

BDC information for March 2022 meeting

Transport Strategy Investment Plan

Have your say

TRANSPORTEAST



Transport Strategy Consultation

Final chance to have your say on a regional strategy that will help shape transport investment

Don't forget to have your say and take part in a public consultation about a proposed new regional transport strategy for the East.

[Transport East](#) – the sub-national transport body – has developed its draft strategy to guide transport investment over the next 30 years, helping support growth and improve people's quality of life across the East.

Covering Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock, the strategy sets a series of priorities for better transport in the region up to 2050.

The public consultation closes on Sunday 30 January and you can have your say by completing the [consultation survey](#).

[Have your say online](#)

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Covid update- Plan B measures to end

Plan B measures in England are due to end by 26 January 2022. The Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced that the country will be reverting to Plan A from next week. This is possible due to how successful the uptake of booster vaccinations have been and how well people have followed Plan B measures in the last few weeks.

The main changes to Covid-19 measures include:

- Face coverings in public spaces will no longer be mandatory from 26 January 2022. Individuals are still encouraged to wear a face covering in crowded and enclosed places where they may come into contact with other people they do not normally meet.
- The Government is no longer asking people to work from home.
- Venues and events will no longer be required by law to use the NHS Covid Pass, although they can still be used on a voluntary basis.



Our Covid Ambassadors will be at Braintree Village on Saturday 29 January 2022 from 10am to 1pm to hand out Lateral Flow Tests.

Come and collect your free tests!

Lateral Flow Tests are also available to order [online](#) or they can be picked up at local libraries or pharmacies.

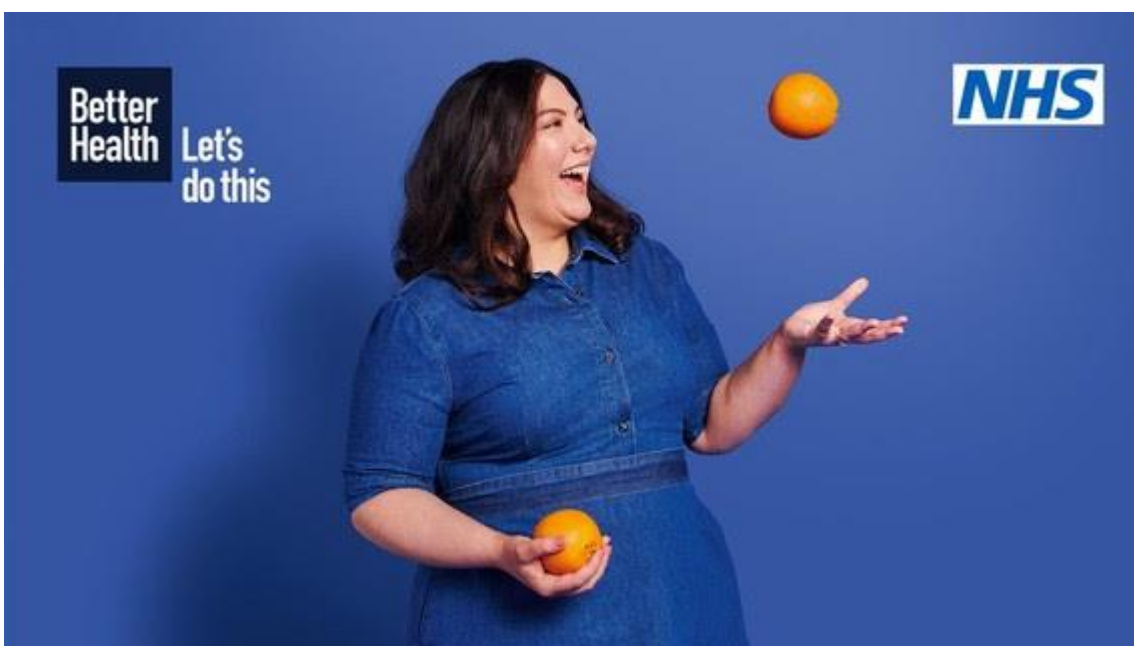


Getting your booster is still the best way to make sure you are protected from becoming very unwell from Covid-19. Find your nearest [walk-in vaccination clinic](#) and get boosted today!

[Find your local walk-in vaccination clinic](#)

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Better Health- Let's do this!



January is the perfect month to start new healthy habits and make some positive changes. Now is the time to Eat Better and Move More.

Just making a small change can have a huge benefit- perhaps going on a winter walk, dusting off your bike or even dancing around the kitchen- it all counts!

Find out more about the [NHS Better Health Campaign](#) and make some small changes today!

Fostering in Essex



“I get to show young people how they can change their path in life.”

Foster with our support.

Join us, **recruiting now.**

www.essex.gov.uk/foster

0800 801 530

Essex County Council

Offering a child a safe and nurturing home gives them the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Fostering is very rewarding, offers flexibility and a chance to be part of a team of professionals.

[Find out more about fostering in Essex](#)

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Useful links

► Note the Health and Safety Executive’s latest advice on **Keeping Workplaces Safe**. Businesses must still control the risks and review and update their risk assessment. The following workplace controls remain unchanged:

- adequate ventilation
- sufficient cleaning
- good hand hygiene

► **Order Lateral Flow Tests** – self testing remains an important and the public are advised to continue to test twice weekly and particularly before attending indoor events or seeing vulnerable friends or family. The best way to source LFT is for staff to collect from participating libraries / pharmacies or order a delivery to their home address.

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Thank you for having your say



THE LOCAL PLAN

LATEST NEWS



Thank you to everyone who responded to our latest consultation on [Section 2 of our Local Plan](#).

The consultation has now closed and we will now give all the responses to the Inspectors for consideration.

We will then await to hear from the Inspectors on what this means for finalising the main modifications and hopefully making a final decision on the Local Plan.

This next stage of the process should be the one that enables us to have a sound Local Plan in place as soon as possible, better protecting us from inappropriate development and giving us more certainty about where development will take place to meet future housing and other development needs for those in our community.

We will continue to keep you updated on the latest updates on the Local Plan via this newsletter.

Planning appeal dismissed over character harm and environmental concerns

The refusal of a proposed development of up to 90 homes in Black Notley, Braintree by Gladman Developments has been upheld by the Planning Inspectorate over concerns about the harm to the character and appearance of the countryside, as well as conflicts with national and local planning policies.

An application for the demolition of existing farm outbuildings and the erection of up to 90 dwellings on land off Brain Valley Avenue was submitted to our planning team in December 2020.

Over 200 objections were received during the public consultation period and the application was refused at a planning committee in September 2021 on the advice of officers.

We will continue to fight against unsuitable, unsustainable and poorly designed developments to protect the whole district, which is an important consideration reflected in our existing and emerging local plans.

As part of our Climate Change Strategy to be carbon neutral by 2030, we will also continue to work with developers to ensure new developments fit in with and enhance the natural environment, helping to reduce the carbon impact and improve biodiversity.

[Read more](#)

Planning & Building Control



Did you know you can find out how to apply for planning and building control permission, search for application information and get advice via our website?

- ▶ [Check if you need planning permission](#)
- ▶ [Check if you need building control](#)
- ▶ [View or comment on planning applications](#)

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Funding to prevent homelessness for vulnerable renters

The Government recently announced that additional funding will be made available to local authorities in 2021/22 to help vulnerable households with rent arrears to reduce the risk of them being evicted and becoming homeless.

The purpose of this one-off payment is to support low-income renters with **COVID-19 related rent arrears** to avoid eviction or find a new home where necessary in order to prevent homelessness, with local authorities able to target funding to those who need it most and help them get back on their feet.

Throughout the pandemic Braintree District Council have offered support to the most vulnerable households, and this additional funding will help those that are still struggling to get back on their feet as we continue to recover from the ongoing impact of COVID-19. As we enter the winter months the aim is to use this funding to help people most at risk of losing their home. Local authorities have to allocate the Tenant Hardship Grant Fund by the end of this financial year (March 2022).

Please email landlord-hotline@braintree.gov.uk if you have any potential tenants you would like to discuss .

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Christmas tree recycling success!



The infographic features a green circular arrow icon on the left, a stylized green Christmas tree on the right, and the Braintree District Council logo in the top right corner. The text is arranged in three rows, each with a large number followed by a description of the achievement.

Christmas 2021

93 Trees collected by Braintree District Council

326 Trees collected by Farleigh Hospice

£5,353 Donated to Farleigh Hospice for charity

A huge thank you to everyone for recycling, composting or replanting their real Christmas tree! We collected a total of 93 trees through our drop-off scheme. Farleigh Hospice collected 326 trees and raised £5,353.

Your tree will be shredded into chippings and used for biofuel with some used for park pathways and soft play areas, all bringing benefits to our environment.

Making small changes can have a huge impact when it comes to climate change. Well done and thank you to all our residents.

Get your Covid-19 vaccination!



The advertisement shows a healthcare worker in blue scrubs and a stethoscope administering a vaccine to a patient in a light blue shirt. Both are wearing face masks. The NHS logo is in the top right, and the HM Government logo is in the top left. A white text box at the bottom contains the following message:

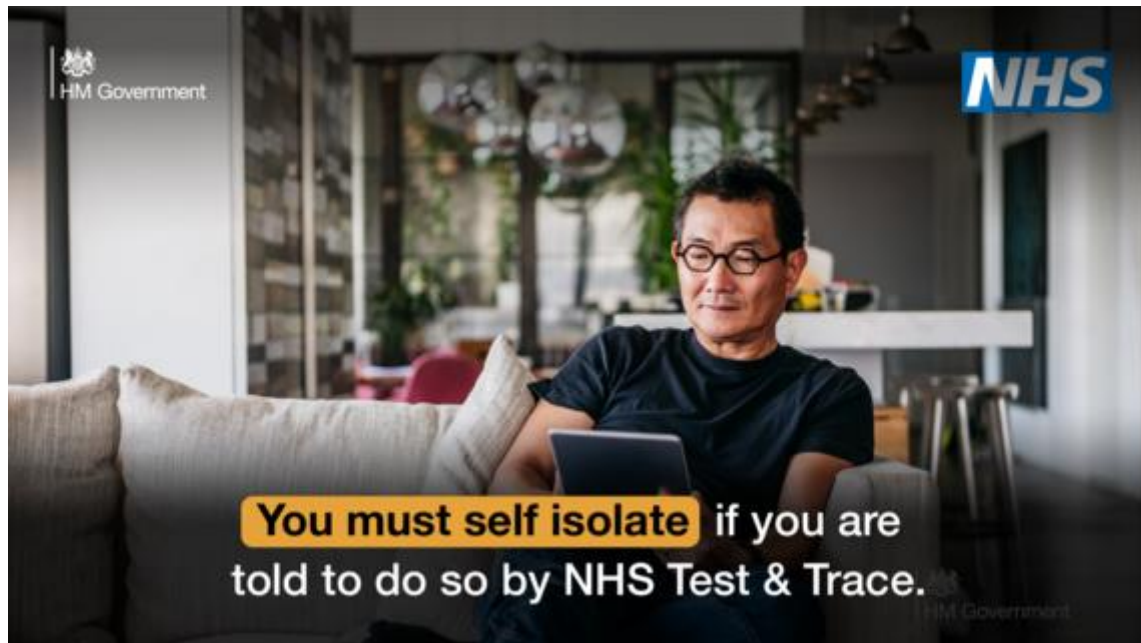
If you are not fully protected, **book an appointment** or **attend a drop-in centre.**

If you are not vaccinated you are about **8 times** more likely to be hospitalised with Covid-19. Make sure you are fully vaccinated by getting two vaccines and the booster.

It is easy to get a vaccine or booster:

- Book an appointment on the [NHS website](#).
- Call 119
- Find a local [walk-in vaccination centre](#)

The Covid-19 vaccine is the best protection for you and your loved ones against becoming very unwell and being admitted to hospital.



It is still a legal requirement for those with Covid-19 to self-isolate for ten days, with the option to end self-isolation after five full days following two negative lateral flow device (LFD) tests.

Find out more about when to self-isolate on the [NHS website](#).

Apply for the Love Essex Fund



Love Essex is running their popular [Love Essex Fund](#) again. Microgrants worth £500 are up for grabs for projects helping to reduce household waste.

The fund is open to individual residents, community groups, local organisations and schools and applications will close on **11 February at 11:59pm**.

This is a great opportunity to put your ideas about reducing waste and climate change into practice, and get others involved too.

Previous successful applicants included **BabyStuff Braintree** who were able to increase their storage facilities and **Halstead Eco Party Kit Hire**.

[Apply for the Love Essex Fund](#)

Essex County Council's Recycling Centre Update



From **Monday 28 February 2022**, vans who are visiting an Essex Recycling centre are being asked to book a timeslot before visiting. Slots can be booked up to two weeks in advance [online](#).

The new system has been put in place to help reduce waiting times, decrease congestion and improve the customer experience at recycling centres.

The new booking system does not apply to cars who are able to visit as usual. Blue Badge holders will still be permitted to visit all recycling centres in a van with no prior booking required.

Van booking for Essex Recycling Centres

WEEE recycling service continuing



After last year's successful trial, the scheme to collect unwanted small **Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE)** items, is now set to continue.

The WEEE Recycling vehicle will be visiting the designated locations on a four-weekly cycle on Wednesdays.

In January 2020, when the scheme was introduced at various sites, more than 7,000 tonnes were collected. Residents dropped off the items at different drop-off locations which meant they did not go into the general household waste.

All electrical items contain chemicals, some of which can be hazardous if they are incorrectly disposed of and if not treated properly, they can be harmful to the environment and pose a health risk, as well as having an impact on climate change. The WEEE collected is recycled in the proper manner in order to pass the General Product Safety Regulations.

[Find out more about the new small WEEE recycling](#)

Help for winter fuel costs



Temperatures are dropping and with rising energy prices, many households are worried about their heating bills.

Take a look at some of the benefits you might be entitled to this winter:

- [Winter Fuel Payment](#) - a tax-free benefit of up to £300 to pay for heating. People born on or before 5 May 1953 will qualify this year. The exact amount depends on your circumstances including your age, whether you live alone, get Pension Credit, or income-based Jobseeker's or Employment and Support Allowances.
- [Cold Weather Payment](#) - made during periods of very cold weather, to help pay for extra heating costs. The average temperature where you live must be recorded or forecast below 0°C for seven days in a row. You may be eligible if you are getting Pension Credit, Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance or you receive Child Tax Credit that includes a disability element
- [Warm Home Discount Scheme](#) - helps low-income and vulnerable households with energy costs. Participating energy companies will be providing a discount of £140 on the electricity bill of certain customers, as well as discounts to a broader group of low-income customers.

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Help to Grow: Digital scheme launched

The government's [Help to Grow: Digital](#) scheme is now open for applications. The scheme was designed to support smaller businesses in adopting digital technologies in order for them to be able to grow.

Businesses which are eligible are able to apply for discounts of up to £5,000 off the retail price of approved Digital Accounting and CRM software from leading technology suppliers.

Businesses are also able to access practical, specialised support and advice on how to choose the right technology for their business.

To qualify for the financial discount through [Help to Grow: Digital](#), businesses can be from any business sector, but must meet a set of criteria.

[Find out more about the Help to Grow scheme](#)

Omicron Leisure and Hospitality Grant Scheme- still open

The Omicron Leisure and Hospitality grant scheme is still open until the **24 February 2022**. This grant aims to provide support to businesses that are experiencing difficulties because of the Omicron variant.

Businesses in the hospitality, leisure and accommodation sectors that provide in-person services are eligible for **one-off grants of up to £6,000** per premises.

Please visit www.braintree.gov.uk/omicrongrant to find the criteria and policy, and to submit the application online.

Flood Risk Resilience



All businesses in the UK are at risk of being affected by flooding even if they are not near a river or the sea. Flooding is the biggest issue which may cause disruption or damage to a business, and according to estimates flooding accounts for 33% of losses to property.

Businesses can sign up to flood warnings [online](#) to be made aware if there is likely to be a flood risk in their area.

There are also a number of other ways of being as prepared as possible for floods, including drawing up a flood plan or assigning a designated member of staff to deal with flood related issues.

[Find out more about flood risk resilience](#)

Useful links

- ▶ It is important to follow the **Keeping Workplaces Safe** guidance. Businesses must still control the risks and review and update their risk assessment.
- ▶ **Order Lateral Flow Tests** – self testing continues to be important and protects your business. Staff are able collect LFT from participating libraries / pharmacies or they can order a delivery to their home address.

Group2Grow Peer Network Programme



The Group2Grow Peer Network Programme has now recruited 8 cohorts, and they are looking for participants for 2022.

You can sign up to the scheme [online](#).

The feedback from the scheme has been incredibly positive and there have been some very successful case stories.

Local business Big Bear Cider from Braintree signed up for the Backing Essex Business 'Group2Grow' Peer Network Programme in 2021. The programme has helped the company to consider its strategy and look forward to how the business can grow.

[Read more about Big Bear Cider](#)

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Useful links

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► **Order Lateral Flow Tests** – self testing continues to be important and protects your business. Staff are able collect LFT from participating libraries / pharmacies or they can order a delivery to their home address.

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Working together to tackle anti-social behaviour



We're pleased to be supporting Essex Police with the introduction of a new anti-drug spray in Braintree and Witham town centres - the first of its kind in Essex as part of their ongoing work to tackle anti-social behaviour.

They visited licensed premises and public venues throughout Braintree and Witham's town centres last weekend to coat surfaces that can often be used for recreational drug taking, such as those in bathrooms.

The clear substance coats the surface with a powerful bittering agent which reacts with any powdered substance. If the substance is then ingested, it will have a foul taste which can last several hours.

The initiative has been launched and funded by the Braintree District Community Safety Partnership, made up of us, Essex Police, Essex County Fire & Rescue Service and other services who are all committed to reducing the risk and impact of crime and hidden harm in the Braintree District.

[Find out more](#)

Importance of Covid-19 testing



You may have seen our Covid Ambassadors touring the district handing out free LFT.

Next week they will be in Halstead outside of the Co-op at 10am on Wednesday 9 February 2022. Come and pay them a visit!

Taking a Lateral Flow Test before meeting others in crowded places or meeting those who are more at risk from becoming seriously unwell, prevents the spread of Covid-19.

LFT (Lateral Flow Tests) are free of charge and can be ordered [online](#), or [picked up](#) from local libraries or pharmacies.

E-newsletter



Do you want to keep up to date with ideas and ways you can help protect our local environment and do your bit for our planet?

If you haven't already, you can sign up for our environmental e-newsletter covering tips about recycling more, reducing waste, saving money, climate action and more. 6,203 residents across our district have already signed up and get regular environment updates.

[Sign up for our newsletter](#)

The Queen's Jubilee celebrations



With a double Bank Holiday and four day weekend in June this year, we are expecting Braintree District to come alive with street parties and village celebrations as the community marks this historic landmark.

Are you planning a party in your street, or perhaps your village is planning an event to mark the Queen's Jubilee?

You can find out all you need to know about public events or road closures [from our website](#).

Many of our residents will be celebrating their own milestones over the Jubilee weekend- perhaps you were born in 1952 as the Queen started her reign or were married that year and are about to celebrate your Platinum Wedding.

We would love to hear your stories and see your photos, and if you would like to share them, please [email](#) us.

Routine childhood vaccinations



NHS

**Don't let Measles,
Mumps and Rubella
into your child's world**

**MMR
vaccines
protect** Help us
help you

The UK Health Security Agency and the NHS are reminding parents to ensure their children are up to date with the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine, as well as all other routine childhood immunisations.

The NHS continued to provide these valuable routine vaccinations throughout the pandemic. Routine childhood vaccinations are key in protecting children from preventable diseases.

If parents are unsure if their child's immunisations are up to date they should in the first instance consult the child's Personal Health Record (Red Book), and if they have any further queries contact their GP.

Find out more information about childhood vaccinations

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Covid-19 Update

An advertisement for COVID-19 testing. It features a close-up of a hand holding a white test strip labeled 'COVID-19Ag'. The test strip shows a single line in the 'C' (Control) window and no line in the 'T' (Test) window. The background is a blurred image of a person in a blue uniform, likely a healthcare worker. The NHS logo is in the top right corner. The HM Government logo is in the top left corner. At the bottom, there is a white text box with black text.

HM Government

NHS

COVID-19Ag

Test before you meet others in crowded indoor places or meeting someone who is at higher risk of getting seriously ill from COVID-19.

As Covid-19 is still in our community, self-testing remains important. Tests can be ordered [online](#) or picked up at many local [locations](#).

Our Braintree District Covid Ambassadors are touring the district every week handing out free LFTs. This week they will be in Braintree town centre on Wednesday (16 February) from 10am. Please note they have a limited amount of tests available and may run out.

The [PHE Resource Centre](#) has some excellent resources which you may find of use.

Please continue to share this message with your communities.

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Support with rising energy costs



Last week the Chancellor Rishi Sunak announced a Council Tax Rebate of £150 for those whose properties fall in bands A to D to help with rising energy costs.

On top of this discount, it was announced that discretionary funding of £144 million will also be provided to support vulnerable people and individuals on low incomes that do not pay Council Tax, or that pay Council Tax for properties in Bands E-H.

We are awaiting more information from central government on how this will be administered for those in the Braintree district, and we will update you as and when we know more.

Essential Living Fund to support families

For Essex residents in need of emergency support to help with essential living costs, they can apply for Essex County Council's Essential Living Fund. If they are eligible, they will be offered support such as vouchers for food and fuel, or high-quality pre-owned furniture from reputable charities as well as white goods.

[Apply for Essential Living Fund](#)

COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund is open to applications



COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund

OPEN TO APPLICATIONS

www.braintree.gov.uk/helpforbusinesses



Business ratepayers adversely affected by the pandemic are to get a £2.9 million discount on their bills.

The package seeks to help businesses affected by the pandemic, but who have been unable to benefit from existing support linked to business rates.

This relief is for businesses **outside** the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors.

The scheme, in-line with government guidance, will support a wide range of businesses. Businesses must occupy property on which it pays business rates to be eligible. You can read the full story [here](#).

Businesses should visit the [Braintree District Council website](#) to find out more about the scheme, criteria and process for applications.

The scheme opened to applications on 9 February 2022 and will close on 1 March 2022. Please help spread the word to eligible businesses within your parishes.

Covid-19 Relief Fund

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New initiative for Dementia sufferers in Essex

A new initiative has been launched by the [Dementia Buddy](#) charity that will help those in Essex, who live with dementia, to stay safe. The initiative is being backed by the NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) throughout Essex, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, Alzheimer's Society, Essex Police and local authorities.

Guardian Angel wristbands, badges, hang tags and keyrings containing the person's first name and an emergency contact number are devices worn by those living with dementia.

Please share this in your communities and encourage them to visit the [Dementia Buddy](#) website for more information.

Save money on solar panels



Essex residents who own their own home or have permission from the landlord to install a solar PV system, as well as some businesses, can register now for [Solar Together](#).

The scheme aims to help solar panel buyers save money on installation and future energy bills. It offers lower prices than the open market and also pairs up residents with trusted suppliers.

Essex residents can register their interest online from 7 February 2022, simply providing information about the roof such as size and orientation.

From 4 April 2022 residents will be contacted with a personal recommendation, costs and specification for solar panel installation, and then residents have until 13 May 2022 to decide whether they wish to progress.

[Find out more](#)

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More investment to strengthen our Planning Enforcement service



At our [Full Council meeting](#) on Monday, our budget for 2022/23 was approved which will see significant investment into the district while also protecting front-line services.

Following feedback from residents and parish councils, we will be substantially strengthening our Planning Enforcement service with over £200,000 invested into additional staffing, along with a £150,000 working budget allocated from the Council's reserves.

This will enable more proactive monitoring and checking of planning compliance, and more robust enforcement where conditions are not being met.

[Read more](#)

Old Rickstones Neighbourhood Centre granted planning permission to be demolished & revamped

This month our Planning Committee granted planning permission for plans to demolish the Rickstones Neighbourhood Centre in Witham, at the junction of Laburnum Way and Dorothy Sayers Drive.

The current buildings and public realm received little investment in recent years, resulting in the area having a 'run-down' appearance, alongside a high number of commercial units standing empty and having been boarded up.

The developers have been attempting to redevelop it since 2007. They withdrew their previous plans in 2018 and have now revived plans for the site which includes commercial units, 21 new flats, landscaping, gardens and a car park.

The commercial spaces will be for business, service and takeaway use.

[Read more](#)

Save money on solar panels through group buying scheme Solar Together



Would you like to have solar panels – but don't know where to start?

Registering with Solar Together is easy and uses the power of group buying to get you a competitive quote.

[Find out more](#)

How to find planning committee agendas



Remember you can view our upcoming planning committee agendas on our website at any time.

The committees will discuss and make decisions on planning applications that have been submitted by individuals, businesses or housing developers.

The next committee will take place on Tuesday 8th March.

Handy links

- [Check if you need planning permission](#)
- [Find a planning application](#)
- [Pre-application advice](#)
- [Local Plan information](#)
- [How to report a planning breach](#)

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A budget set to support communities, enhance the environment and invest in economic growth and recovery



More investment to support our residents and businesses, enhancing the environment and economic growth are at the centre of our budget for 2022/23.

Our budget will see significant investment in services and infrastructure, whilst ensuring no cuts to existing services for residents.

To help protect and enhance services and help the district bounce back stronger as part of our [Bouncing Back Together plan](#), we will be investing into several key priorities that matter to residents and businesses, including:

- Further key priority projects as part of our ambitious investment strategy are to come to fruition utilising the New Homes Bonus (Halstead and Witham town centres, development of business cases on Malting's Lane community centre, Witham Enterprise Units by summer 2022)
- Over £200,000 invested into additional staffing for Planning Enforcement
- £141,000 to develop actions set out in our climate change strategy to address the issues and environmental sustainability
- Investment into creating a better connected network of high quality cycling and walking routes across the district as part of its cycling strategy

- Continuation of the Braintree District [Councillors' Community Grant Scheme](#) to provide additional funding support for local projects and initiatives
- £150,000 to support our commitment to play area refurbishments across the district
- £1.5m added to our current capital investment programme

[Find out more](#)

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FREE Lateral Flow Tests



Our Covid Ambassadors will be handing out free LFTs in the following locations next week:

- Wednesday (9 March) from 10am in Braintree town centre (near Tesco)
- Friday (11 March) from 10am in Witham near Tesco

Stocks will be limited so it might be best to get there early.

Lateral Flow Tests can also be ordered [online](#) or [picked up](#) at local locations.

Boundary Review



The Boundary Commission for England is holding an independent review of all constituency boundaries in England and is inviting you to have your say on their proposals.

The 2023 Boundary Review will rebalance the number of electors in each constituency, and the number of constituencies in England will increase to 543. This includes proposed changes in the Braintree district.

The secondary consultation closes on **4th April 2022**.

[Share your views](#)

Green Home Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme

Stop wasting money on your energy bills



Residents living in Essex could qualify for up to £10,000 of free funding for energy efficiency home improvements, including insulation, heating and hot water systems, solar panels and lighting.

Upgrading your home can reduce your energy bills, keep you warm and lower your carbon emissions.

Delivered by Essex County Council, the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme is for properties with a D, E, F or G Energy Performance Certificate rating (EPC).

To be eligible for this grant you should be a homeowner with a D-G EPC rating and a combined household annual income of below £30,000.

[Find out more](#)

Announcement from Andy Wright, Chief Executive, Braintree District Council

We are writing to inform you that Braintree District Council's Chief Executive Andy Wright, has announced he will be stepping down after five years in the role.

Andy has worked in local government for 37 years, joining Braintree District Council in 2013 as a Corporate Director and becoming Chief Executive in 2017.

Andy said 'After 37 years in local government the time is right for me to retire and take on some new challenges and spend some more time with my family.'

I have been incredibly proud to have been the Chief Executive for the last five years and play my part in driving forward this ambitious and successful authority. I'm privileged to have worked with such a great team at Braintree District Council and would like to thank them for their support, dedication and hard work.'

Cllr Graham Butland, Leader of the Council said:

'We would like to thank Andy for his hard work and for steering this district through the pandemic over the last two years. He will be leaving the authority in good shape with robust finances, the Local Plan on track and good economic growth. This is as well as the successful completion of some major investment projects such as Horizon 120 Business and Innovation Park in Great Notley and the Victoria Square development in Braintree. His period of time at the helm has also seen customer satisfaction rates rise significantly above the national average.'

'Under Andy's leadership the Council has developed an established reputation for innovative and ambitious work.'

'We wish Andy well for the future and thank him for his continued support during the transition period to a new Chief Executive.'

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