

<b>Committee</b>	<b>FULL COUNCIL</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>19<sup>th</sup> July 2021</b>
<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>9</b>

## District Councillors Report

My report this month focusses upon planning. In May 2021 Braintree District Council released the annual Housing Land Supply Statement which, amongst other things, reviews housing completions the past few years and the forecast for the Braintree District over the coming 5 years.

Examination of the information and subsequent follow up with Emma Goodings revealed that 156 houses were completed in Halstead in 2020/21 out of a total of 847 completed in the Braintree District. Completions in Halstead represented 18.4% of the total district when the population of Halstead is only circa 8% of the district.

Further examination of the past 5 years reveals a similar pattern, this is summarised below,

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Total
Halstead	41	70	103	171	156	541
Braintree District	291	492	534	883	847	3,047
Halstead % share of district	14%	14%	19%	19%	18%	18%

There is a consistent pattern in every one of the past 5 years of excessive house building averaging more than double the building rate for the Braintree District as a whole. This has been primarily driven by the building of three major developments on land off Oak Road, Colchester Road and Sudbury Road.

Had the build rate for Halstead followed a more proportionate rate in line with population then 323 less houses would have been built which would have been a more manageable growth.

As we all know this high rate of house building has posed an unprecedented burden on the local infrastructure. In particular additional pressures on the doctors' surgery, schools and road congestion with next to no increase in facilities or resources despite some funds pledged from developers.

If we look forward at the housing forecast for the next 5 years in the BDC Housing Land Supply Statement we find the following,

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Land east of Sudbury Road	52	50	50			
Oakwood Hill – phase 1	12					
Land west of Mount Hill			10	25	25	
Land north of Oak Road			20	25	25	
Former boiler house		22				
Former Hunwick site	7			21		
Cherry Tree rise				10	10	
Other smaller developments	32	21	12	13	29	
<b>Total Halstead</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>471</b>
Braintree District	291	492	534	883	847	6,594
Halstead % share of district	9%	8%	7%	6%	7%	7%

Although this plan shows a more proportionate rate of house building compared to the Braintree District it still represents an average build rate of 94 per year which is only 14 per year less than the past 5 years. In addition to the developments already in the plan there are a number of additional live applications pending consideration which and if approved would significantly add to these figures. These are,

Land off Mount Hill (20/01493/OUT)	=	73	pending consideration
Land adj Conies Farm, Oak Road (21/00493/OUT)	=	39	pending consideration
Land off Bournebridge Hill (19/00493/OUT)	=	200	pending consideration
Land east of Sloe Hill (18/02313/OUT)	=	9	pending consideration
Land at Greenways Ball Chase (16/00802/OUT)	=	14	granted
Land at Brook St/Fenn Road	=	30	allocated site
<b>Total</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>365</b>	

All of this clearly demonstrates that Halstead has been unfairly burdened with a disproportionate rate of house building within the Braintree District. Many local residents have strongly expressed their objections to many of the major developments over the past few years in most cases citing the cumulative impact upon local services and infrastructure as the main reason. Unfortunately, this cumulative impact appears not to form part of the decision-making process for individual planning applications.

I intend to write to Cllr. Mrs Spray who is the cabinet member for planning at Braintree District Council to express my concern and seek her support in preventing future development at an unsustainable rate without the infrastructure being in place to support it. I ask for Halstead Town Council to endorse my letter – see proposed letter in the appendix.

Cllr. Mick Radley  
District Councillor – St Andrews Ward, Halstead

## Appendix

Proposed letter to be sent to Cllr. Mrs Spray – Cabinet member for Planning, Braintree District Council on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

“Dear Cllr. Mrs Spray,

I write to you to express my deep concern about the excessive and disproportionate level of housing growth in Halstead following planning approvals granted by Braintree District Council. This has placed an unprecedented burden on local services such doctors’ surgery, school places and highways. Despite some section 106 monies being obtained from developers there has been little change in infrastructure to support such a significant rate of growth. This represents a considerable overdevelopment of what is a small rural market town and many residents have expressed their deep dissatisfaction.

It appears that planning applications continue to be approved on an individual basis with little or no regard for the accumulative effect they will have upon local services and the wellbeing of the town and its residents. Residents in large numbers have regularly submitted their objections to major planning applications citing the effect it will have upon infrastructure as one of the main reasons, alas to no avail.

Halstead being the smallest of the three towns in the Braintree District is far less connected than other towns and is unable to sustain such a rate of growth. The population of Halstead represents circa 8% of the Braintree district but has been subjected to an average 18% of the district housing completions over the past five years. This is more than double the rate of the remainder of the district and is grossly disproportionate and unfair. The table below clearly demonstrates a consistently high level with the past three years being particularly high.

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Total
Halstead	41	70	103	171	156	541
Braintree District	291	492	534	883	847	3,047
Halstead % share of district	14%	14%	19%	19%	18%	18%

I understand the need to build houses but it’s the rate of building that’s not sustainable for such a small town as Halstead. Had the growth rate in Halstead been the same as the average for the district then 323 less houses would have been built.

Turning to the future I’ve extracted data from the recent BDC Housing Land Supply Statement (May 2021) and summarised the BDC housing forecast for Halstead for the next five years as follows,

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Halstead	103	93	92	94	89	471
Braintree District	291	492	534	883	847	6,594
Halstead % share of district	9%	8%	7%	6%	7%	7%

Although this forecast shows a more proportionate rate of house building compared to the Braintree District it still represents a build rate of 94 per year which is only 14 per year less than the past 5 years and is still unsustainable. In addition to those developments in the plan there are a number of additional live applications pending consideration which, if approved would significantly add to these figures. These are,

Land off Mount Hill (20/01493/OUT)	=	73	pending consideration
Land adj Conies Farm, Oak Road (21/00493/OUT)	=	39	pending consideration
Land off Bournebridge Hill (19/00493/OUT)	=	200	pending consideration
Land east of Sloe Hill (18/02313/OUT)	=	9	pending consideration
Land at Greenways Ball Chase (16/00802/OUT)	=	14	granted
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<b>Total</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>365</b>	

If these additional applications are approved it would increase the Halstead share of house building from 7% to 13% of the district. This would clearly be unsustainable and I urge the planning committee to reject those applications pending and any other new significant developments in the coming months and years.

After such a period of significant growth the time has come to stop this strong wave of housing and give Halstead some breathing space to allow the infrastructure to catch up.

I understand that BDC does not currently have a policy of allocating the housing targets by town or area but the lack of such a policy or some level of control has led to the situation placing a significantly disproportionate and unacceptable burden on Halstead.

I urge you to review and change your policies to prevent this happening in the future. I also ask that in future plans and decisions you take into account the burden already placed on Halstead in the past five years by considerably reducing future development until the infrastructure is in place.

Having imposed such a burden on Halstead over the past five years I ask you and your fellow cabinet members and officers to actively engage with the appropriate authorities and agencies that are responsible for infrastructure and drive them to accelerate delivery of the improvements required.

The residents of Halstead are anxiously looking for the support of their District Council and have an expectation that they will recognise issues raised and take appropriate urgent actions. I look forward to your positive response.

This letter has been formally endorsed and supported by unanimous vote by Halstead Town Council at their meeting on 19th July 2021.

Best regards,

Cllr. Mick Radley  
St Andrews Ward Member for Halstead  
Braintree District Council

Cc  
Cllr. Graham Butland – Leader of Braintree District Council  
Cllr. Mrs Wendy Scattergood – Chairman of Planning, Braintree District Council  
Cllr. Chris Siddall – Essex County Council Member for Halstead  
Cllrs. Mrs Jackie Pell, David Hume, Andy Munday – BDC Members for Halstead  
All Halstead Town Councillors and Town Clerk”