

# **Councillor Peter Schwier**

## **Gosfield & Greenstead Green Ward**

### **Braintree District Council**

**2025 – 2026**

It is a privilege to serve as the District Councillor for the Gosfield and Greenstead Green ward, representing our villages and rural communities on Braintree District Council.

Our ward is made up of proud and historic villages, with Gosfield Green at its heart, surrounded by countryside, farmland and close-knit communities that give this part of the district its distinctive rural character. These places are more than locations on a map — they are communities where people know their neighbours, take pride in their surroundings and work together to protect what makes village life special.

One of my key priorities as your councillor is to ensure that the voice of our rural communities is heard clearly at the District Council. Decisions made at the Council affect the services we rely on, the protection of our countryside and how development is planned across the district.

Over the past year Braintree District Council has continued to focus on delivering services, supporting economic growth and maintaining strong financial management. Throughout these discussions I have worked to ensure that policies and decisions reflect the needs of villages like Gosfield, Greenstead Green and the wider rural area.

Alongside my role as a District Councillor, I also serve as an Essex County Councillor, which allows me to raise local issues at both district and county level. I regularly attend parish council meetings and work with residents, community groups and local organisations to address concerns and support local projects.

“My priority is making sure the rural voice of our villages is heard clearly when decisions are made across the district.”

This report highlights some of the key work undertaken by Braintree District Council during 2025–2026, and how these decisions support our communities.

## Ward Highlights – 2025–2026

Key developments and achievements across the district this year include:

- Introduction of improved recycling services and future waste collection changes
- Continued strong financial management with no increase in District Council tax
- Progress on the Braintree District Local Plan refresh
- Investment supporting local business and employment
- Continued rapid fly-tipping clearance to protect our countryside
- Ongoing Councillor Community Grants supporting local organisations

These initiatives help ensure the Council continues to deliver services while supporting residents and communities across the district.

## Transformation, Environment & Customer Services

### Waste Collection Changes

One of the most significant service changes planned for the coming year is the move to a three-weekly general waste collection, alongside improvements to recycling services.

This follows public consultation and detailed communication with residents, ensuring households understand the changes and how the new system will work.

#### What's Changing (from June 2026)

-  General waste (grey bin): collected every 3 weeks
-  Food waste: collected weekly
-  Two recycling bins: paper/card and mixed recycling collected on rotation
-  Garden waste collections remain fortnightly for subscribers

This approach supports national recycling targets while maintaining reliable services for residents.

#### Bin Collection Change – Timeline

Late 2025 – Early 2026 - Communication campaign and preparation

June 2026 - New collection arrangements begin.

## Tackling Fly-Tipping

Fly-tipping is a challenge faced by many rural areas.

Braintree District Council's environmental teams have continued to perform strongly in responding to reports, with the majority of incidents cleared within 24 hours.

This rapid response helps protect the appearance of our countryside, rural roads and village environments.

## Finance, Resources & Performance

One of the key strengths of Braintree District Council continues to be strong financial management.

Despite the financial pressures facing councils across the country, Braintree has maintained a stable financial position while continuing to deliver services and invest in local priorities.

Importantly for residents:

Braintree District Council has not increased its council tax this year.

Careful financial planning ensures the Council can continue to deliver services and remain financially sustainable in the years ahead.

"Braintree remains a well-run council with strong financial management and a clear focus on delivering for residents."

## Planning, Economic Growth & Infrastructure

### Local Plan Refresh

Work is currently underway on the refresh of the Braintree District Local Plan, which will guide how development takes place across the district in the future.

The Local Plan ensures that:

- Housing growth is properly planned
- Infrastructure keeps pace with development
- The countryside and rural character of the district are protected
- Development takes place in appropriate locations

Public engagement will remain important so that local communities can help shape the future of the district.

## Supporting Local Business

Economic growth continues to be an important priority.

The industrial and business units near Black Notley have been a successful example of how investment can support local businesses while creating jobs and strengthening the local economy.

Projects like this help ensure the district remains a strong place for businesses to grow and invest.

## Housing

Providing appropriate housing across the district continues to be an important priority for the Council.

The focus remains on ensuring that new housing is supported by infrastructure and careful planning, while protecting the character of rural communities.

For villages like those in our ward, it is particularly important that development takes place in a way that respects local character, countryside and community identity.

## Health, Wellbeing & Stronger Communities

Strong communities are at the heart of the district.

One initiative that continues to make a real difference is the Councillor Community Grant Scheme, which supports projects led by local organisations and community groups.

I am pleased that community grants will continue into the coming year, helping parish councils, voluntary groups and community organisations deliver projects that benefit residents.

## Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

Across Essex there are ongoing discussions about Local Government Reorganisation, which may reshape how local councils operate in the future.

While these discussions continue, it is important that any future arrangements:

- Maintain strong local representation
- Protect effective local services
- Recognise well-managed councils

Braintree District Council remains financially stable and well-run, and these strengths must be recognised in any future changes.

## Representing Gosfield & Greenstead Green

Being your local councillor is a responsibility I take seriously.

I maintain a strong attendance record at council meetings, and I aim to respond promptly to residents who contact me with concerns or questions.

As both a District Councillor and Essex County Councillor, I regularly attend parish council meetings and work closely with local communities.

This allows me to raise local issues at both levels of government and ensure that the concerns of our villages continue to be heard and addressed.

## Looking Ahead

Braintree District Council remains in a strong position financially and operationally, and the focus for the future will continue to be:

- Protecting essential services
- Supporting local economic growth
- Strengthening communities
- Ensuring rural areas remain properly represented

It remains a privilege to represent the residents of Gosfield and Greenstead Green, and I will continue working hard to support our villages and communities.

Councillor Peter Schwier

**Deputy Cabinet Member to the Cabinet Member for Planning *and* the Cabinet Member for Economic Growth & Infrastructure**

**\*Lead Member for Rural Issues**

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