HATFIELD PEVEREL
PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council
Sarah Gaeta

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27th October 2026

To: Members of Hatfield Peverel Parish Council

You are hereby summoned to attend

THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
TO BE HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL
ON MONDAY 2ND NOVEMBER 2026 AT 7.30 PM

for the purpose of transacting the following business.

S L Gaeta

Clerk to the Council

A G E N D A

26/118 Apologies for Absence

26/119 Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 5th October 2026 to be taken as read and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

26/120 Declarations of Interest (existence and nature) with regards to items on the Agenda. Councillors are reminded that the code of conduct that took effect from 3rd June 2024 provides that should they have a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter under discussion, they should speak only in the public session, then withdraw from the room and not seek to influence a decision about the matter.

26/121 Essex County Councillor Update *5 minutes*

26/122 Braintree District Councillor Update *5 minutes*

26/123 Public Participation session with respect to items on the Agenda and other matters that are of mutual interest. *3 minutes per person; 15 minutes max*

26/124 Clerk's Update *5 minutes*
To receive an update from the Clerk.

26/125 Youth Services *10 minutes*
(a) To receive an update on youth services.
(b) To consider the planning condition requiring the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) to be locked at dusk and to determine what action, if any, should be taken.

26/126 Finance and General Purposes *45 minutes*

(a) To receive a budget update.
(b) To note the completion of the Quarter 2 bank reconciliations.
(c) To review and adopt a Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy.
(d) To consider and decide whether to authorise the Responsible Financial Officer to commence a 90-day free trial of Parish Online Mapping, with a view to evaluating its suitability for the management and mapping of Council assets and to receive a report on the outcomes of the trial and any associated subscription costs.
(e) To consider the report regarding lone working arrangements and to determine whether to undertake further investigation into available monitoring solutions and associated costs, or to take no further action.
(f) To consider whether to submit an application to the Cost-of-Living Small Grants Scheme to fund one academic year of free weekly tennis lessons for young people aged 13 to 18 years.
(g) To consider the report regarding the VAT treatment of the Village Hall Accessible Toilet Project and to determine whether the Council should proceed on the basis that VAT incurred will be reclaimed through its normal VAT refund procedures or obtain specialist VAT advice prior to payment of the works.
(h) To consider an amendment to the Council's adopted CCTV Policy to incorporate the use of body-worn cameras and to determine whether to approve the proposed changes.
(i) To agree a final response to the Braintree District Council Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation.
(j) To agree the meeting dates for 2027.

26/127 Traffic *15 minutes*

(a) To receive an update on traffic matters.
(b) To consider a proposal from LDK Group Ltd for the management of the Village Hall and proposed sports facility overflow car parks and to decide whether to progress the project in principle, subject to a site visit and agreement of the operational details.

26/128 Environment *20 minutes*

(a) To receive an update from the Environment Advisory Group.
(b) To consider the report regarding cemetery walkway widths in light of a recent formal complaint and to determine what action, if any, should be taken.
(c) To consider a quotation of £760.00 for the supply and installation of bark chippings to the woodland footpath by the duck pond and to determine what action to take.
(d) To consider and agree the installation of cycle racks outside the Village Hall using funding secured through the Essex County Council Locality Fund.

26/129 Stone Path Meadow *5 minutes*

To receive an update on Stone Path Meadow.

26/130 Section 106 *5 minutes*

To receive an update on S106 projects.

26/131 Communications *5 minutes*

To receive an update on communications.

26/132 Keith Bigden Memorial Ground *5 minutes*

To receive an update on the KBMG.

26/133 Community Park *5 minutes*

To receive an update on the Community Park.

26/134 Accounts for Payment *2 minutes*

To agree the accounts for payment for October 2026.

26/135 Announcements *5 minutes*

26/136 Confidential Matters *15 minutes*

(a) **Motion:** Under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 S.1(2), the Parish Council to exclude members of the press and public for the duration of this meeting to consider the following confidential items.

(b) To review the quotes received for the feasibility study of the proposed first-floor office accommodation (minute reference 26/88(c)) and appoint a contractor to carry out the work.

Please direct any questions relating to items on the agenda to the Clerk by 9am on Friday 30th October.
The timings given above are for the Chairman's guidance.

Date of next Parish Council Meeting – Monday 7th December 2026

MINUTES OF THE HATFIELD PEVEREL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 5TH OCTOBER 2026
IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30PM

Those present:

Cllr M Weale (Chairman)
Cllr D Broddle
Cllr T Munt
Cllr R Parker
Cllr W Purser
Cllr M Renow
Cllr T Short
Cllr S Smith
Cllr D Wallace
Cllr T Weale
Clerk
7 members of the public

26/99 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Elliston.

26/100 Minutes

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 7th September 2026 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

26/101 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Wallace in item 26/115.

26/102 Essex County Councillor Update

Councillor John Morris was not present.

26/103 Braintree District Councillor (BDC) Update

Councillor Dervish gave an update on the following:

- Support given to the Parish Council in relation to Section 106 funding delays.
- Review date for the waste consultation has passed. Responses are being reviewed. A budget for additional bins is being considered. Additional collections are cost prohibitive.
- Councillor Grant – the village hall has identified a project for funding.
- Attended a public meeting in Witham regarding community safety. Happy to organise this for Hatfield Peverel if wanted.
- Age Well Fair in Witham on Thursday 8th October.

26/104 Public Participation

None.

26/105 Clerk's Update

The Clerk's update was received.

26/106 Finance and General Purposes

(a) The budget update was received.
(b) The conclusion of audit for the financial year 2025/26 was noted.

(c) The Local Government Services Pay Agreement for 2026/27, effective from 1st April 2026, was noted.

(d) **It was resolved** to permit the Football Club to use the Recreation Ground for training between October and March, 9am - 11am. The following caveats apply: weather permitting, rotate position of pitches, do not use the tennis court fencing as a backdrop.

(e) In the absence of a proposer, the request to use the Village Hall car park as a temporary school car park during the proposed school rebuilding works was not considered further.

(f) **It was resolved** to object to Braintree District Council's Local Plan under the Regulation 19 Consultation.

Power: Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (Regs. 4 and 6); Local Government Act 1972, s.111; Public Health Act 1875, Section 164.

26/107 Traffic

A brief update on traffic matters was received.

26/108 Environment

An update from the Environment Advisory Group was received.

26/109 Stone Path Meadow

No update at this meeting.

26/110 Section 106 Funds

An update on S106 projects was received.

26/111 Communications

A brief update on communications was received.

26/112 Keith Bigden Memorial Ground

An update on the KBMG was received.

26/113 Community Park

(a) An update on the Community Park was received.

(b) **It was resolved** to adopt the Community Park CCTV Policy and Appendices.

Power: Local Government Act 1972, s.111.

26/114 Youth Services

(a) An update on youth services was received.

(b) **It was resolved** to proceed with public consultation on potential pump track locations, noting that the project remains at a preliminary stage, with no formal Parish Council approval or funding currently in place.

Power: Local Government Act 1972, s.111.

26/115 Accounts for Payment

It was resolved that the accounts for payment for September 2026 be approved as follows:

Staff costs	£6,148.13
Wallace Arboriculture and Groundcare	£6,121.50
Andrew Smith Print Limited	£455.00
C Truman (expenses)	£29.95
Hatfield Peverel Community Association	£293.33
Strutt and Parker Farms	£4,500.00
The Swan Inn	£28.00

Essex Tennis	£68.00
Ernest Doe & Sons	£30.00
PKF Littlejohn	£756.00
Mark Cain	£570.00
Fitzpatrick Woolmer	£640.80
M and S Cleaning Services	£50.00
Dunmow Training	£72.00
D Driver and Son	£7,350.10

Pre-Approved Direct Debits:

Unity Trust Bank	£12.05
Braintree District Council	£191.00
BT	£71.94
Now Pensions	Included in staff costs
SSE	£591.68

Councillor Wallace abstained.

26/116 General Announcements

- The village hall charity AGM is on Thursday 8th October at 7.30pm.
- PCSO beat surgery in the village hall this week.

26/117 Confidential Matters

(a) Under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 s.1(2), **it was resolved** to exclude members of the press and public for the duration of this meeting to consider the following confidential item.

(b) No quotations were received for the feasibility study relating to the proposed first-floor office accommodation (Minute Reference 26/88(c)). The item was therefore deferred to the November meeting to allow further quotations to be sought.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm

The next meeting will be held on Monday 5th October 2026

Report - Planning Condition Relating to the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)

Planning Permission Reference: 09/00782/FUL

Purpose of Report

To enable the Council to consider the planning condition requiring the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) at the Strutt Memorial Recreation Ground to be locked at dusk and to determine whether an application should be made to amend or remove the condition.

Background

The MUGA was approved under planning permission 09/00782/FUL – Recreational Ground to be used as a multi-use games area, Maldon Road, Hatfield Peverel. The approved planning permission included conditions restricting use of the facility outside specified hours.

Following construction of the MUGA, arrangements were initially put in place for volunteers to unlock and lock the facility in accordance with the planning requirements.

Over time, the volunteer arrangements became increasingly difficult to sustain. Historical records indicate that the Parish Council subsequently explored options to amend the planning conditions to allow greater flexibility in the use of the MUGA. Records further indicate that these approaches were not supported by Braintree District Council.

A letter sent on behalf of the Parish Council on 16 February 2010 requested variation of two planning conditions. In relation to operating hours, the Council sought amendment of the condition restricting use of the MUGA to between 08:00 and dusk each day. The Council also sought relaxation of the condition prohibiting floodlighting in order to allow the local football club to undertake training sessions during the evening. The request explained that the football club had historically trained on the site and used existing floodlighting for that purpose.

The MUGA has since remained accessible for a considerable period and, to the best of officers' knowledge, has not been routinely locked at dusk for a number of years.

In September 2010 the Parish Council received correspondence from Braintree District Council advising that the Council was failing to comply with the planning condition requiring the MUGA to be locked at dusk and warning that enforcement action could be considered if compliance was not achieved (a ‘first warning’).

Current Position

The original planning condition remains in force unless and until it is amended, removed or otherwise varied through the planning process.

The Council therefore has the following broad options:

1. Take no action and leave the planning condition unchanged.
2. Seek informal advice from Braintree District Council regarding the likelihood of support for amendment or removal of the condition.

3. Submit a formal planning application seeking amendment or removal of the condition.
4. Consider measures to ensure ongoing compliance with the existing condition if the Council does not wish to pursue amendment or removal.

Members should note that any future proposal for lighting at the MUGA would constitute a separate matter requiring further consideration and may be subject to additional planning requirements.

Financial Implications

There would be a cost associated with submitting a planning application and any supporting documentation that may be required.

Should the condition remain, there may also be costs associated with implementing measures to ensure compliance with the condition.

Legal and Risk Implications

The planning condition remains attached to the planning permission unless formally amended or removed.

If the Council wishes to facilitate use of the MUGA beyond the current restriction, a formal planning process would provide clarity regarding the lawful use of the facility.

Recommendation

Members are requested to consider the planning condition requiring the MUGA to be locked at dusk and determine whether:

a) no further action should be taken;

b) informal discussions should be undertaken with Braintree District Council; or

c) a formal application should be submitted seeking amendment or removal of the condition.

HATFIELD PEVEREL
PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council
Sarah Gaeta

REQUEST FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Sections shaded Blue to be completed by the requesting member
Sections unshaded to be completed by the Proper Officer or their delegate

Item topic	Adoption of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy
Advisory Group/Committee recommendation?	No
Proposed by	Richard Parker
Seconded by (if known)	
Proposed outcome – i.e. discussion, decision *	Decision
If motion, please indicate required wording *	That Hatfield Peverel Parish Council adopts the draft Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy, subject to any amendments agreed by the Council.
Background (provided by the proposer)	AI could help the Council reduce repetitive administration, improve consistency and support research and project work. A written policy would set clear safeguards for accuracy, human oversight, confidentiality, data protection and approved tools. I ask the Council to consider and, subject to any amendments, adopt the attached draft AI Policy.
Background (provided by the Proper Officer)	The Proper Officer thanks Councillor Parker for bringing this matter forward and for recognising the opportunities and risks associated with the increasing use of AI. While supporting the principle of adopting an AI Policy, the Proper Officer considers that the draft submitted could be simplified and better aligned with the Council's operational requirements and governance arrangements and submits a second draft for consideration.
Financial implication (anticipated by the proposer)	No immediate expenditure is requested. Any future paid AI tools or implementation costs would be considered separately and approved under the Council's financial regulations.
Financial implication (anticipated by the Proper Officer)	Microsoft Copilot is included within the Council's existing Microsoft 365 subscription and is available for officer use without additional cost. Any future subscriptions, licences or AI-related expenditure would require separate approval in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.
Legal implications	Any use of AI must comply with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, copyright law, employment law, the Council's information governance policies and the Nolan Principles. Members should note that AI-generated outputs may contain inaccuracies and should not be relied upon as a substitute for professional legal, financial, planning, HR or other specialist advice where the Council would ordinarily obtain advice from a suitably qualified and insured professional.
Proposer's signature	[redacted]

LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME FOUNDATION

Explanatory Notes:
* 1. If discussion is required before a decision and the proposer is not clear on what the outcome of discussions may be, please indicate 'to discuss and decide' - a motion will then be formulated at the meeting;
* 2. If discussion or consideration is required *without* a decision, please indicate 'to discuss', 'to consider' etc;
* 3. If a decision is sought and a motion required (for example, a recommendation by an Advisory Group), please indicate this.

Standing Orders 9 and 10 apply to notices of motion:

9. Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Proper Officer

A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting which it is tabled for and in any event shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.

No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least five clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.

The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with Standing Order 9(b) above, correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.

If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with Standing Order 9(b) above is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it in writing to the Proper Officer so that it can be understood at least three clear days before the meeting.

If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chairman of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the Councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.

Subject to Standing Order 9(e) above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.

Motions received shall be recorded in a book for that purpose and numbered in the order that they are received.

Motions rejected shall be recorded in a book for that purpose with an explanation by the Proper Officer for their rejection.

10. Motions at a meeting that do not require written notice

a. The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer:

i. to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
ii. to move to a vote;
iii. to defer consideration of a motion;
iv. to refer a motion to a particular Committee or sub-Committee;
v. to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
vi. to change the order of business on the agenda;
vii. to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
viii. to require a written report;
ix. to appoint a Committee or sub-Committee and their members;
x. to extend the time limits for speaking;
xi. to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or sensitive information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
xii. to not hear further from a Councillor or a member of the public;
xiii. to exclude a Councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
xiv. to temporarily suspend the meeting;
xv. to suspend a particular Standing Order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory requirements);
xvi. to adjourn the meeting; or
xvii. to close a meeting.

Hatfield Peverel Parish Council
Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

Purpose

This policy supports the safe, proportionate and effective use of artificial intelligence (AI) in Council business while protecting personal data, confidential information and public confidence.

Scope

This policy applies to councillors, employees, contractors and volunteers undertaking Council business.

Approved AI Systems

Microsoft Copilot is the Council's approved AI system for Council work.

Council business data shall only be processed using Microsoft Copilot or such other AI systems as may be specifically approved by the Clerk

Other AI tools, such as ChatGPT or image-generation platforms, may only be used for generic research, design concepts, publicity material, illustrations or similar tasks where no Council, personal, confidential or commercially sensitive information is uploaded.

Principles

AI may assist with tasks, but responsibility remains with the user. All outputs must be checked for accuracy, relevance, bias and suitability before use. AI must not be used to make decisions on behalf of the Council.

Permitted Uses

AI may be used to assist with drafting reports, correspondence, newsletters, policies, procedures, website content, procurement documents, project plans, funding applications, general research and administrative tasks. AI may also be used to improve spelling, grammar, readability and accessibility.

Prohibited Uses

AI must not be used to make Council decisions, approve expenditure, provide legal advice, make employment decisions, create misleading information, impersonate individuals, or process confidential Council information through an unapproved system.

AI must not be relied upon in place of professional advice where the Council would ordinarily engage a suitably qualified adviser. AI may assist with research and drafting, but decisions involving public funds, legal obligations or specialist technical matters must continue to be supported by appropriate professional expertise and indemnity arrangements.

Agendas and Minutes

AI must not be used to prepare agendas or official minutes from recordings or transcripts. Agendas and minutes are official Council records and must be prepared and approved through the Council's established governance procedures.

Data Protection

Personal data, confidential information, commercially sensitive information, legal advice, payroll information, complaint details, safeguarding information, passwords and security-related information must not be entered into any public or unapproved AI system. Users must comply with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Council's data protection and retention policies.

Transparency and Record Keeping

AI-generated content used in Council business should be retained where necessary to explain decisions or demonstrate compliance.

Training and Review

Users should receive appropriate guidance on AI. This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes in legislation, guidance or technology.

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Our services are designed for the **precise needs of town, parish and community councils** in England, Wales and Scotland.

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Our Social Value

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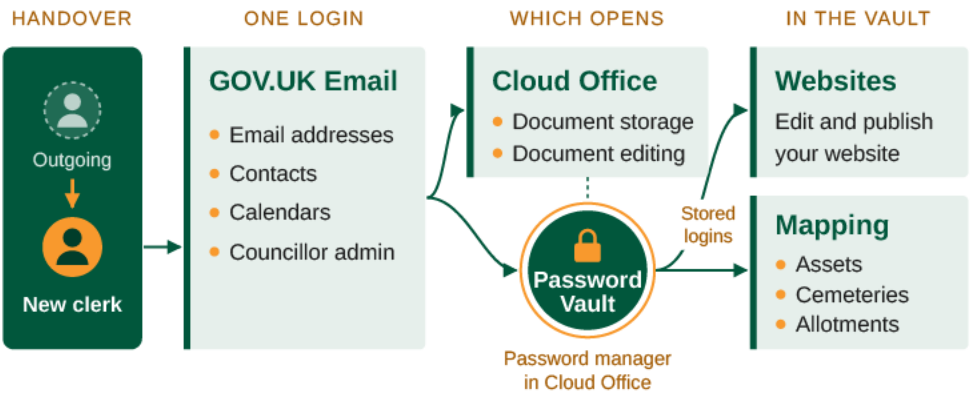
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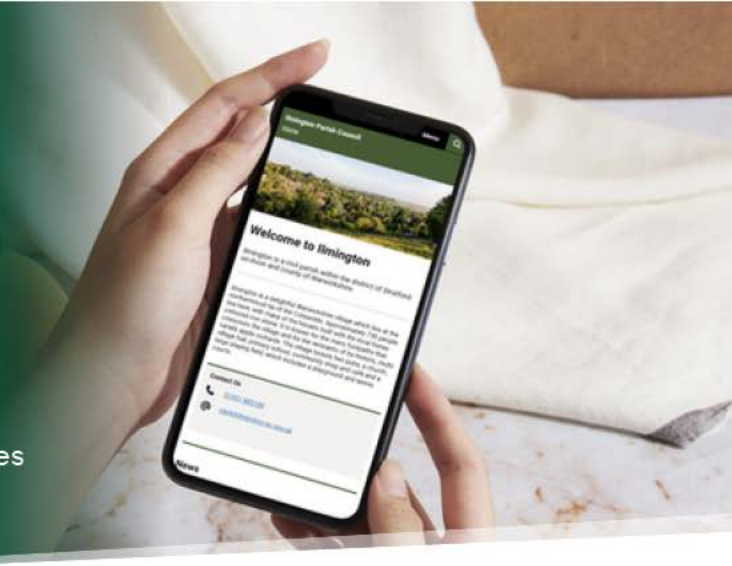
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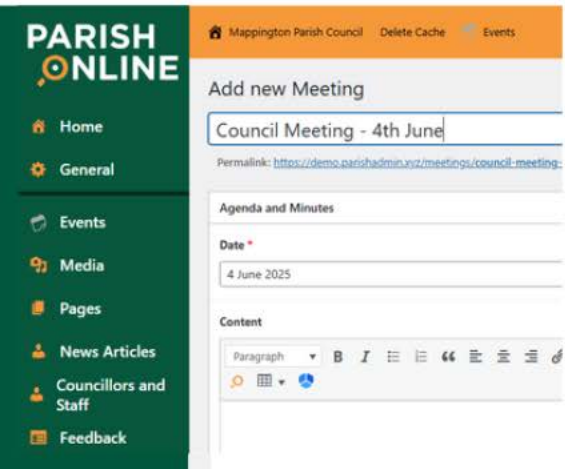


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Clerk for Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council

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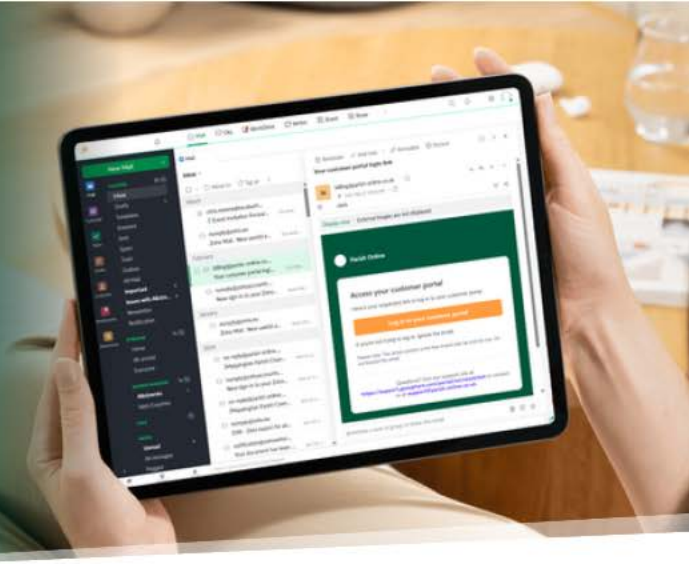
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Websites
Email
Cloud Office
Extra Domains

TOTAL

Get Started

Mapping

Websites

Email

Cloud Office

Free Clerk Email

Wellbeing

Parish Online Mapping and Digital Services

Members are asked to consider commencing a 90-day free trial of the **Parish Online Mapping** platform with a view to subscribing to the service should the trial prove beneficial.

Parish Online is a digital mapping and asset management system designed specifically for local councils. The platform enables councils to create an interactive map of their assets, including items such as benches, bins, play equipment, noticeboards, street furniture, open spaces, footpaths and other infrastructure. Asset records can be linked to photographs, inspection records, maintenance histories and other relevant documents, providing a centralised and accessible asset register.

The initial objective would be to use the system for the mapping and management of Council assets. This would improve record keeping, support insurance and audit requirements, assist with maintenance planning, and provide greater resilience by ensuring asset information is securely stored and easily accessible.

In addition to mapping, Parish Online offers a range of digital services that may be of interest to the Council in the future, including website hosting, email hosting and migration to a **.gov.uk** domain. These services could support improvements in cyber security, compliance and public accessibility.

The proposed 90-day trial would allow officers to evaluate the functionality, ease of use and potential benefits of the platform before any financial commitment is made. A further report would be brought to Council at the conclusion of the trial should Members wish to consider a subscription.

Recommendation:

That the Council authorises the Responsible Financial Officer to commence a 90-day free trial of Parish Online Mapping and report back to Council on the outcomes and any associated subscription costs.

Report to Council: Lone Worker Monitoring Arrangements

Purpose of Report

To inform Council of health and safety audit observations relating to lone working arrangements, consider available options and seek direction on a preferred approach.

Background

The absence of formal lone worker monitoring arrangements has been highlighted during two separate health and safety audits. The Council employs litter pickers, office staff and hall staff who periodically work alone, together with councillors undertaking site visits and inspections.

Options Considered

1. Do Nothing: No cost but does not address audit observations.

2. Manual Monitoring: Start/finish notifications. Low cost but relies on someone monitoring messages.

3. Shared Diary System: Records locations and expected return times, but still relies on active oversight.

4. Lone Worker App (Recommended): Automated check-in/check-out, location recording, alerts and audit trail.

Provider Comparison

Provider	Annual Cost (7 licences)	Advantages	Disadvantages
StaySafe	£798	Widely used; welfare checks; GPS and reporting	Highest cost option
Peoplesafe	£403	Competitive pricing; established UK provider	Extra charges for some features
OK Alone	£336-£840	Automated alerts; GPS; flexible	Quotation normally required
Vygard	£756	Active worker model	Less common in local government

Shared Device Approach

Four licences for litter pickers, one shared office licence, one shared village hall licence and one shared councillor/volunteer licence, giving seven licences in total. Budget heading 101/5 – subscriptions c. £1700 left.

Smartphone Costs

Three entry-level Android smartphones: approximately £270-£390. Recommended budget allowance: £400. Budget heading 101/7 – office equipment c. £280 left.

Suggested Resolution

That Council notes the audit findings and authorises the Clerk to obtain quotations for lone worker monitoring systems and three shared smartphones for operational use.

Report to Council: Cost of Living Small Grants Scheme Application

Agenda Item: Cost of Living Small Grants Scheme Application
Report Author: Clerk to the Council
Meeting Date: 2nd November 2026

Purpose of Report

To seek Council's approval to submit an application to the Braintree District Council Cost of Living Small Grants Scheme for a project aimed at improving access to physical activity and sport for young people within the parish and surrounding area.

Cost of Living Small Grants Scheme – Braintree District Council

Background

Braintree District Council has established a Cost-of-Living Fund to support projects that address the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis. One of the stated objectives of the fund is to enable physical and emotional health and wellbeing, particularly for young people who may be struggling to afford access to leisure activities and sports clubs. The scheme can fund both project costs and sports equipment.

The Parish Council owns and maintains public tennis courts and has an established relationship with a professional tennis coach who delivers coaching exclusively at the facility.

Proposed Project

It is proposed that the Council submits an application for a **Free Youth Tennis Coaching and Equipment Loan Scheme**.

The project would provide:

- Free tennis coaching sessions for young people aged 13-18 and beginner adults (term time only); maximum 20 participants per session.
- Access to loan equipment, including tennis rackets and balls.
- Supporting coaching and training equipment required to deliver the sessions.
- Opportunities for young people to participate in organised physical activity regardless of their financial circumstances.

The project would be open to all young people within the target age group, removing potential barriers and avoiding the need for participants to demonstrate financial hardship. This approach promotes inclusivity and encourages participation from those who may otherwise be unable or unwilling to access organised sporting activities.

Community Benefits

The project is expected to:

- Reduce financial barriers to participation in sport.

- Improve physical health and wellbeing.
- Support positive mental health through regular exercise and social interaction.
- Encourage greater use of Parish Council recreational facilities.
- Provide constructive activities for young people within the community.
- Support the objectives of the Cost-of-Living Fund by offering free access to leisure opportunities.

The project also has the potential to create a volunteering pathway for older participants. Young people approaching adulthood may be encouraged to undertake training as volunteer activators, enabling them to assist with the delivery of future Free Parks Tennis sessions and helping to ensure the longer-term sustainability of tennis provision within the village.

Anticipated Project Costs

To be completed following receipt of quotations and detailed costings.

Item	Cost
Tennis coaching provision	£45 per hour
Tennis rackets	£300 (one off purchase)
Tennis balls	£180 (one off purchase)
Other/coaching equipment	£35

Financial Implications

The project would be dependent upon a successful grant application. No Parish Council budget allocation is currently proposed other than any contribution that Council may subsequently determine is necessary should external funding not cover the full project cost.

The maximum grant available is £5,000. The one-off purchases total £215. An academic year is 39 weeks, so coaching for 39 weeks totals £1,755. Therefore, project total: £1,970.

Recommendation

Council is requested to:

1. Approve the submission of an application to the Braintree District Council Cost of Living Small Grants Scheme for a Free Youth Tennis Coaching and Equipment Loan Scheme.
2. Delegate authority to the Clerk, in consultation with interested Councillors, to finalise the application and supporting documentation prior to submission.

Accessible Toilet Refurbishment Project – VAT Position and Council Decision

Purpose

To provide Members with information regarding the proposed toilet refurbishment project at the Village Hall and the potential recovery of VAT on the scheme before a formal decision is made.

Project Details

The proposed project will remodel the existing ladies' and gents' toilet facilities within the Village Hall to create an accessible toilet while retaining existing ladies' and gents' provision.

Contract value: £52,311.70
VAT (20%): £10,462.34
Total project cost: £62,774.04

The project is to be funded from Section 106 contributions administered through the Parish Council.

VAT Considerations

The Parish Council is the sole managing trustee of the Village Hall charity. The Council will procure the works, enter into the contract, receive invoices, make payment to suppliers and claim the Section 106 funding. HMRC correspondence with the CIPFA VAT Committee confirms that Section 33 VAT recovery provisions apply to the activities of a local authority acting as sole managing trustee, including where a community facility makes exempt supplies such as lettings, provided the local authority itself procures the relevant goods and services.

Funding Options

Members should note that the Council could utilise Section 106 funding to meet either the gross project cost (£62,774.04) or the net project cost (£52,311.70) and subsequently seek recovery of the VAT element through the Council's normal VAT procedures.

VAT Recovery Risk

VAT legislation concerning local authorities acting as charity trustees is complex and there is no specific HMRC ruling relating to this project. However, the Council has historically delivered Section 106 projects directly and reclaimed associated VAT. The Council is sole managing trustee of the Village Hall, will procure and pay for the works itself, and the refurbished facilities will serve a range of users including village hall users, coffee lounge and meeting room users, community groups and Parish Council meetings.

The Village Hall generates income from activities that may constitute exempt supplies for VAT purposes, including hall lettings. HMRC guidance indicates that Section 33 recovery may apply where a local authority acts as sole managing trustee and procures the relevant goods and services itself. However, the interaction between Section 33 recovery, exempt activities and the local authority partial exemption (de minimis) rules is complex and dependent upon the specific facts of each case.

Specialist VAT advice could be obtained should Members require additional assurance. Indicative costs for such advice are estimated at between £2,100 and £3,150 plus VAT.

Financial Implications

If VAT is recoverable, the net cost of the project to the Section 106 budget will be £52,311.70. If VAT were subsequently found to be irrecoverable, the Council or Village Hall charity would need to meet an additional cost of approximately £10,462.34.

Recommendation

Members are asked to consider the information above and determine whether:

1. The Council proceeds on the basis that VAT will be reclaimed through its normal VAT procedures; or
2. Further specialist VAT advice is obtained prior to payment of the works.

Suggested Resolution

That the Parish Council, having considered the information contained within the report, determines that VAT incurred on the Accessible Toilet Refurbishment Project shall be reclaimed through the Council's normal VAT procedures. Members acknowledge that the Village Hall undertakes activities which may give rise to exempt VAT considerations and that there remains a degree of uncertainty regarding the VAT treatment of the project, but are satisfied to proceed on the basis of the information available.

HATFIELD PEVEREL PARISH COUNCIL

~~COMMUNITY PARK~~ CCTV POLICY

This policy sets out the arrangements for the operation, management and governance of CCTV cameras installed at Community Park, Wickham Bishops Road, Hatfield Peverel and the use of body worn cameras for carrying out the activities of the Parish Council and Village Hall.

1. Policy Statement

The Council operates CCTV to protect assets, deter crime and anti-social behaviour, promote public safety and support investigations. The Council will ensure that use of CCTV is lawful, proportionate and transparent.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all CCTV equipment, recordings, users, councillors, employees and contractors involved with the system.

3. Objectives

- Deter anti-social behaviour and vandalism
- Support police investigations
- Protect Council assets
- Promote public safety
- Provide evidential material where incidents occur

4. System Description

The system currently comprises two solar-powered cameras covering the site entrance and car park/access route. The cameras record footage, but are not routinely monitored live.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The Parish Clerk is the system manager. Authorised officers are responsible for secure operation, access control, retention management and responding to information requests.

6. Live Monitoring

The Council does not routinely undertake live monitoring. Any future live monitoring arrangements will require Council approval and compliance with applicable legal requirements.

7. Access to Recordings

Access is restricted to authorised personnel. Every viewing, download or disclosure of footage shall be recorded in a CCTV access log.

8. Retention and Deletion

Footage will normally be retained for 30 days and automatically overwritten unless required for investigation, insurance claims, legal proceedings or police requests.

9. Disclosure

Footage may be provided to police, insurers, legal representatives or other bodies where disclosure is lawful and necessary.

10. Subject Access Requests

Individuals may request copies of their personal data. Requests will be processed in accordance with data protection legislation and third-party images may be redacted.

11. Security Measures

- Password protected access
- Restricted user permissions
- Secure storage
- Regular review of permissions
- Secure transfer of evidence where required

12. Signage

Clear CCTV signage shall be displayed at entrances and key access points informing visitors that recording is taking place.

13. Complaints

Complaints regarding CCTV operation shall be submitted to the Parish Clerk and investigated under the Council complaints procedure.

14. Review of Need

The Council shall periodically review whether the cameras remain necessary, proportionate and effective and whether less intrusive measures could achieve the same objectives.

15. Breaches and Misuse

Unauthorised access, disclosure or misuse of CCTV footage may constitute misconduct and may be reported to relevant authorities.

16. Body-Worn Video Cameras (BWV)

16.1 Purpose

The Council may authorise designated employees to wear body-worn video cameras whilst carrying out car park marshalling duties.

The purpose of body-worn cameras is to:

- Promote the safety and security of staff and members of the public.
- Deter abusive, threatening or aggressive behaviour.
- Record incidents where evidence may be required.
- Assist in the investigation of complaints, incidents or health and safety matters.

Body-worn cameras shall not be used for general surveillance, routine monitoring of members of the public or covert recording.

16.2 Lawful Basis

The processing of personal data through body-worn cameras is undertaken in the exercise of the Council's public functions and legitimate operational requirements, including public safety, staff welfare and incident management.

16.3 Authorised Use

Body-worn cameras may only be worn and operated by employees authorised by the Council.

Cameras shall only be used whilst carrying out approved car park marshalling duties or when responding to an incident connected with those duties.

16.4 Activation

Body-worn cameras will not normally record continuously.

Recording should be activated where:

- An incident is occurring or appears likely to occur.
- Staff feel threatened, intimidated or at risk.
- There is actual or suspected anti-social behaviour.
- Evidence may be required for investigative or insurance purposes.

Where practicable, staff should inform individuals that recording is taking place.

16.5 Audio Recording

Where cameras are capable of recording audio, audio recording shall only be used when necessary as part of a legitimate recording of an incident.

16.6 Storage and Access

All recordings shall be stored securely and access shall be restricted to authorised officers only.

Footage will only be viewed where necessary for:

- Incident investigation.
- Complaint handling.
- Legal proceedings.
- Insurance claims.
- Compliance with statutory obligations.

16.7 Retention

Recordings not required for investigative, legal or insurance purposes shall normally be deleted after 30 days.

Where footage is required for an investigation, claim or legal matter, it may be retained for longer in accordance with the Council's retention arrangements.

16.8 Subject Access Requests

Individuals may exercise their rights under UK data protection legislation, including the right to request access to personal data held by the Council, subject to any applicable exemptions.

16.9 Signage and Transparency

The Council shall provide appropriate signage and privacy information informing members of the public that body-worn video cameras may be used by authorised staff during car park marshalling activities.

Appendix A - Access Log Requirements

- Date and time accessed
- Reason for access
- Person accessing footage
- Outcome
- Any disclosure made

Appendix B - Annual Review Checklist

- Camera locations remain appropriate
- Signage remains in place
- Retention settings remain suitable
- Access records maintained
- Policy remains current

Appendix C - CCTV Footage Requests and Disclosures

- To ensure transparency, accountability and compliance with data protection legislation, the Council shall maintain a **CCTV Footage Request and Disclosure Register** (Appendix C).
- The register shall be completed whenever recorded CCTV footage is:
  - Requested by the Police or another law enforcement agency.
  - Requested by an insurer in connection with a claim.
  - Requested by a legal representative.
  - Disclosed in response to a Subject Access Request.
  - Released to any third party authorised by law.
  - Downloaded, copied or exported from the CCTV system for evidential purposes.
- The register shall record:
  - A unique reference number for the request.
  - The date of the request.
  - The name and organisation of the requester.
  - The purpose for which the footage has been requested.
  - The specific footage requested.
  - The lawful basis for disclosure.
  - The name of the officer authorising disclosure.
  - The date the footage was released.
  - The method used to transfer the footage.
  - Confirmation that appropriate checks were undertaken before disclosure.
- Prior to releasing any footage, the Council shall ensure that:
  - The identity of the requester has been verified.
  - The request has a valid legal basis.
  - The disclosure is necessary and proportionate.
  - Consideration has been given to the privacy rights of any third parties captured in the footage.
  - The disclosure has been authorised by an appropriately authorised officer.
- The CCTV Footage Request and Disclosure Register shall be retained as an auditable record of all disclosures made by the Council and may be reviewed as part of internal audit, external audit or data protection compliance reviews.Body-Worn Cameras (BWV) Policy Section

Document Control

Adopted by Council: 5th October 2026

Revision adopted by Council: 2nd November 2026

Review Due: May 2027

Responsible Officer: Parish Clerk

Hatfield Peverel Parish Council, Parish Council Office, Village Hall, Hatfield Peverel, CM3 2HP

Do you consider the Local Plan is:
Sound - NO
Legally compliant – NO

The Braintree District Local Plan policies were developed through 2025. Regulation 18 & 19 consultations took place through 2026. The evidence base for the local plan has been iterating continuously throughout the 2-year period, due to inputs needed/required from many external third-party partners. However, policy creation and decision making took place early on in the process, well in advance of having a sufficiently developed robust evidence base.

The local plan evidence base has continued to evolve and still has key gaps at time of writing, October 2026. With the constrained timeframe Dec 31, 2026, for filing, it follows that Braintree local plan consultations (Reg. 18 & 19) have run using policy content/evidence base insufficiently developed. The required purpose and objectives of the consultations therefore not fulfilled or met.

Policy within the plan to 2043 continues to be vigorously defended by Braintree DC, irrespective of extensive feedback provided by the community, which has remained largely ignored. New housing allocations have been added; the local plan duration extended; neither consulted on under Reg 18. These are material changes. This shows a lack of appropriate readiness to run the regulation consultation due process.

Braintree officers and councillors have openly used the filing timeframe of Dec 31, 2026, the consequences of not filing, as a way to push back/suppress feedback. There are still fundamental gaps in the evidence base (Transport, Education, Health etc.). Key assumptions continue to be used, which have no plans or funding to underpin them e.g., LPR 28 and A12 Widening project cancellation and mitigation.

Fundamental questions therefore exist regarding soundness and legality of this local plan regarding it fulfilling due process and the required procedures.

Hatfield Peverel Parish Council Position

We understand the housing challenges that exist both now and in the future for the local area and for wider Braintree district. We understand the mandatory housing targets and central govt. policy via NPPF. We remain fully engaged and committed to local planning via Neighbourhood Development Planning (NDP). We have a recently adopted NDP “made” Sept 2024 running to 2038 to evidence this. We remain willing to engage with Braintree DC on the local plan to address Hatfield Peverel strategic housing market assessed needs/supply assessed requirements even though no approach to do so has been made to us.

1. **Lack of Justification;**

Is the plan evidenced based with fair consideration of alternatives?

1.1 Conflict & Disregard of Hatfield Peverel Neighbourhood Plan

At time of writing, we have not been approached by Braintree DC regarding the local plan. No new housing requirements for Hatfield Peverel have been raised to us. We have a recent "made" NDP (Sept 2024). We are therefore confused and dismayed at Braintree DC approach to planning for our district. We are specifically concerned regarding LPR 28 for min. 1150 new homes.

The delivery of this site moved out 2 years from Reg 18 to Reg 19 with no explanation as to why. There is no stable or clear funding path or plan for it. Much has changed from Reg. 18 to Reg. 19 consultation e.g., removal of Witham spine road, the affordable housing ratio moved up to 45% with little transparency provided on the changes made.

We have been consistently told it's too early to know the detail and yet we have seen a slow drip feed of content that remains insufficient for a firm plan and funding path to be readily understood/deliverable. There is also a lack of transparency regarding decision making for this site. Decisions are being made on the "hoof" e.g., removal of spine road. There remains a lack of sufficiently developed evidence base to underpin this strategic allocation. In summary we believe this site has not been allocated based on sound evidence of deliverability.

The inclusion of a strategic allocation, LPR 28, min.1150 homes, north of the A12 at Hatfield Peverel, directly conflicts and overrides our Hatfield Peverel Neighbourhood Development Plan (HPNDP). Our HPNDP was democratically reviewed, passed and formerly "made" by Braintree District Council in September 2024 following an 87.6% "yes" vote at a public referendum.

The HPNDP established a sustainability growth envelope and cap for the parish of 492 to 656 dwellings to 2038. Through Braintree DC planning permissions and developer activity, Hatfield Peverel is meeting and exceeding growth requirements including affordable homes. We are currently on track to absorb 700+ new homes.

There is a clear protected pathway via NPPF for local communities and their NDP where they actively plan for growth rather than resisting. Our NDP meets this criteria.

We understand strategic targets take priority but there is a balance required in the local plan in that housing supply needs to be married up to assessed local housing needs. There is **no** evidence tabled in the local plan regarding each individual Braintree district/s and their housing needs assessed. The allocations are confirmed as based on supply only; identified via "call for sites"; assessed by planning officers for potential sustainable development; allocated in order to meet govt. target; selected speedily to facilitate the local plan being filed by 31 Dec 2026.

Factoring the iterative build out of the evidence base, insufficient evidence existed to genuinely assess allocations for alternative options / sites. The underlying data used in the

SA has several constraints identified too. In summary it would have been impossible for sufficient data to be available to assess objectively sites, at the time the strategic allocation decisions were made. It follows that a true and fair consideration of alternatives to LPR 28 via an objective assessment could not have taken place.

The speed of the strategic housing site decision is noteworthy too because it was taken H1 2025. Hatfield Peverel LPR 28 decision was made immediately following cancellation of the A12 Widening Project by Govt, June 2025. This housing is to be based on land that was/is needed to widen A12.

1.2 Flawed Spatial Strategy

Govt. housing targets exist to drive delivery of homes to address shortage, affordability and to meet future needs. It follows that the Braintree district local plan requires allocations to reflect this. In addition, individual districts within Braintree district require locally assessed needs to be met alongside. Within a local plan, a measured view needs to be taken on how well housing allocations balance against individual district assessed needs e.g., Hatfield Peverel. Currently the Braintree local plan has no content or analysis included regarding assessed local housing needs for the districts of Braintree e.g., Hatfield Peverel. The approach to housing is focused just on achieving an overall number of homes in order to meet the govt. target. It follows this approach does not meet the requirements of a "sound" local plan because individual district needs are not considered or balanced against the identified supply.

At time of writing, it is genuinely not known if the spatial strategy and housing allocations will meet the objectively assessed housing needs of each Braintree district. Assessed housing needs for each, is not mentioned or covered anywhere within the local plan.

A further minimum 1150 homes at Hatfield Peverel overrides the recently agreed local spatial strategy and settlement boundaries painstakingly designed by the parish. Braintree DC local plan is overriding our legally "made" local development plan without providing evidence of why alternative, less sensitive, sites across the broader Braintree district were not considered or considered but found unsuitable. Why weren't locations at Rayne, Andrewsfield, West of Braintree, and north of the district near Haverhill been considered?

The strategic allocation at Hatfield Peverel was made post notification of the cancellation of the A12 Widening project. The location is currently subject to a compulsory purchase order to 2029. The issues being addressed by the A12 Widening project for Hatfield Peverel remain valid and are acknowledged as requiring solutions. The reconfiguration of junctions (removal of junctions 20a & 20b) is particularly relevant. Assumption used for LPR 28 is that mitigation will be found but what this will be and how it's to be funded remains unknown. This detail is missing from the evidence base which means the policy / site has significant deliverability issues.

Hatfield Peverel Parish Council were not made aware of the change of direction regarding "strategic locations" spatial strategy. We had not been contacted about the associated impact on our NDP. Braintree DC, June 5th, sub plan committee meeting minutes evidence

the original thinking for Hatfield Peverel. The review of our district for local plan had no mention of a sizable strategic site. 1150 min. homes placed here outside the settlement boundary fundamentally changes characteristics and rural identity of the village. It undermines the statuary weight of Neighbourhood Planning as outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This allocation devalues the statutory role of neighbourhood planning that exists via national policy.

NFFP Aug 2026 version refers to "master planning" being required to underpin infrastructure delivery under HO4, Strategic Sites Framework. It says 10-to-25-years will be required for strategic developments to deliver the required infrastructure which reflects the complexity involved. The Braintree strategic sites are shown to commence delivery 2029/30 onwards, within 5 years which shows high-risk, hard to deliver strategy tabled as per NPPF. Insufficient time is provided to deliver the required infrastructure needed for residents. Policy LPR 28 deliverability is therefore at risk. In addition, required infrastructure has been removed e.g., spine road, on site health services etc., in an attempt to make the site deliverable. Residents' genuine needs removed.

The previous Braintree DC Local Plan was rejected by the planning inspectorate due to "garden villages" being tabled which were "overly optimized regarding benefits and had unsupported negative assumptions attached to alternative strategies". "**Disproportionate concentration**" existed distributing an unviable chunk of the housing target to a small cluster of villages/areas without robust evidence showing why other potentially sustainable areas were ignored".

The local plan 2027 to 2043 is a repeat of this. The spatial strategy of "strategic development sites" has the very same issues.

1.3 Ability to Deliver Affordable Housing

The Affordable housing quota is raised to 45% for LPR 28 between Reg 18 & 19 consultations. No explanation is included in the local plan to provide transparency of why this has changed. There is no content in the evidence base or policy to explain. Planning officer at full council meeting 21st Sept 2026, stated that 45% would not be deliverable currently due to current economic conditions. It is "hoped" that the economy improves in the intervening period to underpin 45% delivery. This alone makes the strategic allocation not sound / undeliverable.

The affordable housing provision being upped to 45% at Hatfield Peverel LPR 28 looks to be in response to reductions at the other strategic sites, but it's not clear / mentioned when reading local plan. Comments made by planning officer in full council meeting 21st Sept. 2026 is why we draw this conclusion. Braintree DC policy in the local plan under LPR 35 says 30% urban and 40% affordable housing on all other sites. There is a "small site" policy allowing financial contribution in lieu.
Strategic sites have been reduced back from stated levels in the Reg 18 consultation other than Hatfield Peverel which increased. None of the strategic site allocations now adhere to affordable housing policy under LPR 35 or central govt. ask. This policy is therefore flawed with Braintree DC allocations failing to meet its own policy/district requirements. The below

detail was shared by planning officer at the Braintree DC meeting 21st Sept 2026 for affordable provisions. It is not included in local plan:

- East of Braintree now 13%
- Kings Dene now 33% (dropped again to 17.5%, confirmed by BDC)
- Halstead now 20%
- Hatfield Peverel upped to 45%

What is clear is that affordable housing requirements are not being "objectively assessed" at these sites and plans do not deliver the policy either. Policy LPR 35 is ignored/flawed as a result. These sites, deliverability of LPR 28, all are unsound.

The council's own SHMA explicitly states acute deficit of 5060 new affordable units, the vast majority being needed for social rent. By dropping these affordable housing quotas (likely under pressure from developers and needing to satisfy filing timeline 31 Dec), the council are actively preventing its own housing needs (that are evidenced and justified in the evidence base) from being met.

2. Failure to be "Positively Prepared"

Does it plan properly for homes and the infrastructure needed?

2.1 Failing to Meet Hatfield Peverel Agreed Housing Targets Set 2024 NDP

The strategic allocation LPR 28 at Hatfield Peverel does not meet the areas objectively assessed housing development needs ref. Hatfield Peverel Neighbourhood Development Plan "made" Sept. 2024.

LPR 28, with min.1150 homes, has been allocated in order to meet wider Braintree District target. Hatfield Peverel needs are not considered or balanced. The village has/is already absorbing 700+ new homes to meet our assessed target up to 2038. This is a recently agreed commitment made via our NDP, Sept 2024. For the Braintree Local Plan to have been "positively prepared", this new housing allocation should have been raised to us. Evidence on alternative options including why no other options within the district could fulfil needs available for review. This was/is needed to satisfy local plan legal compliance and due process.

2.2 Failing to Consult on Cross Boundary Needs

We have been unable to locate evidence / analysis / consultation content regarding Maldon District as input to Braintree DC local plan preparation. It is relevant when factoring LPR 28. This was/is needed to identify transport needs/impacts. LPR 28 sits directly on the road network heavily used by both districts. Maldon districts use Hatfield Peverel to access both rail (to London) and A12 road, both directions (J20A & 20B). B1019 & B1137 are primary route in/out of Maldon district for A12. The Maldon district will see significant housing growth in the plan period alongside Braintree.

LPR 28 is positioned right on top of the "Duke of Wellington" roundabout and A12 slip road/s. This part of the network is already Identified as having significant capacity challenges

ref. A12 Widening project and need for Maldon Bypass. 2760 min. more people moving around directly on this part of the network is proposed. When reviewing vehicle movement, Essex Highways evidence base did not consider Maldon District needs. Hatfield Peverel is just 5 miles away.

Braintree Local plan has Maldon Bypass included under LPR 49, so the need is understood and acknowledged. This requirement has been agreed upon for many years. The reconfiguration of J20 A & B via A12 Widening project was to address some of the capacity challenges for Hatfield Peverel. With the inclusion of a strategic site, cross boundary conversations should have taken place. Maldon districts transport growth impacts were/are fundamental inputs to both Essex Highways assessments and Braintree DC assessments for the district for LPR 28.

Absorbing increased vehicle movements beyond capacity is not an infrastructure solution; continuing to defer out the bypass post 2043, is also not a solution. The position taken by Braintree DC has created a critical mismatch between delivery of housing and network capacity. Homes are being planned without the required infrastructure which is not sound planning.

2.3 Failure to Objectively Assess Development & infrastructure needs

The strategic sites are all clustered to the south of the district; a disproportionate concentration which will create undue infrastructure stress and strain. The decision to have strategic sites was taken, prior to the evidence base data being sufficiently developed for such decision/s to be made. It follows that the infrastructure provision has been iterating out, changing from one consultation to the next.

Required infrastructure for LPR 28, at time of writing, has been reduced from that stated under Reg 18. The “Hatfield Peverel to Witham spine road” is now removed from the site policy. The new road deferred out past 2043. No clear explanation or evidence is given as to why the change is made. Developer costs alongside Essex Highways report likely influenced Braintree DC decision making. Vehicular movements will “not worsen significantly the current issues” is the Essex Highways conclusion. However, there is an assumption used for LPR 28 that “mitigation of A12 Widening project cancellation impacts” will be found. There is no funding or plan included regarding this assumption. It follows that the local plan lacks a credible highways assessment. Removing infrastructure (Witham spine road) due to “not significantly worsening the issues” is “avoidance” of genuine infrastructure needs. Dropping this is not sound planning.

The SA and Non-Technical assessments for LPR 28 use assumptions too regarding cancellation of A12 Widening & Lodge Farm Primary School projects at Hatfield Peverel. Mitigations to the cancellations will be forthcoming is the stated position hence these infrastructure requirements are not included within the assessments. The “minor positive effect likely” outcomes derive as a result of these assumptions being used in the assessments. There is no plan or funding in place for either assumption.

The evidence base assessments do not therefore conform to the required standards of local plans or NPPF. Infrastructure requirements dealt with via assumptions require robust plans and funding for the mitigations to be viewed as sound and deliverable.

LPR 28 The strategic allocation has been increased between Reg 18 & 19 consultations moving from 1123 homes to a "minimum 1150 homes". No further update to the evidence base has been made to support this change and no explanation is provided in the local plan. In the Braintree DC full council extraordinary meeting 21st Sept., planning officer explained that "minimum" has been added to strategic site allocations. This is needed to provide the required "protection" should deliverability of sites become problematic. It follows, if a strategic site runs into deliverability difficulty (they will), Braintree DC need to be able to mitigate by adding homes to other sites allocations. This calls into question BDC ability to deliver strategic sites alongside a lack of objective deliverability assessment of said sites for housing which is not sound planning.

3. Failure on Effectiveness

Can the housing and required infrastructure be realistically delivered?

3.1 Putting Aside Required Infrastructure & Deliverability Issues for LPR 28

Braintree DC have used forthcoming mitigations / assumptions to remove the need to cater for cancellations of "A12 widening" and "Lodge Farm Primary School" capacity in their assessments. However, robust plans & funding underpinning these mitigations/assumptions is required so how are the assessments made sound.

The statements made in the Essex Highways assessment conclude known network issues will not significantly worsen with LPR 28. However, the assessment only looked at LPR 28 in isolation.

The accumulation of vehicular movements through Hatfield Peverel for A12 and train station from Maldon districts needed to be considered alongside LPR 28 min. 1150 and the in-train 700+ homes being absorbed. This means insufficient infrastructure exists / will worsen as a result. LPR 28 cannot be considered in isolation. It's unrealistic to assess for this need alone and harmful to residents existing & new. It's a strategic plan; there is a soundness requirement to work cross boundary especially with Maldon district due to impacts of growth and current bottlenecking here at Hatfield Peverel. There is no evidence tabled of any cross boundary effective joint working with Maldon district; it's completely missing which is not sound planning.

It is not acceptable for a strategic local plan to omit infrastructure simply because significant congestion already exists and that it is unlikely to significantly worsen (ref. Essex Highways evidence base). A fair and objective assessment for a strategic site is required for local planning for soundness. The Essex Highways report is enabling a pathway of "do nothing" by Braintree DC regarding roads for LPR 28 which does not meet NPPF requirements. Delivery of much needed infrastructure is required.

Regulation 18 consultation included a link road for LPR 28 to connect the min. 1150 homes to Witham (needed for Health, Education, Transport etc.). Regulation 19 consultation mentions the link road, but its delivery is now removed. It is now placed under LPR 49 with delivery post 2043. This lacks transparency, commentary, reasoning and evidence on what is a fundamental capacity reduction needed for transport for a strategic housing allocation placed outside agreed settlement boundary. Likely the removal is due to developer pushback on costs. Braintree DC look to be sacrificing a key road (speedy decision lacking robust challenge) to keep developer onboard. Braintree DC now choosing to rely on Govt policy regarding "well connected" train station to allow building on greenfield land outside settlement boundary instead. Unfortunately, Hatfield Peverel station is not a qualifying well-connected station under NPPF policy. It follows too that fundamental change like this requires transparency and explanation regarding how transport needs for min. 2760 extra people are now met without the road.

The required roads are deferred out (Witham link road, Maldon Bypass) to post 2043 which means there is now a critical mismatch between infrastructure delivery and needs. This is not a "sound" basis for delivery for a strategic housing allocation.

Transport needs are now assumed to be met via sustainable options of walking, cycling, bus & train travel with no evidence or plan tabled to underpin this position. High level costs are shown but funding is assumed to be achievable via S106. Factoring the affordable housing allocation increasing to 45%, which council officers openly stated as currently undeliverable (please listen to 21st Sept 2026 full council meeting), due to present day economic conditions, pressure on funding from developer clearly exists. There is no evidence tabled of a plan for delivery & funding for transport for LPR 28.

3.2 Well-Connected Train Station

Hatfield Peverel station is not a "well connected" station. There is 1 train in each direction an hour outside of Mon to Fri rush hours when there are 2. There is no evidence tabled that rail services will be uplifted. The station is not included on the Govt. list of Well-Connected stations.

In addition, it is physically impossible for critical mass of min. 1150 homes to be built within 800m walk of Hatfield Peverel train station. Sheer volume and site position to the station is why. NPPF policy "presumption for well-connected stations" is not met LPR28.

There is a "well-connected" station; the new Beulieu Park Station, 5 miles away from Hatfield Peverel, located on Braintree DC & Chelmsford DC boundary/border at Boreham. There is no evidence of any cross district working with Chelmsford DC to explore cross boundary opportunities that exist to leverage this sizable recent investment. This is the first new station on the Great Eastern main line in over 100 years, and Braintree DC have not looked into any cross-boundary opportunities for the district's strategic Local Plan 2027 to 2043 from it even though its 2 miles from district boundary. This is a prime location for housing factoring new station/expanded roads.

3.3 Connectivity LPR 28 to Hatfield Peverel

Without the Witham link road, the site is not connected. The original site assessment which found the location "sustainable" was based on provision of the Witham link road. Transport, Education & Health services were described as being provided via Witham due to Hatfield Peverel provisions being exhausted and the site being very much outside the village settlement boundary.

LPR 28 will not be physically connected to Hatfield Peverel. The proposal that new footpaths, cycle paths will address connectivity lacks evidence that these can actually be delivered/provided to underpin provision. There is no detail provided regarding costs, plans or funding or if the landowners are prepared / willing to sell / allow use of their land for these provisions. Connectivity to the village solely relies on these various paths.

These "paths" have been tabled previously over the years without success e.g., footpath to the station, footpath to KBMG. No evidence is tabled to demonstrate delivery is possible in regard to acquiescing landowners allowing such footpaths / cycle paths to exist. These permissions have proved insurmountable both in the past and at time of writing.

3.4 Infrastructure Deficits

Based on experience of living in Hatfield Peverel, homes have arrived without the required infrastructure, harming both existing and new residents. We have/are absorbing 700+ homes currently that were approved factoring A12 Widening, the Lodge Farm Primary School (420) projects plus sufficient uplift of primary NHS healthcare services. Same again regarding Anglian Water fresh water & sewerage services.

Braintree DC have acknowledged the slow delivery of NHS services and that new residents are accessing services some distance away from Hatfield Peverel. Some new residents have failed to find a GP list that is open. Factoring this and the two projects cancelled, (A12 Widening & Lodge Farm Primary School), we have "infrastructure deficits" and no plans are in place in the plan to acknowledge or remedy this at time of writing.

It should be noted that we regularly lose water services due to issues that occur with the aging Anglian Water infrastructure. Anglian Water (AW) have voiced major concerns as part of local plan consultation regarding their ability to uplift/fund services across Braintree District due to sheer volume of new homes and the funding that will be required. S106 is unlikely to be sufficient vehicle to cover these strategic AW infrastructure costs they say.

Concerns focus specifically on provision of fresh water factoring global warming and the ability to deal with sewerage needs. It should be noted that the main sewer for the area runs underneath LPR 28 site. This will be costly to address. No plan or budget is referenced in the local plan regarding relocation of sewer which is not sound planning.

The district has a current hosepipe ban with freshwater levels well below the norm at Oct 2026. Regular discharges of sewerage took place across the 2026 summer into local rivers irrespective of little / no rainfall. The water quality for Rivers Ter, Blackwater, Chelmer, Brain all show as "fail". There are no plans or funding details in the local plan to underpin Anglian

Water being able to deliver 85 to 90 litres/person/day for any of the strategic sites ref. policy LPR75. Sound planning requires this.

3.5 Education & Health Capacity

Unmet needs have seen children not going to school. Also, primary age children going to school outside of Hatfield Peverel due to lack of places. There are many travel challenges with this e.g., road congestion, parents being unable to do drop offs, siblings at different schools, elongated school days affecting learning. The village schools are full/exhausted. Many residents on the new housing estates have shared their frustrations that their children cannot get into the local school/s even though they are within walking distance of their homes. The schools in the village are at maximum capacity; no physical build out / uplift is possible. Lodge Farm was the targeted solution, funding now cancelled. Mitigation plan & funding to address unknown.

The village primary health care services are also exhausted. Residents registered with the practice have waited on the phone 2 + hours trying to get booked for appointment to no avail. No further up lift is possible for primary healthcare services in the village. New residents have to travel to Chelmsford or Witham by road putting pressure of the already congested local road network and full surgeries. These facilities in these locations are also now exhausted/full. These movements are not factored in the transport / highways assessments either.

6.212 (local plan) for LPR28 “the site is well related to healthcare facility in Hatfield Peverel” ….“new or expanded healthcare facilities provided by the new development will be in place to serve the local population”. New is actually not happening for LPR 28. It is unclear as to where 2760 min new people will go for these services. Uplift locally in the village is physically impossible. Witham too. Ratio suggests 2 GPs, but no clear service delivery plan is included. Funding is mentioned using S106 methodology. Will the capacity materialise? Likely not based on experience of 700 homes in train; new residents travel a distance; some are not able to access services at all. We have real deficits and none of this is mentioned; the reality is very different.

As NHS primary healthcare and primary schools locally are already operating at max capacity, allocation of a strategic development site, policy LPR 28, without matching guaranteed detailed solutions with identified funding renders this site undeliverable.

3.6 A12 Road Saturation & Local Network Bottlenecks:

Hatfield Peverel sits right on the critical A12 corridor at J20 (A & B). Injecting min. 1150 additional homes / min. 2760 more people right on top of and into this local network will introduce yet more stress and strain resulting in far worsening conditions. Deterioration is already forecast hence the A12 Widening project. The known and accepted issues now not addressed due to the funding cancellation. Adding more in without mitigations shows

Braintree DC has failed to provide a fully costed concrete infrastructure delivery plan proving that local junctions, the A12 slip roads and the narrow village B roads can handle the upward spike in traffic. For context Hatfield Peverel was 4,200 residents at last census, 2021.

The evidence base assessments incl. Highways do not include the new 700 + homes built/in train or Maldon district new homes (9000 more are going to be added over same time period as Braintree DC) or the expanded Heybridge business park traffic flowing through Hatfield Peverel to A12. Deliverability of LPR 28 is directly impacted; There will be min. 2760 new residents who will need to "commute" as work and services are not located within the village. Walking/cycling will not pick this up; the train station is not well connected: buses will play a role but elongated journey times / congested routes will lead to private car use.

Policy LPR 49 states transport schemes are needed; Maldon Bypass addressing known issues at Hatfield Peverel. Connectivity to Witham for services requires a new spine road. However, both are pushed out to post 2043. These are required well before 2043, clearly not forthcoming. This will result in real infrastructure needs going unmet. This is on top of cancellation of funding for A12 Widening where no mitigation is offered / forthcoming.

Essex Highways have produced assessment/s Ref. pages 78 to 81 summarises findings:

- The NEMo tests/assessments have been done with only partial mitigation modelled due to missing data
- Impact of developments along the A12 corridor including Hatfield Peverel & Kelvedon require further mitigation, and this is not included in NEMo.
- Strategic requirements are not included in NEMo and require funding
- Significant improvements are required along the A12 & A120 corridors, not included
- National Highways will not contribute to any mitigations/costs
- Further work is needed as a follow-on to their assessments to develop A12 Widening mitigation;
    - Land needed for A12 Widening needs to be safeguarded - LPR 28 is on the land currently under a govt. compulsory purchase order as it was/is needed for A12 Widening so it is <u>not</u> being safeguarded
    - Funding to be requested through the Road Investments Strategy & Major Road Networks programmes; this to be coordinated pre-2043
    - Capacity modelling for the district shows A12 requires 3 lines north bound at J20, and 4 lanes south bound at J20, for the period to 2043, Hatfield Peverel. Currently there are 2 and 3 lanes respectively. However, the land take for this / needed to make this happen will be occupied by LPR 28 homes.

In conclusion Highways evidence base conflicts with contradicts Braintree dc local plan policy regarding LPR 28. There is no soundness as a result.

4. Inconsistency with National Policy

Does it meet national requirements for sustainable development?

<u>4.1 Settlement Coalescence, Green Buffer, Loss of Village Identity</u>

The NPPF explicitly mandates sustainable development to include the preservation of distinct community identities; to prevent adjacent towns and villages from physically merging. Buffers being necessary to maintain separate identities i.e., towns to villages and for physical separation. Proportionality is needed. To build on land outside of a settlement boundary requires additional specific exception/s to also to be met.

The Hatfield Peverel NDP (adopted 2024) implements a Coalescence Safeguarding Zone under policy HPE1.

A primary policy objective of the Hatfield Peverel Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) is preventing the village from physically merging with Witham. Large peripheral housing sites tabled under LPR 27 & LPR 28 will cause "urban sprawl" that will cut across national policies and adopted local ones aimed at protecting the distinctive rural character and identity of the village by taking forward development on landscape settings outside of the settlement boundary of Hatfield Peverel.

Policy LPR 71 Green Buffers in the Braintree DC local plan states coalescence is required between Witham and Hatfield Peverel. The policy goes on to state this would be at risk where there is 500m or less separation between two settlements. Using the geography of the site there will be much less than 500m between LPR27 & LPR28; mathematically impossible. A robust green buffer as defined by Braintree DC iro. 500m means that LPR 28 fails soundness test. It will result in a piecemeal encroachment rather than sustainable growth.

The buffer zone tabled by Braintree District Council between Woodend Farm, Witham and Hatfield Peverel is structurally inadequate factoring the land take needed for both LPR 27 & LPR 28; physical and visual merging (coalescence) will happen between Hatfield Peverel and Witham. The plan lacks a defensible coalescence green buffer.

LPR 28 will cause irreversible loss of Hatfield Peverel's identity as a distinct rural Essex village. The move of the settlement boundary to accommodate LPR 28 coupled with Woodend Farm 400 homes LPR 27 will undermine the independent character of the village. Distinct identity and character lost contrary to NPPF. A continuous urban corridor of min. 1550 min homes will result. See pic over page, left hand side.

The site cannot accommodate anywhere near a 500m green buffer without significantly compromising the planned development numbers. The gap (left side of the pic) is insufficient for the needed green buffer alongside the number of homes tabled; it does not align to the tabled policy; it is physically impossible to be at or anywhere near 500m ref. LPR 71. The target build density would need to be significantly less and likely be unviable factoring the available land and buffer zone needed.

A green buffer is legally required under Hatfield Peverel NDP HPE1 to preserve settlement identity. However, it's physically impossible to deliver LPR 71, LPR 27 & LPR 28 as these policies internally contradict within the tabled Braintree DC local plan.



4.2 Development of Green Field Land

Policy requires protection of character and beauty of the countryside. Previous site assessments conducted for the above land gap noted that over development would "almost completely fill the gap" between built developments at Hatfield Peverel & Witham. As a result, the proposal here now ignores past Braintree DC own evidence base / decision making regarding landscape capacity and settlement separation for this area.

Settlement boundaries are important especially where new homes are being tabled outside of them based on green field land where it's a substantive take.

Under NPPF S3/S4/S5 the framework for such development, anything outside of the settlement area e.g., LPR 28 can only be supported where specific requirements are met:

- 1. Infill development, 2. rural exception site, 3. station proximity "well connected" or 4. evidenced unmet need. In other words, exceptional circumstance exist.
- There is no evidence tabled that any of these requirements apply at Hatfield Peverel for LPR 28 or that exceptional circumstances exist in that no evidence is tabled to show all other options for new homes within the Braintree district have been explored, assessed and exhausted.

There is a lack of evidence base demonstrating unmet housing needs i.e., objectively assessed HNA. The village has a HNA to 2038 via our NDP. The HNA is being executed upon

currently 700+ homes currently being absorbed at Hatfield Peverel refers. Progress is ahead of plan. Factoring planning approvals, HNA will be met and exceeded.

There is also a lack of robust evidence base to justify extensive take of green field land resulting in a significant reduction of the current green buffer zone between the village and Witham. Policy LPR 71 will not be met.

There is also insufficient evidence base in the local plan regarding sites not located on green field land and them being fully exhausted / allocated first prior to moving on to allocate the use of greenfield land for housing development e.g., LPR 28. For a local plan to be sound, evidence is needed in the local plan to justify the use of greenfield land for development of new homes.

There is therefore a lack of robust evidence base to underpin the need to build a strategic housing allocation min 1150 homes on green field land at Hatfield Peverel.

There are no statements made either on how much green field land is actually being taken across the plan period for the district; No mention of associated impacts e.g., economically. No mention of how material the cumulative loss will be to the district factoring redesignations/loss of agricultural graded land. This is all unknown not mentioned on the evidence base and yet there are policies protecting green infrastructure and agriculture/farming. Ref. LPR 70, 6.38 “Careful balance is needed between development and protection and enhancement”. How will LPR 70 policy be measured and met factoring this backdrop?

4.3 Environment – Air Quality

There are no air quality management centres within the Braintree district. However, there are air quality issues at Hatfield Peverel resulting from A12; its proximity and extent of vehicular movements is why. There have been high reading/s recorded for emissions of NO2 along the B1137 & B1019 during traffic studies undertaken. These measured locations are further away than the min 1150 homes will be ref. LPR28.

LPR 28 is located between the railway line and A12 ref. pic. Page 13. It is on a strip of land that runs in parallel with both, residing directly alongside the A12. The original assessment by planners of the site/s identified noise and air pollution challenges due to position and proximity. Past readings in the local area (B1019 / B1137) mean NO2 & noise issues will absolutely exist without mitigation.

Original “sustainability assessment” by planning officers of the location, ref. June 2025, surfaced these challenges alongside other issues. The site was not put forward at this time. In the revised assessment H2 2025, post A12 Widening cancellation, mitigations were said to be possible. Little detail is provided on the mitigations which is needed to underpin deliverability of this strategic site. Plan/funding is missing too which calls into question deliverability / soundness of LPR 28 ref NPPF and “sustainable location” for new homes being required to “protect public health and quality of life”.

Housing located directly alongside the A12 would experience elevated concentrations of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2) because NO2 is a byproduct of combustion primarily emitted by diesel and petrol vehicles. These new homes will be placed directly next to a major arterial route so will bear the highest brunt of traffic emissions. NO2 concentrations at 50 metres of a multi lane road have 50% higher ambient pollutant concentration. High volume traffic and in particular HGVs use of the A12 constantly with estimate of 90,000 vehicles a day passing currently by directly the proposed LPR 28 site. Homes will experience high and ever increasing NO2 emissions as the number of vehicles will only grow. Many of these homes will face a constant influx of high NO2 emissions.

Mitigation of noise and in particular NO2 emissions to facilitate use of the site for new homes and development was planned under the A12 Widening project. The reconfiguration / removal of junctions 20 A & B to a new/revised J21 layout, plus providing extra lane/s alongside mitigation with buffers, mechanical ventilation, green screening allowed the location to be listed for some future development post the A12 Widening project. Key to this was having free flowing traffic rather than stop / start grid locked idling traffic that currently occurs at Hatfield Peverel due to the junctions and 3 lanes of A12 reducing to 2 at Junction 20 north bound which is directly adjacent to the LPR 28 site.

Braintree DC have either assumed on site mitigations without the A12 enhancements will be enough or that A12 Widening cancellation will be mitigated. No evidence is tabled to validate / fund either assumption. The reality is that idling traffic and traffic congestion/gridlocking, a regular feature on the A12 at Hatfield Peverel, directly adjacent to where these new homes will be, will continue and it will get worse. Without the extra vehicle capacity / junction reconfiguration being added to A12 to mitigate the extent of the pollutants/noise the site will present significant public health risk.

5. Failure to Comply with the Duty to Co-operate, Legal Compliance

Braintree DC has failed to work collaboratively with the lowest tier of local governance, Hatfield Peverel Parish Council meaning the preparation process of the local plan is procedurally and legally compromised. Braintree District Council has failed to engage in respect of local planning with this tier, rendering the process structurally flawed.

Under 6.2 of local plan "Statement of Community Involvement" it says, "a process of ongoing community involvement exists in the preparation so that the community have had a chance to <u>influence</u> local policy decisions made". For this local plan feedback provided by the community has not been discussed / duly considered. The community have been <u>denied</u> the "chance to influence local policy decisions made".

Braintree DC priority is to meet the filing deadline 31 Dec 2026. Making changes to policy as a result of consultation feedback would risk undermining the evidence base. This in turn unacceptably impacting the required timeline for submission. We refer to the sub plan committee meetings 30 July and 17th Sept plus the extraordinary full council meeting 21st Sept recordings to evidence this.

Draft Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation March 2026 saw an 821-petition submitted to Braintree District Council from Hatfield Peverel residents regarding LPR 28. When the Braintree DC sub plan committee met to review the section 18 feedback 30 July 2026, the petition was not mentioned; its existence not visible in the roll up of feedback. No mention of it was made in the meeting papers or at the meeting. It was stated that 18 objections had been received for LPR 28 which was highly misleading. Insufficient time to collate the extensive feedback received from the community was the explanation following formal complaint. There was no discussion on the feedback provided. Activities moved on immediately to the preparation work needed for Reg 19 consultation Sept. 2026.

6. Government Policy Change

The change of policy for Local Plans effective from 1st Jan 2027 is having a significant detrimental effect on this local plan preparation. The "cliff edge" for submissions by councils of 31 Dec 2026 is why:

- If missed min. 30 months to re-do via new policy framework
- Council District being open to speculative development
- Potential loss of planning control

It is believed the regulation 18 consultation feedback was not duly considered because of this. We are expecting Regulation 19 consultation feedback to be treated in the same way and to follow the same pathway.

Feedback is once again shared as this will go forward with the Local Plan to the planning inspector should Braintree DC decide to file at their meeting 21st Dec. 2026.

We as a Parish Council recognise that many district councils are divided on how to handle the current policy position regarding local plans and housing targets. We believe Braintree DC embracing the new framework Jan 2027 would provide better and improved outcomes for the district. This attempt to meet end of year filing is resulting in a compromised local plan. Factoring its importance, timeframe, scope, breadth and impact we genuinely ask that Braintree DC do not "push it through". We do not support the current plan, as it stands. We also do not support it going forward for filing / adoption / inspector review before or on 31 Dec 2026. It is not sound or fit for purpose.

7. Changes requested Braintree DC Local Plan 2027 to 2043

a. Braintree DC to engage/work with Hatfield Peverel Parish Council on objectively assessed housing needs and housing allocation for the village **if** change is evidenced as needed or required to our recently adopted, (Sept. 2024) NDP.
    I. When putting aside an NDP HNA, evidence as to why alternative, less sensitive, sites across the district are not considered possible is needed.
    II. Village community identity and merging that is proportional is protected as is separate identity being retained and physical separation from Witham via a coalescence buffer. There are protected under NPPF due to the legal pathway it provides to protect policies "made" under NDP.

b. Revisit spatial strategy for housing listening to community feedback;
   i. How were options assessed/decided? What options were put aside, why?
   ii. Does/did data sufficiency exist for decision making? Did robust evidence/data exist at the time decisions were taken regarding strategic sites?
   iii. Does/did a robust assessment framework exist to underpin objective repeatable consistent assessments by planning officers of all local plan allocations tabled?
   iv. Provide evidence that green field land sites and / or sites with overriding protection via adopted NDP/s are being taken forward only as last resorts i.e., all other sites/options thereby assessed and are exhausted.
   v. Housing supply is balanced to each area/parish objectively assessed need/HNAs including affordable;
      - Govt. target interpreted within plan as the "assessed need" is flawed
      - Balancing of housing needs / HNAs to housing supply is still required
      - Needed for each district/parish e.g. Hatfield Peverel within BDC

c. Refrain from "rushing" the Local Plan to meet 31 Dec 2026 policy change deadline. Consider a "fit for purpose" "soundness" independent review prior to filing.

d. Proactively front run strategic planning continuously to secure funding via partners, leverage new investment e.g., Beaulieu Park Station. Work proactively across boundaries e.g., Maldon, Chelmsford, to locate sites/provision needed infrastructure for future economic growth and housing allocation rather than do one off 5 yearly refreshes to meet govt. target.

e. Take forward sites that are deliverable where infrastructure needs can be genuinely funded and met within the plan period to 2043. Some issues for LPR 28 follow:
   I. Legal pathway exists via NPPF to protect NDP 2024 policy for Hatfield Peverel which directly impacts this site being taken forward
   II. Cancellation of strategic projects A12 Widening & Lodge Farm Primary School with mitigations on both unknown
   III. Maldon Bypass pushed out past 2043
   IV. Witham Link Rd pushed out past 2043
   V. Hatfield Peverel station not being a well-connected station as per govt. list
   VI. NO2 emissions and associated public health risk
   VII. Structurally inaccurate and ineffective Coalescence Buffer with Witham
   VIII. Essex Highways request to safeguard land needed for A12 Widening etc.

f. Strategic sites require masterplans as per NPPF with suggested delivery across 10 to 25 years; Strategic sites within Braintree Dc Local Plan do not mirror this thus inherent risk exists regarding soundness and delivery. Reconsider strategic site propositions for alignment to Aug version of NPPF.

Parish Council Meetings 2027

Monday 11th January

Monday 1st February (followed by Sole Trustee meeting)

Monday 1st March

Monday 5th April

Monday 10th May – Annual Parish Council Meeting, followed by monthly meeting*

Monday 7th June

Monday 5th July

Monday 2nd August

Monday 6th September (followed by Sole Trustee meeting)

Monday 4th October

Monday 1st November

Monday 6th December

Annual Parish Meeting - TBC

Community Information Event – TBC

Village Hall Charity AGM - TBC

All Parish Council meetings will be preceded by a Planning Committee Meeting, except when there are no planning applications to be considered.

* Elections take place on 6th May 2027. Councillors officially take office on the 10th May 2027. The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council must take place on or within 14 days of councillors taking office in an election year.

Village Hall Car Park and Proposed Sports Facility Overflow Car Park Management

Purpose of Report

To provide Members with information regarding a proposal from Kelvin Mupungu of LDK Group Ltd for the management of the existing Village Hall car park and the proposed sports facility overflow car park, and to seek a decision in principle on whether to proceed to the next stage of discussions.

Background

The Council has previously considered options for addressing unauthorised and long-stay parking within the Village Hall car park. As part of this work, the Council investigated the potential use of ANPR technology and sought legal advice regarding parking enforcement on private land. LDK Group Ltd, a parking management company and member of the British Parking Association Approved Operator Scheme, subsequently approached the Council with a proposal to provide a fully managed parking enforcement solution at no capital cost to the Council.

The Clerk attended a Microsoft Teams meeting with Kelvin Mupungu, together with Cllrs Mark Weale and Teresa Weale, to discuss the proposal in more detail.

Current Position

During the meeting, it was identified that:

- The existing Village Hall car park provides approximately 38 spaces.
- The temporary overflow car park provides a further approximately 28 spaces.
- The primary issues experienced at the site are overnight parking and vehicles remaining for longer than necessary.
- The car parks serve multiple users, including Village Hall hirers, sports facility users, visitors to the coffee lounge and other legitimate visitors.
- There is a perception that some rail users and local workforce may also be utilising the facility for long-stay parking.

Proposal

The proposal presented by LDK Group Ltd includes:

- Installation and maintenance of ANPR cameras covering both car parks.
- Provision and installation of all required signage.
- A permit system for approved or regular users.
- A visitor validation system via a kiosk, with the final location(s) to be determined by the Council in conjunction with the Village Hall Management Committee.
- Management of Parking Charge Notices, appeals, administration and debt recovery.

- Ongoing reporting and monitoring.
- The ability for the Council to determine parking policies, including permitted stay periods, exemptions and special arrangements for events.
- Flexibility to suspend enforcement or alter parking restrictions for specific events as required, through Officers.

The company advises that the scheme would be provided with no upfront capital cost to the Council and that operational arrangements would be managed by the provider.

Considerations

At this stage, a number of operational details remain to be determined, including:

- The maximum permitted stay period for members of the public.
- The location and type of visitor validation kiosk(s).
- The precise wording and positioning of signage.
- The location of any ANPR cameras.
- Whether an existing power supply can be utilised or whether alternative arrangements are required.

A site visit has been proposed by the provider to assess the most appropriate locations for cameras, signage and any associated power requirements.

Financial Implications

The proposal is presented as a no-capital-cost solution to the Council, with the provider supplying and maintaining the necessary equipment and infrastructure. Any future revenue-sharing arrangements or charging mechanisms would be subject to separate consideration by the Council if applicable.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council:

1. Agree in principle to the management of the existing Village Hall car park and proposed sports facility overflow car park with LDK Group Ltd.
2. Allow a site visit by the provider to assess suitable locations for ANPR cameras, signage, visitor validation facilities and any associated power requirements.
3. Receive a further report following the site visit setting out detailed operational proposals, including parking restrictions, maximum stay periods, exemptions, equipment locations and any associated contractual arrangements, before a final decision is made.

Car Parking Management is a social value

Our public commitment to landowners, communities and everyone who uses the car parks we manage.

We declare

LDK Group Ltd is a car parking management company based in Bletchley, Milton Keynes, with 20 years' experience. We believe Car Parking Management is a social value. We design, operate and improve car parking schemes so that fair access, dignity, safety and trust come before Parking Charge Notice volume — on housing, retail, commercial, academic and NHS land alike.

Standards we operate to

BPA AOS
Member of the BPA Approved Operator Scheme

Single Code
Private Parking Single Code of Practice

POPLA
Independent appeals via POPLA

Living Wage
Traffic wardens paid at Living Wage Foundation rates

Twelve charter commitments

01 Purpose before penalty

Car parking keeps land usable for the people it serves. Enforcement supports that purpose — never an end in itself.

02 Fair access first

Residents, patients, shoppers, staff, carers, Blue Badge holders and authorised visitors come first, with online E-Permits for those entitled to park.

03 Protect priority car parking bays

Blue Badge, clinical and priority bays — and emergency and refuse vehicle access — are protected by design and daily operation.

04 Human quality control

A person checks every Parking Charge Notice before it is issued. Right plate, right time, right entitlement.

05 No wrongful harm

Incorrect Parking Charge Notices are stopped at source. Every motorist can appeal to us and then independently via POPLA.

06 Clear, honest communication

Signs, terms and journeys use plain English, under the Private Parking Single Code of Practice. Ambush-style notices have no place.

07 Privacy with purpose

Only necessary data, including ANPR and E-Permit data, with human review and GDPR-minded controls in our in-house systems.

08 Calmer, safer places

Wardens resolve issues on the ground, reducing conflict, with abandoned-vehicle pathways and safer movement for all.

09 Property strategy, not a bolt-on

Car parking belongs in every property strategy — retail, housing, commercial, academia and NHS.

10 Income with integrity

Self-funding schemes with no upfront cost, run open-book, favouring the landowner, institution and community — not notice chasing.

11 Accountability & reporting

We measure and report social outcomes — access protected, QC interventions, complaints and appeals — not vanity totals.

12 Continuous improvement

In-house systems mean we change rules, permits, journeys and QC when estates and clients need us to.

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How we deliver the Charter

People-first PCN quality control
A person checks every Parking Charge Notice before it is issued. We believe this gives LDK the most robust PCN quality control in private parking, and because notices are right first time, we achieve a collection rate of 60% of PCNs issued on private land.

E-Permit system
Residents and users apply online. The landowner approves each application or sets the guidelines we apply. Wardens can book block-by-block appointments and resolve issues on the ground.

ANPR, including solar-powered
ANPR gives accurate, consistent monitoring. Our solar-powered, self-powered ANPR needs no mains supply, so car parks without a power connection can still be covered.

Fair work and local jobs
Our traffic wardens are paid at Living Wage Foundation rates. From our base in Bletchley, Milton Keynes, we count local Living Wage jobs as a social outcome and report on them.

Partnership models

No upfront cost
Schemes are self-funding: the landowner or institution pays nothing upfront.

Open-book transparency
Costs and revenue are shared openly with our clients.

Revenue returned
Revenue shares are returned to communities and clients, for example as community grants.

NHS partnership model
The Trust collects all revenue. Agreed costs are recovered first, then profit is shared 70/30 in the Trust's favour.

Outcomes we measure and report

- **Bay availability**
- **Blue Badge bay protection**
- **Emergency & refuse vehicle access**
- **Support for carers**
- **Abandoned vehicles**
- **Complaints**
- **Appeals**
- **Community revenue returned**
- **Local Living Wage jobs**

How the strategy works

1. Listen to the estate
2. Design for social outcomes
3. Operate with human QC
4. Measure what matters
5. Improve in service

In-house systems · A person checks every PCN · Open-book, landowner-aligned models

Approved and signed off on behalf of LDK Group Ltd

Kelvin Mupungu

Director, LDK Group Ltd · October 2026

Version 2.0 | October 2026

This Charter supersedes Version 1.0 (September 2026).

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Cemetery Cremation Plot Walkway Widths

Purpose of Report

To provide Members with information regarding the width of walkways between cremation plots in the existing cemetery following the receipt of a complaint concerning accessibility. Members are asked to consider the issues raised and determine whether any changes should be made to the layout of future cremation plots and the management of items placed around memorials.

Background

A formal complaint has been received regarding access between cremation plots within the existing cemetery. The complainant has raised concerns that the gap between some rows of cremation plots has reduced over time and that, in certain locations, there may be insufficient space for visitors using walking aids to comfortably access graves.

The complaint notes that the first plot in the newest cremation row has been positioned approximately 18 inches from the plot in the row behind and expresses concern that continuation of this arrangement could further restrict access to adjacent plots. It is also suggested that narrower spacing may disadvantage elderly or disabled visitors and could potentially conflict with the principles of the Equality Act 2010.

Current Situation

The cremation section has been developed over many years. Historically, the width between rows varied and was largely determined by funeral directors undertaking plot preparation. As a result, there is no single consistent walkway width throughout the cremation area.

The Council's records indicate that walkway widths have reduced over time, with some of the newest sections now having gaps of approximately 18 to 24 inches between rows.

Variation also exists due to:

- Different memorial designs and base sizes;
- Memorial surrounds extending beyond plot boundaries;
- The placement of flowers, ornaments, solar lights and other memorial items around plots;
- Natural grass growth and ground conditions.

These factors have resulted in some walkways becoming narrower than originally intended and have also increased maintenance difficulties for grounds staff and contractors.

Accessibility Considerations

Advice obtained from the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) Legal Advice Service states that if the cremation area were being designed today, it would be necessary to consider walkways of sufficient width to accommodate disability access needs.

The Council has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to consider the needs of disabled users and take reasonable steps to avoid placing them at a substantial disadvantage where practicable.

However, Members should note that:

- The cemetery is an historic grassed site rather than a modern purpose-designed facility.
- Existing plots and memorials cannot realistically be relocated.
- The Council has already provided a surfaced pathway through the cemetery and seating for visitors.
- Access to the cemetery is partially dependent upon movement through the adjoining churchyard, which is outside the Council's ownership and control.

The Equality Act requires reasonable adjustments rather than perfect accessibility in every circumstance. Members must therefore balance accessibility considerations against other factors including available burial space, operational practicality and future cemetery capacity.

Legal and Operational Considerations

Article 3(1) of the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 provides that a burial authority:

"may do all such things as they consider necessary or desirable for the proper management, regulation or control of a cemetery."

The Council therefore has discretion to determine appropriate plot layouts and management arrangements provided those decisions are reasonable and properly considered.

The SLCC Legal Advice Service has advised that:

- The Council should consider accessibility requirements for all users.
- Having received a complaint, the matter should be fully considered and documented.
- The Council should assess both accessibility and wider health and safety considerations.
- Where items are placed contrary to cemetery regulations and restrict access, the Council may consider adopting and enforcing arrangements requiring their removal.

Industry Practice

Many older cemeteries have limited access between cremation plots, and it is not uncommon for visitors to leave the principal pathways in order to reach individual memorials.

Whilst wheelchairs generally require significantly more space, many walking frames used by older visitors are approximately 22 to 26 inches wide. Members may therefore wish to consider whether existing and future walkway widths provide reasonable access for those using mobility aids.

Options Available to the Council

Option 1 - No Change

Continue developing the current row in line with the first interment already completed.

Advantages

- Maximises remaining burial capacity.
- Maintains a consistent alignment within the current row.
- No loss of future cremation plots.

Disadvantages

- Does not address concerns raised by the complaint.
- Accessibility limitations may increase over time.
- Potential for further complaints.

Option 2 - Introduce a Minimum Walkway Width Immediately

Determine a minimum width for future sections of the current row and reconfigure the layout from this point onwards.

Advantages

- Demonstrates consideration of accessibility requirements.
- Provides greater space for visitors using walking aids.
- Establishes a clear standard for future plot allocation.

Disadvantages

- The first plot in the row would be positioned differently from subsequent plots.
- Reduces future burial capacity to some extent.
- The minimum width would need to be determined by Members.

Option 3 - Introduce Increased Widths Gradually

Increase walkway widths incrementally as the row progresses.

Advantages

- Allows a gradual transition between historic and future layouts.

- May reduce the visual impact of changing plot spacing.
- Offers a compromise between accessibility and burial capacity.

Disadvantages

- Does not immediately resolve concerns.
- May create inconsistency in layout.
- The rate of increase would need to be determined by Members.

Memorial Items

Members may also wish to consider whether additional action should be taken regarding the placing of ornaments, decorations and other memorial items beyond plot boundaries.

Such items can further restrict access and complicate maintenance activities. However, professional advice received indicates that any attempt to restrict or remove such items is likely to be sensitive and may attract objections from some families.

Should Members wish to pursue this option, clear communication and reasonable timescales would be essential.

Future Cemetery Development

Members should note that this report relates solely to the existing cremation section located to the right of the cemetery entrance.

The planned cemetery extension will be professionally designed and mapped prior to opening, allowing accessibility considerations and plot spacing to be incorporated from the outset.

Recommendation

Members are asked to consider:

1. Whether a minimum walkway width should be introduced for future cremation plots in the existing cemetery, and if so, what that minimum width should be.
2. Whether any changes should be made immediately or introduced incrementally.
3. Whether action should be taken regarding memorial items encroaching into walkway areas.
4. Whether any amendments to the Cemetery Regulations should be considered to support the Council's preferred approach.

Suggested Resolution

That the Parish Council, having considered the report on cremation plot walkway widths, determines the minimum width to be applied to future cremation plot rows within the existing cemetery and resolves [whether to introduce the change immediately / incrementally / make no change], together with any associated measures relating to memorial items and cemetery management.