Braintree District Council

Rural Services Survey 2011

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Braintree District Council

RURAL SERVICES SURVEY 2011

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RURAL SERVICES SURVEY 2011

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

This report is an update of the Braintree District Rural Services Survey 2008. The report covers the 62 rural parishes (52 parish councils) in Braintree District. It excludes the parishes of Witham Town and Halstead Town and the unparished area of Braintree and Bocking.

The report includes a summary for the district as a whole and also information for each of the three local areas of Braintree, Halstead and Witham. Details can be provided for individual wards or parishes on request.

1.2 Purpose of the Survey

To establish the number of settlements with and without key services.

To highlight services at risk and in need of improvement.

To ascertain local infrastructure requirements.

To assess the sustainability and self-reliance of rural settlements and the degree of local resilience in the face of future challenges.

1.3 Use of the Survey

To provide information for the Local Development Framework Evidence Base.

To provide information for allocation of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

To provide information for Locality Management in relation to the emerging Big Society agenda.

1.4 Survey Method

In September 2010, each parish clerk was sent a summary of services and facilities in their parish, using information from the 2008 survey. They were asked to update it and to indicate which, if any, services and facilities are at risk or in need of improvements, and which services and facilities are managed locally.

All 52 parish councils responded to the survey and provided information about 71 settlements. A blank survey form is in Section 11 of this report.

1.5 Sustainable Communities and Big Society

A sustainable community is one which is:

Well run;
Well connected;
Well served;
Environmentally sensitive;
Fair for everyone;
Thriving;
Well designed and built;
Active, inclusive and safe.

The sustainable communities headings were used as a framework for this Rural Services Survey. Responses under the headings of Economy, Services, Transport and Social and Cultural have been used as a crude assessment of sustainability.

There are strong links between community sustainability and the new government's Big Society concept, where communities will be encouraged to become more self-reliant and take on the delivery of services and provision of facilities in their locality.

Communities will have a greater say in planning decisions for their areas and new rights to build, buy and challenge for the delivery of services.

BRAINTREE DISTRICT AREAS MAP

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2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 Rural Service and Infrastructure – key observations and issues

The sustainability of settlements is measured in part by access to the following key services: Doctor's Surgery, Grocery Store, Post Office, Cash Point, Hall, Primary School and Pub. Of the 71 settlements in the district, 7 have all of the key services and a further 5 have all but a cash point. 8 have none of the key services. Of the three locality areas, Halstead is the most poorly served; the settlements have fewer key services and infrequent transport services.

Since 2008 there has been a reduction in the number of settlements with pubs (4) and post offices (3) but an increase in the number with a cash point (2) and grocery store (1). The number with a website has increased from 41 to 50. The type of service most at risk is the village pub with 7 communities fearing closure.

The asset base of community meeting spaces in our rural settlements is considerable. This goes beyond village halls to include church buildings, scout huts, and sports pavilions, the majority of which are owned and managed by local groups and parish councils. These community meeting spaces are a hub for social activity and, with some investment in infrastructure, can also be adapted to provide other key services, for example the community shop and post office at Toppesfield Village Hall.

Rural communities are experienced in providing their own infrastructure and services. Historically they have 'filled the gaps' where population sparsity has made delivery uneconomic for the statutory or private sectors. Meeting places, allotments, sports fields and play areas have long been managed at a local level. Many communities are rising to the challenge of poor services, or services under threat of closure, by taking on new provision, for example affordable housing schemes, community based broadband solutions and community owned businesses such as pubs and farms. Local projects are managed by volunteers and in many communities this is a small group of committed individuals. The challenge will be to increase the volunteer base and spread the workload.

The Big Society concept will provide communities with opportunities to take control of more local services, should they wish to, through the new Community Rights to Build, Buy and Challenge. The willingness of communities to provide new or improved local services is demonstrated by the 36 settlements that are actively involved in local projects at present. Many of the projects have arisen from community led planning initiatives. Some strategic infrastructure projects are beyond the remit of local communities, such as schools, health services, highways and broadband, but it is important that local needs in these areas are acted upon by statutory organisations as part of locality management. The Community Infrastructure Levy, which can be used for maintenance of infrastructure as well as new infrastructure projects, should enable better targeting of funding for all local infrastructure projects.

A major challenge for rural communities will be resilience to rising oil prices. Many are dependent on oil to heat their homes and for transport to access services. Some are starting to address this issue through their community led plans.

2.2 The District as a whole (71 rural settlements)

	2011	*2008*
Key Services	80% have a hall	*80%*
	61% have a pub	*66%*
	42% have a primary school	*42%*
	35% have a post office	*39%*
	32% have a grocery store	*31%*
	20% have a doctor's surgery	*20%*
	23% have a cash point	*20%*
9.9% (7 settlements) have **all** the above services		*8.5%*
A further 5 settlements have all except a cash point		
And 1 has all services except a post office		
Economy	48% have small business units	*48%*
	28% have a tourist or visitor attraction	*
	44% have a hotel or B&B	*42%*
	25% have a café	*17%*
Environment	25% have a nature reserve or similar	*
	41% have allotments	*35%*
Equity	41% have a pre-school or nursery	*46%*
	20% have an after school club	*20%*
	13% have a youth council or forum	*8%*
	23% have a youth club or mobile facility	*30%*
	49% have a club for the elderly	*52%*
	13% have a good neighbour scheme	*13%*
Housing	18% have affordable housing schemes	*
	37% have mains gas connection	*
Services	72% have a play area	*70%*
	58% have a sports pitch	*
	44% have a police station or mobile facility	*41%*
	75% have a neighbourhood watch scheme	*75%*
Social and Cultural	97% have a parish magazine	*99%*
	70% have a web site	*58%*
	89% have a church or faith meeting place	*89%*
Transport	17% have no public transport services to their nearest centre for key services	*17%*
	35% identified their centre for key services as being outside of Braintree District	*35%*

** No equivalent data from 2008 survey*

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.2 The three areas of the district

	Braintree Area 16 settlements		**Halstead Area** 42 settlements		**Witham Area** 13 settlements	
	2011 %	2008 %	2011 %	2008 %	2011 %	2008 %
Key Services						
Hall	81	81	78	78	85	85
Pub	81	87	50	52	69	85
Primary School	56	56	33	33	54	54
Post Office	44	44	31	31	38	62
Grocery Store	44	37	24	24	46	46
Doctor's Surgery	25	25	14	14	31	31
Cash Point	37	31	10	10	46	38
	Coggeshall has **all** the above services.		Earls Colne, Sible Hedingham and Steeple Bumpstead have **all** the above services.		Hatfield Peverel, Kelvedon and Silver End have **all** the above services.	
	Finchingfield has all except a cash point. Great Notley has all services except a post office.		Bures Hamlet, Castle Hedingham and Great Yeldham have all except a cash point.		Terling has all except a cash point.	
	19% (3 settlements) have **none** of the above services		12% (5 settlements) have **none** of the above services.			
Transport						
Without public transport to their nearest centre for key services	19	19	21	21	0	0
The centre for key services is outside of Braintree District	6	6	57	57	0	0

	Braintree Area 16 settlements		Halstead Area 42 settlements		Witham Area 13 settlements	
	2011 %	2008 %	2011 %	2008 %	2011 %	2008 %
Economy						
small business units	62	56	36	36	69	69
tourist or visitor attraction	56	*	19	*	23	*
hotel or B&B	56	62	40	40	38	23
café	37	31	19	12	31	15
Environment						
nature reserve or similar	31	*	24	*	23	*
allotments	37	19	33	33	69	62
Equity						
pre-school or nursery	50	56	33	40	54	54
youth council or forum	25	12	7	5	15	15
youth club or mobile facility	31	56	21	17	15	38
club for the elderly	62	62	43	45	54	62
good neighbour scheme	13	19	10	15	23	10
Social and Cultural						
parish magazine	94	100	98	98	100	100
web site	81	69	60	48	92	77
church / faith	81	81	93	93	85	85
Housing						
affordable housing scheme	19	*	19	*	15	*
mains gas	31	*	29	*	69	*
Services						
play area	75	75	67	64	85	85
sports pitch	81	*	45	*	69	*
police station or mobile facility	63	56	31	33	62	46
neighbourhood watch scheme	63	69	74	74	92	85

3 AREA COMPARISONS

The three areas are quite different in character.

Witham Area has good transport infrastructure with the A12 and mainline and branch line railways. It includes three 'larger' villages (populations over 3,000) and two 'small' communities (populations less than 500). The A120 serves many parishes in the Braintree Area which has two 'larger' villages (Coggeshall to the east and Great Notley to the south west) and two 'small' communities. Halstead Area has no trunk road and almost three times the number of parishes and settlements of either of the other two areas. It similarly has 2 'larger' villages but has 27 'small' communities.

Geographically, Halstead is the largest of the three areas and many of the villages are some distance from Halstead town and without good road infrastructure or transport services. The towns and larger villages outside the district – Sudbury, Haverhill and Clare - are significant service providers to those without key services.

The smaller rural communities in the District generally lack key services. Access to basic retail and health services is particularly limited with inequality across the district. The district-wide percentage masks the very poor provision of these services in the Halstead Area; 24% have a grocery store (46% in Witham Area), 10% have a cash point (46% in Witham Area) and only 14% have a doctor's surgery (31% in Witham Area).

The gap in provision of retail services may to some extent be overcome by mobile shop services or by good public transport links to other service centres. However, of the 48 settlements (32 in Halstead area) without a grocery store or farm shop, only 20 have a mobile grocery service. The major supermarkets offer home delivery services across the district but only 10 settlements have community ICT access (for those without a home computer), all of which also have a grocery store or farm shop. All but one settlement in the district have at least one bus per week to a major town although this town may not be their identified service centre.

A community building such as a hall, school, pub or church can be important as a focal point for the delivery of services in rural areas. A significant number of rural settlements have a hall; the level of provision is a similar percentage (78% to 84%) in all three local areas. Of the 15 settlements that do not have a hall, 8 have a church and 2 have a pub which could be used as a centre or 'hub' for community activity, should the community wish to provide additional services locally.

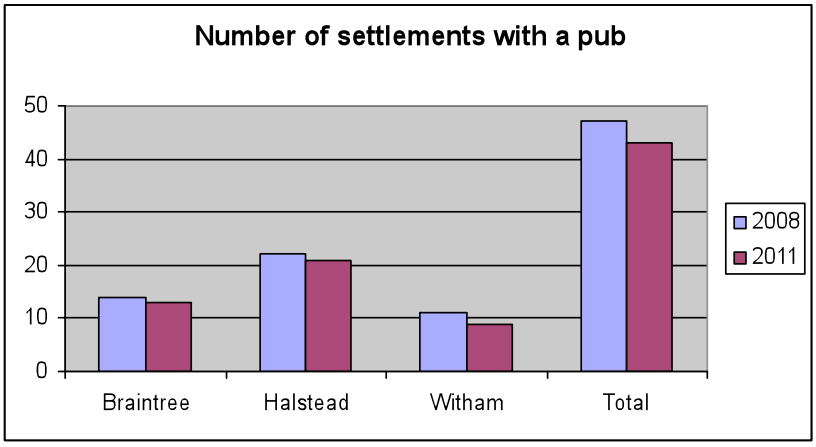
Rural small business units are located in over 60% of settlements in the Braintree Area and Witham Area but in only 36% of settlements in the Halstead Area. As mentioned above, over half of the settlements in the Halstead Area have a population of less than 500. Over half of the settlements in the Braintree Area have tourist or visitor attractions and this is reflected in the provision of hotels, B& B and cafes.

A significant number of settlements in the district, particularly in Braintree Area and Halstead Area, are without mains gas and at present are reliant on oil to heat their homes.

4 CHANGES SINCE THE 2008 SURVEY

Since the 2008 survey there has been a reduction in the provision of key services in the district in respect of pubs and post offices.

Four settlements, two in Witham area and one in each of the other areas of the district, are now without a pub. The last remaining pub has closed in Beazley End, Pebmarsh, Rivenhall End and Terling. Pubs have also closed in other villages that had more than one in the 2008 survey. The total number of rural pubs in the district has reduced from 92 to 83, with the Halstead area losing 4 pubs.

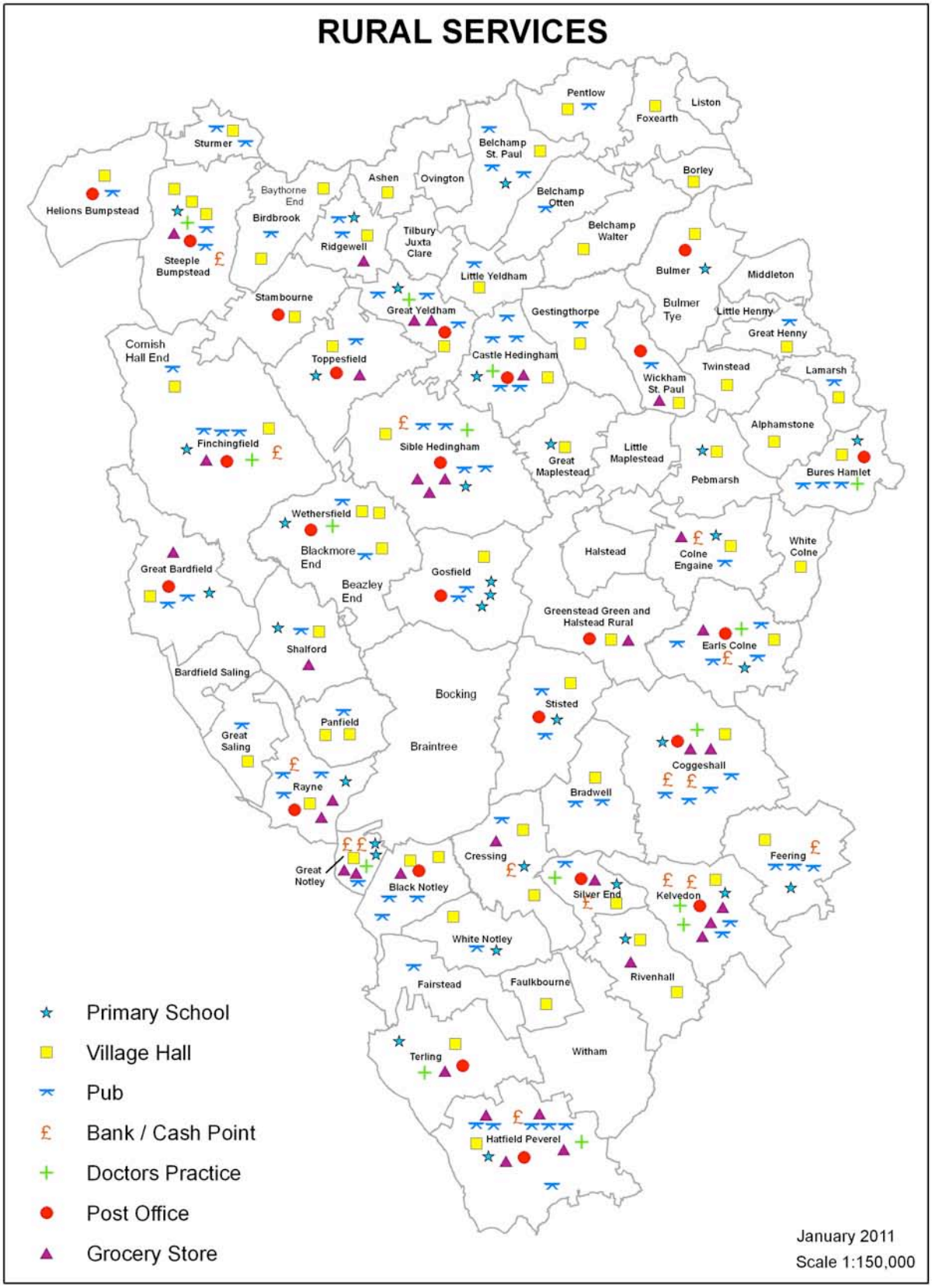


There has been a dramatic reduction in the number of post offices in the Witham Area with the loss of provision in Feering, Rivenhall and White Notley. On the positive side two additional settlements have a cash point (Finchingfield and Feering) and one settlement (Shalford) has regained a grocery store.

There has been a significant improvement in transport services since 2008 with the introduction of shopper buses. Many of the most poorly served settlements e.g. those in Stour Valley South Ward, have seen their bus service double from one per week to two. In the far north of the district, the shopper buses are providing one service per week to a major town (Sudbury or Haverhill) although this is not necessarily the service centre identified by the community, e.g. for doctors services.

There are notable changes in the provision of services for young and old. The number of pre-schools in Braintree Area and Halstead Area have fallen by one and three respectively. Youth clubs, including the Essex County Council mobile facility, are available in fewer Braintree Area and Witham Area settlements although Youth Councils and Forums are on the increase in Braintree Area and Halstead Area. In 2011 there are fewer clubs for the elderly than in 2008, although the Village Agent Scheme is now providing services for the most vulnerable.

Since 2008 the number of settlements with a community website has increased from 41 to 50 (out of 71). This is a continuation of an upward trend since the first survey in 2005, with parish councils also making more use of websites to provide information for their communities. One community is using a Facebook page to provide up to date information and alerts in respect of their community led plan.



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5 SERVICES AND FACILITIES IN BRAINTREE DISTRICT

	BRAINTREE	HALSTEAD	WITHAM	TOTAL	
	12	*31*	*9*	*52*	*Number of Parish Councils*
	12	*39*	*11*	*62*	*Number of Parishes*
	16	**42**	**13**	**71**	**Number of distinct settlements**
KEY SERVICES	13	33	11	57	have a hall or meeting place
	13	21	9	43	have a pub, 18 have more than 1 pub
	9	14	7	30	have a primary school
	7	13	5	25	have a Post Office,
	7	10	6	23	have a grocery store, 6 have more than 1 grocery store
	4	6	4	14	have a doctor's surgery
	6	4	6	16	have a cash point
HOUSING	3	8	2	13	have an affordable housing scheme
	2	3	2	7	have a sheltered housing site
	2	3	3	8	have a residential home for the elderly
	1	1	1	3	have a housing scheme for people with special needs
ECONOMY (Business & Tourism)	10	15	9	34	have small business units
	2	0	1	3	have a guide to local businesses
	2	2	4	8	have a petrol station
	4	9	6	19	have food provisions shops (in addition to grocery store)
	2	15	3	20	have mobile grocery / food provisions services
	7	8	8	22	have other retail and service stores
	7	11	7	25	have a restaurant / takeaway
	6	8	4	18	have a café
	9	17	5	31	have accommodation (Hotel or B&B)
	9	8	3	20	have a tourist or visitor attraction
	0	4	3	7	have a golf course
	4	6	3	13	have a public car park
EQUITY (Provision for vulnerable)	0	2	2	4	have a Children's Centre
	8	12	5	25	have a baby and toddler group
	8	14	7	29	have a pre-school or a nursery
	5	3	6	14	have an after school club
	4	3	2	9	have a youth council or forum
	5	9	2	16	have a youth club or mobile facility
	3	6	3	12	have a meeting place exclusively for use by youth groups
	8	11	6	25	have organised activities for young people
	1	2	1	4	have a secondary school (2 in Halstead area are private schools)
	0	2	1	3	have a school for people with special needs
	10	18	7	35	have a club for the elderly
	2	4	3	9	have a good neighbour scheme
	14	42	10	66	have a Village Agent

5 SERVICES AND FACILITIES (continued)

	BRAINTREE	HALSTEAD	WITHAM	TOTAL	
	12	*31*	*9*	*52*	*Number of Parish Councils*
	12	*39*	*11*	*62*	*Number of Parishes*
	16	**42**	**13**	**71**	**Number of distinct settlements**
ENVIRONMENT	5	10	3	18	have a nature reserve, country park or similar
	8	19	6	33	have a village green
	11	16	11	38	have a footpath map / walk guide
	6	14	9	29	have allotments
	1	2	1	4	have a community orchard
	2	2	0	4	have a community woodland
	1	2	0	3	have a local composting scheme
	14	30	11	55	have mains sewerage connection
	5	12	9	26	have mains gas connection
	2	12	0	14	have an oil purchase consortium
	0	1	0	1	have renewable energy sources in community buildings
	8	9	7	24	have a maintenance warden / parish handyman
GOVERN -ANCE	5	4	4	13	have a parish office
	16	42	13	71	have a local information notice board
	8	19	8	35	provide an annual parish council report for every house
	14	21	12	47	have parish council information on a website
SOCIAL & CULTURAL	12	34	12	58	have a local clubs and organisations
	15	41	13	69	have a community / parish magazine
	13	25	12	50	have a community website
	8	14	9	31	have a guide to community organisations and services
	4	5	1	10	have a museum
	13	39	11	63	have a church/faith group meeting place
	4	18	7	29	have a cemetery or burial ground
SERVICES	15	39	12	66	have a library service (building or mobile)
	4	2	4	10	have community ICT access
	12	28	11	51	have a play area / play equipment
	13	19	9	41	have a sports field / pitch
	4	11	6	21	have a hard court
	7	14	8	29	have a venue for indoor sports, which is the village hall or school hall
	8	17	6	31	have a sports pavilion / changing rooms
	2	4	1	7	have public toilets
	3	3	1	7	have a park / gardens
	10	13	8	31	have a police station (building or mobile)
	10	31	12	53	have a “Neighbourhood Watch” scheme
	2	2	2	6	have a vet
	2	0	2	4	have a dentist
	1	1	2	4	have an optician
	2	3	3	8	have a chemist or pharmacy

6 ASSESSMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICE DELIVERY

6.1 Specific local needs for different types of infrastructure

The following number of settlements identified the need for improved infrastructure;

Broadband	14
Hall *	11
Affordable Housing *	8
Allotments *	6
Play area *	5
Primary School	3
Grocery Store	3
Sports Pavilion *	3
Roads and parking near school	2
Public Car Parking *	2
Doctors Surgery	1
Post Office	1
Youth group meeting place *	1
Access to trunk road / slip roads	1

The items asterisked in the table above are where parish councils and rural community groups are most likely to instigate and manage projects to improve infrastructure for themselves. There have been a few projects in the district to provide 'commercial' infrastructure e.g. broadband in Gestingthorpe and a grocery store in the village hall at Toppesfield. Infrastructure improvements to schools, roads and health services are the responsibility of statutory organisations, whilst broadband and post office provision are issues for national government.

As part of the survey an attempt was made to gather information about **broadband** upload and download speeds across the district but it was not possible to get a complete picture. The following settlements stated that the broadband service in their area was generally poor, patchy across the area or varied considerably at different times of day: Belchamp Walter, Borley, Fairstead, Feering, Finchingfield (Cornish Hall End), Gestingthorpe, Great Maplestead, Great Saling, Greenstead Green & Whiteash Green, Little Maplestead, Middleton, Pebmarsh and White Notley.

Of the 11 **hall** infrastructure requirements, 2 are proposed new builds (Cressing on a new site and Ridgewell on the existing site), 4 are proposed extensions (Bradwell, Great Notley, Kelvedon and Rayne) and 5 are internal alterations and refurbishments requiring significant capital investment (Gestingthorpe, Lamarsh, Panfield, Toppesfield and White Colne). The majority of the halls are owned and run by community based charities. Great Notley is owned by BDC and Panfield by ECC, although both are managed by local groups. Rayne has identified the need to expand the **car park** at the hall to cope with demand.

Castle Hedingham, Fairstead, Great Saling, Sible Hedingham and Silver End have identified the need for a new site for **allotments** and Panfield requires investment in a water supply to its existing site. The **play areas** in Bradwell, Great Saling, Stisted, Toppesfield and White Colne need upgrading. Great Bardfield, Toppesfield and Wethersfield have identified the need for new or refurbished **sports pavilions.** The scout hut in Silver End, which provides a **youth meeting place** for 80 young people needs a complete rebuild.

The **grocery stores** in Bures Hamlet and Toppesfield are too small to meet local needs and require expansion. In Toppesfield this will mean an extension to the village hall but in Bures this will require relocation of the commercial premises. Gestingthorpe has aspirations for a community shop but is unsure yet of its viability. The part-time **post office** that had been established in the police station at Feering has now closed due to dispute with PO counters and is missed by the community.

Primary Schools in Cressing, Feering and Silver End are at capacity. At Silver End primary school and at Sible Hedingham primary school improvements to **road access and parking** are required. In Great Bardfield, a lack of **parking** in general is a problem.

Great Bardfield, Panfield, Rayne, Ridgewell, Rivenhall, Sible Hedingham, Stisted and Terling have identified a need for **affordable housing**. Three schemes are on hold (Rayne, Rivenhall and Terling) due to difficulties with finding a site; the other five are working towards developments for their village. There is local support for a proposed new **doctor's surgery** and medical centre as part of the Sible Hedingham Regeneration area.

Feering has identified the need for building of new **slip roads** to enable traffic from Tiptree to have improved **access to the A12**

6.2 Services at risk

The type of service most at risk in rural areas is the pub. In addition to the 9 pubs that have closed since the 2008 survey, a further 7 have been identified as being at risk in the following settlements:

Earls Colne	One of our four pubs (The Lion) is currently closed. It may be possible that an application for change of use to residential may be made
Feering	One of the three pubs at risk
Great Saling	There has been a series of landlords at the pub; unable to make it viable. Pub up for sale again.
Helions Bumpstead	Current landlord is selling up
Ridgewell	One of our two pubs may have a problem to survive
Toppesfield	Pub freehold up for sale; pub still open
Wethersfield - Blackmore End	Pub at risk

Community groups / Parish Councils in Great Saling and Toppesfield, as well as in Pebmarsh and Terling where pubs have already closed, are exploring the possibility of a community owned pub.

Other services identified as being at risk are as follows:

Settlement	Service at risk	Comments
Silver End	Hall	Future management arrangements uncertain
Ridgewell	Primary School	Affordable / extra housing needed to sustain pupil numbers
Bures Hamlet	Post Office	Post master needs larger premises to survive
Ridgewell	Grocery Store	New proprietor after a spell of closure. Future uncertain
Bures Hamlet	Petrol station	Site under offer
Bures Hamlet	Other retail	Papershop owners unwell
Earls Colne	Youth club	Youth Club building is now the Children`s Centre, which was supposed to also house the Youth Centre. However, the space is not suitable to be shared by teenagers and the under fives
Gestingthorpe	Club for the elderly	Club at risk; few consider themselves elderly
Ridgewell	Club for the elderly	Club for the elderly has dwindling membership
Gosfield	Neighbourhood Watch Scheme	It is run by elderly people and needs more younger volunteers
Great Henny	Shopper bus	May not continue due to low use

Another risk identified was the threat to the tranquillity of the countryside posed by aircraft noise as a result of NATS re-routing.

6.3 Services delivered at a local level

Parish councils have a key role to play in local services, either by direct delivery or by working collaboratively with community groups. The parish councils can raise funding through the precept to support local activities and make grants to local organisations to improve facilities.

13 parish councils have an office which acts as a local information point for their community. 24 employ a parish handyman to provide litter clearance and/or grass cutting services.

Parish councils and Playing Fields Associations own and manage the playing fields or recreation grounds in all but three of the 41 settlements that have them, and are responsible for the play equipment in all but one of the 51 settlements with play areas.

There are 29 settlements with allotments; 5 are owned and managed by Braintree District Council, the rest are owned and managed locally by parish councils and allotment associations. 18 settlements have natural environment areas described as nature reserves, country parks, river walks etc. 11 of which are owned and managed locally. There are 'friends of' groups involved in the management of a number of the others. One settlement is in the process of negotiating transfer of ownership from Braintree District Council to the parish council to enable local management.

Of the 63 halls (in 57 settlements), 58 are owned by locally based charities and all but one are managed by local community groups. Some churches fulfil the function of a community hall where none exists (for example in Middleton). Religious meeting places are owned by their respective church organisations and managed by local groups (parochial church councils, church elders etc).

These community buildings are a hub for activities in their settlements, serving as pre-schools, indoor sports and keep fit venues, lunch clubs, arts activities and the meeting place for a huge range of interest groups. One community building (Toppesfield) also hosts the community shop and post office. The majority of the activities that take place in community buildings are run by volunteers and locally based charities.

There are also some community buildings that fulfil specific functions. 12 settlements have youth meeting places all of which are locally owned and managed, mostly scout huts; 31 have sports pavilions, 30 of which are locally owned and managed, 3 have bowling greens and clubhouses, 2 of which are locally owned and managed; 10 have museums, 8 of which are locally owned and managed.

People who share a hobby will always get together to pursue their interests, and groups will naturally form e.g. heritage groups, garden clubs etc. This type of community activity is quite different from the provision of a service for philanthropic reasons or as a social enterprise.

The willingness of community leaders to take on the delivery of a service sometimes arises out of a locally identified need, through a community led plan initiative. For example, a lunch club to provide meals and company for the elderly and vulnerable. Or a group may get involved in the running of a service that is threatened with closure, as is currently happening with campaigns to save local pubs by community buy out.

Whatever activity arises, whether from community interest, philanthropy or social enterprise, it is likely that the group of volunteers will need some sort of professional support in their venture. The amount and type of support will vary depending on their skills and the complexity of the project.

6.4 Projects in Progress

Of the 71 settlements included in this survey, 36 are managing projects to improve local infrastructure and services. There are a total of 60 projects in progress:

Type of project	No
Hall improvements	7
Affordable housing	6
Allotment site	6
Footpath map	5
Play area	5
Community pub	4
Nature reserve	3
Public car park	2
Youth council	2
Community orchard	2
Community access to IT	2
Sports pavilion	2
Parking around the school	1
Doctors surgery	1
Guide to local businesses	1
Broadband	1
Youth meeting place	1
Good neighbour scheme	1
Village green	1
Renewable energy in hall*	1
Notice board	1
Guide to community groups	1
Museum	1
Church water supply*	1
Sports field	1
Hard court	1

* community hall/ meeting place projects

Funding is obviously needed for the projects but most have secured some funding and/or the groups are aware how to access funding. Applications have been made to a variety of grant funders including Essex County Council Community Initiatives Fund and the CHIP fund. Some funding has come from Braintree District Council through the Local Committees and from s106 money collected from developers. In the future, there may be scope to use the Community Infrastructure Levy to assist with funding non-commercial capital projects. This will be particularly useful for projects that fall outside grant funding criteria, e.g. parking improvement projects.

The projects are managed by volunteers in the community but most will need some specialist legal and business advice; some groups will also need training. Professional support is provided by a variety of organisations, many of which are voluntary sector organisations.

7 SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

7.1 Assumptions

The survey (see sample in section 11) asks for Yes/No responses to the existence of services and facilities in each parish and settlement. The tables below show the number of Yes responses within the Economy, Services (including Key Services) and Social and Cultural sections of the survey. The maximum scores are 12, 23 and 7 respectively. For the transport column, the scores are calculated as 5 for an hourly bus service, 4 for a service of a few buses per day, 3 for one bus per day, 2 for a few buses per week and 1 for one bus per week; plus the addition of 1 for a train service and 1 for a car share scheme; a maximum of 7.

To fully assess the sustainability of a settlement, a judgement would need to be made about how well designed, well governed, fair and environmentally sensitive it is. Whilst the survey provides responses about facilities and services under these headings, it does not provide sufficient information upon which to make such a judgement.

7.2 Braintree Area

Ward	Parish	Settlement	Economy	Services	Social & Cultural	Trans-port
			Max 12	Max 23	Max 7	Max 7
Coggeshall *	Coggeshall		9	21	7	6
Cressing and Stisted	Cressing		6	12	4	6
	Stisted		4	13	5	0
Great Notley	Great Notley		9	17	5	5
Panfield	Bardfield Saling		1	1	2	2
	Great Saling		4	7	3	2
	Panfield		2	8	3	5
	Shalford		3	11	4	5
Rayne	Rayne		6	14	7	5
Three Fields	Finchingfield	Cornish Hall End	0	5	4	1
		Finchingfield	9	14	7	5
	Great Bardfield		6	14	6	0
	Wethersfield	Beazley End	0	1	2	0
		Blackmore End	0	5	3	1
		Rotten End	0	0	2	0
		Wethersfield	3	12	5	5

7.3 Halstead Area

Ward	Parish	Settlement	Economy	Services	Social & Cultural	Trans-port
			Max 12	Max 23	Max 7	Max 7
Bumpstead	Helions Bumpstead		1	8	5	4
	Steeple Bumpstead		3	15	5	1
	Sturmer		4	6	3	4
Gosfield and Greenstead Green	Gosfield		7	12	5	5
	Greenstead Green	Greenstead Green	2	8	4	2
		Whiteash Green	1	0	2	1
Hedingham and Maplestead	Castle Hedingham		8	15	4	5
	Gestingthorpe		4	7	6	5
	Great Maplestead		2	7	4	4
	Little Maplestead		0	2	3	5
	Sible Hedingham		10	19	5	5
	Wickham St.Paul		4	8	4	5
Stour Valley North	Belchamp Otten		0	2	4	2
	Belchamp St.Paul		2	10	5	1
	Belchamp Walter		3	5	3	2
	Borley		0	2	3	2
	Bulmer	Bulmer	2	6	4	5
		Bulmer Tye	2	1	2	5
	Foxearth		0	5	5	1
	Liston		1	1	5	1
	Ovington		0	2	2	1
	Pentlow		1	4	3	1
	Tilbury juxta Clare		0	2	2	2
Stour Valley South	Alphamstone		1	4	3	2
	Bures Hamlet		8	14	5	6
	Great Henny		0	4	3	2
	Lamarsh		0	4	2	2
	Little Henny		0	1	1	1
	Middleton		1	2	3	2
	Pebmarsh		2	9	4	4
	Twinstead		0	5	3	1
Three Colnes	Colne Engaine		4	12	5	2
	Earls Colne		9	19	6	5
	White Colne		6	5	5	5
Upper Colne	Ashen		0	3	4	1
	Birdbrook	Baythorne End	4	5	4	5
		Birdbrook	1	6	4	2
	Ridgewell		4	12	7	3
	Stambourne		1	9	4	1
	Toppesfield		3	11	5	2
Yeldham	Great Yeldham		4	12	7	5
	Little Yeldham		0	7	3	2

7.4 Witham Area

Ward	Parish	Settlement	Economy	Services	Social & Cultural	Trans-port
			Max 12	Max 23	Max 7	Max 7
Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall	Bradwell		4	7	5	5
	Rivenhall	Rivenhall	2	12	6	5
		Rivenhall End	9	6	4	5
	Silver End		5	19	5	5
Black Notley and Terling	Black Notley		4	11	5	5
	Fairstead		4	1	5	3
	Faulkbourne		0	5	3	2
	Terling		2	14	6	2
	White Notley		3	8	4	3
Hatfield Peverel	Hatfield Peverel	Hatfield Peverel	7	18	6	6
		Nounsley	0	4	4	4
Kelvedon	Feering *		6	12	5	5
	Kelvedon		8	19	7	6

7.5 Summary

As would be expected, the settlements that are identified in the Local Development Framework settlement hierarchy as 'key service villages' (Coggeshall, Earls Colne, Hatfield Peverel, Kelvedon, Sible Hedingham, Silver End) have the highest scores.

Although this method is rather crude it gives some indication of which settlements might have a stronger local economy and which settlements are reasonably self sufficient in terms of services and social activity. It also shows those that are dependent on other areas for services. Those with low scores and with poor transport will be reliant on private cars to access shops, health services, education, employment and social activity.

Reliance on oil is a major challenge for future sustainability in rural areas. Not only reliance on oil for transport to access services, but also reliance on oil for domestic heating.

The self sufficiency and sustainability of villages depends to a large extent on the capability and willingness of local people to get involved in the management of local facilities, direct delivery of services or the oversight of key areas. The previous section of this report showed the number of community assets and services already managed or delivered by parish councils and local groups.

The number of projects in progress shows a continued willingness to provide local facilities and services. Cuts in local government funding may signal a withdrawal of some services and transfer of delivery to a more local level. Communities will continue to need community development support, professional advice and funding.

8 SERVICE CENTRES

8.1 Braintree Area

Braintree Town was identified by 14 of the 16 settlements in its area as the service centre to satisfy their needs. Beazley End identified Wethersfield as it is part of that parish. Great Bardfield identified Dunmow, having strong links with schools there.

Within the area, Coggeshall (having all of the 'key services') recognised itself as a potential service centre but was not identified by other settlements in the district as fulfilling that role. It may be a service centre for settlements in Colchester Borough. Great Notley also felt that it may be a service centre but was not identified as such by other villages in the district; it may fulfil that role for settlements in Chelmsford Borough.

8.2 Halstead Area

Halstead was identified by 11 of the 42 settlements in its area as the service centre to satisfy their needs. 12 settlements identified Sudbury, 6 identified Haverhill, 4 Clare, 5 Sible Hedingham, 2 each for Long Melford and Earls Colne.

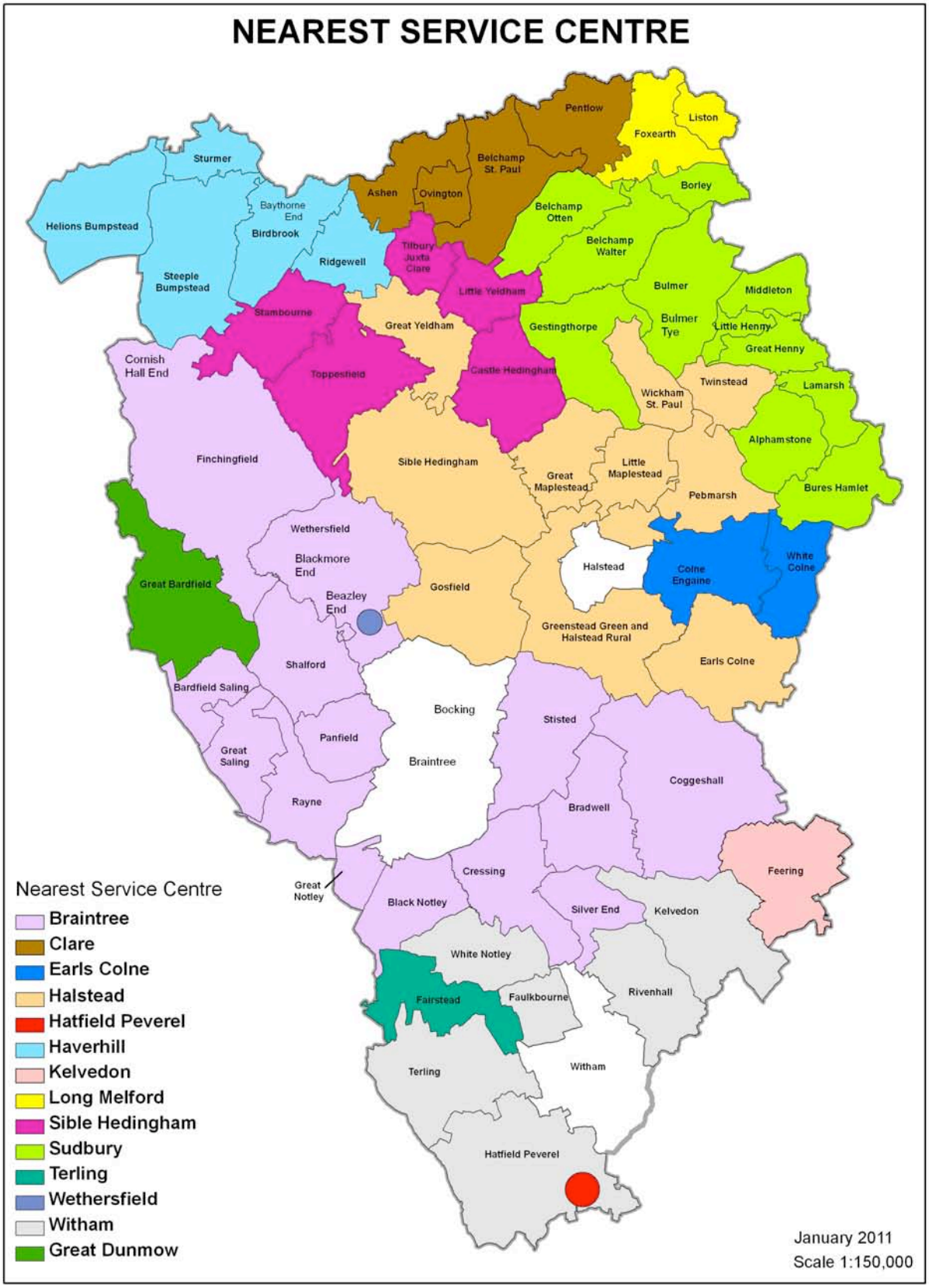
Since the 2008 survey, there has been an increase in the number of settlements identifying Sible Hedingham as its service centre (from 1 to 5) and a reduction in the number identifyng Great Yeldham as its service centre (from 4 to 0). The reason for this switch is unclear but may be associated with health care services.

Within the area, Sible Hedingham and Earls Colne (having all of the 'key services') recognised themselves as service centres. Bures Hamlet, Great Yeldham and Steeple Bumpstead felt they may be service centres but were not identified by other settlements. It may be that Bures Hamlet and Steeple Bumpstead are services centres for villages outside the district.

8.3 Witham Area

Witham Town was identified by 7 of the 13 settlements in its area as the service centre to satisfy their needs. 3 settlements identified Braintree which is not surprising as the Witham area extends to the edge of Braintree town. The other 3 identified Kelvedon, Hatfield Peverel and Terling.

Within the area, Hatfield Peverel, Kelvedon and Silver End (having all of the 'key services') recognised themselves as service centres. Silver End was not identified by other settlements in the district as fulfilling that role.



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9 ACCESS TO SERVICE CENTRES

The time taken to travel by car to the nearest service centre as identified by each settlement ranges from 2 minutes to 20 minutes.

5 settlements have a train service. White Notley and Cressing (on the Witham to Braintree branch line) and Bures Hamlet (on the Marks Tey to Sudbury branch line) have an hourly service. Hatfield Peverel and Kelvedon (on the main line to London Liverpool St) have an hourly service off peak with more frequent trains at peak times. The train services enable access to identified service centres.

32 settlements have a community bus service. 1 service (Kelvedon Station to Coggeshall) is run by a Coggeshall voluntary group as a peak time connection to weekday rail services. The remaining 30 settlements are served by the 7 shopper buses run by Braintree District Community Transport.

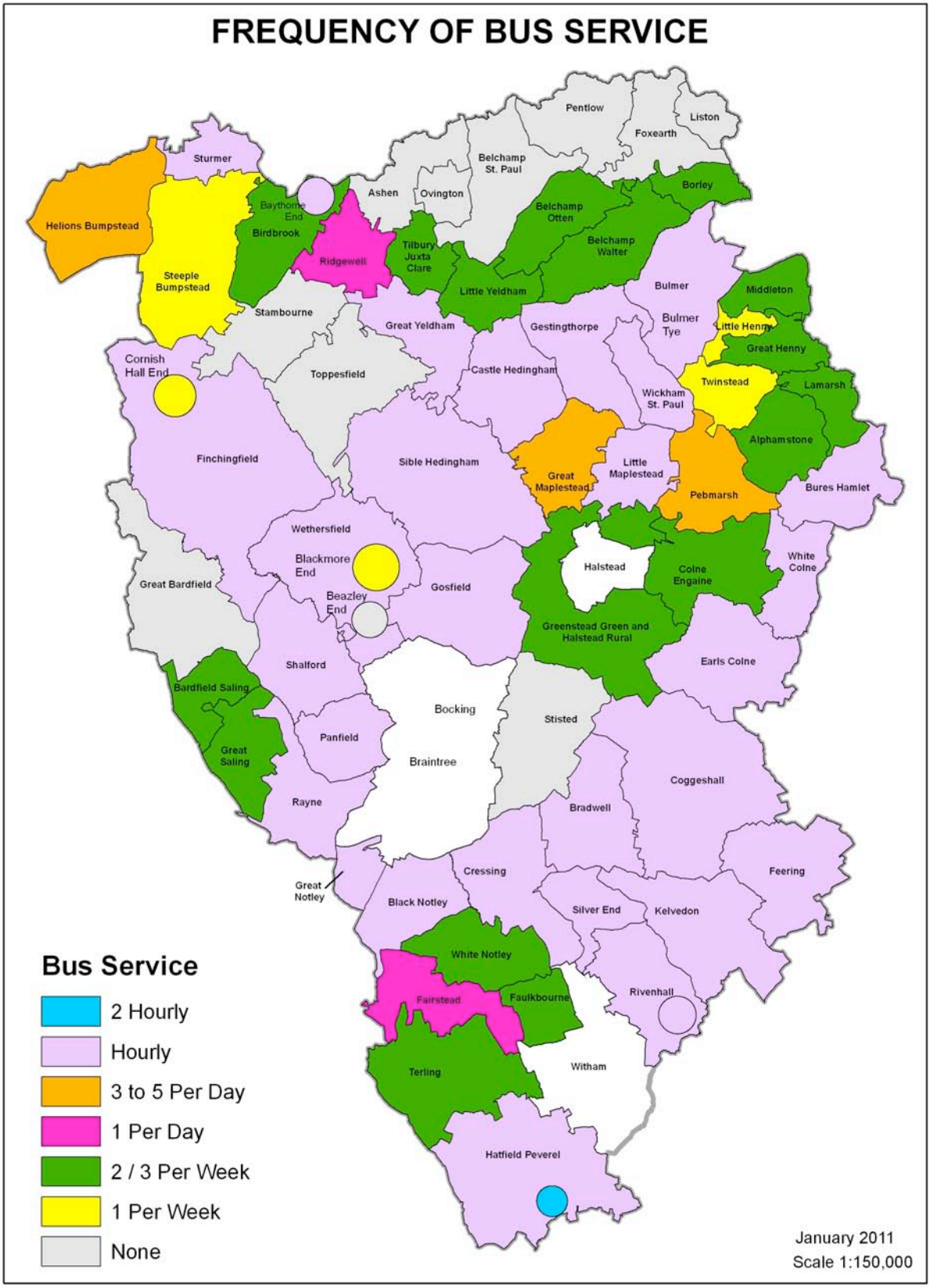
Bus and community bus services to the identified service centre is as follows:

BRAINTREE	HALSTEAD	WITHAM	TOTAL	
12	*31*	*9*	*52*	*Number of Parish Councils*
12	*39*	*11*	*62*	*Number of Parishes*
16	**42**	**13**	**71**	**Number of distinct settlements**
3	8	0	11	have no bus service
2	4	0	6	have one bus per week
2	12	3	17	have two/three buses per week
0	1	1	2	have one bus per day
0	3	0	3	has three buses per day
0	1	1	2	has a bus every 2 hours
9	13	8	30	has a bus hourly /half hourly (but most are without evening service and a reduced service at weekends)

11 settlements have no bus service to their **identified centre** for key services. Of these, only one settlement has no bus service whatsoever. The other 10 are on a bus route which provides access to a major town (e.g. Braintree, Haverhill or Sudbury) but does not access their nearest service centre (e.g. the location of their doctor's surgery).

The 11 settlements with no bus service to their identified service centre are lacking key services and rely on the car to access their nearest location. 3 of these 11 settlements have **none** of the key services; 4 have a post office and primary school, 2 have a grocery store, 5 have a pub and 8 have a village hall. None of these 11 settlements has a doctor's surgery.

Of the 6 settlements with one bus per week, 2 have none of the key services.



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10 KEY SERVICES IN EACH PARISH

10.1 Braintree Local Area

12 Parishes, 16 Settlements
Number of key services in each settlement and parish

Ward	Parish	Settlement	Pop'n 2001	Hall	Pub	Primary School	Post Office	Grocery Store	Doctor Surgery	Cash Point
Coggeshall *	Coggeshall		4327	1	4	1	1	2	1	2
Cressing and Stisted	Cressing		1538	2	1	1	1	1	0	1
	Stisted		617	1	2	1	1	0	0	0
Great Notley	Great Notley		4815	1	1	2	0	2	1	2
Panfield	Bardfield Saling		179	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Great Saling		261	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Panfield		850	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Shalford		746	1	1	1	0	1	0	0
Rayne	Rayne		2162	1	3	1	1	2	0	1
Three Fields	Finchingfield	Cornish Hall End	1348	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
		Finchingfield		1	3	1	1	1	1	1
	Great Bardfield		1238	1	2	1	1	1	0	1
	Wethersfield	Beazley End	1232	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Blackmore End		1	1	0	0	0	0	0
		Rotten End		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Wethersfield		2	1	1	1	0	1	0

* Information for Feering North is included in Feering Parish totals as part of the Witham Area. The majority of Feering services and facilities are south of the railway line in Feering South.

10 KEY SERVICES IN EACH PARISH

10.2 Halstead Local Area

39 Parishes, 42 Settlements
Number of key services in each settlement and parish

Ward	Parish	Settlement	Pop'n 2001	Hall	Pub	Primary School	Post Office	Grocery Store	Doctor Surgery	Cash Point
Bumpstead	Helions Bumpstead		473	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
	Steeple Bumpstead		1481	3	2	1	1	1	1	1
	Sturmer		464	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Gosfield and Greenstead Green	Gosfield		1364	1	2	3	1	0	0	0
	Greenstead Green	Greenstead Green	668	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
		Whiteash Green		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hedingham and Maplestead	Castle Hedingham		1142	1	5	1	1	1	1	0
	Gestingthorpe		421	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Great Maplestead		355	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
	Little Maplestead		294	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Sible Hedingham		3665	1	4	1	1	3	1	1
	Wickham St.Paul		330	1	1	0	1	1	0	0
Stour Valley North	Belchamp Otten		164	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Belchamp St.Paul		331	1	3	1	0	0	0	0
	Belchamp Walter		198	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Borley		99	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Bulmer	Bulmer	568	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
		Bulmer Tye		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Foxearth		303	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Liston		46	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Ovington		54	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Pentlow		228	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Tilbury juxta Clare		140	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Ward	Parish	Settlement	Pop'n 2001	Hall	Pub	Primary School	Post Office	Grocery Store	Doctor Surgery	Cash Point
Stour Valley South	Alphamstone		177	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Bures Hamlet		765	1	3	1	1	0	1	0
	Great Henny		126	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Lamarsh		177	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Little Henny		48	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Middleton		128	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Pebmarsh		479	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
	Twinstead		165	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Three Colnes	Colne Engaine		979	1	1	1	0	1	0	1
	Earls Colne		3389	1	4	1	1	1	1	1
	White Colne		480	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Upper Colne	Ashen		315	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Birdbrook	Baythorne End	369	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Birdbrook		1	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Ridgewell		503	1	2	1	0	1	0	0
	Stambourne		401	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Toppesfield		533	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Yeldham	Great Yeldham		1715	1	3	1	1	2	1	0
	Little Yeldham		326	1	1	0	0	0	0	0

10 KEY SERVICES IN EACH PARISH

10.3 Witham Local Area

11 Parishes, 13 Settlements
Number of key services in each settlement and parish

Ward	Parish	Settlement	Pop'n 2001	Hall	Pub	Primary School	Post Office	Grocery Store	Doctor Surgery	Cash Point
Bradwell, Silver End and Rivenhall	Bradwell		512	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
	Rivenhall	Rivenhall	732	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
		Rivenhall End		1	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Silver End		3741	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Black Notley and Terling	Black Notley		1646	2	3	0	1	1	0	0
	Fairstead		206	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Faulkbourne		101	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Terling		774	1	0	1	1	1	1	0
	White Notley		500	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Hatfield Peverel	Hatfield Peverel	Hatfield Peverel	4384	1	6	1	1	3	1	1
		Nounsley		0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Kelvedon	Feering *		1985	1	3	1	0	0	0	1
	Kelvedon		3485	1	2	1	1	4	2	3

* Totals for Feering Parish are included here. Feering North is in Coggeshall Ward (Braintree Area). The majority of Feering services and facilities are south of the railway line and therefore in Witham Area.

11 SURVEY FORM

Every two years Braintree District Council conducts a survey of services and facilities in rural areas of the district. The information gathered helps to inform the plans and strategies of the council and its partner organisations.

The last rural services survey, conducted in 2008, had a 100% response rate from parishes in the district and is available on the website
http://www.braintree.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/81C73EC2-38D9-4AA0-96FA-E4391E49A60E/0/BraintreeDistrictRuralServicesSurvey2008.pdf

For the 2010 survey, as well as updating our records, we would like to find out more about whether your services and facilities meet local needs. If you need information about saving services at risk, improving services, refurbishing or extending facilities, we will try to provide advice about funding and support available. From the responses to this survey and from other information we will also be trying to assess the sustainability and self sufficiency of each of the parishes in the district.

How to respond to this survey

Below is the information you kindly provided for the 2008 rural services survey. New items will have blank entries. Facilities and services provided/run by the parish council or by local community groups are shown in red.

(a) 'Yes/No' and 'Number' columns – please amend entries to indicate any changes since the last survey, and insert entry where blank. Include numbers where appropriate;

(b) 'Services and Facilities' column – please amend the colour (black/red) and correct the service details (e.g. survey item 46 – list of clubs and organisations) if incorrect;

© 'At risk' and 'Improvement needed' columns – if a service or facility is at risk or needs to be improved, please place a mark in the appropriate column and, in the 'Issues' column, add comments to provide some details (The cell will expand as you type information);

(d) 'Resources and assistance needed' column – please let us know if a project to improve or save a service is being considered or is in progress in your village, and what resources/ assistance is needed. (The cell will expand as you type information);

(e) Return the completed / amended form by email to janco2@braintree.gov.uk

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey

Parish ……

Contact Name ……

email ……

	SERVICES AND FACILITIES	Y/N	Number	At risk	Improvement needed			Issues relating to the service / facility	Resources and assistance needed
					Infrastructure	Service	Demand greater than provision		
	Key Services								
1	Hall								
2	Pub								
3	Primary School								
4	Post Office								
5	Grocery Store								
6	Doctor's Surgery								
7	Cash Point								
	Housing								
8	Affordable housing scheme for people with a local connection								
9	Sheltered housing site / complex								
10	Residential home for elderly								
11	Housing scheme for people with special needs								

	Economy (Business and Tourism)	Y/N	Number	At risk	Improvement needed			Issues relating to the service / facility	Resources and assistance needed
					Infrastructure	Service	Demand greater than provision		
12	Small business units								
13	Guide to local businesses								
14	Petrol station								
15	Other shops (provisions):								
16	Mobile retail services (provisions);								
17	Other retail and services:								
18	Restaurants / takeaways:								
19	Cafe								
20	B&B								
21	Tourist or Visitor Attraction								
22	Golf Course								
23	Broadband access								
24	Public car park								

	Equity (Provision for young, old and vulnerable)	Y/N	Number	At risk	Improvement needed			Issues relating to the service / facility	Resources and assistance needed
					Infrastructure	Service	Demand greater than provision		
25	Children's Centre								
26	Baby and Toddler group								
27	Pre-school or nursery								
28	After school club								
29	Youth council or forum								
30	Youth Club or mobile facility								
31	Meeting place exclusively for use by youth groups e.g. scout hut								
32	Organised activities for young people;								
33	Secondary School								
34	School for special needs								
35	Clubs for the elderly;								
36	Good Neighbour Scheme								
37	Village Agent								

	Environment	Y/N	Number	At risk	Improvement needed			Issues relating to the service / facility	Resources and assistance needed
					Infrastructure	Service	Demand greater than provision		
38	Nature Reserve, Country Park or similar								
39	Village Green								
40	Footpath Map / walk guide								
41	Allotment site								
42	Community orchard								
43	Community woodland								
44	Local composting scheme								
45	Mains sewerage								
46	Mains Gas								
47	Oil purchase consortium								
48	Renewable energy sources for community buildings								
49	Maintenance warden								
	Governance								
50	Parish office or information point								
51	Noticeboard								
52	Annual Parish Council report to every house								
53	Parish Council info on website								

	Social and Cultural	Y/N	Number	At risk	Improvement needed			Issues relating to the service / facility	Resources and assistance needed
					Infrastructure	Service	Demand greater than provision		
54	Clubs and organisations;								
55	Community / Parish magazine								
56	Community Web site								
57	Guide to community organisations and services								
58	Museum								
59	Church/faith group meeting place								
60	Cemetery or burial ground								
	Services								
61	Library (building or mobile)								
62	Community access to computers								
63	Play area / play equipment								
64	Sports field / pitch								
65	Hard court								
66	Venue for indoor sports (which may be school or village hall)								
67	Sports Pavilion / changing rooms								
68	Public Toilets								

69	Park / Gardens								
70	Police (station or mobile facility)								
71	Neighbourhood watch scheme								
72	Vet								
73	Dentist								
74	Optician								
75	Chemist or Pharmacy								
76	Chiropodist								
77	Other;								

	Transport and Access	**Details**	**Comments**
78	Main centre for services not available in the parish		
79	Bus service		
80	Community bus		
81	Train Service		
82	Car share scheme		

83	Any other comments

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey

Compiled by Jan Cole
Rural Community Council of Essex

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