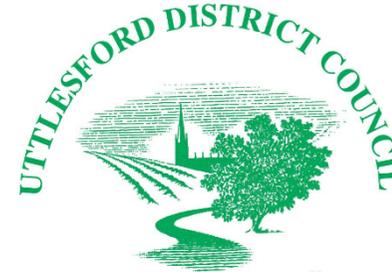


The West of Braintree Garden Community Plan

Issues and Options Consultation



CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| HAVE YOUR SAY | 4 |
| SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION | 6 |
| THE PURPOSE OF THIS CONSULTATION..... | 6 |
| WHY IS A PLAN NEEDED? | 6 |
| THE PLAN’S PREPARATION STEPS | 7 |
| BACKGROUND | 9 |
| THE LOCAL CONTEXT..... | 11 |
| SECTION 2: BACKGROUND, EVIDENCE AND SITE ANALYSIS..... | 13 |
| SECTION 3: VISION AND PRINCIPLES..... | 24 |
| SECTION 4: ISSUES..... | 30 |
| THEME 1: PLACE AND INTEGRATION | 30 |
| GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE | 30 |
| INTEGRATED AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT | 35 |
| EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY..... | 40 |
| LIVING ENVIRONMENT..... | 42 |
| SMART AND SUSTAINABLE LIVING..... | 44 |
| GOOD DESIGN | 47 |
| THEME 2: COMMUNITY | 49 |
| COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT | 49 |
| ACTIVE LOCAL STEWARDSHIP | 51 |
| THEME 3: DELIVERY | 53 |
| STRONG CORPORATE AND POLITICAL PUBLIC LEADERSHIP | 53 |

| | |
|--|----|
| INNOVATIVE DELIVERY STRUCTURE..... | 55 |
| SECTION 5: SPATIAL BOUNDARIES..... | 57 |
| OPTION 1 – COMBINED BRAINTREE AND UTTLESFORD LOCAL PLANS AREA..... | 59 |
| OPTION 2 – BRAINTREE LOCAL PLAN ONLY AREA..... | 60 |
| SECTION 6: NEXT STEPS | 62 |
| GLOSSARY..... | 63 |
| APPENDIX 1 – THE NORTH ESSEX GARDEN COMMUNITIES CHARTER | 69 |
| APPENDIX 2 – THE EMERGING EVIDENCE BASE..... | 79 |

HAVE YOUR SAY

Braintree District Council and Uttlesford District Council are working collaboratively on the planning of a new Garden Community on land to the west of Braintree as the most effective and sustainable way to plan for long term growth and to ensure future housing needs are supported by the right level of job opportunities, community facilities and other accompanying local and strategic infrastructure.

The principle of development for this new Garden Community is contained in the Councils' emerging Local Plans which set out the approximate location, scale and approach of the West of Braintree Garden Community. In the case of Uttlesford District Council a decision has not yet been made if the Garden Community should extend into their district and that decision will be made by the Council before the Uttlesford Local Plan is submitted for independent examination, after the Council has considered all of the representations which have been made in relation to its Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18).

The next stage is to progress the principle of development into detailed strategies, policies and proposals, including a defined settlement boundary for the new Garden Community (which may or may not extend into Uttlesford District as explained above). This consultation forms part of this stage and is a fundamental aspect of planning; the Councils recognise the importance of early and meaningful engagement with stakeholders to not only ensure that the Garden Community is a successful place to live, work and visit, but that it is also locally-led, accountable and transparent in its planning.

As a stakeholder in this process we welcome your views on the Issues and Options related to the planning of the new Garden Community and ask you to respond to the questions set out in this document. There is no requirement for you to comment on every issue or to answer every question; we would like you to submit comments on any areas that you wish to. Additionally, if you believe some issues have been missed out or not afforded the weight they deserve, please raise this in your response. Your feedback to this consultation will directly influence the strategies, policies and proposals in the final West of Braintree Garden Community Plan.

The Councils have set up a dedicated online portal in order to make responding to the consultation as simple as possible. Following a simple registration process you will be able to respond to the questions posed in this document and comment on other areas you think are relevant to the planning of the Garden Community. The online portal also has a facility for respondents to upload documents relevant to their submissions and you are particularly encouraged to submit documents which may assist the understanding of issues raised in your responses, including for example, maps, plans and photographs which help illustrate points that cannot be explained as well through a written response.

CONSULTATION PERIOD

The Issues and Options consultation will be held between **13th November 2017 and 8th January 2018**. Unfortunately submissions received after 5pm on 8th January will not be able to be considered by the Councils so an early submission of your responses is encouraged.

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED



To respond online visit the Councils' dedicated online consultation portal [web link to be inserted]



To respond via email send your comments to [email address to be inserted]



If you would prefer to respond by letter, post your comments to [postal address to be inserted]

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

THE PURPOSE OF THIS CONSULTATION

The purpose of this Issues and Options consultation is to gather your views on the development of the West of Braintree Garden Community. The responses to this consultation will directly feed into the emerging West of Braintree Garden Community Plan (the 'Plan'). The Plan, once adopted, will contain all of the strategies, policies and proposals needed to guide the development of the new Garden Community. As the planning process progresses the emerging Plan will be refined through further public consultation and stakeholder engagement to ensure that as many views as possible are taken into consideration. Eventually the West of Braintree Garden Community Plan will be adopted by both Braintree District Council and Uttlesford District Council (if an option is pursued which extends into Uttlesford District) and will form part of the suite of documents that together form their respective Local Plans. The West of Braintree Garden Community Plan will need to be in conformity with the higher order, district-wide Local Plans for Braintree and Uttlesford.

CONFUSED BY THE TERMINOLOGY?

See the Glossary at the end of the document for an explanation of terms used.

WHY IS A PLAN NEEDED?

The West of Braintree Garden Community Plan is being jointly prepared by Braintree District Council and Uttlesford District Council because the Garden Community could cover land in each authorities' district. This joint working has been brought about as a result of the Councils' inclusion of the principle of development of a new Garden Community (in the location proposed in this consultation) in their emerging Local Plans. The West of Braintree Garden Community Plan will take the principle of development further than the Councils' Local Plans and include specific proposals, strategies and detailed policies to inform the delivery of the Garden Community. The final Plan will provide certainty for stakeholders on the type, scale and location of specific land uses including the infrastructure required to accommodate them.

The West of Braintree Garden Community Plan will technically be known as a Development Plan Document (DPD). A DPD is a planning document, similar to the Councils' Local Plans, which is reserved for planning proposals significant and far-reaching in their nature. A DPD is used for such planning proposals because it is subject to multiple stages of consultation as well as independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate (a Government agency responsible

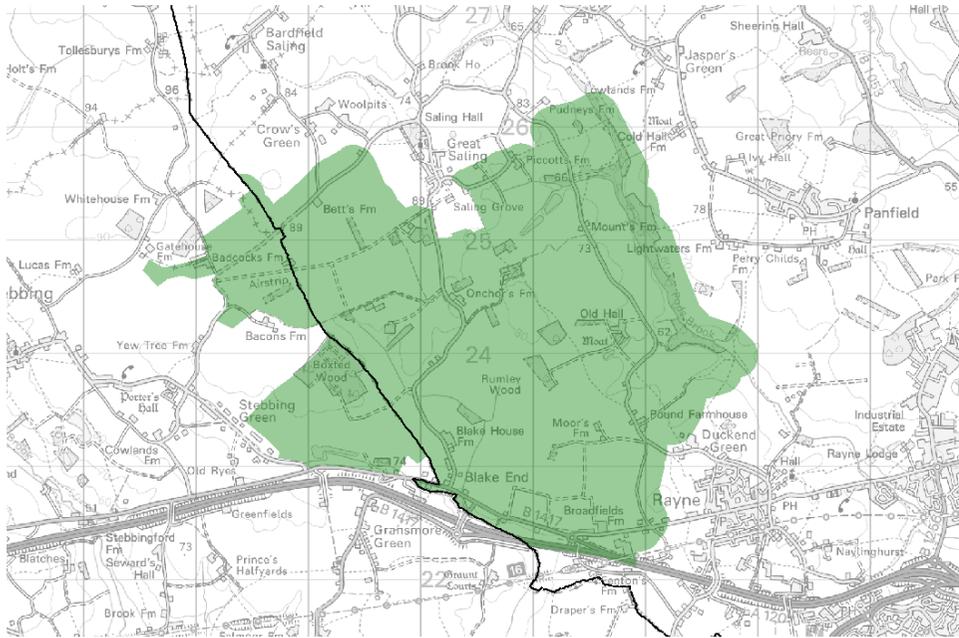


FIGURE 1 THE COMBINED AREA OF SEARCH FOR THE WEST OF BRAINTREE GARDEN COMMUNITY CONTAINED IN BOTH COUNCILS' EMERGING LOCAL PLANS.

for overseeing the operation of the planning system). A DPD is required to guide the development of the Garden Community rather than a Supplementary Planning document (SPD), which is not subject to the same degree of consultation and independent examination, because of the scale of the development proposed; its cross-boundary nature; the associated land assembly required to accommodate the proposal; and the potential use of a Local Delivery Vehicle (LDV) which will put proposals into practice. All of these attributes depart from traditional forms of development and consequently necessitate a higher level document, subject to a greater degree of scrutiny and consultation. Due to its importance, the West of Braintree Garden Community Plan will be prepared in a comprehensive and transparent manner and provide all stakeholders with an opportunity to not only inform the planning of the Garden Community but also to scrutinise its preparation.

Importantly the final Plan will be afforded statutory weight; all planning proposals within the Garden Community boundary will have to be carried out in accordance with the Plan. This is necessary to ensure the Plan's policies and proposals are properly applied and developed as intended. Essentially the preparation of the West of Braintree Garden Community

Plan will follow a similar planning process to that followed in the preparation of each Councils' emerging Local Plans.

THE PLAN'S PREPARATION STEPS

The preparation of the West of Braintree Garden Community Plan will be an extensive process reflecting the importance of the final document to the delivery of the Garden Community. For up to date timescales on each stage please consult the Councils' Local Development Schemes (LDS) on their respective websites. The following diagram illustrates the stages in the planning process.

THE GARDEN COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS

WHEN AND HOW TO GET INVOLVED



FIGURE 2 THE PLANNING PROCESS OF THE WEST OF BRAINTREE GARDEN COMMUNITY PLAN.

BACKGROUND

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) articulates the Government's objectives for growth in the context of sustainable development. It identifies three elements of sustainable development:

- an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy;
- a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities; and
- an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing It is committed to a presumption in favour of development.

The NPPF advocates the use of large-scale developments which incorporate the Town and Country Planning Association's (TCPA's) Garden City Principles as one way of achieving development at scale (paragraph 52). Development of new large-scale communities must be established by working with existing local communities, and significant weight is attributed to good design of the built environment and creating a high quality and inclusive design.

The NPPF also seeks to ensure an integrated approach to the planning of housing, and provision of commercial and employment uses alongside the delivery of community services and facilities, to include education and open space uses as part of the creation of healthy and inclusive communities (paragraph 69). The NPPF also recognises the significance of financial viability in both planning and decision making.

A NATIONAL AGENDA FOR GARDEN COMMUNITIES

In 2015 the Government invited proposals for new 'Garden Communities' across the UK as a way of tackling the housing crisis. The North Essex Garden Communities (NEGC) responded positively to this significant opportunity for long-term comprehensively planned growth and put forward draft proposals for three new settlements to be designed and delivered to Garden City Principles. West of Braintree Garden Community is one of those new communities proposed.

The Government continues to recognise the contribution that well-planned, well-designed new communities can make to meeting long-term housing needs and has confirmed its intention to legislate to allow locally-accountable New Town Development Corporations to be set up which could further support public sector delivery of new communities. The Councils will continue to explore such innovative mechanisms to deliver the Garden Community.

The current strategy for the West of Braintree Garden Community could see Braintree District Council and Uttlesford District Council playing a key role in the Garden Community's delivery, giving the Councils more ability to control the design, type of housing, rate of construction and, importantly, the associated infrastructure requirements that will come alongside, or in advance of the development. The extent of the involvement by Uttlesford District

Council would depend on the outcome of its Local Plan process and whether or not development extends into its District; the Uttlesford District Council will make this decision before its Local Plan is submitted for independent examination, and after the Council has considered all of the representations which have been made in relation to its Draft Local Plan.

The Councils are working jointly to explore the most effective way to deliver the Garden Community that would maximise benefits of the development for all. One delivery option is through NEGC Ltd (working closely with Uttlesford District Council) and Local Delivery Vehicles for each Garden Community; another may involve emerging Government proposals for locally-led New Town Development Corporations which may offer an alternative means of delivery that is devolved and locally accountable.

Regardless of which delivery model is applied, capturing the uplift in development land value will be critical to ensuring that the long-term aspirations of community stewardship of public assets and infrastructure are delivered.

THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Braintree and Uttlesford Districts are facing an unprecedented level of population growth over the coming decades. However, the influences of population and economic growth do not stop at administrative boundaries; migration flows, commuting and strategic infrastructure needs all have significant influences within and between local authority areas. Like the drivers of growth themselves, the planning system should not begin and end at district boundaries but should instead respond positively to the opportunity such growth provides in improving our districts for existing and future residents. How to accommodate future growth whilst at the same time promoting the best interests of the districts has meant that the Councils have had to face difficult questions regarding what the best planning response should be. What has become clear is that if the planning response is to be positive and if it is to ensure the sustainability of future growth, the authorities will have to move beyond traditional approaches to development.

Responding to future growth by allocating additional land for housing in our towns and villages may seem like a logical solution to accommodating housing and employment needs but to do so indefinitely would not be tolerable, especially if we are to protect our villages and our countryside. Incremental growth of existing towns and villages only serves to add to the burden on existing services and facilities without providing the threshold of development needed to fund and deliver new strategic infrastructure. Furthermore, incremental growth inevitably pushes new development to the outer reaches of those settlements, adding to journey times, promoting the use of the private car, and ultimately increasing 'sprawl' into the countryside.

Braintree District Council and Uttlesford District Council are committed to planning in a more sustainable way. Rather than approach the growth needs of their districts in isolation, the authorities have agreed to work collaboratively on the allocation and distribution of large-scale development, including employment opportunities, community services and facilities, and strategic infrastructure provision on land that straddles their administrative boundaries. In response to the anticipated growth of their districts, the authorities have taken a pioneering approach to strategic development by proposing the establishment of a Garden Community on land to the west of Braintree.

Braintree and Uttlesford District Councils, together with Essex County Council, are committed to the delivery of this Garden Community which will be developed alongside all necessary infrastructure. The West of Braintree Garden Community has been identified as providing a strategic long term opportunity to not only contribute towards growth in this plan period, up to 2033, but also to contribute towards longer term growth and development opportunities in the future.

Both Councils are also proposing other Garden Communities in their districts. Uttlesford District Council is planning new Garden Communities at Easton Park and North Uttlesford whilst Braintree District Council is also proposing another Garden Community on land spanning its administrative boundary with Colchester Borough Council (as part of the North Essex Garden Communities consortium). This consultation, however, concentrates solely on the West of Braintree Garden Community.

LOCAL PLANS

This overarching commitment to Garden Communities is embedded in both of the authorities' emerging Local Plans. These documents set out the planning policy framework for the West of Braintree Garden Community, including the principles which will inform decisions about its future development. This can be found in Policy SP10 of Braintree District Council's Publication Draft Local Plan (Regulation 19) and in Policy SP8 of Uttlesford District Council's Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18). The authorities' emerging Local Plans also include an area of search for the Garden Community, providing an indication of the location and amount of land available to accommodate the new settlement.

In the case of Uttlesford District Council a decision has not yet been made if the Garden Community should extend into the District and that decision will be made by the Council before the Uttlesford Local Plan is submitted for independent examination, after the Council has considered all of the representations which have been made in relation to its Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18). It is for this reason that this consultation considers two options, one with development only in Braintree and one across the district boundary (see Section 5). When Uttlesford District Council has made a decision on the Draft Local Plan, the next stage will be to progress the principle of development into detailed strategies, policies and proposals, including a defined settlement boundary for the new Community.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Alternative locations for the Garden Community have been considered and the criteria for assessing the sustainability and other merits of alternative locations are contained in the Sustainability Appraisals which accompany the authorities' emerging Local Plans. A Sustainability Appraisal has also been prepared specifically for this Issues and Options consultation which can be viewed on the Councils' websites.

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND, EVIDENCE AND SITE ANALYSIS

BACKGROUND

THE NORTH ESSEX GARDEN COMMUNITIES AND UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Braintree District Council has formed a strategic partnership with Colchester Borough Council and Tendring District Council to plan for future housing, employment and infrastructure delivery across north Essex. This partnership was initiated to manage and co-ordinate the Councils' resources towards the delivery of Garden Communities as the preferred strategy to accommodate their growth needs and aspirations not just over the current planning period but over future plan periods too. North Essex Garden Communities (NEGC) was subsequently established by the three District and Borough Councils, and Essex County Council in 2015 to deliver this innovative planning approach.

The North Essex authorities have committed to this partnership through a shared Section 1 of their emerging Local Plans which covers cross-boundary issues and includes the principle of development of three Garden Communities across north Essex, including the West of Braintree Garden Community which is the subject of this consultation.

Uttlesford District Council supports the proposal for a new Garden Community at West of Braintree and has identified land in its Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) contiguous to the land allocated for the Garden Community in the Braintree Local Plan and this is one of the options included in this consultation. Due to this cross-boundary nature of the West of Braintree Garden Community, Uttlesford District Council is working collaboratively with Braintree District Council (which is acting as part of NEGC), in the joint planning of the new settlement.

THE NORTH ESSEX GARDEN COMMUNITIES CHARTER

In planning for a new generation of Garden Communities, NEGC has developed a charter of principles to express its ambitions. The North Essex Garden Community Charter is based on the Town and Country Planning Association's (TCPA) Garden City Principles¹, but adapted for the specific north Essex context. The TCPA Garden City Principles provide a good starting point because they were developed to shape the sustainable development of new communities, using the opportunity and economies of scale to innovate and create high-quality places that put people at the heart of developing new settlements. This contributes to a community that is holistically and comprehensively developed with a distinct identity that



¹ Town and Country Planning Association, *Reimagining the Garden City for the 21st Century* (2011) (<https://www.tcpa.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=b0204e3f-7546-413e-bda9-108e4b3ae7fe>).

responds directly to its context, and is of a sufficient scale to incorporate a range of homes, employment, green space and other uses to enable residents to meet the majority of their day to day needs, reducing the need for out commuting.

The Garden Communities Charter is based around three key themes which comprise the ten placemaking principles developed to articulate the Councils' ambition for the Garden Communities, and to drive forward their development. The Charter has informed and will continue to inform the approach to the development of the West of Braintree Garden Community. More information about the principles which form the Charter can be found in Section 3.

THE EMERGING EVIDENCE BASE

To inform the planning approach, an evidence base is being prepared to improve the understanding of the issues which exist in the area and the sorts of opportunities which could arise through the development of a Garden Community.

To support the preparation of the West of Braintree Garden Community Plan and as part of both Councils' Local Plan preparations, a wide range of new and existing evidence has been gathered to inform the Councils' planning approach. This evidence base includes a Concept Feasibility Study² which provided an overview of these issues as well as the constraints and opportunities in the broader area. In relation to the proposed West of Braintree Garden Community, the study investigated a range of scenarios covering the scope and scale of development that may be feasible, together with an evaluation of how development at scale could meet strategic objectives, deliverability and anticipated infrastructure requirements.

The evidence base has contributed to the emerging approaches to the issues that need to be addressed in the planning of the Garden Community. The emerging approaches form a starting point for discussion, and through ongoing engagement, including through this Issues and Options consultation, the views and opinions of all stakeholders will be taken into consideration in shaping the strategies, policies and proposals that will make up the West of Braintree Garden Community Plan. You can view summaries of some of the evidence base documents in Appendix 2.

² Aecom, *Concept Feasibility Study* (2015).

SITE ANALYSIS

It is vital the Garden Community is responsive to existing issues as well as issues which may arise as a result of large-scale development on land to the west of Braintree. Therefore local characteristics, existing infrastructure and utility provision will have to be carefully considered to ensure future development is receptive and where possible embraces the opportunities presented by the Garden Community to address existing issues. The following map illustrates some of the site's constraints.

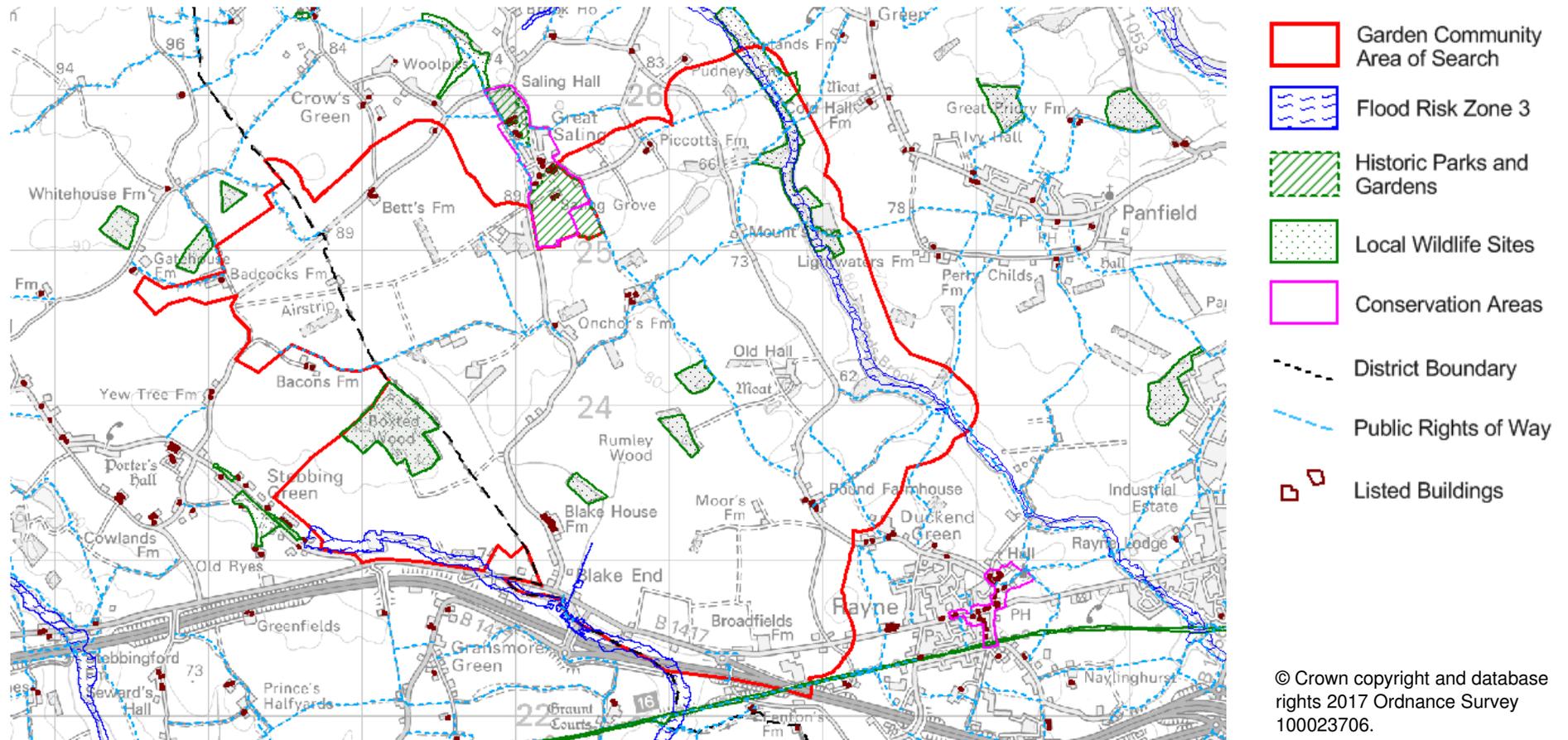


FIGURE 3 SITE CONSTRAINTS

Landscape

Constraints

The vast majority of the land is in agricultural use (mostly Grade 2 Agricultural Land³) with a small number of detached residential and commercial properties (including at Andrewsfield), mostly associated with farming. The landscape is typically flat and open in character with medium to large fields divided by hedgerows and some areas of woodland copse. There are a number of mature woodlands, including Boxted Wood.

The land within the site forms an open farmland plateau with a gently sloping topography to the south. This topography means that there are long distance views into the site from the surrounding rural areas. There are a number of sensitive receptors associated with the surrounding settlement and large scale development has the potential to impact on the rural character of the small settlements surrounding the site.

There are a number of important areas of deciduous woodland, which is a priority habitat, scattered across the site. Of particular importance are the significant areas of ancient woodland, including the 19ha of Boxted Wood as well as that found at Golden Grove and Rumley Wood. These areas support potentially sensitive ecology which could be impacted upon by new development. There are two local wildlife sites

Opportunities

The development of a Garden Community at the site will inevitably significantly change the character of the existing landscape. The level of potential change necessitates a comprehensive landscape and green infrastructure strategy to ensure that the changes brought about by development are positive and the boundaries of the settlement are treated in such a way that they integrate into the existing rural landscape. The development of the Garden Community provides an unprecedented opportunity to create an abundance of publicly accessible landscapes, including but not limited to formal and informal parks, allotments, country parks and nature reserves. Where valued landscape features exist within the site, such as mature hedgerow and trees, there are opportunities to integrate them into new green infrastructure, enhancing both their aesthetic and ecological benefits.

The proximity of existing villages to the Garden Community opens up opportunities to improve areas between these existing settlements and new development. Existing private farmland, for example, could be opened up as publicly accessible parkland with new green links formed to improve walking and cycling connectivity in the area for both existing and future residents.

The site's existing ecological assets, such the woodlands and local wildlife sites identified, will be obvious areas to protect and integrate into the Garden Community's green infrastructure. As well as protecting existing ecologically valuable sites there will be opportunities to enhance them through green corridors which in turn can be linked to new habitats within the development.

³ Natural England Agricultural Land Classification (<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/5954148537204736>).

Heritage

With the majority of the land in productive agricultural use; intensively farmed for arable crops, field size typically medium to large, and the majority of the water courses classified by the Environment Agency as ecologically poor, overall the site is unlikely to have high levels of existing biodiversity. There is however an area of good quality semi-improved grassland and priority mixed habitat around Stebbing Green.

There are a number of Grade II listed buildings and two Grade II* listed buildings within the site, predominately associated with historic farmsteads. The value of these farmsteads is not only in their built structures but also in their rural settings.

The area around Great Saling Hall is designated as a Conservation Area and includes an Historic Parks and Gardens designation associated with the Hall's grounds and Church cemetery. These areas are particularly sensitive and will require an appropriate planning and design response.

Stebbing also has a designated Conservation Area and several listed buildings that would be sensitive to development. In addition, there are a number of isolated farmhouses and farm buildings both within the site and in the surrounding area that are listed which would be sensitive. There is also known to be a Roman Villa in the area of Boxted Wood and potential earthworks within the Ancient Woodland.

New development will significantly increase the recreational use of existing natural spaces therefore recreational areas available to new residents will have to be carefully managed through a Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy to ensure they do not negatively impact upon habitats.

Due to the site's predominant use as intensively-farmed agricultural land there are considerable opportunities to enhance its overall ecological value.

Whilst the growth of the Garden Community will result in substantial new built development in the area, new built form will have to respond positively to its location and this includes respecting, and where possible, enhancing the presence of heritage assets and their settings. There are therefore opportunities to accommodate listed buildings into Garden Community in a manner which responds to the special characteristics and features of their listing. This could include using complementary designs in their vicinity or suitable amounts of buffer space to provide an organic and seamless townscape.

Great Saling Hall's Conservation Area and its Historic Parks and Gardens status warrants special attention and the planning of the areas around this important heritage asset could provide an opportunity to enhance its significance and raise its profile as a local attraction.

Connectivity – Active Modes

The site contains many rural lanes and roads which currently lack footpaths however there are a number of Public Rights of Way across the site.

The National Cycle Network (NCN16) currently connects to Flitch Way via a bridge over the A120.

A further elevated foot and cycle bridge crosses the A120 connecting Fentons Road with the roundabout with Dunmow Road.

The lack of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure through the site itself means that there are considerable opportunities to improve active mode connectivity to support the transport choices of new and existing residents and reduce the existing reliance on car use. Opportunities are therefore apparent to create a comprehensive network of footways and cycleways which could incorporate links to and from existing attractors such as Braintree town centre, Braintree Freeport, Skyline A120 as well as new employment and local centres within the Garden Community. A comprehensive transport strategy should be developed alongside a green infrastructure strategy which would ensure that such active mode connections are not only efficient but also pleasant to use.

Connectivity – Public Transport

Braintree railway station lies to the east, approximately 5km from the centre of the site, providing access to the Braintree-Witham branch line which provides limited connectivity (one train per hour) to the Great Eastern Mainline. Parking at Braintree railway station is limited to approximately 160 spaces, whilst at Braintree Freeport, parking is limited to a duration of 6hrs which limits its use for commuters.

A limited existing bus network exists in close proximity to the site, currently setting down south of the site on the B1256 and providing an infrequent service to Chelmsford. A greater volume of buses currently serve Braintree town centre, however due to their current route pattern and the distance between the site and the town, accessibility by bus is poor. There is presently low bus use and bus services in Uttlesford with most services centred on London Stansted Airport, Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow.

Improvements to the Braintree-Witham branch line are anticipated independently of the Garden Community, through the provision of a loop at Cressing, mid-way between Braintree and Witham. This would increase the capacity of the line to some degree, albeit limited by its single track alignment.

The development of the Garden Community presents an opportunity to heavily invest in public transport infrastructure in the area, providing high quality and high frequency services within the site and to and from existing destinations, including transport hubs within Braintree, Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and through the proposed Easton Park Garden Community to London Stansted Airport. Improvements in public transport will provide benefits to existing residents in surrounding settlements, which may help to make services more viable at an earlier stage in the development.

Connectivity – Road Network

Currently it is forecast that numerous junctions in and around Braintree will be overcapacity by 2032 if no improvements to the A120 between Braintree and Marks Tey take place. This is particularly important because the lack of existing road infrastructure to the north of the site results in dependency on access from the south, putting pressure on A120, its junctions and the town centre route via the B1256.

Furthermore there are potential capacity issues to the west of the site along the B1256 towards Great Dunmow and its connection to the A120 as well as the A120 westwards and further afield to Junction 8 of the M11. Without intervention there may also be issues with traffic impacts on Felsted to the south of the site, possibly as a result of a lack of an all-movements junction with the A120 in the vicinity of the site.

There are opportunities for new vehicular access via the existing local and strategic road network in the form of the A120, A131 and the B1256 which could provide connectivity east towards Braintree, south towards Chelmsford and west towards London Stansted Airport.

Opportunities have been (and will continue to be) sought to addressing the lack of connectivity with the A120 in the vicinity of the site. In order to resolve this issue early in the development process a bid for the funding of a new all-movements junction with the A120 was submitted to Government in September 2017.

Whilst there is likely to be a requirement for substantial internal road infrastructure improvements to enable development on the site, a new road link may also need to be considered from the north and west to reduce reliance on access via the south and the A120 however public transport and active transport should be considered first and this should only be considered as a last resort due to the perceived impact.

In all instances it will be important to consider the right mix and location of uses within the Garden Community to promote sustainable modes of transport and short journey trips within the site itself to limit any potential dependency on the car.

Water Cycle

Both the Pods Brook and River Ter are already failing to meet the Water Framework Directive target of good ecological status and are considered to be at risk of further deterioration in water quality. Diffuse urban pollution from surface run off associated with future development could exacerbate this risk. The

The existing issues with the water cycle present a challenge to new development proposals and substantial investment in this essential area of infrastructure will be required to facilitate the improvements needed and ensure adequate ongoing maintenance. It is clear that the delivery of the Garden Community will provide an opportunity to provide this level of investment and also provide an

underlying London Clay and clay soils that can impede the rate of infiltration may limit the use of infiltration sustainable urban drainage systems on the site. This is coupled with the site being situated within a Drinking Water Safeguarding Zone and surface and groundwater nitrate vulnerability zones. Parts of the site are at risk of fluvial (river) and surface water flooding.

unprecedented opportunity to integrate innovative sustainable urban drainage systems into the design of new development.

Economy - Retail

Due to its rural nature the site does not currently accommodate any notable retail uses. It is however located approximately 5km to the west of Braintree Town Centre, 6km to the west of the regional shopping and leisure attraction of Braintree Freeport and 13km from Great Dunmow Town Centre.

A development on the scale of the Garden Community could have the potential, if not appropriately planned and managed, to develop as a competitor location, especially with respect to Braintree Town Centre, impacting on its resilience. It will be important for the Garden Community to therefore develop an economic and retail strategy that compliments Braintree Town Centre, Braintree Freeport and Great Dunmow Town Centre but also avoids the Garden Community itself becoming a dormitory residential suburb. The ability to plan appropriate centres at locations and scales suitable for the Garden Community they will serve provides an opportunity to strike this balance.

Economy - Employment

The site currently contains a number of small scale employment uses, mostly related to agricultural and industrial uses.

The site is close to the established employment centre of Braintree which has seen steady growth in recent years and unemployment in the area is low with a high rate of economic activity. Jobs are growing at a faster rate than the working age population demonstrating a demand for labour. However, levels of out-commuting are high, qualification levels are

The Garden Community presents an opportunity to contribute to local economic growth both in the short and medium term during the construction phase and the longer term by providing high-quality employment space for future employers. Importantly the Garden Community will not be a dormitory settlement because employment sites will be developed within the new community and combined with an area specific economic strategy in order to attract potential employers, both start-ups and companies looking to relocate into new premises.

The economic strategy will have to utilise existing strengths including a strong focus on the local sectoral base and collaboration

Utilities

relatively low and productivity is behind the national average.

The area benefits from a diverse sectoral employment base. This includes a relatively high proportion of manufacturing activity which, despite the long-term loss of industrial employment and a general absence of large employers, offers evidence of innovation and growth potential. While there are significant economic 'anchors' in the wider vicinity (some of which are significant employers of local residents), the area has not yet been able to realise the full benefit from them.

Within South Uttlesford growth is linked to potential employment opportunities at a future expanded London Stansted Airport. The continued growth in the airport's operations means that the airport itself increasingly acts as a hub which attracts a range of high level economic activities, particularly in knowledge-based sectors.

All the electrical networks west of Braintree are 11kV rural supplies, consisting mainly of overhead lines. These would have limited capacity to supply new development and overhead lines are inherently less reliable than underground cables, as they are more susceptible to storm damage.

There is capacity in the medium pressure gas network in the region, but local low pressure upgrades will be required.

with potential local employers and industry bodies to understand their needs and how they could be accommodated in the new settlement. The growth of London Stansted Airport will also provide an opportunity for the Garden Community to capture future associated employment growth. An understanding of the economic consequences of an expanded international airport in close proximity to the site will be key to achieving this.

Overall, employment sites will have to be well-integrated with the rest of the community, have excellent connectivity, be serviced with innovative telecommunications infrastructure and wherever possible be located close to complementary uses, such as cafes and early years care services. The planning of the Garden Community provides an opportunity which would not be realised through alternative development approaches.

The development of a new Garden Community provides significant opportunities to not only provide new infrastructure but also the opportunity to deliver innovative forms of infrastructure and ensure their integration from the outset, reducing and avoiding the need for disruptive retrofitting.

A new primary substation will have to be established early in the development phase and preliminary discussion with UK Power Networks suggests that this would be connected into the 33kV network from existing overhead lines to the south of the A120. Similarly improvements to the local gas network and local water network will need to be factored into the development.

Anglian Water has stated that the site is forecast to be in a deficit state by 2040. One of the main measures to mitigate the forecasted deficit will be to increase the transfer from neighbouring areas that benefit from a supply surplus. Unfortunately however, there is little spare capacity at either the Rayne or the Braintree waste water treatment plants, and waste water will need to be pumped to Bocking waste water treatment plant. This would only provide a short term solution, and in the medium term a new waste water treatment plant would have to be provided within the new settlement area. This could be challenging because existing water courses are too small and ecologically sensitive to accept the final discharge of treated sewage effluent, so any effluent which is not used locally would still have to be pumped to Bocking.

Current broadband provision in the settlement area is poor, largely due to the distance from the site to the closest BT exchanges which are located at Stebbing and Braintree. Consequently, internet performance within the site is far lower than surrounding settlements.

The Broadfield Farm site to the west of Rayne is allocated for mineral extraction in the Essex Minerals Plan and is subject to a planning application. It is acknowledged that the planning context for the mineral extraction site is changing with the allocation of the Garden Community in the submitted Braintree Local Plan and Uttlesford Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18).

The planning of the Garden Community provides a unique opportunity to deliver truly innovative forms of emerging utility-related technologies, including but not limited to state of the art telecommunications infrastructure which could provide an ultra-fast broadband service for existing and future residents. Additionally, utility provision in the Garden Community has the potential to embrace sustainable forms of energy production and distribution such as wind and solar power technologies and district heat networks.

The creation of a new settlement offers an opportunity to design these improvements in such a way as to make them as efficient (in terms of operation and maintenance) and as complementary to surrounding land uses as possible. To ensure the success of this integration, strong collaboration with service providers will be required.

The Garden Community provides previously unforeseen opportunities for the Broadfield Farm mineral allocation post-extraction. The changed planning context of a new Garden Community widens its potential use to residential and other development, offering the potential to better connect the site to the new and existing communities. Any future green infrastructure networks on site could be linked in to the wider environment improving the ecological and recreational value over an isolated scheme.

Minerals Extraction

The site lies within a Mineral Safeguarding Area and will require a Mineral Resource Assessment to be undertaken to assess whether the mineral resource requires extraction prior to development. Any extracted mineral could be used on site to provide a sustainability benefit to the development of any new community.

Any mineral extraction operations would require a noise and environmental buffer zone between the potential Garden Community and neighbouring villages, ensuring any disruption is kept to a minimum for both new and existing residents whilst the site is active.

SECTION 3: VISION AND PRINCIPLES

VISION

A Vision for the West of Braintree Garden Community will provide a mandate for its future development and will be the golden thread running through the West of Braintree Garden Community Plan. It should be a shared Vision that governs all processes from design through to delivery of the development and future management of community assets.

It should create an identity for the new community where residents and business feel like they 'belong'. It should foster a collective sense of ownership and pride in the place where people will live, work and spend their leisure time.

A VISION FOR THE GARDEN COMMUNITY

The West of Braintree Garden Community will be an exceptional place to live, to grow up, to work, to raise a family, to retire; to enjoy a rich and fulfilling life. It will be a beautiful Community with a strong sense of identify and belonging. It will be a Community which is a safe and secure place where residents, workers and visitors have a strong sense of wellbeing.

The Garden Community will combine the best of traditional Essex residential environments with the expectations of a 21st century lifestyle. It will have low-energy, high performance homes in a rich landscape setting with natural green space directly accessible to every home. It will be well served by sustainable transport modes within a network of streets, greenspaces, and Public Rights of Way that will connect its distinctive neighbourhoods to each other as well as with surrounding communities. The new development will be designed in a way which respects and enhances existing landscape and heritage assets.

The Garden Community will provide the educational and health infrastructure required to support its residents. It will be healthy place, where walking and cycling to local destinations such as schools, convenience shops, play spaces and places of work, will be attractive and more convenient than driving. To support this, every new home will be within walking distance of local shops and other services that support daily life.

Good value, frequent, high-quality and reliable public transport will connect the new Community to existing settlements in Braintree and Uttlesford Districts including Braintree, Rayne and Stebbing, and further afield to other transport hubs including London Stansted Airport. Neighbourhoods will benefit from good links to the strategic road network, aligned to keep more through-traffic away from where people live but accessible to make journeys over a wide area as convenient as possible.

The timescale over which the Garden Community will grow and develop will offer the unique prospect of incorporating exciting new technological innovations within new developments, allowing it to respond to sociocultural changes and changing patterns of travel behaviour, thus ensuring its longevity and resilience.

The West of Braintree Garden Community will support the economic growth of the surrounding area and improve local opportunities to access a wide range of employment prospects. There will be a wide variety of jobs available to residents in businesses accommodated in modern buildings in its centre and outlying areas located close to strategic transport routes and benefit from proximity to London Stansted Airport. Support will be given to local small and medium enterprises to help promote entrepreneurship and embed local firms within the wider regional economy. A proportion of new housing should include homeworking facilities and all new homes should have a choice of travel modes, including high quality public transport to provide residents with the opportunity to seek employment in locations across the sub-region and beyond.

HAVE YOUR SAY



The proposed Vision is a starting point from which a more succinct and shared Vision can be developed which will capture the aspirations of stakeholders and will ensure new residents fully identify with it. Your views are important to the creation of a collective Vision that provides direction for the growth of the West of Braintree Garden Community which is distinctive, inspiring and enduring.

Q1. Do you agree with the content of the Vision? Is there anything missing?

PLANNING PRINCIPLES OF THE GARDEN COMMUNITY

As mentioned in Section 2, the North Essex Garden Communities Charter has been prepared to articulate the Councils' ambition for the Garden Communities. The Charter Principles are outlined below (and explained in more detail in Appendix 1).



FIGURE 4 THE NORTH ESSEX GARDEN COMMUNITIES CHARTER

THEME 1: PLACE AND INTEGRATION

Created from a comprehensive and integrated approach to placemaking the Garden Communities will be amazing places to live, work and spend leisure and recreation time.

PRINCIPLE 1: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The Garden Communities will provide a generous amount of green space. They will be set within a multi-functional and integrated natural environment; providing space for nature, making the communities more resilient to climate change; promoting healthy lifestyles, and creating beautiful places to live and work.

PRINCIPLE 2: INTEGRATED AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

The Garden Communities will be planned around a step change in integrated and sustainable transport system for the north Essex area, which will put walking, cycling and public transit systems at the heart of the development, and be delivered in a timely way to support the communities as they grow.

PRINCIPLE 3: EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Garden Communities will seek to provide access to one job per household within the new community or within a short distance by public transport. The employment function will be a key component of creating character and identity and sustainable communities.

PRINCIPLE 4: LIVING ENVIRONMENT

Community inclusiveness and walkable, sociable and vibrant neighbourhoods will be a defining characteristic of the garden communities. A diverse mix of homes responding to existing and future local needs will be provided alongside a range of community services, including health, education, leisure and recreation, culture and shopping.

PRINCIPLE 5: SMART AND SUSTAINABLE LIVING

Planned for the 21st century, the Garden Communities will secure a smart and sustainable approach that fosters resilient environments and communities; able to respond positively to changing circumstances. Innovation and technology will be embraced to achieve resource efficiency, higher quality of life and healthier lifestyles; creating the conditions for sustainable living.

PRINCIPLE 6: GOOD DESIGN

Through all stages of the planning, design and development of the Garden Communities the highest quality of design and management of the built and public realm will be promoted. Existing local assets will be capitalised to help create distinctive places.

THEME 2: COMMUNITY

A sense of community and active community participation will be at the heart of the Garden Communities and central to their planning, development and long term management.

PRINCIPLE 7: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Garden Communities are a locally-led initiative, and their development will be shaped through engaging existing communities and emerging new communities; residents will be empowered to contribute to shaping the future of north Essex.

PRINCIPLE 8: ACTIVE LOCAL STEWARDSHIP

The Garden Communities will be developed and managed in perpetuity with the direct involvement of their residents and businesses; residents will be directly engaged in the long term management and stewardship, fostering a shared sense of ownership and identity.

THEME 3: DELIVERY

The ambition of the Garden Communities to create something special, unique and lasting for north Essex will be supported by a delivery structure that embraces collaboration, a common sense of purpose, commitment and vision, and where risk and reward is shared.

PRINCIPLE 9: STRONG CORPORATE AND POLITICAL PUBLIC LEADERSHIP

The councils of North Essex will collaborate to provide clear vision for the garden communities and commitment to their long term success. Central to this will be a commitment to high quality placemaking, timely infrastructure provision, and achieving a steady pace of housing and employment delivery.

PRINCIPLE 10: INNOVATIVE DELIVERY STRUCTURE

The Garden Communities will be delivered through a genuine and pro-active partnership approach between the public and private sectors, where risk and reward is shared and community empowerment enabled.



HAVE YOUR SAY

The Charter is an important set of Principles which will inform the planning and delivery of the Garden Community. Making sure the Charter embodies the Councils' aspiration that the Garden Community is an exemplar will therefore need to be reflected within the Principles.

Q2. Do you support the Charter Principles? Is there anything missing?

SECTION 4: ISSUES

THEME 1: PLACE AND INTEGRATION

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

CHARTER PRINCIPLE 1

The Garden Communities will provide a generous amount of green space. They will be set within a multi-functional and integrated natural environment; providing space for nature, making the communities more resilient to climate change; promoting healthy lifestyles, and creating beautiful places to live and work.

The concept of Garden Communities places great emphasis on the landscape framework and the availability of high-quality, accessible green space near to homes and community facilities. The strategy for the Garden Community is to draw upon natural assets and features within the site to generate high standards of design. It requires an approach that sets development within a strong framework of internal green space and surrounding buffer areas that separate the new development from existing communities.

By definition, a Garden Community evokes notions of development set within an extensive, verdant landscape, with multi-functional open space available for residents to enjoy. It is also a form of development where all open spaces, from the strategic green corridors, local parks and streets to the domestic garden, have a role to play in characterising the development. The provision of significant amounts of accessible, well designed and well maintained open space will therefore be fundamental to the character and sense of place in the West of Braintree Garden Community.

The development of the Garden Community will be of a high standard of design and layout, drawing on its context and the assets within and close to its boundaries including Boxted Wood, Golden Grove, Rumley Wood, Pods Brook, and the historic airfield at Andrewsfield. These key assets will provide a context to build a new green-grid upon to provide an attractive setting for the new community and linking it to the wider countryside. The new community

will also address the relationship with existing communities close to its boundaries and maintain a separation between them including the villages of Great Saling, Stebbing Green and Rayne.

Open space can take a number of forms, but it is the interconnectivity between these different types and scales of open space that is the key to realising the vision of the Garden Community. The retention of existing landscape and open space assets is important, given the nature of the adjacent countryside and the quality of some of those assets. Retaining these established landscape assets helps to give meaning to the development from its earliest days, building on an existing character, rather than creating a completely new one from scratch. Making connections, internally and beyond the site boundaries, is essential both in terms of the creation of ecological pathways and linkages, but also to achieve a form of development that is firmly embedded within its landscape setting. There are clearly blocks of sensitive landscape and locations where the relationship of new built development with open areas of countryside, and other settlements (e.g. Great Saling and its conservation area), require a sensitive design response.

STRUCTURAL LANDSCAPE - AN INTEGRATED GREEN AND BLUE NETWORK

Sensitive local areas, such as Pods Lane and Brook, Boxted Wood and the surrounding settlements require careful consideration. Clearly the creation of a new settlement is difficult to hide no matter how extensive the surrounding landscape. In any case, this would also be the wrong approach to take. Creating a matrix of spaces, including landscape buffers and structural tree planting within which development sits, is a more nuanced and sustainable way of managing potential impacts on the surrounding area.

In order to facilitate an integrated green and blue infrastructure network there should be a promotion of the following key principles, which combine to establish a place that is resilient to climate change and establishes a pro-active relationship with the existing landscape:

- A focus on the existing open space and landscape features such as Boxted Wood and areas of ecological value to celebrate current features as well as establish a strong ecological network that retains and enhances biodiversity across the landscape.
- Definition of major east-west and north-south green corridors through the site, giving shape and form to development. This will provide a coherent landscape that ensures high levels of access to quality amenity, recreation and leisure space - encouraging healthy behaviours for new residents.
- Establishing connections into the wider landscape such that the new community becomes sustainably accessible through walking and cycling green routes.

SETTLEMENT-WIDE LANDSCAPE – KNITTING THE PLACE TOGETHER

The Garden Community will contain major new parkland designed to capitalise on the existing landscape and celebrate the local distinctiveness of the area. This parkland will provide local amenity and leisure space while also creating new ecological habitats/reserves and where appropriate providing storm water attenuation space with the potential to promote water balance and re-use such as through irrigation.

Town parks and commons will be key assets, providing amenity and creating a focus for civic life, while also helping to knit together parcels of mixed use development. The areas of habitat and Town Farm provide the stage for residents to directly engage with the landscape, and the flora and fauna it supports, both formally and informally. These areas use existing assets as a starting point, whether it be historic farm structures or existing and new wetland (potentially arising out of the remediation work to the Broadfield Farm minerals extraction site).

Finally, the sports pitches will need to be located at key junctures, providing access to a variety of formal and informal sports activities that contributes to the healthy living agenda that is one of the key aspirations of the Garden Community.

LOCAL LANDSCAPE – ENRICHING THE PLACE

Local parks, allotments, play space and incidental green space will be fundamental to the overall sense of place and character in the Garden Community. These local green spaces can create focal points for neighbourhoods and opportunities for community interaction.

The incidental spaces located within development parcels are a key part of this local-level landscape, providing opportunities for play, amenity planting that also provides shade and shelter, as well as localised food production, and a network of spaces capable of supporting local drainage systems that help to manage surface water drainage as part of a more strategic, site-wide set of interventions.

Flowing between these spaces, heavily tree planted streets and avenues will weave the whole development together, creating a more nuanced and finely detailed counterpoint to the major green corridors that flow around the edges and spine of the new community.

The importance of existing habitats and landscape structures to the longer term success and sustainability of the Garden Community cannot be over-emphasised. Protecting and enhancing existing assets, creating new spaces and connections and managing the whole system in a sensitive and responsive manner will help deliver spaces that are attractive to both people and nature.

AN ACTIVE LANDSCAPE

There is ample opportunity to use both the structural landscape spaces and the local open space to deliver high quality sport and leisure provision within the Garden Community. This might include both formal sport and more informal leisure and recreation facilities, with local school facilities also having a role to play in providing for the needs of residents. All play space should be integrated into natural surroundings and allow children to be within green spaces with a high degree of natural surveillance. Locating play alongside complimentary uses such as schools, nurseries and cafés to support their function and improve their success and vibrancy should be a focus throughout.

A PRODUCTIVE LANDSCAPE

Building on the existing site's focus on arable agriculture and food production, the Garden Community will provide space to establish orchards, allotments and greenhouses for commercial and local neighbourhood food production. Such spaces can be used by residents to grow fruit, vegetables and flowers, encouraging interaction with the outdoors, promoting education about the benefits of healthy living and giving people the opportunity to pursue a healthy lifestyle as well fostering civic pride within the community.

A FLEXIBLE LANDSCAPE

Green infrastructure should be suited to the varying needs of the community and the environment. Spaces should be flexible to allow for the changing needs of the community over time and allow for spaces to be inhabited throughout the year.

The Pods Brook valley provides a natural edge to the potential development. Enhancement and active management of the vegetation in and around the Brook and reinstating the natural route of the water course could help establish a green corridor that both the ecological and water quality whilst providing flood protection and recreation opportunities.

Active management of existing woodland assets and the creation of new areas of planting could create an attractive green network to enhance ecology, manage storm water and provide an attractive environment for the future settlement.

Networks of drainage ditches will provide the framework for a sustainable drainage network. The underlying geology and soil structure favour attenuation sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) that could be used to create attractive ponds on site that could be both an ecological resource or used to store water for reuse on site.

The green infrastructure network could be used to provide the necessary improvements to run-off water quality before discharge. This would reduce the need for new surface water sewer infrastructure and pressure on the existing waste water networks. Alternative non-potable water supplies are likely to be increasingly important in this water scarce area.

HAVE YOUR SAY



The Green Infrastructure Strategy for the new Garden Community will be the basis for achieving a variety of different objectives as outlined above. It is vital therefore that the Strategy is comprehensive and balances the needs of the community with the natural environment. Your views are sought on the emerging approach to green infrastructure to help shape this future Strategy.

Q3. Do you support the emerging approach to green infrastructure?

In preparing your response, you may like to consider:

- Parts of the site to be protected
- The sorts of public open space that are needed – parks, sports, play areas, natural spaces
- How these spaces can be made available and accessible to everyone
- How they should be owned and maintained
- What the open space priorities should be
- The importance of gardens and other private outside spaces

INTEGRATED AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

CHARTER PRINCIPLE 2

The Garden Communities will be planned around a step change in integrated and sustainable transport systems for the North Essex area which will put walking, cycling and public transit systems at the heart of the development, and be delivered in a timely way to support the communities as they grow.

Designing and delivering a new settlement with a well-functioning, efficient and sustainable transport system will be a key factor in the determination of the Garden Community's success as a place to live, work and visit. The Transport Strategy for West of Braintree will therefore have to include a variety of different considerations, from strategic connectivity across the region, right down to walkable streets. The emerging approach to transport in the Garden Community is set out below.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT – STRATEGIC CONNECTIVITY

To ensure the highest level of strategic connectivity the Garden Community will have to be integrated into the wider regional transport system. Whilst the site is in close proximity to the A120, it does not currently feed into the wider public transport system. The Transport Strategy will therefore have to deliver new strategic public transport systems that are capable of connecting the Garden Community to surrounding areas, including areas with employment growth opportunities. Such a form of public transport is referred to as rapid transit system, reflecting the scale and speed of its service.

A future Rapid Transit System serving the Garden Community could take the form of strategic light rail, tram-train, or a guided or priority bus service which could link the site up to London Stansted Airport to the west and Harwich (via Colchester) to the east. The availability of frequent public transport access to a potential future multi-modal transportation hub at the airport would also vastly improve the connectivity of the new Garden Community, making destinations further afield (including to London and Cambridge) accessible via convenient and sustainable modes. In addition to the future Rapid Transit System, the transport network will have to be supplemented by local, frequent-stopping and high quality bus services.

The strategic public transport network could include the following potential interventions:

- A rapid transit (potentially a light rail link) connecting London Stansted Airport to Braintree via the West of Braintree Garden Community and proposed Easton Park Garden Community;

- A dedicated bus route to London Stansted Airport and the settlements of Dunmow via the A120;
- A local bus interchange, including a park and ride service, located adjacent to the A120;
- A strategic busway through the site, connecting north-west Braintree (Springwood Drive) to Braintree town centre;
- A Rapid Transit System connecting Braintree Freeport (linked via Millennium Way slip ways or similar) via the future potential A120 alignment, or via the old A120 alignment (with the potential introduction of a new A120 alignment to the A12) linking Braintree with Marks Tey and Colchester;
- The re-purposing of the Braintree-Witham branch line into a Rapid Transit System corridor providing a connection with the Great Eastern Mainline at Witham and wider connectivity towards both Colchester and London;
- New connections from Skyline 120 and the A130 towards Chelmsford linking the future proposed park and ride facility and Beaulieu Park railway station.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT – LOCAL BUS NETWORK

Through considerable upgrading of route frequency and vehicle provision, a number of existing and future routes could serve as local connections between the site, the local settlements and the towns of Chelmsford, Great Dunmow, and Braintree. It could also underpin local movement within the settlement via a segregated Rapid Transit System, connecting residential uses with employment, schools and amenities. This could also importantly connect to the new strategic bus interchange within the site located adjacent to the A120. The bus network would provide a complete 400m and 800m catchment area across the site, meaning residential areas are within the identified 10 minute walking distance to ensure connectivity and encourage the highest levels of public transport take-up possible.

ACTIVE MODES

High quality streets and connections through the site will seek to ensure that the modal choice for local journeys (under 2.5km) is predominantly via active modes and therefore enshrines the sustainable transport principles at the heart of the Garden Community. For these journeys, car use should be limited, ensuring it is easier to walk than drive.

The Garden Community will seek to be exemplar in terms of the way that people can travel, with 40% of movements by active modes (walking or cycling). A settlement that favours active modes will provide the best possible opportunity to create a distinctive and attractive public realm, with a reduced amount of land set aside for car based infrastructure and instead more land for green space, development and useful amenities. Likewise a series of attractive, safe and accessible public and green places and the walking and cycling links between them and services, such as schools, creates the conditions by which a healthy new development can prosper. In turn this helps the achievement of the ambitious mode targets for all journeys within, to, and from, the Garden Community.

A shared use footway/cycleway between Rayne and Blake End alongside the B1256 could improve southern connectivity with minor upgrades to Pods Lane to improve leisure route linkages. Improvements to the crossing on Dunmow Road will ensure Pods Lane is safely connected across the B1256 and toward Flitch Way. Given the current and possible future status of Flitch Way and the sensitivity that surrounds this route, Flitch Way east of Pods Lane and Rayne will retain its rural character and setting. A 2km all weather surface section from River Brain to Pods Lane in Rayne with sensitive lighting has the potential to improve connectivity to Braintree town centre.

The Flitch Way also runs west through Great Dunmow to Hatfield Forest providing a safe, off road, cycling and walking route for most of its length. A gap in the route exists through Great Dunmow for cyclists and walkers, which could be connected to develop a quieter, more attractive route for walking and cycling, linking the two parts of the Flitch Way.

The conversion of Queenborough Lane and Shalford Road to an in-traffic quiet cycle route toward Skyline 120 would further improve connections to the east of the new settlement. Connections to the existing and protected leisure based bridleways, trails and Public Rights of Way on Flitch Way and Pods Lane, with upgrades to the existing pedestrian bridge over the A120 and B1256, would ensure a direct connection and interface with the southern edge of the site.

Travel Plans will need to be developed from the outset with high levels of funding for intervention measures to make the most of the infrastructure provided for active and sustainable modes of transport. Travel Plans should be prepared for residential, school, and business uses to assist the necessary 'step change' in sustainable transport modes. A site-specific Travel Plan Co-ordinator should be retained for the duration of the site build-out, and beyond.

ROAD NETWORK

The current and potential future strategic road network capacity should be preserved through an emphasis on investment in sustainable transport modes and the local road infrastructure should be viewed as a means of access to the site, rather than the sole transport option available.

The road network within the Garden Community will be framed around a hierarchy of different types of streets connecting users from neighbourhoods to the local highway system and beyond. A network of primary streets will have to link the site with the external local trunk road system providing a connection to local centres, whilst also providing connections to an eventual network of secondary streets within the site. The secondary and tertiary levels of the road network will have to be planned to preserve the current nature of existing lanes, for example Blake End Road leading to The Street, as much as possible, especially where there are existing dwellings present.

The site, by its nature, lends itself to only a small number of access possibilities, all of which connect with the B1256 and A120 to the south. It is essential the Garden Community's connection with the A120 is carefully considered given its strategic nature; its anticipated improvements to its eastern section between Galley's Corner and Colchester; and the capacity implications brought about by additional largescale growth along the route. Clearly a functioning road access will always be required to access the site but this access should not at the detriment of encouraging residents and employees from using others

forms of transport. Therefore the access arrangements between the site, the B1256 and the A120 will have to be planned in such a way that when new infrastructure is provided it considers ease of travel in relation to other transport modes with provision built into the design for bus priority lanes.

It will be essential that further highway modelling and testing of the solutions presented in the Movement and Access Study⁴ are explored in the future.

CAR PARKING

Car parking policy must be long-sighted in its intent to reduce car reliance. Policy should primarily focus on on-site car parking and street design along with its capacity to serve development that is consistent with a modal choice away from the private car especially for local journeys whilst recognising the importance of connectivity to the wider strategic road network, but not at a cost to its function. Consideration could be given in the emerging transport strategy to reducing car parking provision over time, as modal shift occurs.

In this context, a clear grading of parking ratios based on public transport accessibility and housing/development density could be used. Along with this, car clubs and changes in social habits toward peer to peer car sharing could be promoted and enabled within the development as a means of reducing private car ownership but still providing a convenient option for longer distance car travel. This could seek to build on the concept of the sharing economy, and the environmental and community benefits that potentially result.

The Garden Community presents an opportunity to fully embrace emerging transport innovations such as autonomous (driverless) vehicles and encourage electric vehicle use. This could be achieved by designing streets in such a way as to create a safer environment for autonomous vehicles and providing space for their storage when not in use. Additionally residential areas could be required to provide adequate vehicle charging facilities, designed into neighbourhoods, and requiring their utilising of renewal energy sources wherever possible.

CYCLE PARKING

Cycle parking in a similar vein to car parking should be ambitious in its intent and should be provided in large numbers. Future standards should relate to density and typology of development to ensure uptake in cycling is maximised. Consideration could be given to innovative cycle storage solutions at home and at employment premises.

Cycling facilities such as local hire schemes and secure cycle parking could be located at major employment and public transport destinations to further promote transport choice. Innovative cycle parking solutions could also be located within residential areas both in private areas and in public spaces to ensure parking is provided at the origin and destination of a journey and enshrine cycling as the transport choice for journeys under 2.5km in distance.

⁴ Jacobs, *NEGC Movement and Access Study* (2017).



HAVE YOUR SAY

The Transport Strategy and the infrastructure interventions it sets out will have a fundamental effect on the way the Garden Community's overall sustainability as well as how it functions as a place. The provision and availability of different transport choices will strongly influence residents' behaviour, so ensuring sustainable and active transport modes are given priority will have to be an underlying principle of the Strategy. Your views are sought on the emerging approach to help shape the future Transport Strategy.

Q4. Do you support the emerging approach to integrated and sustainable transport?

In preparing your response, you may like to consider:

- How to reduce the need to travel
- How to encourage more people to walk, cycle and use public transport
- The importance of having public transport available early on the development
- The best ways to accommodate cars so that they don't dominate streets and townscapes
- The extent to which innovative technologies such as autonomous and electric vehicles are taken into account
- How car parking and cycle parking should be planned for

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

CHARTER PRINCIPLE 3

The Garden Communities will seek to provide access to one job per household within the new community or within a short distance by public transport. The employment function will be a key component of creating character and identity and sustainable communities.

The Garden Community's location is considered to have good potential access to areas with local employment opportunities, for example Braintree, Braintree Freeport, Witham, Chelmsford and London Stansted Airport. These locations are within easy commuting distance of the new Garden Community, but the challenge will be to ensure that they can be reached using modes of travel other than the car, through the provision of public transport/Rapid Transit Systems (as suggested in the previous section).

Employment within the Garden Community is likely to be focused towards small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which generally reflects the make-up of companies in the local economy. There is also the opportunity to provide space for smaller units which would encourage start-up businesses which would be able to take advantage of the proximity to major economic hubs and the innovative and technological advanced environment generated by the new community.

The connectivity to the A120 corridor with its international links at London Stansted Airport to the west and the Haven Ports to the east could be used to attract a range of businesses into the Garden Community, but care must be taken to ensure that they offer sustainable, quality jobs for the local community.

Linking new manufacturing and office floorspace to popular existing business parks and growing local sectors will ensure that the population within the Garden Community, as well as those in the local area, can benefit from these improvements.

The economic growth prospects of the Garden Community confirms that the West of Braintree Garden Community would likely to be associated with significant jobs growth, where jobs linked to exogenous growth processes are presumed to be physically on site, those linked to homeworking will be physically associated with the homes of residents and therefore also on site, and those related to the consumption of local services may or may not be on site, but all will be in close traveling distance⁵. This would achieve the Garden Community Charter aspiration of 'one job per house'. This is ambitious, and

⁵ Cambridge Econometrics and SQW, *North Essex Garden Communities: Employment & Demographic Studies* (2017).

its achievability depends on many different factors, some of which are very difficult to influence, but the likelihood of achieving desired employment growth will increase if there is a proactive economic growth plan in place across the area and the Garden Community is delivered in a manner which itself is proactive, visionary, managed and appropriately resourced.



HAVE YOUR SAY

The Employment Strategy will underpin the economic growth prospects of the Garden Community and will also be an important factor in contributing towards sustainable development. Whilst planning for economic growth is very different from planning for new housing because so many more factors are outside the control of the Councils, the Garden Community can nevertheless provide the right conditions to attract employers and foster their growth. Your views on how such an environment can be achieved are welcome.

Q5. Do you support the emerging approach to employment opportunity?

In preparing your response, you may like to consider:

- How to attract new small and medium enterprises and employers looking to relocate
- How to make best use of nearby economic drivers – London Stansted Airport, the University of Essex, surrounding town centres and existing employment centres
- How to secure jobs for a wide range of different people
- How to accommodate emerging technologies and changing business needs
- Where employment sites should be located in the Garden Community

LIVING ENVIRONMENT

CHARTER PRINCIPLE 4

Community inclusiveness and walkable, sociable and vibrant neighbourhoods will be a defining characteristic of the Garden Communities. A diverse mix of homes responding to existing and future local needs will be provided alongside a range of community services, including health, education, leisure and recreation, culture and shopping.

HOUSING

A successful Garden Community must seek to ensure the type and tenure of housing product is expanded beyond what the market would deliver and the number of residential outlets increased or accelerated. Housing types and tenures could seek to consider custom-build, self-build, starter homes, co-housing, older persons housing (including retirement communities, Independent Living schemes, supported living and extra care), housing for vulnerable and disabled people as well as the private rented sector (PRS). Overall it will be important for the Garden Community to provide a range of different housing types and neighbourhoods, to achieve a balanced community and cater for residents of all ages.

CENTRES STRATEGY AND SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY

The Garden Community will be developed upon the basis of a centres strategy that is distributed across a clear network and focuses on co-located social infrastructure such as community hubs. The current rural context of the site and surrounding area means the population is relatively sparsely distributed. The urban area of Braintree has the highest concentration of population and activity and is approximately 5km to the east while the market town of Great Dunmow is approximately 6km to the west with a modest population and local key service provision. The village of Rayne sits in close proximity to the east but provides relatively limited economic activity. There is little close connection to any major urban settlements to the north or south. As a result the Garden Community will need to establish a major new centre at its heart to focus the predominant interaction and exchange of social and economic capital within the Garden Community.

This new centre will likely comprise of large groups of shops containing at least one supermarket and a range of non-retail services such as banks, cafés and restaurants. It could also contain community hubs providing co-located facilities such as educational (early years, primary and secondary levels) and leisure facilities which are flexible and multifunctional to take account of specialised and local requirements. In practice this could mean that sports facilities located at educational establishments are available for wider community use at appropriate times of the day and periods of the year.

Additional and supporting local centres will be located in proximity to new neighbourhoods and along the transport spine in order to establish a walkable environment with sustainable travel links. These local centres will contain smaller groups of convenience shops and services as well as localised community hubs sharing smaller scale uses such as early years care, primary schools and healthcare provision. Complementary uses should be sought wherever possible, for example locating early years care facilities in close proximity to employment areas.

HAVE YOUR SAY



Creating an attractive living environment through careful consideration of the location of different land uses and how they relate to one another within the Garden Community will have significant consequences on social interaction and integration, fostering a sense of place and community. Your views on this subject will help shape a future strategy that will make the Garden Community a celebrated place to live, work and spend time, as well as a place with a strong sense of community.

Q6. Do you support the emerging approach to the living environment?

In preparing your response, you may like to consider:

- How public places that are safe, sociable and busy can be designed and delivered
- What types of services the main centre of the Garden Community should include (social, cultural, education and leisure facilities)
- What types of services smaller local centres should include (social, cultural, education and leisure activities)
- How to making places and spaces that are attractive and flexible for all types of future users
- How to provide homes for all requirements – single people, couples, families, older people, and those looking to rent, to buy or to build themselves

SMART AND SUSTAINABLE LIVING

CHARTER PRINCIPLE 5

Planned for the 21st century, the Garden Communities will secure a smart and sustainable approach that fosters resilient environments and communities; able to respond positively to changing circumstances. Innovation and technology will be embraced to achieve resource efficiency, higher quality of life and healthier lifestyles; creating the conditions for sustainable living.

The Councils are preparing a strategy for Smart and Sustainable Living based on five key principles:

- Smart Places – places that incorporate the best of technology to support sustainable living
- Smart Mobility – technology that facilitate sustainable travel choices
- Smart Lives – technology that enable independent living throughout life
- Smart Infrastructure – technology that delivers sustainable energy and waste solutions
- Smart Public Services – technology that enables access to public services as effectively and efficiently as possible

The aim of the strategy is to support Sustainable Living, focused on the new Garden Communities but with the potential to transform existing communities too. It is anticipated that technology will continue to change and develop during and beyond the development of the Garden Community . Consideration will be given to ‘future proofing’ the planning of the new Community so that places can adapt as technology and lifestyles change.

Smart Places the public realm would be designed to create opportunities for more active lifestyles irrespective of age, ability or cultural background.

Smart Mobility means:

- the application of Active by Design principles⁶ using planning and design for new developments to encourage active and healthy lifestyles. The approach is linked to the Government’s Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy⁷ to design-in opportunities for a step-change in active travel including smart hubs that make interchange with public transport simple and secure.

⁶ Design Council, *Active by Design* (http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/Active_By_Design_Brochure_web_LATEST.pdf)

⁷ Department for Transport, *Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy* (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/603527/cycling-walking-investment-strategy.pdf)

- The public realm in smart places will be designed to create opportunities for more active lifestyles irrespective of age, ability or cultural background.
- Smart vehicles, including electric vehicles infrastructure and charging points linked to renewable energy.
- Smart car-sharing schemes linked to smart parking solutions.
- Autonomous service vehicles to enable consolidated deliveries, either to neighbourhood hubs or individual residences.

Smart Lives will support Independent Living by using technology and mobile apps to enable and support independence for longer, reducing the burden on social and health services. Smart Lives could also improve the effectiveness of care, connecting local government, the National Health Service and charitable organisations, allowing a pooling of resources and efficiencies.

Smart Infrastructure will include:

- cutting edge digital communications, designed for ultra-fast broadband and 5G from the outset and future-proofed for simple upgrades.
- Smart energy systems that use collective contracts to deliver sustainable energy at lower prices through a community owned network tailored to the community's needs.
- capacity and adaptability for technologies through the design of flexible cable ducts, service corridors, etc.
- making space for heat and power energy generation centres and hubs within the Garden Community.
- maximising efficiency at the household and business level, with on-site generation and use of battery storage, with technology to monitor individual energy.
- a mixed portfolio of energy technologies to avoid dependence on any one energy solution.
- smart waste systems which will aim to operate at zero carbon whilst at the same time maximising waste recycling with a waste Hub linked to energy generation.

Smart Public Services will provide public safety benefits from improving emergency incident response and management, to more efficient street lighting, energy and communications infrastructure management.

UTILITY PROVISION

The delivery of a new Garden Community to the West of Braintree will provide a number of challenges in terms of infrastructure provision however the very lack of existing connections and services is also an opportunity to think differently about how to serve the energy and water needs of the new community. The opportunity therefore exists to deliver intelligent utility network infrastructure in an integrated, cost effective and timely manner.

The delivery of the Garden Community will need to be carried out with close collaboration with utility providers to ensure a more integrated approach to provision that guarantees land parcels are unlocked and unconstrained by utilities infrastructure through intelligent timing and phasing. The opportunity for combined utility corridors, ensuring utilities are provided from the outset and making maintenance easier and more convenient for residents, along with

other sustainable onsite items such as innovative approaches to waste water treatment and onsite power generation, should all be considered. In addition, the potential for the utilisation of new technologies, including renewable technologies, needs further consideration.

The planning of the Garden Community also provides an opportunity to design in energy generation and waste management systems into individual properties, groups of properties or at a neighbourhood level. Such localised energy and recycling schemes can result in cheaper and more sustainable energy sources for the Community's residents.



HAVE YOUR SAY

The West of Braintree Garden Community provides an unprecedented opportunity to embrace the latest innovations and technologies available to make buildings, infrastructure and lifestyles more efficient, more enjoyable and more sustainable than what could be achieved through smaller, disjointed development proposals.

Q7. Do you support the emerging approach to smart and sustainable living?

In preparing your response, you may like to consider:

- What sorts of new technologies the Garden Community should embrace
- How such technologies could be planned and delivered
- How to make sure new technologies are available to everyone not necessarily just those who can afford it
- How to encourage wide scale capture and distribution of renewable energy
- How energy efficiency could be achieved in all aspects of the Garden Community

GOOD DESIGN

CHARTER PRINCIPLE 6

Through all stages of the planning, design and development of the Garden Communities the highest quality of design and management of the built and public realm will be promoted. Existing local assets will be capitalised to help create distinctive places.

The Garden Community must achieve an attractive, locally distinctive, high quality and sustainable design. Development should be well-laid out to help people find their way easily, and should have generous open spaces, public, private and communal areas to help create distinctiveness and interest. Masterplans and design guidance can be developed as instruments to secure good design throughout the development.

Greener and more efficient developments should be designed so they are outward facing onto the streets for good surveillance of public places, but should accommodate substantial areas of integrated green space within, to provide for good sized gardens, landscaping, recreation, wildlife and food growing and other private space.

How a new community interacts with its existing landscape is an important design consideration. Development must achieve a suitable transition from urban development to countryside. The design and layout should respond positively to the historic environment context which creates opportunities for developing distinctive and inviting places. It is considered desirable to retain a 'green gap' between the new Garden Community and the surrounding villages and towns, to avoid coalescence and maintain settlement identity. The design of the Garden Community's boundaries should reflect that ambition (see Section 5).

A development framework will be established informed by best practice in urban design principles, which could be supplemented with specific design codes and a design review process with an independent panel of experts helping to support high standards of design.

The Essex Design Guide (EDG) is currently being refreshed to provide urban design guidance to assist Councils in their determination of planning applications and planning for large scale developments, including new Garden Communities. Therefore there is an opportunity to link the future approach to achieving good design to the new EDG, which is expected to be completed by the end of 2017.



HAVE YOUR SAY

The approach taken on architectural and urban design will have long-lasting and far-reaching effects on the settlement's identity and for many people will be the most prominent factor in their perception of the Garden Community. To get this right your views are sought and your responses will directly influence the design approach adopted.

Q8. Do you support the emerging approach to good design?

In preparing your response, you may like to consider:

- How can high quality and sustainable design be achieved in the Garden Community
- How new development can be successfully integrated into the existing landscape
- How different areas of the Garden Community approach design – should different neighbourhoods with the Garden Community have distinct design codes?

THEME 2: COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CHARTER PRINCIPLE 7

The Garden Communities are a locally-led initiative, and their development will be shaped through engaging existing communities and emerging new communities; residents will be empowered to contribute to shaping the future of North Essex.

Continued, meaningful local engagement from inception, to planning, and then implementation is necessary. The Garden Community's development will be guided by a locally-led vision, and ongoing and meaningful public and stakeholder participation. Community engagement will form a key part of developing a masterplan for the settlement, utilising the extensive knowledge and views of the existing and new communities to help shape and refine strategies, policies and proposals. Exhibitions and other forms of community engagement events will be held locally as the Development Plan for the Garden Community is progressed.

Measures to support the development of the new community and its provision of vital social infrastructure will be needed, especially in the Garden Community's early days. This support can take a variety of forms. For example community development support workers can be employed to facilitate the establishment of local governance, clubs and social groups and be in place for a minimum period (for example, ten years) from the initial occupation of the first homes or until such time as their involvement is no longer required.

Community involvement will not only be essential to ensure social sustainability but also as a means for the Councils to gather feedback on the delivery of the Garden Community. Once neighbourhoods are established, new residents will start to feel a sense of identity and this will translate into views and opinions on how the latter phases of the Garden Community are designed and delivered. Capturing this local sensitivity will be critical to ensuring community engagement is an ongoing process and able to evolve as the community matures.



HAVE YOUR SAY

The Councils are committed to ensuring the Garden Community is planned from the bottom up, giving local people the opportunity to take part in the planning and delivery decisions that will need to be taken as development progresses. How the Councils go about community engagement will be a test of this commitment and your views on how meaningful and effective consultation can be achieved are therefore encouraged.

Q9. Do you support the emerging approach to community engagement?

In preparing your response, you may like to consider:

- How existing residents and communities should be engaged in the masterplanning of the Garden Community
- How new residents and communities should be engaged in the phasing and latter stages of delivery
- What the best way is to enable new residents and businesses to create a successful Garden Community (community facilities, community support workers, programmes of community activities)

ACTIVE LOCAL STEWARDSHIP

CHARTER PRINCIPLE 8

The Garden Communities will be developed and managed in perpetuity with the direct involvement of their residents and businesses; residents will be directly engaged in the long-term management and stewardship, fostering a shared sense of ownership and identity.

One of the defining principles of Garden Communities is that assets that are important to the local community should be owned and managed by them directly, helping to build a sense of community and collective responsibility.

Establishment at an early stage in the development of the Garden Community of local governance structures and stewardship arrangements for community assets including green space, public realm areas, community and other relevant facilities will encourage civic involvement and bind new communities together. Such arrangements can be funded by the development and include community representation to ensure residents have a stake in the long term development, stewardship and management of their community.

A wide range of social infrastructure can be co-located alongside the key service centres. This could include the community, health, education, cultural, and recreational facilities that provide for the needs of a cohesive community. These facilities will 'anchor' the Garden Community, providing a range of facilities in close proximity to people's homes. Typically these will be positioned on public transport and served by attractive and safe cycling and walking routes to facilitate the creation of walkable and cycleable neighbourhoods as well as allowing easy access for residents across the Garden Community. It will be critical that the provision of social infrastructure is delivered at the earliest possible stages of development in order to advance the establishment of a community and ensure that early residents are adequately served by new facilities, avoiding placing undue pressure on existing provision.

A Local Stewardship Body (LSB) could be formed to encourage community participation and oversee the long term governance of the Garden Community. Such an LSB could be encouraged to collaborate actively with associated bodies and charities where they share similar objectives and to share best practice. For example participation bodies such as sports association, and cultural and religious organisations. The LSB could be funded by endowment from the development or through its potential ability to raise a local precept or levy on residents.



HAVE YOUR SAY

Garden Communities are most commonly associated with delivering high levels of 'hard' infrastructure such as new means of transportation, health and educational facilities, and generous amounts of open space but ensuring the 'soft' infrastructure of active local stewardship is given adequate support and resources is just as essential. Your view on how arrangements can be made from the outset to help the Garden Community's social infrastructure flourish are welcomed.

Q10. Do you support the emerging approach to active local stewardship?

In preparing your response, you may like to consider:

- The importance of local communities running, managing and/or owning community assets (such as parks, sports pitches, allotments, community buildings and community transport)
- The types of community assets to be covered by local stewardship arrangements
- How these community assets could be run, managed and/or owned by the local community
- How the running of local governance structures could be funded (for example through endowment or through the ability of an LSB to charge a local precept or levy)

THEME 3: DELIVERY

STRONG CORPORATE AND POLITICAL PUBLIC LEADERSHIP

CHARTER PRINCIPLE 9

The Councils will collaborate to provide clear vision for the Garden Communities and commitment to their long-term success. Central to this will be a commitment to high quality place-making, timely infrastructure provision, and achieving a steady pace of housing and employment delivery.

A successful Garden Community relies on strong corporate and political leadership and a well-defined, shared Vision. The West of Braintree Garden Community is being led by the joint-working of Braintree District Council (working as part of the North Essex Garden Communities) and Uttlesford District Council. Strong, cross-party, political support will be required to drive the project forward over several Local Plan periods and political cycles.

The delivery of the Garden Community will require a positive and active approach by both the public and private sectors. The Councils will explore all opportunities to take a direct stake in the delivery process relating to good place-making, infrastructure delivery, funding and governance.

The Councils will need to take a long term strategic view of development to ensure that the Vision and ambitions for the Garden Community are delivered. This will require forward thinking and planning that is not limited to the current plan-making time horizon of 15 years, but looks well beyond that.

The Garden Community will place the Councils' commitment to high quality place-making and infrastructure delivery at the heart of the development, and a central tenet of all governance and delivery mechanisms created to bring forward the new Garden Community.

HAVE YOUR SAY

Strong corporate and political leadership is a key principle of the Garden Community, particularly given the significant challenges of delivering a new settlement at such a scale, which crosses local authority boundaries will cover many future Local Plan periods.



Q11. Do you support the emerging approach to corporate and political leadership?

In preparing your response, you may like to consider:

- How the Garden Community can implement an effective and enduring regime of control to main high standards of design and quality and maintain a commitment to the Garden Communities Charter
- How the funding should be sought for the investment in the Garden Community
- The type of governance arrangements required to ensure long term commitment to deliver the new settlement

INNOVATIVE DELIVERY STRUCTURE

CHARTER PRINCIPLE 10

The Garden Communities will be delivered through a genuine and pro-active partnership approach between the public and private sectors, where risk and reward is shared and community empowerment enabled.

The delivery of new Garden Communities on this scale requires delivery arrangements that are more complex and wide-reaching than those that would apply to conventional development. Most notable is a desire of the public sector, represented by the two local Councils, to play a full and active role in the development of the Garden Community, and to participate in both the risks and the rewards of development, securing benefits for the wider communities.

This involvement could go beyond the role of the Councils as local planning authorities in making local planning policy and determining planning applications. Managing development through the planning process relying on planning policy and conditions on planning permissions is potentially too coarse and remote for such complex and large-scale proposals.

Ideally the Councils would like to see the formation of a Local Delivery Vehicle (LDV) as a minimum with one or more local Development Corporations formed as a preference. These Development Corporations will have the powers to acquire and to hold land, to prepare master plans and other guidance, and to determine planning applications in the Garden Community area, thereby ensuring high standards and capturing land values to pay for infrastructure and community assets. Such a Development Corporation would be accountable to both local Councils.

By taking a more involved role in the Garden Community the Councils will have a stronger say in the delivery of the settlement, ensuring that infrastructure is delivered at the right time to support the new Garden Communities and to minimise the impacts and increase the benefits to existing communities.

HAVE YOUR SAY



The Councils have a strong and equal commitment to ensuring the delivery of the Garden Community raises the expectations and reputation of new largescale development. This can only be achieved with an innovative delivery structure which embeds the Councils aspirations in the heart of its governance. Your thoughts on the form this innovative delivery structure should take are sought.

Q12. Do you support the emerging approach to innovative delivery structure?

In preparing your response, you may like to consider:

- The level of involvement of the Councils in the delivery of the Garden Community
- How local interests can be placed above private gain through the sharing of risks and rewards of new development
- How strong local and political leadership can be translated into the establishment of the innovative delivery structure
- The need for public funds to secure infrastructure in advance of development

SECTION 5: SPATIAL BOUNDARIES

Both the Braintree and Uttlesford emerging Local Plans show the West of Braintree Garden Community as a broad location. This means that further detailed work is required to determine the full extent of land required.

ESTABLISHING A BOUNDARY FOR DEVELOPMENT

Part of the role of the West of Braintree Plan is to determine the full extent of land required for the Garden Community. In order to determine the full extent of the land required it is necessary to consider the nature of the existing area and the level of land uses and infrastructure required to serve the Garden Community.

The area of land that could accommodate a new Garden Community in the area has been refined from options presented in the Options and Evaluation⁸ study which was influenced by stakeholder consultation with local community representatives in November 2016 and March 2017, as well as an understanding of the issues and the inter-relationship between them which include:

- identification of clear and defensible boundaries (water courses, roads, woodland belts);
- appreciation of distance and separation of communities – (physical, visual, perceived);
- relationship to existing settlements;
- nature of land that will perform the role of a ‘green buffer’ which will define an envelope within which a new community can be accommodated that remains distinct from other existing settlements;
- planning policy protection (how might this land be protected ‘in perpetuity’ from built development whilst allowing complementary activities that support both the new community and existing communities?).

The effects of constraints on potential land use are identified through consideration of the evidence base and by engagement with landowners, statutory agencies, utility service providers and others. Based on this process, absolute constraints on development, such as easements and buffers to existing settlements can be defined and removed from the boundary of the Garden Community altogether or from the developable area if they remain within the boundary. Remaining constraints, such as areas of high landscape sensitivity will influence decisions on proposed land uses and potential residential densities.

Once the developable area is determined the quantity of land required for each land use or infrastructure type needs to be calculated based on the evidence base as well as the principles contained in the Garden Communities Charter. The proposed disposition of the various land uses can then take

⁸ Aecom, *Options and Evaluation*, (2016)

advantage of the constraints and opportunities offered by the characteristics of the different areas across the site and inform the overall capacity of the area.

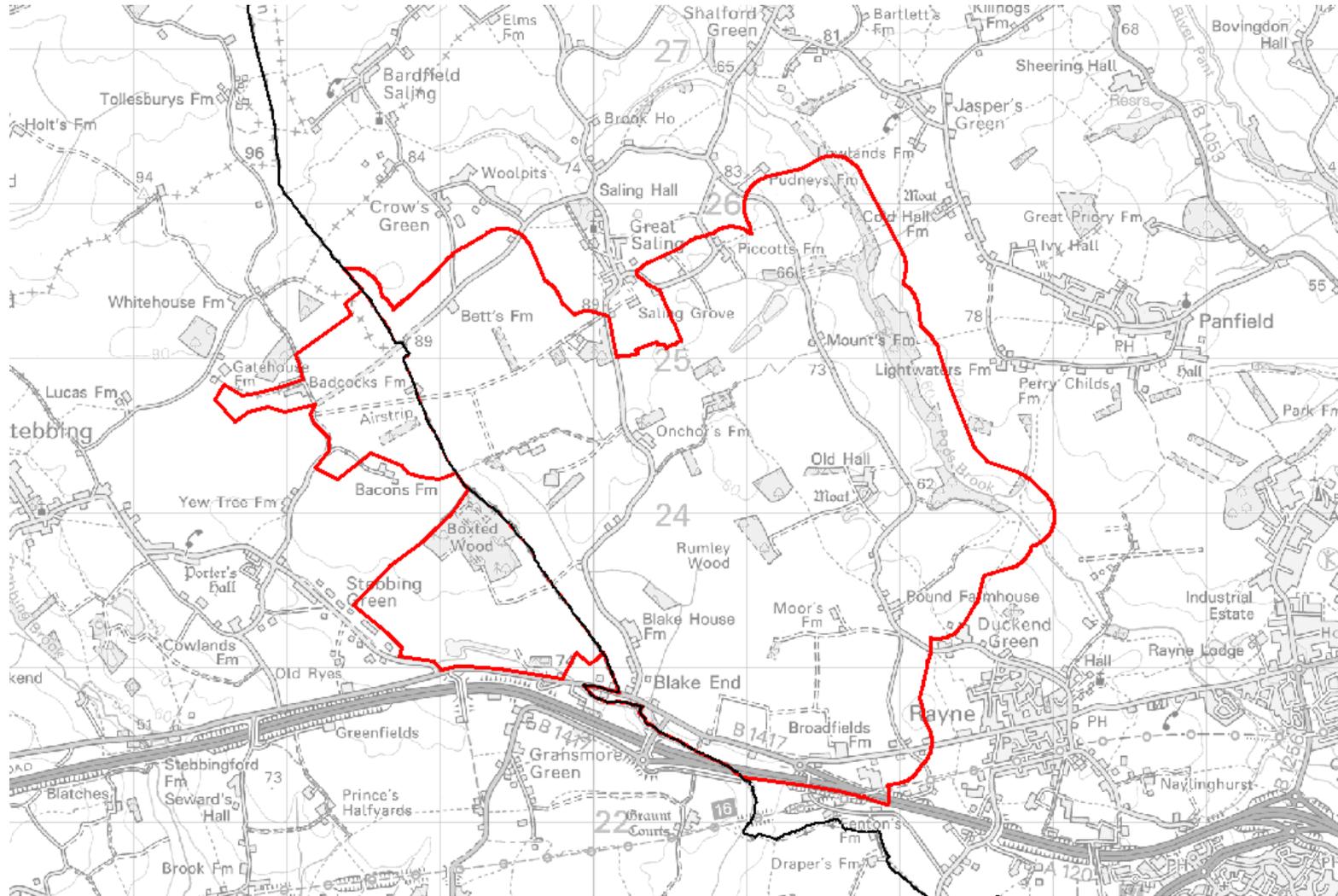
It is important to remember that where green buffers are needed to prevent the coalescence of the Garden Community with existing settlements and preserve the character and identity of surrounding villages from new development, the land required to accommodate these buffers will need to be contained within the boundary of the Garden Community. By including green buffers in the Garden Community boundary the land can be protected in perpetuity from built development whereas such a safeguard could not be imposed on land outside of its boundary. This is the reason why the Garden Community boundary will need to be in close proximity to Great Saling, Rayne and Stebbing Green.

SPATIAL OPTIONS

As mentioned the Braintree and Uttlesford emerging Local Plans contain the principle of development and a broad location for the Garden Community. Whilst neither Local Plan is yet to be adopted in its current form, and is therefore subject to change following independent examination in public, the Local Plans are at different stages of progression. Braintree District Council has recently concluded its Regulation 19 statutory consultation and is due to submit its Local Plan to Government in Autumn 2017. Uttlesford District Council has recently concluded its Regulation 18 statutory consultation and is due to carry out its Regulation 19 statutory consultation in early 2018 with submission to the Government later in 2018.

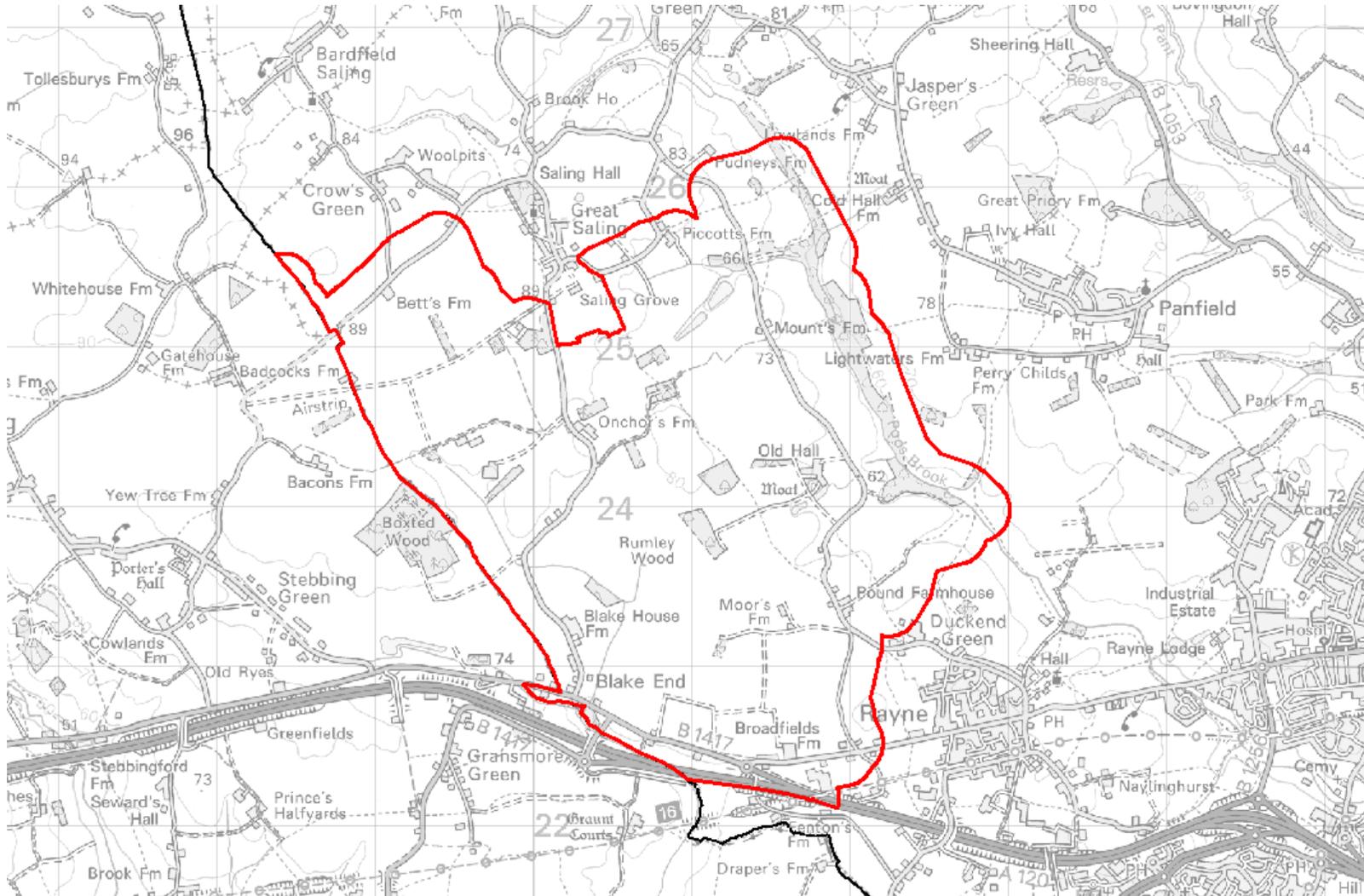
In order to not pre-empt the Local Plan process, outlined above, the Councils are exploring different spatial options for the West of Braintree Garden Community. The two spatial options available reflect the possibility that the Local Plans may be subject to change as the statutory planning process continues up to formal adoption by the Councils. Option 1 comprises the combined areas of search contained in the two emerging Local Plans whilst Option 2 is wholly contained with Braintree District.

OPTION 1 – COMBINED BRAINTREE AND UTTLESFORD LOCAL PLANS AREA



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OPTION 2 – BRAINTREE LOCAL PLAN ONLY AREA



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HAVE YOUR SAY

The spatial boundaries of the Garden Community will set the extent and scale of the development and consequently the amount of land available for different land uses, and local and strategic infrastructure. For the reasons mentioned above, the Councils are exploring two spatial options to take account of the ongoing statutory Local Plan process. However, irrespective of which option is taken forward, the exact development boundary is yet to be determined and your views are therefore sought to help refine what the exact boundary should be. **It is important to recognise that the development boundary does not mean that built development will take place up to the edge of the boundary; the development boundary will have to include green buffers if they are to adequately safeguarded from future development.**

13. Do you have any comments on the potential boundary of the Garden Community?

In preparing your response, you may like to consider:

- Within each option are there specific areas that should be excluded, and why?
- Are there any specific areas that should be included, and why?
- Should there be buffers to separate the existing settlements nearby from the Garden Community? If so, where should these be? Apart from existing rural and agricultural uses should any other types of development or land uses associated with the Garden Community be acceptable in these buffers, e.g. open space, or sustainable urban drainage, or playing fields?
- There is a triangular area of land in Uttlesford District south of Andrewsfield, north of Boxted Wood and east of Stebbing Green that is currently excluded from the broad location – do you think this area should be included for further consideration, and why?

Q14. Are there any other considerations relevant to the West of Braintree Garden Community that have not been identified or discussed in this document?

SECTION 6: NEXT STEPS

This document has provided information on the proposed Vision, Principles, Issues and two potential options for the West of Braintree Garden Community, given the position of respective emerging Local Plans. We welcome your views on all those elements, and anything you feel should be added or emphasised.

Your responses will be reviewed and analysed and will help decide which spatial options are progressed and how the emerging strategies, policies and proposals are shaped which will inform the West of Braintree Garden Community Plan. Where your comments are considered to merit further consideration of issues or indeed require additional evidence to be gathered, we will progress this as part of the continued evolution of the Plan.

Many thanks for your contribution, this is an exciting long term project and we are keen that you continue to engage with us as we prepare a shared Plan for the Garden Community.

GLOSSARY

Affordable housing – a broad term used to describe a variety of housing tenures including social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Affordable housing should meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.

Allocation - the specific identification of an area of land for a particular use or designation in a planning document.

Ancient Woodland - an area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD.

Archaeological interest - there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places and of the people and cultures that made them.

Avoidance - action taken to avoid a possible impact by either re-locating the works to an area that will not have an impact or timing them to avoid the impact i.e. outside of the bird breeding season, amphibian mating season, etc.

Autonomous (driverless) vehicles - robotic vehicles that are designed to travel between destinations without a human operator.

Biodiversity - includes all living organisms (plants and animals) and collections of species that form different natural habitats.

Bridleway - a path, trail or a thoroughfare that is used by people riding on horses.

Broadband (Ultrafast) - Ultrafast is defined, depending on the supplier, as delivering between 300Mbps and 1,000Mbps. Achieving these speeds would require FTTP.

Car Clubs/Car Sharing - sharing cars for regular travelling, especially for commuting and routine travel such as shopping.

Climate change - the large-scale, long-term shift in Earth's weather patterns and/or temperatures.

Community assets - community assets are land and/or buildings owned or managed by community organisations. These assets cover a wide spectrum and include community centres, sports facilities, affordable housing, libraries, cafes, and even transport services.

Community facilities – the wide range of facilities and services required by any community. It includes education, health and community care, shops, meeting halls, libraries, places of worship, burial grounds and emergency services.

Concept Feasibility Study - conducted by Aecom in 2015 to investigate a range of scenarios covering the scope and scale of development that may be feasible, together with an evaluation of how development at scale could meet strategic objectives, deliverability and anticipated infrastructure requirements.

Conservation (for heritage policy) - the process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

Conservation Area - an area designated for special protection under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, for which it is considered desirable to preserve and/or enhance an historic interest and/or a special architectural character. Such areas have restrictions over works which can be done to buildings or trees.

Countryside – land outside defined development boundaries.

Custom build/Self-Build - Custom build homes are where an individual or a group works with a developer to help deliver their own homes. Self-build is where an individual directly organises the design and construction of their own home

Cycleway - either a mandatory or an advisory route along which bicycles may travel, either segregated from pedestrians or as shared users.

Development - 'the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operation in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land.' (Section 55, Town & Country Planning Act 1990).

Development Plan Document (DPD) - the planning policy documents that make up the Local Plan and help to guide development within a local planning authority. Importantly DPDs are subject to formal public consultation and independent examination by a Government-appointed Planning Inspector.

District Centre - A centre which serves a wider area than a local centre.

District Heat Networks - a system for distributing heat generated in a centralised location for residential and commercial heating requirements such as space heating and water heating

Drinking Water Safeguarding Zone – designated areas in which the use of certain substances must be carefully managed to prevent the pollution of raw water sources that are used to provide drinking water.

Environment Agency – the public body responsible for the protection and enhancement of the environment in England.

Essex County Council (ECC) – the public body which governs the county of Essex. ECC is responsible, amongst other services, for governing highways, education, adult social care and minerals and waste planning in Essex.

Educational infrastructure – early years education and childcare, primary and secondary schools and post-sixteen and adult life-long learning facilities.

Flood protection - the measures taken to reduce or prevent the detrimental effects of flooding,

Flora and fauna - flora is plant life and fauna refers to animals.

Formal recreation - recreational activities which use or require dedicated or purpose-built facilities, either in public or private ownership, for example, sports pitches, swimming pools, playing fields, tennis courts, bowling greens.

FTTP - Fibre to the Premises (broadband).

Garden City Principles (TCPA) – a set of principles developed to shape the sustainable development of new communities, using the opportunity and economies of scale to innovate and create high-quality places that put people at the heart of developing new settlements.

Garden Community – a community that is holistically and comprehensively developed with a distinct identity that responds directly to its context, and is of a sufficient scale to incorporate a range of homes, employment, green space and other uses to enable residents to meet the majority of their day-to-day needs, reducing the need for commuting elsewhere. Importantly, Garden Communities capture the uplift in land value that results from new development for the benefit of the community.

Garden Communities Charter – The key themes and placemaking principles that will inform the approach to the development of Garden Communities.

Grade II* and Grade II Listed Buildings – Particularly important buildings of more than special interest (Grade II*) and buildings that are of special interest (Grade II) warranting every effort to preserve them.

Green-Blue infrastructure - all natural and semi- natural landscape elements that form the green-blue network in an urbanised environment, including hedgerows, copses, bushes, orchards, woodlands, natural grasslands, pools, ponds and water courses.

Green infrastructure – green spaces which may include parks and gardens, village greens, woodlands, cycling routes, allotments, churchyards and other environmental features.

Green network - the linking together of natural, semi- natural and man-made open spaces to create an interconnected network that provides opportunities for physical activity, increases accessibility within settlements and to the surrounding countryside, whilst enhancing biodiversity and the quality of the external environment.

Greenspaces - an area of grass, trees, or other vegetation set apart for recreational or aesthetic purposes in an otherwise urban environment.

Heritage asset - includes Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, and Conservation Areas.

Heritage Impact Assessment - the process of establishing the impact of a specific proposal on the significance of a place and identifying ways of mitigating any adverse impacts.

Historic Parks and Gardens - sites included in the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest compiled and maintained by English Heritage, that make a significant contribution to the diversity of the local and/or national landscape and/or which are of particular historical importance.

Housing density - the number of dwellings proposed to be accommodated on a set unit of land. Urban areas tend to have higher densities than rural areas.

Important Hedgerow - a hedgerow meeting the criteria set out in the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.

Independent Living Schemes - a living arrangement that maximizes the independence of vulnerable people.

Informal recreation - recreational activities which do not make use of or require dedicated or purpose-built facilities, either in public or private ownership. Informal recreation land could include trails and walks as well as village greens.

Infrastructure - infrastructure means any structure, building, system facility and/or provision required by an area for its social and/or economic function and/or well-being. Generally the term refers to roads, railways, schools, healthcare facilities, community facilities, places of worship as well as retail and service outlets.

Landscape/Green buffers - the on-site use of landscaping elements, screening devices, open space, drainageways and landforms for reduction of the potentially adverse impacts of adjoining, dissimilar land uses. Green buffers generally refer to the concept of using undeveloped land as a means of separating settlements to avoid physical or visual coalescence.

Local Centre - Local Centres typically contain a small supermarket, shops, takeaways, sub-post office, etc. They are more numerous but smaller in scale than District Centres.

Local Delivery Vehicle (LDV) – the body responsible for delivering the new Garden Community. It will be accountable to the Councils, with both public and private sector representation. The LDVs will be responsible for delivering development and infrastructure required for the new communities in accordance with an approved masterplan and also for meaningful participation of the existing and emerging communities in the process.

Local Development Schemes (LDS) - a document produced by local planning authorities which identify the local development documents will be produced, in what order and when.

Local Plan – the development plan for a district/borough administrative area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community.

Minerals Safeguarding Area - an area designated by minerals planning authorities (Essex County Council) which covers known deposits of minerals which are desired to be kept safeguarded from unnecessary sterilisation by non-mineral development.

Mitigation - action taken to reduce the severity of adverse impacts. Mitigation can include minimising impacts by limiting the degree of magnitude of an action, or rectifying impacts by restoring, rehabilitating, or repairing the affected environment or reducing or eliminating impacts overtime.

Mixed use sites - land developed to consist of a combination and integration of uses including residential, employment and community uses.

National Cycle Network (NCN) – a series of traffic-free paths and quiet, on-road cycling and walking routes, that connect to every major town and city.

New Town Development Corporations (NTDCs) - originally established under the New Towns Act 1946, now the New Towns Act 1981, are accountable to the relevant Secretary of State and are established to oversee the development new settlements.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – National Government policy on planning. Local Plans are expected to conform to the policies contained in the NPPF.

North Essex Garden Communities (NEGC) – a strategic partnership between Braintree District Council, Colchester Borough Council, Tendring Borough Council and Essex County Council to manage and co-ordinate the Councils’ resources towards the delivery of Garden Communities.

Permeable surface - permeable surfaces consist of a variety of types of pavement, pavers and other devices that provide stormwater infiltration while serving as a structural surface.

Placemaking - placemaking is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces. Placemaking capitalises on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well-being.

Public Rights of Way - a category of right of way created under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. A restricted byway allows a right of way on foot, on horseback, or leading a horse, cycling and for any vehicles other than mechanically propelled vehicles.

Rapid Transit System – a public transport system which includes overground trains (including light rail), trams, and guided buses.

Settlement (or Development) Boundary - the designated boundary surrounding a built-up area within which there is a presumption in favour of development subject to the detailed policies in the relevant development plan.

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) - made up of enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding £40 million and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding £34 million.

Smart Living - Incorporating the best of technology to support sustainable and fulfilling lifestyles.

Sociocultural - combining social and cultural factors.

Starter Homes – a Government initiative to help meet the housing needs of young first-time buyers, many of whom increasingly cannot afford to buy their own home, by allowing homes to be offered at below their open market value.

Stewardship – the direct involvement of residents and businesses in the long-term management of their communities/areas.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - planning documents supplementary to the development plan and are used to provide additional detail as deemed necessary, usually in the form of site or topic specific guidance.

Surface runoff – water, from rain, snowmelt, or other sources, that flows over the land surface, and is a major component of the water cycle.

Sustainability Appraisal – an assessment required by European and national law into how a plan or project will impact on the environment in the long term and to what extent it contributes towards sustainable development.

Sustainable transport – a focus on walking, cycling and public transit systems.

Sustainable development - development that is in accord with economic, social and environmental objectives. Development that meets today's needs without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) - a sustainable drainage system is designed to reduce the potential impact of new and existing developments with respect to surface water drainage discharges.

Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) – an independent charity that works to improve planning practice in the UK by making planning more responsive to people's needs and to promote sustainable development.

Town Centre - an area of a settlement which contains uses such as clusters of retail, service and leisure outlets.

Transport hub – a place where passengers exchange between vehicles or between transport modes, such as train stations, bus stops, airports and ferry slips.

Water course - a brook, stream, or artificially constructed water channel.

Water Framework Directive - the Water Framework Directive is a European Union directive which commits member states to achieve good qualitative and quantitative status of all water bodies.

APPENDIX 1 – THE NORTH ESSEX GARDEN COMMUNITIES CHARTER

THEME 1: PLACE AND INTEGRATION

Created from a comprehensive and integrated approach to placemaking the Garden Communities will be amazing places to live, work and spend leisure and recreation time.

PRINCIPLE 1: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The Garden Communities will provide a generous amount of green space. They will be set within a multi-functional and integrated natural environment; providing space for nature, making the communities more resilient to climate change; promoting healthy lifestyles, and creating beautiful places to live and work.

1. A RANGE OF GREEN AND OPEN SPACES

A wide range of green and open spaces will be provided including: a country park; community woodlands, neighbourhood and pocket parks, urban plazas, play areas, school playing fields, sports pitches, local nature reserves, swales, ditches and ponds, street trees and verges, pedestrian and cycling routes, allotments and access to open countryside.

2. MULTIFUNCTIONAL GREEN SPACE

Green infrastructure will be multifunctional providing amenity space for formal and passive recreation, a haven for wildlife and biodiversity, the management of surface water drainage, contribute to climate change resilience, and create an attractive place to live, work and invest in.

3. WATER SENSITIVE URBAN DESIGN

An attenuation based sustainable urban drainage system will be developed and integrated with the green infrastructure network. Surface water storage, bio-filtration cleaning and reuse within the landscape will be key components.

4. PRODUCTIVE LANDSCAPES

Productive landscape will be incorporated where appropriate through the establishment of orchards, allotments and greenhouses, for commercial and neighbourhood growing. These will be distributed through the Garden Communities so they are easily accessible by residents.

5. ACCESS TO OPEN SPACE

Residents will always be within convenient and safe access of open space; houses will be designed with good sized gardens and neighbourhoods planned with integrated public amenity spaces for all, benefiting from activation and passive surveillance.

6. CONNECTED GREEN SPACE

Green infrastructure will be linked visually and physically. Connectivity will enhance public engagement with the natural environment, improve opportunities for biodiversity migration and assist in facilitating and encouraging sustainable forms of travel. Streets will be tree lined helping to create safe and attractive places to walk and cycle.

7. UTILISING EXISTING LOCAL ASSETS

Existing woodland copse, hedgerows and small water courses are local assets of the North Essex landscape. These will be used as structuring elements of a comprehensive green infrastructure network, and a defining placemaking characteristic of the Garden Communities.

PRINCIPLE 2: INTEGRATED AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

The Garden Communities will be planned around a step change in integrated and sustainable transport system for the north Essex area, which will put walking, cycling and public transit systems at the heart of the development, and be delivered in a timely way to support the communities as they grow.

1. AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO LANDUSE AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT PLANNING

Land use type, distribution, mix and density will be planned to maximise the opportunity for the provision and use of sustainable transport internally within the Garden Communities and connecting externally to key centres beyond. Neighbourhoods will be planned to ensure that all residents and employees are within a 10min (800m) walk of public transport. Areas of highest density and mixed use opportunity will be focused in locations of greatest internal and external sustainable transport interchange.

2. SEEKING MODERN FORMS OF RAPID PUBLIC TRANSIT

To maximise the desirability and use of public transport the Garden Communities will be served and connected by new modern forms of rapid public transit networks. These will operate within the North Essex sub-region providing a high frequency, reliable and efficient service, connecting the Garden Communities with existing settlements and key destinations such as the towns of Colchester and Braintree, the University of Essex and key transport interchanges.

3. TIMELY DELIVERY OF SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

To achieve the step change in sustainable transport use sought, key infrastructure will be funded and provided early within the development of the Garden Communities. The Councils and Essex County Council will therefore work with key agencies such as the Department for Transport (Daft) and Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to help meet this ambition.

4. SPACE FOR CYCLING AND WALKING

Consistent with promoting healthy living, the Garden Communities will be planned to enable safe, attractive and convenient routes for walking and cycling, with participation in active mode choice maximised. Neighbourhoods will be designed with high levels of permeability and a mix and integration of land uses, including connectivity with the green infrastructure network.

5. MAKING PROVISION FOR THE CAR

The car will be planned for in the context of making walking, cycling and public transport the most attractive forms of local transport. Car clubs and car sharing will be promoted, together with provision for electric car use and charging. A specific car parking strategy will be developed that promotes the use of sustainable transport and makes efficient use of land, and provides for attractive and safe streetscapes and residential neighbourhoods.

PRINCIPLE 3: EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Garden Communities will seek to provide access to one job per household within the new community or within a short distance by public transport. The employment function will be a key component of creating character and identity and sustainable communities.

1. MAXIMISING THE SUB-REGIONAL OPPORTUNITY

As a location the North Essex Sub-Region and A120 Haven Gateway, including the A12, provide excellent international and regional connectivity; access to existing centres, including Braintree and Colchester; the internationally renowned University of Essex; and access to attractive countryside and coastline. These assets will be used to attract high value, high-skilled and logistics based employment to the Garden Communities, together with promoting working from home.

2. ATTRACTING INVESTMENT AND ACTIVE JOB CREATION

Proactive marketing and strong local leadership led by the new delivery bodies set up by the Councils will work to attract economic activity and job opportunities into the garden communities, securing links to appropriate skills and training, and enhancing and diversifying local employment opportunities.

3. A DIVERSE COMMUNITY AND A RANGE OF JOBS

As a new settlement the Garden Communities will contain a mix of uses that together provide the conditions for diversity, vibrancy and social cohesion. As such jobs will be created in schools, retail, health and leisure, in addition to business and employment areas.

4. CREATING A QUALITY EMPLOYMENT ENVIRONMENT

Employment floor space will seek to be affordable, flexible and attractive, and where possible located alongside and interwoven with residential and other land uses. The Garden Communities will aspire to be a location of choice for business and workers alike, attracted by a strong vision, sense of purpose and a clear identity.

5. CREATING A QUALITY EMPLOYMENT ENVIRONMENT

The Garden Communities will be digitally enabled with excellent broadband provision; flexible working, home working and remote/'third place' working from coffee shops, libraries, and other public venues will be possible.

6. SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT ACCESS TO JOBS IN THE LOCAL AREA

Residents of the Garden Communities will be able to access local jobs in neighbouring centres of employment, for example Braintree and Colchester, by being frequently linked by public transport services and safe cycling routes.

PRINCIPLE 4: LIVING ENVIRONMENT

Community inclusiveness and walkable, sociable and vibrant neighbourhoods will be a defining characteristic of the garden communities. A diverse mix of homes responding to existing and future local needs will be provided alongside a range of community services, including health, education, leisure and recreation, culture and shopping.

1. FACILITATING SOCIAL, VIBRANT, MIXED AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

Walkable neighbourhoods will be the building blocks of these garden communities which will be planned around a sustainably connected hierarchy of centres providing a mix of homes, jobs and services, set within attractive and green environments, and active streets; creating the conditions for residents to socialise, enjoy cultural facilities and lead healthy lifestyles.

District centres will form the main centre (town centre area) of the garden community. It will likely contain the greatest levels of development density, employment opportunities, retail provision, secondary school provision, retail, cultural and amenity facilities, together with main public transport interchange. These uses will be interspersed with new homes; of typically higher density than elsewhere in the Garden Communities.

Local centres will contain a smaller range of local services including primary schools, nurseries, doctors' surgeries, day to day convenience retail, and cafés. They will be located in 10 minute walking residential catchments. They may take a clustered form or have a linear identity dispersed within a number of adjacent streets.

Centres will be supported by active street corners which might be individual cafés or corner shops located within residential streets.

2. INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO DELIVERING LOCAL COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

New ways to provide and deliver the education, health and other social and community facilities and services needed to support the new community will be explored in the interest of maximising community inclusiveness and access for all.

Options might include: **Co-located services 'hubs'** developed around areas of high accessibility to encourage cooperation and collaboration and reduce land requirement and duplication of services. **Flexible and adaptable multi-purpose spaces (outdoor and indoor)** that provide for the specific and varying needs of a wide range of individuals, groups, organisations, workers and visitors, which together form the community. **Responsible neighbour** - social Infrastructure provision will be planned comprehensively to ensure that where necessary facilities benefit existing and new communities without compromising services which already exist.

3. PROVIDING VARIED HOUSING TENURES, LEVELS OF AFFORDABILITY AND OWNERSHIP MODELS

A mix of dwelling sizes, tenures and types, including provision for self- and custom-built homes, lifetime homes and affordable and starter homes, will be included in the Garden Communities. This will respond to local needs, including how this changes over time. As part of creating a mixed and balanced community, and vibrant sociable neighbourhoods, a mix of different types and tenures of homes will be provided in each neighbourhood giving single people, couples, families, retirees and elderly people the chance to be part of the Garden Communities.

PRINCIPLE 5: SMART AND SUSTAINABLE LIVING

Planned for the 21st century, the Garden Communities will secure a smart and sustainable approach that fosters resilient environments and communities; able to respond positively to changing circumstances. Innovation and technology will be embraced to achieve resource efficiency, higher quality of life and healthier lifestyles; creating the conditions for sustainable living.

1. ACCESS AND USE OF SMART TECHNOLOGY

Smart technology will be embraced in the planning, development and management of the Garden Communities, and future proofed to respond to future technological and work based trends and changes. Benefits will include:

Community-wide benefits: Advanced Information, Communication and Technology systems (ICT) will attract business and generate jobs. Real time and mobile-enabled public transport timetabling. Enabling use of electric cars and car club/ sharing. f Data analysis and smart monitoring of water and energy use, and waste generation, will create utility management efficiencies. Access to data and analysis can assist in the long term management and stewardship of the Garden Communities. Potential for micro energy generation to provide the Garden Community with a revenue stream for reinvestment in the community.

Neighbourhood benefits: Residents generate and share data to improve the way the community works. Potential to create a 'Garden Communities APP' helping residents to engage with the day to day management of their neighbourhood and wider community, with access to information helping to foster a shared sense of ownership and community identity. Wi-Fi provision in cafés and public spaces, including outdoor spaces, will create flexible opportunities to work, study, and socialise.

Household/resident benefits: Automated and remote control of home environment using mobile devices, enabling reduced energy demand and lower utility bills. Greater flexibility for home working and use of local shared workspaces. Access to real time on demand data, analysis and information – e.g. public transit timetabling. Greater opportunity to lead healthier lifestyles.

2. MAXIMISING NATURAL RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

The Garden Communities will be planned to work with and integrate existing landscape features and topography as much as possible. New and existing tree planting, hedgerows, other vegetation will be used to absorb carbon, and through summer shading reduce energy use for cooling buildings. An integrated approach to water management will be adopted, underpinned by the principles of reducing demand through water efficiency in homes, community buildings, work places and landscape; attenuating and storing surface water drainage; and exploring the potential for grey water (non-potable) networks. Decentralised energy provision such as the use of solar panels and the orientation of buildings to maximise solar gain and day light will be used to reduce overall energy demand as part of creating low carbon Garden Communities.

3. INTEGRATED INFRASTRUCTURE UTILITIES DELIVERY

Multi-utility service corridors will be used where possible within Garden Communities. These can reduce capital and maintenance costs, and more effectively design in physical space and capacity for additional requirements and changing technologies. Consideration will also be given to the use of multi-utility service companies (MUSCOs) to manage and co-ordinate energy and other infrastructure services for the benefit of the community, focusing on the use of best technologies to create efficiencies and resource savings.

PRINCIPLE 6: GOOD DESIGN

Through all stages of the planning, design and development of the Garden Communities the highest quality of design and management of the built and public realm will be promoted. Existing local assets will be capitalised to help create distinctive places.

1. HIGH QUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

Garden Communities will be characterised by a permeable layout which is well ordered but which includes informal elements including public, private and communal space to help create distinctiveness and interest. Masterplans and design guidance will be developed and used to inform and influence the shape and detail of the layout and design characteristics of the communities.

2. GREENER AND MORE EFFICIENT DEVELOPMENT BLOCKS

Development blocks will be a key component of the structure of the Garden Communities. They will be designed so they are outward facing onto the streets to provide good surveillance, yet enclosing substantial areas of green space that can provide for good sized gardens, landscaping, recreation, wildlife and food growing. Higher densities will be located close to the district and neighbourhood centres and along strategic public transport corridors to both support and take advantage of the accessibility opportunities offered by these locations.

3. A WELL PLANNED AND STRUCTURED LAYOUT

Garden Communities will be characterised by a layout which is well ordered but which includes informal elements, public, private and communal spaces.

4. THE URBAN/RURAL EDGE

A design treatment will be adopted for the edge of the development that achieves a suitable transition from urban development to countryside. Where a new Garden Community is located adjacent to an existing urban edge, a positive relationship between the existing and new developments will be created; where it is desirable to retain a green gap between the new garden communities and existing villages and towns, the edge treatment to the new community will reflect that ambition.

THEME 2: COMMUNITY

A sense of community and active community participation will be at the heart of the Garden Communities and central to their planning, development and long term management.

PRINCIPLE 7: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Garden Communities are a locally-led initiative, and their development will be shaped through engaging existing communities and emerging new communities; residents will be empowered to contribute to shaping the future of north Essex.

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY THROUGHOUT

The Garden Communities will be developed from a locally-led vision, and ongoing and meaningful public and stakeholder participation through the Local Plan process and beyond. Community engagement will form a key part of developing a masterplan for each Garden Community and planning applications, utilising the extensive knowledge and views of the existing and new communities to help shape and refine proposals. Exhibitions and other forms of community engagement events will be held locally as the plans for the Garden Communities are progressed. Existing communities will be given the opportunity to define how they want to engage with the new communities being created. Exhibitions and other forms of consultation events will be held locally as the plans for the Garden Communities are progressed.

PRINCIPLE 8: ACTIVE LOCAL STEWARDSHIP

The Garden Communities will be developed and managed in perpetuity with the direct involvement of their residents and businesses; residents will be directly engaged in the long term management and stewardship, fostering a shared sense of ownership and identity.

1. TO CREATE ASSETS THAT FOSTERS THE EMERGENCE OF COMMUNITY

The Garden Communities will be developed over many years, but from the outset will be planned to create the conditions needed to place people, community, identity and belonging at the heart of successful and healthy place making. The development of community assets such as parks, allotments, community centres, other forms of communal space, schools, local centres and opportunities for formal and passive recreation will form guiding principles of the development.

2. PROVISION FOR LONG TERM STEWARDSHIP AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

An organisation, such as a community trust or similar, will be set up and funded to maintain and develop community assets over the long term. The new community will be empowered from the start and secure community benefits in perpetuity and provided with sufficient financial resources to deliver on this role. Its remit might include:

- Provision and maintenance of parks and other open space.
- Maintain and develop a property portfolio of community assets.
- Generate revenue streams from community assets.
- Reinvest income for the benefit of the community.
- Advance public education, especially environmental awareness.
- Promote health and wellbeing.
- Provide facilities for leisure and recreation.

- Organise community based events.

THEME 3: DELIVERY

The ambition of the Garden Communities to create something special, unique and lasting for north Essex will be supported by a delivery structure that embraces collaboration, a common sense of purpose, commitment and vision, and where risk and reward is shared.

PRINCIPLE 9: STRONG CORPORATE AND POLITICAL PUBLIC LEADERSHIP

The councils of North Essex will collaborate to provide clear vision for the garden communities and commitment to their long term success. Central to this will be a commitment to high quality placemaking, timely infrastructure provision, and achieving a steady pace of housing and employment delivery.

1. STRONG CORPORATE AND POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND VISION

The NEGC project will be led by the local councils. Strong cross-party political support will drive the project forward over several local plan periods and political cycles. The delivery of this ambitious vision of the Garden Communities will require a positive and active approach by both the public and private sectors. The Councils will explore all opportunities to take a direct stake in the delivery process relating to good place-making, infrastructure delivery, funding and governance.

2. TAKING A LONG TERM VIEW

The councils will take a long term strategic view of development to ensure that the vision and ambitions for the Garden Communities are delivered. This will require forward thinking and planning, and not being limited to the current plan making timescales, but looking beyond that.

3. A COMMITMENT TO HIGH QUALITY PLACE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The Garden Communities will place the Councils' commitment to high quality placemaking and infrastructure delivery at the heart of the development, and a central tenet of all governance and delivery mechanisms created to bring forward the new communities.

PRINCIPLE 10: INNOVATIVE DELIVERY STRUCTURE

The Garden Communities will be delivered through a genuine and pro-active partnership approach between the public and private sectors, where risk and reward is shared and community empowerment enabled.

1. ESTABLISH GARDEN COMMUNITIES LOCAL DELIVERY VEHICLES

From the outset one or more Local Delivery Vehicles (LDV) will be established as the body responsible for delivering the new community. It will be accountable to the Councils, with both public and private sector representation. The LDVs will be responsible for delivering development and infrastructure required for the new communities in accordance with the approved masterplan and also for meaningful participation of the existing and emerging communities in the process.

2. AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO DELIVERY AND SHARING OF RISK & REWARD

A funding arrangement will be established that reflects a partnership approach between the public and private sectors, and the sharing of project risk and reward. The public sector will directly invest in the funding and delivery process, helping to facilitate the timely and coordinated provision of infrastructure and services, and achieve the level of development ambition set out in this Charter. The active involvement of the public sector in supporting the delivery of the Garden Communities will be rewarded not just by the creation of great places for the residents of North Essex to live and work in, but also through unlocking a share of the value created through this endeavour

3. MANAGING DELIVERY OF HOMES AND JOBS

The LDVs will operate to provide new homes and jobs at a steady pace throughout the main build out period of the Garden Community. The scale of the new communities combined with innovative delivery mechanisms provide the opportunity to create variation in the types and tenures of the homes provided and who provides them.

APPENDIX 2 – THE EMERGING EVIDENCE BASE

Garden Communities Concept Feasibility Study (2016)

In preliminary work, the North Essex Authorities identified four broad search areas for new Garden Communities and commissioned Aecom to undertake a Concept Feasibility Study to explore the potential of these four locations to support a new Garden Community. This study informed the Councils' selection of West of Braintree as one of three sites for Garden Communities to be taken forward through consultation on the emerging Local Plans.

Technical Groups and Workshops (2016-2017)

Technical groups and workshops have formed an important part of the evidence gathering process. These meetings have been attended by professionals and stakeholders, and have helped to explore topics relevant to the evolution of proposals for the West of Braintree Garden Community. These meetings have included discussions on housing, design, transport, education, community provision, and health and wellbeing.

Two community stakeholder workshops were also held as part of the evolution of the Concept Framework for the West of Braintree proposal and these were attended by representatives of the local communities that relate to the site as well as Council officers and Councillors.

Movement and Access Study (2017)

Jacobs were commissioned to review the performance of the existing transport network in the vicinity of the North Essex Garden Communities and review the proposals associated with the Concept Frameworks. The study also looks at trip rates and destinations to investigate the type and level of transport interventions required within and in the vicinity of the site, including active travel assumptions and the potential for rapid transit corridors to serve the new Community.

North Essex Garden Communities Employment & Demographic Studies (2017)

SQW and Cambridge Econometrics were jointly commissioned to determine the likely demographic profile of each Garden Community to inform planning for future service provision, and to develop scenarios for future employment growth and job creation targets. Although it was not an economic growth plan for North Essex, its findings would be helpful in the preparation of such a document.

North Essex Local Plans (Strategic) Section 1 Viability Assessment (2017)

Hyas Associates were commissioned to test the viability of policies set out in the joint Section 1 of the Local Plans, focusing on the viability of the three proposed new Garden Communities. The report acknowledges that the Garden Communities are at an early stage in their evolution and as such it presents

a high-level, strategic assessment. Costs and values are likely to change over time so the viability of the sites will need to be actively monitored in parallel with the evolution of development and design proposals.

West of Braintree Concept Framework (2017)

Following the establishment of the feasibility of the West of Braintree Garden Community, the Councils commissioned a further study to develop a design framework at the site in response to the issues, constraints and opportunities which emerging through previous evidence base studies. The Concept Framework Study sets out the drivers of development at the site and proposed options to address the constraints and incorporate the Councils' ambitions for the new settlement. As previously mentioned two community stakeholder workshops were held which also inform the findings of the final study.

Chris Blandford Associates – Land West of Braintree Landscape & Visual Appraisal (June 2017)

This study provides a preliminary high level appraisal of the development potential of the land West of Braintree in landscape and visual capacity terms.

The study concludes that overall the land to the west of Braintree is of moderate to high landscape and visual sensitivity, varying across the site. There is potential for part of the site to accommodate development, subject to appropriate mitigation developed in accordance with published landscape character guidelines, planning policy and the opportunities and constraints identified in the appraisal. The appraisal finds that the easternmost part of the site (see Figure WB3 of the appraisal) is the most sensitive part of the site and therefore it is desirable for development in this location to be limited on landscape and visual grounds.

Uttlesford District Council – Ecological sites on and adjacent to new settlement/ neighbourhood proposals (May 2017)

The purpose of this paper is to identify the sites designated for their ecological importance within and adjoining the new settlement/neighbourhood sites. The information will identify whether there is a need for further survey work.

There are no international or national designations within the site. Boxted Wood which is ancient woodland is within the site. There is a grassland site and Cannon Wood adjoining the development site which may be of ecological importance. Up to date information on these sites will be required as part of an overall ecological survey accompanying any eventual planning submission.

Uttlesford District Council – New settlement proposals: landscape & visual impact (May 2017)

This paper looks at the significance and the effects of change resulting from the development of a new settlement on the landscape and on public views and visual amenity.

The paper concludes that the aerodrome occupies a significant part of the site within Uttlesford. Within the boundaries of the aerodrome there are no historic landscape features which are of significance. There are, however, arable fields adjacent to Stebbing Green which are considered to be of pre-18th

century, or possibly of much earlier origin. The setting of the small linear settlement of Stebbing Green, with its Listed dwellings, is particularly sensitive to the visual impact of new development and it is considered important that this settlement's character and identity is protected by the provision of a generous buffer zone incorporating the immediately adjacent fields. Overall, whilst the proposed development would undoubtedly result in a significant change to the visual character of the site and the immediate surrounds, it is considered that the site within Uttlesford has a low to moderate sensitivity and has capacity for change.

Uttlesford District Council – Brief heritage impact assessment – West of Braintree (May 2017)

The brief heritage impact assessment highlights any heritage assets that could potentially be impacted by development in response to the call for sites undertaken as part of the preparation of the new Uttlesford Local Plan. It considers the significance of these heritage assets, the contribution that setting makes to their overall significance and the likely effect of the proposed development on their setting and overall significance

The assessment concluded that it is strongly recommended that a full Heritage Impact Assessment be commissioned. Based on the information available at the time of preparing the brief heritage impact assessment, it is considered unlikely that the proposed scheme could be achieved without causing a degree of harm to the significance of a number of heritage assets; both listed buildings and sites of archaeological interest.

The resulting impact of the development as proposed, upon the setting of these heritage assets is considered to be harmful and would compromise their overall significance. This is likely to result in less than substantial harm predominantly, and would detract from the open countryside setting of the individual assets, and Little Easton village, as a whole.

There is a significant level of public benefit arising from such a scheme that would arguably overcome this harm, depending on the proposed mitigation put forward by the applicant in respect of the concerns raised above. Further discussion with the applicant, or supporting information, would be required in order to comment further at present as the information submitted in relation to the historic built environment is lacking.

Subject to measures being taken to address the concerns raised it is considered that a scheme could be achieved on the site without causing substantial harm to the significance of the heritage assets detailed.

Troy Planning & Design – Infrastructure Delivery Plan (May and July 2017)

The Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (May 2017) has been supplemented by an Addendum which updates the IDP in the light of the Regulation 18 preferred strategy (July 2017). The IDP has considered the infrastructure requirements of all the garden communities proposed in Uttlesford including West of Braintree.

WYG – Uttlesford Local Plan Transport Study (December 2016) and Addendum (June 2017)

This study broadly examines the likely transport implications of different spatial distribution options for future Local Plan development within the district. It examines potential development locations and presents a high level comparative appraisal of the transport implications of a range of possible development scenarios. This study has included consideration of all the garden communities proposed in Uttlesford including West of Braintree.

Pathfinder Consultants & Malins Associates - Economic Viability Study (2016)

These reports tests the viability of eight New Settlement/Neighbourhood Proposals and seventeen residential allocations in the towns and villages put forward by promoters/developers in the Call for Sites for the Uttlesford Local Plan.