

Braintree District Councillor's Report to Halstead Annual Town Meeting 2025

Three themes have stood out during this Civic Year: Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation; Updating the Local Plan; and Waste and Recycling Strategy.

1. Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation

Our Labour government has given priority to developing a common system of local government organisation throughout England:

- Mayoral Authorities, which will be given powers devolved from central government as well as some of the functions of the previous County Councils and Unitary Authorities.
- New Unitary Authorities, which will be given all the responsibilities of the previous District and Borough Councils as well as the rest of the functions of the previous County Councils.

In our area this will mean:

- A Mayoral Authority for Greater Essex (covering the current areas of Essex County Council, Southend-on-Sea City Council and Thurrock Council.)
- A Unitary Council, probably covering the current areas of Braintree District Council, Colchester City Council and Tendring District Council.

Although the final arrangements have yet to be determined, the outcome will have far-reaching implications for the residents of Halstead and for Halstead Town Council, fundamentally changing the ways in which our local democracy is organised and how our local services are delivered.

2. Updating the Local Plan

Following Braintree District Council's call for sites throughout the district, a large number of sites have been proposed for development in and around Halstead. As members of the Local Plan Sub-Committee, Cllr Munday and I will have the opportunity to contribute to discussions as to which of these sites are suitable for development. The way in which the choice and location of sites may affect the provision of a potential Halstead bypass will also require careful consideration.

3. Waste and Recycling Strategy

Our Labour government has given clear guidance to local councils on developing our local Waste and Recycling Strategy. The aims are to significantly increase the rate of recycling, to enable the improved separation of different types of recycled materials and to provide residents with the opportunity to recycle a wider range of materials at the kerbside. This will be achieved by the provision of new bins and less frequent collection of undifferentiated waste. BDC will respond to the results of the consultation on these proposals and finalise the strategy shortly.

Finally, Braintree District Councillors' Community Grant scheme has continued, and I have been pleased to allocate £1,250, postponed from the previous Civic Year, to Halstead Community Choir and £1,250 for this Civic Year to the Empire Theatre Trust to support the Dementia Choir.

Cllr Malcolm Fincken