

## **District Councillor's Report to Parish Councils August 2025**

### **Cllr. Diana Garrod - Bumpstead Ward**

#### **Scheduled Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders & Roadworks**

Multi-way traffic signal at New England, Sturmer Road. Commencing 1<sup>st</sup> May to 24<sup>th</sup> October 2025 for Utility Asset Works. Anglian Water. Project: SEW-12079 - Stambourne Pump Away Scheme. Installing underground storm water storage pipes. E: [onealliancecustomers@anglianwater.co.uk](mailto:onealliancecustomers@anglianwater.co.uk) T: 03457 145 145.

The emergency closure of B1057 Cornish Hall End, Finchingfield, which commenced on 23rd July 2025 is estimated to be completed on 31st July 2025 (11:59), however, please check [one.network](https://one.network/?tm=144730970) for the most up to date information on duration of the emergency closure. It is requires whilst Anglian Water undertakes mains leakage repair works. <https://one.network/?tm=144730970> for the most up to date information regarding these works.

Intended closure of Bower Hall Drive, Steeple Bumpstead, due to commence on 19th August 2025 for 3 days. The closure is required while Anglian Water undertakes new connection. <https://one.network/?tm=144085322>

Intended closure of Haverhill Road, Helions Bumpstead, due to commence on 21st September 2025 for 2 days. The closure is required while Anglian Water undertakes new connection. <https://one.network/?tm=144432123>

Closure of Howe Street to Dyer's End, Stambourne (Finchingfield Rd). 29/08/25 – 02/09/25 for UK Power Newtworks, 29/09/25 – 02/10/25 for Openreach,

NB: Cancellation of the road surfacing and intended closure of Water Lane, Hempstead Road, was due to commence on 23rd July 2025 for 30 days. <https://one.network/?tm=142991133>

#### **Sturmer Station Bridge – Update**

ECC Highways has revisited their assessment of the bridge. This re-assessment is in its final stages. ECC Highways are confident about the result and that is *“that the structure cannot carry full highway loading.”*

BDC's understanding of this outcome is that it increases the priority and funding options for the project as the funding is no longer entirely reliant on flood funding. In terms of preliminary works BDC has sought clarification from ECC Highways and we have been advised the following:-

*“Plans for the preliminary works have been put on hold as the bridge replacement did not qualify for funding from the Local Levy and Flood Defence Grant in Aid. However, ECC Highways are still actively working with Essex County Council's flood team to investigate other options to get financial support to prioritise the scheme. ECC Highways explained the scheme and the options from a structural perspective in a tracker meeting and will raise again following the finalisation of the assessment and ECC's Flood team investigations.”*

BDC's Emergency Team has not been asked for a contribution toward the scheme.

BDC Councillors and Officers have been consistently lobbying for prioritisation of funding for the project via the ECC Flood Team, ECC Highways Team and the Essex Flood Partnership Board. The project was again raised 23<sup>rd</sup> July at the Essex Flood Partnership Board meeting with Cllrs (Cllr Tom Cunningham and Cllr Peter Schwier) highlighting the importance of the scheme and requesting funding to be prioritised as soon as possible.

The agenda is published for the July 23rd meeting on the ECC website but the minutes are not yet published:  
<https://cmis.essex.gov.uk/essexcmis5/CalendarofMeetings/tabid/73/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/410/Meeting/5569/Committee/145/Default.aspx>

Cllr P Schwier has made the following comments:

*“The assessment is undergoing technical approval, and we are looking to complete it by mid-October 2025. Although currently the assessment is not complete, we are confident that the structure cannot carry full highway loading.*

*Plans for the preliminary works were put on hold as the bridge replacement does not qualify for funding from the Local Levy and Flood Defence Grant in Aid. However, we are still actively working with Essex County Council’s flood team to investigate other options to get financial support.*

*We explained the scheme and the options from a structural perspective in a County Council tracker meeting earlier in the year and will raise again following the finalisation of the assessment and ECC’s Flood teams investigations for funding.”*

### **Housing**

295 Affordable Homes were delivered in 2024-25, completing 45 homes above the annual target. There were 25 affordable housing completions in May 2025 – 20 Affordable Rent and 5 for Shared Ownership on sites in Halstead, and Cressing. Anticipated completions for June 2025 – around 35. Affordable housing delivery target for year is 250. 51 Affordable housing completions to date in the current year period.



	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
23-24	77	90	162	95
24-25	58	70	113	54
25-26	51			

(2025-26 Q1 numbers are for 2 completed months)

The Healthy Housing strategy has also seen the launch of a Landlord Incentive and Tenancy Sustainment Scheme, which has supported 47 households to date into the private rented sector and prevented 34 children from having to go into temporary accommodation. The scheme provides an incentive to private landlords to help offer greater options for affordable rent and has been extended for a further two years.

The Empty Homes Scheme has seen 32 long term empty homes come back into use and has also been extended for a further two years.

### **Temporary Accommodation**

At the end of March 2025 there were 52 households in temporary accommodation, this is equal to last year.

### **Rough Sleeping Partnership**

Cases which were prevented or relieved have declined throughout the year with 28 prevented and 19 relieved cases in the fourth quarter. The BDC Housing Team are in the early stages of working with partners to establish a Rough Sleeping Partnership to discuss cases of verified rough sleepers in the district. Once the partnership is set up, there will be a targeted response to supporting rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping.

### **Essex Police – Counter Closures**

Essex Police have closed several police front counters, including Braintree, Harlow, Clacton and Basildon, also council-shared spaces at Saffron Walden and Maldon. This was effective from 11 July. They have advised that whilst the front counter will close, Braintree Police Station will remain open and operational, with officers and staff continuing to work from the site. Residents will still be able to make appointments to meet with officers at the station. As a result of all the closures, nine members of staff have chosen not to take other roles and will be made redundant. Chelmsford, Colchester, Grays and Southend front counters will remain open and unchanged.

### **The Reverend Canon Jonathan Lowe and his wife The Reverend Theresa Lowe**

Jonathan and Theresa have decided to step back from parish ministry. From the end of April next year, they will be moving into “semi-retirement” and relocating to Norfolk. Jonathan will continue in his part-time role as an Army Chaplain at Pirbright. Theresa will be retiring from her teaching role at Ridgewell School at the end of this summer term. However, she will remain part of the governing body and plans to continue visiting regularly, leading collective worship and supporting where she can until we move.

### **Local Plan Review to 2041 – Current Status**

Due to Government mandatory housing targets, the Local Plan Review is looking at growth options post 2033 to 2042. The new targets are tougher, and it's the same for every local authority across the country. The Government is also paying particular attention to the ambitious growth intended for our neighbouring Cambridge and its environs. The Cambridge Growth Company will be supported by £10 million. The Government document 'The Case for Cambridge' outlines the economic rationale and 'its' potential to enhance its position as Europe's science capital'.

The Local Plan Sub Committee at BDC has made decisions on the 18 smaller sites submitted within the Bumpstead Ward. Site STEB2282 at Blois Meadow Business Park is allocated for employment use. The larger sites within the Braintree District will be



considered at meetings scheduled 24/09/25, 01/10/25 and 06/11/25. This will include STUR2293 Land south of Haverhill, 314 Hectares which straddles Sturmer and Helions Bumpstead and would see around 5000 dwellings.

See: <https://www.catesbyestates.co.uk/land/haverhill-vales-haverhill>

It is very likely that the Government's recent decision to cancel the long-awaited A12 Chelmsford to A120 Widening Scheme will mean that there is considerable uncertainty of the ability to provide further growth in areas such as Witham, Kelvedon and Hatfield Peveral. Indicating that the north of the district may be the focus for further growth. I follow the LPR with interest. Sadly, I have not yet seen any evidence of new or improved infrastructure for the housing growth that is anticipated.

Residents and all interested parties will have the opportunity to comment and share their views on the sites as part of the 'Preferred Options' consultation planned for Nov/Dec 2025. Those comments will be reported back to the Local Plan Sub-Committee for consideration before the final plan is consulted on in early 2026. Christmas is a busy time, so look out for it!

### **Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation Update**

It was confirmed in the House of Commons 17<sup>th</sup> July that Greater Essex will go ahead with Devolution and work towards establishing a Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA) can proceed. The Government's English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, which was recently introduced, is set for a second reading in the House of Commons in September. Separate legislation to create the MCCA will then go through Parliament in the autumn/winter. The MCCA is set to be legally established in early 2026, with a mayoral election scheduled for Thurs. 7 May 2026.

On 17<sup>th</sup> July, Essex County Council announced their preferred configuration for LGR as part of the business case they are developing.

Chief Executives and Leaders across the Essex authorities are working to develop detailed proposals for unitary authority configuration, ahead of submission to Government by Friday 26 September 2025. At present these proposals will take the form of 3 separate business cases (ultimately, the final decision will be made by Ministers):

- One proposing to move to 5 Unitary Authorities, this is being led by Southend Council.
- One proposing to move to 4 Unitary Authorities, this is being led by Thurrock Council.
- One proposing to move to 3 Unitary Authorities, this is being led by Essex County Council. Their preferred configuration for their 3 unitary proposal would mean that in north Essex there would be a single unitary covering Braintree, Colchester, Tendring and Uttlesford.

This will be the largest reorganisation in local government in over 50 years.

### **Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy – Now Published**

Nature in Essex has suffered significantly over the last century, and continues to suffer, from species loss, habitat loss and increased habitat fragmentation. There are multiple causes for this, including land use change, invasive species, pollution, overexploitation and climate change. Therefore, it is crucial to place nature recovery at the centre of future action for the environment, to create new habitats and recover and enhance space for nature that has been lost or degraded. The role of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) is to provide a county-wide, practical solution for nature recovery. The Government has established a nationwide network of 48 Responsible Authorities, each being required to create a LNRS for its area. Essex County Council is the Responsible Authority for the Greater Essex LNRS. See this document at: <https://www.essexclimate.org.uk/sites/default/files/lhrs-strategy-may-25.pdf>

### **BDC Prosecutes Taxi Driver for Refusal to Carry Guide Dog and Owner**

A taxi driver, in breach of the Equalities Act 2010, has been prosecuted after refusing to carry a guide dog and its owner. Mr Budulan, a licensed Hackney Carriage driver, pleaded guilty at Chelmsford Magistrates' Court on Thursday, 24 July 2025 for refusing to carry an assistance dog and its owner to an address in Witham. Braintree District Council brought the prosecution against the driver following an incident which took place on Wednesday, 21 August 2024.

A member of the public who is registered blind approached Mr Budulan's vehicle at a taxi rank in Albert Road, Witham, and asked to be taken to an address in town, but the driver refused to allow the guide dog into his vehicle. After the refusal, the passenger was assisted by a second Hackney Carriage driver who agreed to take them both to their destination. The court imposed a £325 fine and ordered Mr Budulan to pay a surcharge of £130 and costs of £600 to Braintree District Council. The total fine came to £1,055.

Cllr. Diana Garrod  
Braintree District Councillor - Bumpstead Ward