, continue with the RSS to comprise the Development Plan.

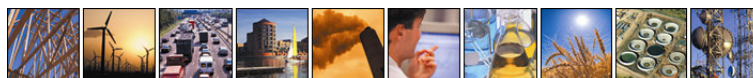
The East of England Plan

The East of England Plan places specific requirements on Braintree and St. Edmundsbury Councils to deliver targets for growth. These include a further 4,340 new dwellings for the period 2006-2021, projected to 5,510 for the period to 2025, at a rate of 290 per annum; and to contribute towards a Central and North Essex economic sub-region new job provision of 42,000.

To implement this planned growth the LPA's Core Strategy Documents need to reflect the East of England Plan and its policies on water efficiency, water resource and wastewater infrastructure development, integrated water management and flood risk management (WAT1-4).

Local Development Framework

The Braintree District Local Plan Review sets out the current settlement strategy for the District and essentially restricts new development to existing allocated sites and previously developed land within Braintree, Halstead and Witham; and the larger villages. However, the preparation of the LDF is seen as an opportunity to review this



strategy and set out the direction of growth within the context of the East of England Plan. This will be delivered via the Core Strategy DPD, the key development plan document and will provide the overarching strategy for development within the District. Other Local Development Documents will build on this strategy and deliver the detail.

The Water Cycle Study

The Water Cycle Study is intended to inform the planning process and provide an evidence base for the production of the Core Strategy and other LDDs and, thereby, assist in delivering objectives relating to water in a timely and structured manner when bringing forward development. In effect it provides the detail on how Local Authorities, and ultimately developers, will meet the strategic water requirements of the East of England Plan. Braintree District and St. Edmundsbury Borough Councils will need to address the policies of the East of England Plan in the LDDs and, where necessary, include appropriate policies within their documents. There are, however, options as to how this is best achieved but it is fundamental that there is an appropriate policy base included in the Core Strategy.

Other environmental studies commissioned to date to inform the planning process include:

- A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) – This provides detailed guidance on areas at risk from flooding in the District and the measures required to mitigate this risk. A scoping report has been completed as the first stage preparing the SFRA. Work has been undertaken on the second stage looking in more detail at individual Districts;
- A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal Baseline Report – the SEA/sustainability appraisal is a continuous process to ensure that the policies and proposals of the Plan have regard to sustainability objectives.

This Water Cycle Study examines the capacity of the existing water structure against the dwelling provision published in the East of England Plan. The Braintree District Council Issues and Options consultation document regards the proposed development plan provision as minimal and the achievement of additional housing would be acceptable if it can be delivered without breaching environmental and infrastructure constraints. This study sets out the constraints from the water environment and the measures that would be needed to accommodate development within those constraints. It examines the capacity of the water infrastructure and the environment to meet the pressures generated by 300 new homes per annum and an upper growth rate of 500 new homes per annum.

This study has taken into account the new housing locations that already have planning permission or which are allocated for development in the current local plan on a parish / location specific basis. An overview of the main locations highlighted for growth is provided in Table 2.1. Where appropriate it examines the spatial context of the environmental constraints, to identify if certain locations or concentrations of development would affect the pressure on the water infrastructure and its ability to cope with the demand.

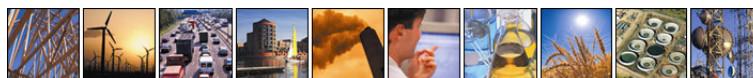


Table 2.1 Overview of the main areas highlighted for the proposed growth under the two different scenarios (300 and 500 per annum)

Small Area Name	WwTW Name	300 New Builds Per Annum				500 New Builds Per Annum			
		Annual Growth Rate	Forecast Occupancy Rate*			Annual Growth Rate	Forecast Occupancy Rate*		
			2001/02	2006/07	2021		2001/02	2006/07	2021
Braintree, Bocking and Great Notley*	Braintree or Bocking WwTW	160				267			
Witham Total	Witham WwTW	83				139			
Halstead	Halsted (Langley) WwTW	15				24			
Earls Colne	Earls Colne WwTW	12				20			
Coggeshall	Coggeshall WwTW	5				9			
Sible Hedingham	Sible Hedingham WwTW	4	2.371	2.306	2.112	6	2.371	2.319	2.162
Black Notley	White Notley WwTW	3				5			
Cressing	White Notley WwTW	2				4			
Steeple Bumpstead	Steeple Bumpstead	2				4			
Feering	Coggeshall WwTW	1				2			
Hatfield Peverel	Diverted to Witham WwTW	1				2			
Kelvedon	Coggeshall WwTW	1				2			
Haverhill (2006-2011)		150	2006/07 Occupancy Rate = 2.312						
Haverhill (2012-2016)		88	2021Occupancy Rate = 2.137						
Haverhill (2017-2025)		119							
Clare up to 2016		6							

* Occupancy rates provided by Braintree DC. No figures were provided for St Edmundsbury Borough Council so it was agreed to use an average.

