

Council's Response to Inspector's Further Matters (September 2013)

Further and additional representations

2. The Council has addressed question i) of Issue 1 regarding consultation and the specific questions concerning Hullbridge and Canewdon. However, in the light of the hearing statements from Representor 28594 concerned with Rayleigh does it wish to say anything more by **Friday 6 September** to respond to the specific comments in this regard?

The Council sought to raise awareness of emerging planning policy for the District, initially during the preparation of the Core Strategy.

With particular reference to Rayleigh, manned public exhibitions took place along Rayleigh High Street and at Rawreth Village Hall during consultation on the 2006 Issues and Options Document.

During the 2007 consultation on the Preferred Options Document, manned public exhibitions were held at the following locations: Rawreth Village Hall, Rayleigh High Street and Rayleigh Windmill.

In 2008 an unmanned public exhibition was staged at Rayleigh leisure centre during the Revised Preferred Options consultation. In addition, a public meeting was held at Edward Francis Junior School in Rayleigh and a secondary school workshop was held at Fitzwimarc School in Rayleigh. Leaflets were also handed out to commuters at the District's train stations, including Rayleigh.

From 2007 onwards those on the Council's mailing list were directly consulted by letter and email, and other forms of media including press releases, posters and articles in Rochford District Matters were utilised. Rochford District Matters is the Council's free newsletter that is sent to all households in the District.

Letters and emails were sent out to those individuals and organisations on the Council's mailing list highlighting the Submission Document consultation in 2009 inviting them to comment. The consultation also featured on the Council's website, an article appeared in Rochford District Matters, posters and press releases were issued, and there was local press coverage.

The Council utilised a wide range of media to advertise the consultation and how people can get involved in the preparation of the Allocations Document. In addition to the mailing list of individuals and organisations who were directly contacted to comment on the document in 2010, the Council also advertised the consultation on its website, Parish Council notice boards, in local media (including local press coverage such as the Evening Echo and Rayleigh and Eastwood Times) and within the Council's free newsletter, Rochford District Matters, where appropriate.

Officers also gave a presentation on the purpose and content of the document at an evening public meeting in Rayleigh in March 2010 and Rawreth in April 2010, at which

the public could ask questions. Leaflets, which summarised the document and explained how to comment, were also available at the meeting.

Over 500 representations were made on the options for Rayleigh during consultation on the initial stage of the Allocations Document in 2010. Grove Park Residents Association, Louis Drive Estate Residents Association, Rawreth Parish Council, Rayleigh Grange Community Association, Rayleigh Town Council, Rayleigh Town Sports and Social Club, and businesses such as PGM Carpentry Contractors, Repro Sales and Repairs Ltd, Sectorsure Ltd (Grange Filling Station), and Swallow Aquatics commented during the consultation.

Consequently these groups and organisations and other Rayleigh and Rawreth residents who responded to the consultation and/or were on the Council's mailing list were directly invited to comment on the submission document in November 2012. A follow-up mailshot was also sent in early January 2013 to those with an email address to remind them of the opportunity to participate in the consultation. Other forms of media included press releases, posters in Parish Council notice boards, local media coverage and an article in Rochford District Matters, the Council's free newsletter.

In total 49 representations specifically commenting on proposed Rayleigh allocations (Policy BFR4, SER1, GT1, NEL1 and NEL2) were received during the pre-submission consultation on the Plan. Rawreth Parish Council and Louis Drive Residents Association responded to the consultation.

The Council considered each of the representations submitted during each consultation stage and identified the main issues raised by respondents. These issues as well as officers initial responses to these at both stages in the preparation of the Plan have been included in the Consultation Statement for the Allocations.

The Allocations has been prepared since 2010 taking into consideration consultation responses received at each stage. The Council were also mindful of comments raised during the preparation of the Core Strategy. The Submission Document sought to address issues raised during the 2010 consultation, for example concern was raised in relation to flood risk and in response to this the Concept Statement for the site to the 'North of London Road, Rayleigh' requires the area at risk of flooding to be set aside for open space. In addition suitable sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) would be required to manage excess surface water. The Council's response to comments raised throughout the consultation, including any proposed changes is set out in the Consultation Statement.

3. As part of the hearing session on 11 September the site at Eastwood Nurseries will be discussed (Representor 29002). It would be helpful if the Council could explain by **Friday 6 September** the consideration given to the site (Call for Site Allocations Site 146); the reasons for its non-inclusion in the Document and any further comments regarding its soundness.

Site 146 (Eastwood Nurseries) is located within the general location of 'South/South East Rayleigh'. The preferred general locations for development and reasonable alternatives were considered during the preparation of the Core Strategy, and its

subsequent examination. Several housing options for Rayleigh were considered; West Rayleigh (North of London Road, Rayleigh), East Rayleigh, South West Rayleigh, North Rayleigh, South/South East Rayleigh and Rawreth village. Further detail on the appraisal of the general locations is provided within the Core Strategy SA Addendum¹. In summary, it was concluded that:

“Land to the south of Rayleigh is constrained by the A127, A1015 and existing development, including industrial development at Brook Road, as well as potential flooding issues. It therefore does not have the advantage of some of the other locations in terms of creating sufficient economies of scale to fund infrastructure and community services. Development in this location will also lead to coalescence between Rayleigh and settlements to the south.” (page A1 – 19)

The Allocations Document is required to confirm to the Core Strategy and so, in relation to Rayleigh in particular, only options within the general location of ‘North of London Road, Rayleigh’ were included within the initial Discussion and Consultation Document in 2010, as this general location was proposed within the Core Strategy, and was being examined at that time.

The location ‘North of London Road, Rayleigh’ has been identified for the development of 550 dwellings and associated infrastructure including a new primary school, was found to be sound and forms part of the development plan for the District (as it is identified in the adopted Core Strategy).

As part of the preparation of the Submission Document, all of the sites submitted to the Council for consideration in the preparation of the Local Development Framework went through a screening process to determine their compliance with the Core Strategy, for example whether the proposed site would accord with Policy H1, or would be commensurate with the general locations identified within Policy H2 and H3.

The Site Screening Report forms part of the evidence base (72.EB23). Site 146 (Eastwood Nurseries) was considered within the screening report (page 79) but was screened out at this stage as it would not accord with Policy H1, H2 or H3 of the development plan i.e. it is not located within the existing residential area and is not located within a Core Strategy general location.

Those sites which were considered to accord with the relevant Core Strategy policies were therefore screened in (such as Site 144; Land at Rawreth Lane and Site 173; Land west of Rawreth Industrial Estate) as appropriate, and were then assessed in further detail (75.EB26).

¹ Core Strategy SA Addendum. Available from: http://fs-drupal-rochford.s3.amazonaws.com/pdf/pla_policy_corestrat_sa_appraisal2011.pdf

Further comments on Inspector's questions

Using the original numbering:

17. The Access Appraisal in Appendix 7 of the Council's statement concludes that a safer, higher standard access could be provided to Site NEL2. However, the Highway Authority is unable to support this allocation as set out in its hearing statement. It would be of assistance if the Council could ensure that the Highway Authority has had sight of the Appendix 7 report prior to the hearing session. Furthermore, an up-to-date position statement from the Highway Authority by **Friday 6 September** would also assist in enabling the discussion to focus on any outstanding matters of disagreement.

The Council provided the Highways Authority with a copy of Appendix 7 and it is understood that a revised position statement has been submitted, as requested.