

Core Strategy General Housing Locations - Audit Trail

Issues and Options

Production of Issues and Options

The issue of locations for housing development in relation to the production of the Core Strategy Issues and Options iteration was discussed at Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 1st and 28th March 2006 (minutes, agendas and background documents are available via <http://cmis.rochford.gov.uk/CMISWebPublic/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=5138> and <http://cmis.rochford.gov.uk/CMISWebPublic/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=5149>, respectively).

Key elements of the report to Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1st March included the following statements:

- Work is now underway to prepare a baseline audit of the district's assets [the Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) Baseline Information Profile was subsequently published and is updated on an annual basis], which will provide a starting point to enable the sustainability of the plans, policies and proposals to be tested and measured over time;
- Officers have also given some thought to spatial objectives that might be relevant/appropriate to the district;
- As part of the background to the preparation of options, it will be important to think about the particular characteristics that shape and define the district. This is a spatial process best carried out using maps and diagrams. Accordingly, the Committee will be provided with a set of maps and plans to use as a resource to develop initial thoughts on these matters. Two issues that will need to be carefully considered during the preparation of the Core Strategy relate to the broad areas where development may or may not take place in the future.

First, taking account of protective designations and the characteristics of the District including the location of centres, the road network, etc, is it possible to identify areas where new development in the future would not be appropriate in any scale?

Second, is it possible to identify broad locations for required allocations or proposed development as required in the Core Strategy? These broad locations should not be site specific, but will identify possible

options to be considered during the informal community consultation stage of plan preparation;

- The assessment of land for future housing is not though simply an examination of green field sites. Also important, in accordance with government advice, will be an assessment of the capacity of the existing urban areas to accommodate additional development. In simple terms, two issues must be considered. First, the opportunities for realistic further intensification of residential areas, a difficult issue given growing concerns about the impact of increasing residential densities. Second, an assessment of non-residential uses, particularly employment areas, and a decision about whether these should be retained or might be redeveloped for housing;
- The industrial estates in the district are of variable quality and a recent study for TGSE concluded that most industrial areas in South Essex were unattractive, run down and old fashioned. An initial assessment has been carried out of the industrial estates in the district to assess their suitability for housing redevelopment or their imperative for retention as employment areas;
- In examining this analysis, Members will need to begin to give some thought to the value of each industrial area and determine whether there is any justification for a residential use. In deliberating on this question, it may be that the value of an industrial area for employment is paramount, but that the existing estate might be better relocated to a new site, enabling the creation of modern facilities and allowing residential redevelopment of the old site;
- It should be borne in mind that an additional 3000 jobs is intended to be a net figure. This is important because there is no doubt that some jobs will be lost, for many reasons, and the overall aim of the strategy is not to stand still, but to move forward to provide additional jobs that will adjust the imbalance between resident workers and jobs and reduce out-commuting.

A report was subsequently made to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 28th March 2006. This included options for the distribution of housing for Members to consider, along with their respective advantages / disadvantages. These were as follows:

Option 1 – all development should be concentrated within the existing urban areas.

Advantages – minimises the release of Green Belt land.

Disadvantages – will increase urban cramming and have significant impacts on residential amenity.

Option 2 – all development to be located in a new settlement.

Advantages – greater potential to ensure the provision of appropriate infrastructure.

Disadvantages – significant impact on the District and will not resolve any existing infrastructure issues.

Option 3 – new development to be provided as urban extensions to the existing settlements of Rayleigh, Rochford and Hockley.

Advantages – possible to consider infrastructure improvements for each of the main settlements and to ensure affordable housing provision contributes to identified need.

Disadvantages – smaller releases may be less sustainable and yield fewer infrastructure benefits.

Other key aspects of the report in relation to the approach to housing included the following statements:

- A key part of the first stage informal community consultation on the Core Strategy will be the identification of development options.
- Development options will, of course, link closely with the vision, but it is possible to suggest some of the options that might be considered. It is important to bear in mind that a discussion of options at this stage should not revolve around their credibility per se, though perhaps it would be appropriate to exclude any really extreme suggestions. That having been said, it is for the informal consultation stage to tease out the practicality and realism of options after which the Council can consider its preferred option. Having drawn out some possible options, the Council is required to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment of them, and this process will play a key role in identifying the appropriateness of those options and ultimately the identification of the preferred option.
- The list of options is not intended to be definitive, but to provide a focus for discussion. In reality, following consultation, the favoured spatial option is likely to be more complicated and to take account of the arguments for releasing land for development and the implications of continuing intensification of the existing built up areas

Key points in relation to development locations from the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 28th March 2006 include:

- Whilst it may be possible to consider an option such as locating all development in a new settlement, it is important to ensure that

residents are provided with an opportunity to give their views on all possible options

- Whilst the report identified that one option could be urban extension to the existing settlements of Rayleigh, Rochford and Hockley, there is no reason why the Authority could not consider the expansion of smaller settlements with a view to developing their sustainability. There would need to be associated strategic/environmental assessments. The importance of the retention of community identity for settlements could be incorporated within the Council's vision.
- A high number of new dwellings would have to be introduced to point to a need for a new secondary school. In that there are schools within the District working to capacity, any options would need to be discussed with the Local Education Authority.
- It was resolved that the broad development options, as set out in the report, be part of the informal community consultation process.

The Core Strategy Issues and Options document was approved for public consultation at Planning Policy and Transportation Committee on 12th September 2006 (details, including minutes and reports, available via <http://cmis.rochford.gov.uk/CMISWebPublic/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=5227>).

Key elements of this Core Strategy Issues and Options document relevant to housing locations were as follows:

- Identification of strategic gaps – areas of the Green Belt which are particularly worthy of protection as they prevent coalescence of settlements (para 4.2.4)
- Intensification of existing urban areas not felt to have had a positive impact on their character, although it was noted that it has helped restrict demand for Green Belt development (para. 4.5.3)
- Role of the redevelopment of previously developed land considered important in reducing need to develop Green Belt land (4.5.4)
- Phasing of the development of sites considered important, particularly with regard to infrastructure provision (para 4.5.5 and 4.5.6)
- It is stated that the Council will allocate land in locations that are considered sustainable and such locations will be tested through the Strategic Environmental Assessment / Sustainability Appraisal process (para 4.6.2)
- Identification of three tiers of settlements based on provision of services, facilities and access to public transport (para 4.6.3 – 4.6.5)
- Proposed strategy of focussing on existing settlements, with the main settlements in the district taking the majority of development required. The majority is defined as 90% of the housing development required. The main settlements are considered to be Hawkwell / Hockley,

Rayleigh and Rochford / Ashingdon. Also proposes minor extensions to Canewdon, Great Wakering and Hullbridge. (para 4.6.6 and 4.6.7)

Options put forward of particular relevance to housing locations were as follows:

Housing Numbers and Phasing

POSSIBLE	PROBABLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not attempting to meet the cascaded figure due to the restrictive development position vis-a-vis the green belt. • Relying on windfall development and urban intensification, to prevent the need for any green belt releases. • Not allocating land to accommodate all the dwelling units and relying on a percentage of windfall development and urban intensification. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring enough land is allocated to accommodate all of the cascaded figure for homes from the <i>East of England Plan (RSS14)</i> for the period 2001 to 2021. • Prioritise the reuse of previously developed land in urban areas, on bigger sites. • A timescale will be specified detailing the expected phasing of development.

General Development Locations:

POSSIBLE	PROBABLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater dispersal to minor settlements, enabling possible regeneration of local facilities. • Split the housing allocation evenly between the parishes (excluding Foulness), so that each area gets a small amount of housing. • Develop a new settlement, well related to transport links and providing its own basic infrastructure. • Focus solely on an expansion of one settlement, creating a significant urban expansion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate the total number of housing units to the top (90%) and second tier (10%) settlements, to gain a smaller number of large sites which will deliver the greatest amount of infrastructure improvements. • A timescale will be specified detailing the expected phasing of development.

Sustainability Appraisal of Issues and Options

Sustainability Appraisal (including the requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment) of the Core Strategy Issues and Options was undertaken by Essex County Council

(http://www.rochford.gov.uk/PDF/planning_strategic_environmental_assessment_and_sustainability_appraisal_environmental_report.pdf)

The Sustainability Appraisal was underpinned by the Strategic Environmental Baseline Information Profile 2005-2006

(http://www.rochford.gov.uk/planning/policy/local_development_framework/evidence_base/strategic_environmental_assess.aspx). This baseline report provided a detailed assessment of numerous characteristics in the District relevant to sustainability, including:

- Biodiversity, flora and fauna
- Water
- Soil
- Air quality
- Climatic factors
- Built environment
- Population and health
- Heritage

In considering general development locations, the SA identified the following:

Options Greater dispersal to minor settlements, enabling possible regeneration of local facilities and Split the housing allocation evenly between the parishes (excluding Foulness), so that each area gets a small amount of housing was found to have major negative effects in the short, medium and long term.

Option Develop a new settlement, well related to transport links and providing its own basic infrastructure would result in increasingly negative impacts throughout time.

Option Focus solely on an expansion of one settlement, creating a significant urban expansion had a diverse range of impacts with both negative and positive effects.

Option Allocate the total number of housing units to the top (90%) and second tier (10%) settlements, to gain a smaller number of large sites which will deliver the greatest amount of infrastructure improvements had the greatest concentration of positive effects.

Consultation response to Issues and Options

The Council undertook community involvement in the Issues and Options iteration as set out in the Consultation Statement (http://www.rochford.gov.uk/PDF/planning_cs_consultation_statement.pdf)

As set out in the Consultation Statement, the summary of the consultation response was as follows:

“The general feeling is that there is already enough housing and that some settlements are full. Strong feeling that the green belt should not be built on. Common response is to develop brownfield sites in existing settlements. The option of providing a new settlement was largely rejected. No clear preference as to which settlements should take new housing and which should not. There is a need to improve infrastructure”.

Responses from specific consultation bodies included the following:

Essex County Council suggested the adoption of a policy that sought to locate development where access to day to day facilities and services is readily available by public transport, walking and cycling thereby reducing the need to travel, particularly by car. They also encouraged the adoption of a policy seeking to locate employment development in sustainable locations that are accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.

Preferred Options

Production of Preferred Options

The next iteration of the Core Strategy – the Preferred Options – was produced having regard to the results of consultation and appraisal of the Issues and Options.

The results of consultation were presented to Members of the Planning Policy and Transportation Committee on 15th February 2007 (details of meeting available via <http://cmis.rochford.gov.uk/CMISWebPublic/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=5209>).

Key points from the minutes of this meet were:

- The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning and Transportation summarising the representations received during the Regulation 25 consultation process and seeking approval for the Planning Policy Sub-Committee to consider the representations further and to use these to inform the preparation of the Core Strategy Regulation 26 draft;

- Responding to a further Member question relating to the range of residents consulted, officers confirmed that the Authority had sought to ensure that representatives from all parts of the community were engaged in the consultation process and had, for example, visited secondary schools within the district and spoken to students there with respect to Regulation 25.

The proposed draft of the Core Strategy Preferred Options was reported to Members of the Planning Policy Sub-Committee on 22nd March 2007 (details of meeting available via <http://cmis.rochford.gov.uk/CMISWebPublic/CommitteeDetails.aspx?committeeID=1224>) . The Preferred Options document included preferred and alternative options.

Paragraphs 4.6.2 to 4.6.9 of the Core Strategy Preferred Options set out the Council's preferred approach, developing the options identified as being most sustainable at Issues and Options. The preferred options for general locations was as follows:

- The Council will set out a policy detailing a settlement hierarchy split into three tiers based on services and sustainability;
- The Council will set out a policy detailing a timescale for the expected phasing of development;
- The Council will set out a policy allocating the total number of housing units to the top (90%) and second tier (10%) settlements, to gain a smaller number of large sites which will deliver the greatest amount of infrastructure improvements. The split (with approximate numbers) will be as follows:

HOUSING UNITS	
Completions 2001-2006	900
Rochford / Ashingdon	1000
Hockley / Hawkwell	400
Rayleigh	1800
Smaller settlements	500
TOTAL	4600

The report to Members of the 22nd March 2007 noted the following:

- The Planning Policy Sub-Committee considered the Regulation 25 draft last year and this was then subject to public consultation. The results of this consultation were reported in summary form to the Planning Policy & Transportation Committee on 15 February 2007 and a full version of the responses was placed in the Members' Library.
- The Council's preferred options, to be agreed by Members, are clearly identified throughout the document by using emboldened text in a box. Other possible alternatives are shown in a box without the text being

emboldened. These options are less preferable because they fail to meet sustainable development criteria or the Council's own standards.

The significant aspects of the minutes relevant to housing locations were as follows:

- Within the preferred options for housing section of the draft Regulation 26 document, an attempt was made to draw conclusions as to the general location around the district of the 3,500 new homes that have to be provided up to 2021. This was determined taking into account the existing settlements, environmental capacity and the requirement for green buffers between settlements. Affordable housing provision was determined by taking into account the guidance in Planning Policy Statement No. 3 and the East of England Plan. It was proposed that the district's affordable housing target should be 30% of houses on sites of 10 units or greater;
- During debate particular reference was made of the difficulty of allocating 1800 houses in Rayleigh without the infrastructure to cope with such a high volume. Concern was expressed that such numbers could lead to a diminution in the quality of housing, resulting in cramped flats and houses of mediocre quality. Members also questioned whether it might be possible to phase the housing more slowly in anticipation of the possibility of a new Government with different housing policies;
- Responding to a Member question relating to what specific criteria had been applied in order to establish the numbers of new houses detailed in the table on page 7.34 of the document, officers confirmed that two different sets of criteria had been applied. First of all the populations of the district's settlements were assessed. Rayleigh was the largest settlement, comprising half the population of the district. The distribution of population between the settlements was also assessed. Secondly, an attempt was made to evaluate the environmental capacity of the existing settlements in the district and assessing connectivity in terms of road networks and sustainability. It was clear that Rayleigh had a good road network that connected to South Essex. Conversely, Hockley and Hawkwell were badly located in terms of road networks, with the exception of the southern part of Hockley. Rochford and Ashingdon contain important environmental designations, and the eastern section was not well located in terms of the district's road networks. In addition, Ashingdon Road was the busiest road in the district.
- During debate of the proposed breakdown of housing by settlement within the district, although concern was expressed at the large figure for Rayleigh, it was nevertheless recognised that smaller settlements had poor public transport access and that the breakdowns proposed would be subject to public consultation.

Sustainability Appraisal of Preferred Options

As with the Issues and Options iteration, Sustainability Appraisal (including the requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment) of the Preferred Options document was undertaken by Essex County Council examining the sustainability of preferred options compared to alternatives (http://www.rochford.gov.uk/pdf/planning_strategic_environmental_assessment_and_sustainability_appraisal_environmental_report_2007.pdf).

The Sustainability Appraisal was again underpinned by the Strategic Environmental Assessment Baseline, providing a detailed assessment of numerous characteristics in the District relevant to sustainability.

The key findings of the Sustainability Appraisal in relation to the preferred housing location option were as follows:

- Focussing housing provision at the larger settlements would enable sustainable access to key services and could reduce the number of unfit homes, insofar as they are located in the larger settlements;
- Town centre vitality and viability would be promoted, with the degree of benefit to each centre related to the scale of housing;
- Impact on the landscape and the urban fringe would be dependent on the precise scale and location of any development sites on the edge or beyond settlements;
- Concentration of housing provision at the larger settlements could assist local business development and job opportunities by increasing the ability to provide a broader range of local services and facilities;
- The distribution of housing provision, by concentrating development at the larger centres, would positively support the promotion of more sustainable transport choices. It would assist maintenance and promotion of passenger transport, by increasing potential ridership levels, and use and provision of walking and cycling routes, by locating homes in close proximity to shops and other facilities;
- Development is being steered away from areas of particular ecological value.

Consultation response to Preferred Options

The main issues raised, as set out in the Consultation Statement, were as follows:

- There is too much residential development proposed for the settlement in which the respondent resides;
- There is no need for additional housing in the District;
- It is not clear where new development is proposed to go;
- Green Belt land should not be developed;
- Residential intensification is unwelcome;

- There is not enough infrastructure to support more housing;
- Roads are too congested;
- The District's green, open spaces are popular;
- Antisocial behaviour is a concern;
- There needs to be more for young people to do;
- Any new accommodation should be affordable;
- The District's character is liked. The historic character, in particular, needs to be protected;
- Local shops are popular;
- More village shops are needed;
- Community spirit is strong in the District's settlements;
- New development should be environmentally friendly.

Other particularly relevant consultation responses included:

- Essex County Council stated:
 - The district has significant functional economic relationships with Southend, Basildon, and other parts of Essex Thames Gateway, as well as parts of Greater London. It was suggested that the evolving Core Strategy should consider how these relationships might change and develop up to 2021, and what the practical implications might be for job/home alignment, commuting patterns, transport, and patterns of development provision;
 - The urban capacity study needed updating before the broad direction of any Preferred Options can be confirmed. They suggested that it also needed to be linked into a strategic housing market assessment and strategic housing land availability assessment;
 - The allocation of 300 more units than proposed to Hockley and 300 less to Rayleigh would provide a better fit in terms of maximising the use of current schools' capacity.
 - Rochford/Ashingdon:- 1,000 Units The capacity of Doggetts Primary can potentially be expanded to meet the needs of up to 1,000 new homes. If the sites are poorly located for this school, a new single form entry primary school would be needed (site area required 1.1 hectares);
 - King Edmund [secondary school in East Ashingdon] is already accommodating significantly more pupils than is recommended by the DfES for their site area. The school is forecast to remain oversubscribed. To expand, the school will need to obtain additional land. Land to the north and east of the school is open. The school has access difficulties with significant vehicle / pedestrian conflict and congestion at the start and end of the day. Incorporation of land to the north into the school site would allow the school to expand to serve new housing while at the same time providing improved access via Brays Lane. The plan should allocate a minimum of 2.7 hectares of land for this

- purpose based on 1,000 new homes. RDC will need to consult with the School as to the precise piece of land needed;
- Hockley/Hawkwell: - 400 Units Demand for both primary and secondary places in the area is forecast to fall, which should allow this number of new dwellings to be accommodated without the need for significant additional capacity;
 - Rayleigh: - 1,800 Units This quantum of new development is likely to require an additional two forms of entry to be added to permanent capacity across the town at both primary and secondary levels. Half of this requirement at primary level can be met by expanding existing schools. The allocation of a single housing site of around 700 units would be needed to deliver a new single form entry primary school (1.1 hectares) to make up the anticipated shortfall. Limited expansion of Fitzwimarc and/or Sweyne Park can probably be achieved with careful planning/negotiation with the schools;
 - Smaller settlements: - 500 Units. The allocation of units to smaller settlements could help sustain rural primary schools within the District but would impose long term school transport costs upon the County Council that should be mitigated through developer contributions
- The Environment Agency stated that approach taken appears likely to be acceptable from a flood risk viewpoint. The top tier settlements all do contain areas of Flood Zone 3 (High Risk), but the majority is Flood Zone 1 (Low Risk). Of the second tier settlements, Canewdon is all FZ1, Hullbridge has a small part of FZ3, while Gt Wakering is approximately 40% FZ3. All appear capable of accommodating the required growth in FZ1, but this must be tested.
 - Essex Chambers of Commerce agreed with the Council's Preferred Option in respect of larger sites being able to deliver greater infrastructure improvements.
 - Essex Wildlife Trust was pleased to note that sustainable development principles are being followed in 4.6.2, where the Council will not allocate sites which are considered sensitive due to landscape designations, biodiversity issues or where they may be at risk of flooding.
 - Home Builders Federation stated that the document fails to make any reference to the fact that provision will need to be made for a supply of at least 15 year's housing supply from the Plan's adoption date. Therefore, such provision will need to be identified beyond the year 2021. Consequently, a higher housing number will need to be identified. They also stated that it should not seek to overly control and manage housing delivery where there are not direct infrastructure issues or problems that first need resolving.
 - King Edmund School stated that they would need to expand to accommodate additional pupils, and that they were "desperate" for a new access to their site.

- Network Rail stated they favour the direction of higher density development to areas with good access to public transport. This meets many of the national and regional planning objectives for sustainable development and also encourages the re-use of previously developed land, rather than expanding into green field areas. High density development around train stations could directly (where Network Rail estate land is used) or indirectly (through Section 106 contributions) support station improvement and interchange works.

In addition to the representations received a petition with 328 signatures was submitted at the Hullbridge public exhibition. The petition stated “Please all support your village, sign below if you are opposed to the amount of building houses/flats in our village. We need more shops for the village.”

Revised Preferred Options

Production of Revised Preferred Options

Having regard to the result of consultation, the Council resolved to revisit the Preferred Options stage of the Core Strategy at the LDF Sub-Committee of 19th September 2007 (details of meeting available via <http://cmis.rochford.gov.uk/CMISWebPublic/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=5352>). In particular, the Council were aware of consultation feedback, including from GO East, suggesting that the Council needed to be more spatially specific with the locations identified for housing development.

In developing the Revised Preferred Options, the Council were mindful that the approach of focussing development on higher tiers of settlement with a smaller proportion of the residential allocation being directed to smaller settlements was supported by sustainability appraisal and, in general, identified as preferred through consultation.

However, a slight change in the balance was considered appropriate having regard to concerns expressed at the initial preferred options stage (as outlined above), in particular that a reduction in numbers for Rayleigh and increase in Hockley would fit better with current schools capacity, and concerns about facilities being sustained in the lower tier settlements. Additional evidence vis-à-vis the relationship of the District to neighbouring centres provided through the Retail and Leisure Study and the Employment Land Study. The Urban Capacity Study was updated and this also influenced the revised preferred options, as it identified the quantum of development that was felt could be accommodated with existing residential areas.

There was a plethora of evidence that the Council was able to draw upon in setting out the housing locations for the Core Strategy. The evidence base document, the issues raised within it relevant to housing, and the implications for the housing distribution strategy for the District, are set out in the table on

the following page (Table 1). The evidence base also helped generate the District characteristics map on page 19 of the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options document, which in turn influences the balanced strategy to housing distribution proposed, as set out from page 26.

Table 1

Evidence Base Document	Issues identified relevant to future housing development locations	Implications for housing distribution strategy
<p>SEA Baseline Information Profile 2007-2008</p> <p>http://www.rochford.gov.uk/PDF/planning_evibase_sea_profile.pdf</p>	<p>Biodiversity, flora and fauna:</p> <p>Identifies areas of particular ecological value that are of local, regional, national or international importance, including those protected by the EU Habitats Directive and SSSIs. (Figures 3 and 4 of the document)</p>	<p>Such areas not appropriate for residential development. Most are concentrated in any case in the undeveloped east of the District. However, there are also protected areas around the river and coasts which could have implications for development north of Great Wakering, in North Hullbridge, and, South Hockley / West Hawkwell</p>

	<p>Landscape:</p> <p>Special Landscape Areas identified. These are important local landscapes whose quality and appearance warrants their protection (Figure 8 of the document)</p> <p>Landscape Character Areas, as identified within the 2003 Landscape Character Assessment, are illustrated in Figure 9 of the document. This study identified three broad landscape types within Rochford District, and their sensitivity to change (Table 6 of the document). Much of landscape in and around the District's three main settlements, as well as Great Wakering, is classified as South Essex Coastal Town. Some areas around these settlements, together with the land in which the other smaller settlements are located, is categorised as Crouch and Roach Farmland. Land in the more remote, eastern</p>	<p>Such areas are not appropriate for development. Coastal Protection Belt affects mostly more remote areas of the District, but would be relevant in considering appropriateness of development in North Hullbridge, North Great Wakering, and large urban extensions to the north of Hockley and east of Rochford.</p> <p>The Hockley Woods / Upper Roach Valley Special Landscape Area is relevant to any proposed urban extensions to the south of Hockley, west of Hawkwell or east of Rayleigh.</p> <p>In many cases, all land surrounding a particular settlement is of the same landscape type. However, exceptions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East of Rochford / Ashingdon and north of Ashingdon landscape character is more vulnerable to harm from urban extension than other areas of Rochford / Ashingdon • North of Hockley landscape character more vulnerable to harm from urban extension than other areas of Hockley / Hawkwell • South of Great Wakering landscape character is less vulnerable to harm from urban extension than other areas around Great Wakering
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	<p>part of the District is identified as Dengie and Foulness Coastal. The SEA Baseline Information profile notes that the sensitivity of the different landscapes to development varies: South Essex Coastal Towns being the least vulnerable to harm from small urban extension, followed by Crouch and Roach Farmland, with Dengie and Foulness Coastal being the most susceptible to harm from development.</p> <p>Ancient woodland:</p> <p>SEA Baseline Information Profile identifies areas of ancient woodland concentrated to south of Hockley</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some areas to the west of Rayleigh, and north-east of Rayleigh landscape character is more vulnerable to harm from urban extension than other areas around Rayleigh <p>Such areas are not appropriate for residential development. Opportunity for urban extension to south of Hockley constrained by presence of ancient woodland</p>
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	<p>Air Quality:</p> <p>Rochford Market Square and Eastwood Road, Rayleigh identified as areas where air quality is a concern in relation to pollution from Nitrogen Dioxide and Particulates (pollutants which are predominantly derived from fuel emissions from motorised transport).</p>	<p>Consideration of potential development locations and whether traffic from these developments will worsen air quality in the areas where this is a concern. When cross referenced with information derived from the Retail and Leisure Study and Employment Land Study, there is concern that traffic from development east of Rochford would be directed through the centre of Rochford adjacent to the Market Square, with limited alternative routes available for car users.</p>
	<p>Flooding:</p> <p>Vast majority of areas at risk of flooding located in the more remote eastern part of the District (Figures 27 and 28 of the document). Some areas adjacent to settlements, but generally small areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3 which would not prohibit development within a particular general location, but would be relevant at the sites specific level. The exception being some areas around Hullbridge and Great Wakering.</p>	<p>North Hullbridge and East of Great Wakering contain significant areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3, rendering them less appropriate areas for urban extension than other locations.</p>

	<p>Soil, minerals and waste:</p> <p>Agricultural land classifications are illustrated in Figure 30 of the document which shows that the highest quality agricultural land is concentrated in the south-east of the District. The majority of land surrounding the District's main settlements is Grade 3, with the exception of Rochford where it is predominantly Grade 1 or 2.</p>	<p>In many cases, all land surrounding a particular settlement is of the same agricultural land classification. Exceptions to this include Hockley, where the area south of Hockley contains a significant area of non-agricultural land – but this is ancient woodland. The other exception is Rochford / Ashingdon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East of Rochford is predominantly Grade 1, with the exception of the area of non-agricultural land occupied by an industrial estate. • West of Rochford is a mixture of Grade 1 and 2. • East of Ashingdon is predominantly Grade 2 • North Ashingdon is predominantly Grade 3.
<p>Rochford Futures Report (56.EB14 - http://www.rochford.gov.uk/pdf/planning_evibase_rochford_futures.pdf)</p>	<p>Identifies the environmental strengths and weakness, e.g. the district has good transport connectivity, including the East – West link and transport links to Southend, but poor access to amenities and services in certain parts of the district.</p> <p>The statistics on demographic composition, household component, commercial occupancy, car usage and access to services in ward level help to provide a spatial overview of the District which has been embedded into the vision of the Core Strategy.</p>	<p>Taking into consideration the East-West divide of the District, proposed housing in the general locations are mainly situated within the top tier settlements of Rayleigh, Rochford and Hockley. These areas are recognised as having good access to bus and railway links.</p> <p>It is important to maximise the accessibility of services - a balanced delivery of housing both in areas where existing services are available and accessible, and to areas where additional housing will ensure local services will be viable and will help increase accessibility to services.</p>

<p>Employment Land Study</p> <p>(47.EB5 - http://www.rochford.gov.uk/PDF/planning_evi_base_employment_land_study.pdf)</p>	<p>Shows that there are strong links with neighbouring centres for employment: Basildon, Chelmsford, Southend and London.</p> <p>Recommends that land to the west of the District is considered as viable to be developed as employment land and the East as a more appropriate location for housing and other uses when planning for future land use requirements.</p> <p>Identifies the condition of Rawreth Industrial Estate as poor, with poor, inadequate road access. It notes that the estate has particular environment issues and that the site may be suitable for housing.</p> <p>Suggests some sites should be relocated and could be considered for other uses. In addition, Hockley Trading Centre (Eldon Way) is in a prime location and there is potential for a mixed use scheme.</p> <p>Land west of Rayleigh has also been identified as a suitable area for employment use (possibly from de-allocation of other industrial sites.)</p>	<p>Whilst the Core Strategy contains a variety of measures intended to increase employment opportunities, it must be recognised that the District has strong links with Basildon, Chelmsford, London and Southend with a high proportion of the District's workforce commuting to these centres.</p> <p>This relationship is illustrated in diagrammatic on page 19 of the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options document, when setting out the characteristics of the District. Appendix 1 attached is a combination of the identified relationships that Rochford District has with neighbouring areas depicted on page 35 of the Core Strategy Submission Document overlaying the Key Diagram on page 169 to show how the spatial characteristics of the District relate to the balanced strategy.</p> <p>In considering the balance of housing distribution, it is appropriate to have a balance between areas which relate well to links to Basildon / Chelmsford, and those that relate well to links to Southend. Such areas would preferable relate well to links via alternatives to the private car, e.g. areas located in close proximity to one of the District's train stations.</p> <p>However, it is also necessary to consider impact on the highway network from a strategic perspective and the need to avoid generating traffic on local networks for non-local reasons (as noted in para 2.62 of the Core Strategy Submission Document) .</p>
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		<p>The following areas have the potential to relate well to Southend whilst avoiding generating traffic on local networks for strategic reasons, as far as is practicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South of Canewdon • West of Canewdon • South of Hawkwell • West of Rochford • South of Rochford • West of Great Wakering • South of Great Wakering • South of Rayleigh / Eastwood <p>The following areas have the potential to relate well to Chelmsford and Basildon whilst avoiding generating traffic on local networks for strategic reasons, as far as is practicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West of Rayleigh • West of Hullbridge • South of Hullbridge <p>The study supports the case for the redevelopment of Rawreth Industrial Estate for housing.</p>
<p>Retail and Leisure Study (54.EB12 - http://www.rochford.gov.uk/)</p>	<p>This Study recognises the importance of determining the shopping pattern and potential catchment of existing centres within the District “given the proximity and strength</p>	<p>Rochford District has notable relationships with other neighbouring centres which have been relevant in determining the balance of housing numbers.</p>

<p>PDF/planning_evi_base_retail_leisure_study.pdf</p>	<p>of nearby competing centres such as Basildon, Southend-on-Sea and Chelmsford” (paragraph 4.02).</p> <p>The Study highlights the extent of the relationship between centres within the District and those outside, which act as a draw leading to the leakage of expenditure to other centres outside the District. The Study found that: “The District centres lose considerable comparative expenditure to competing centres, particularly Southend-on-Sea. There is also expenditure movement towards Basildon to the west and centres in Castle Point to the south west, although these movements are most prominent from those Zones which are within geographical proximity to these alternative centres.” (page 47).</p> <p>However, outside the larger settlements, the village centres are acknowledged as playing an important role. The Study found that “The secondary (village) centres such as Canewdon, Hawkwell, Hullbridge and the Wakerings play an important role in providing top up convenience facilities to their immediate hinterland.” (page 47).</p> <p>Therefore the District is evidenced as having important strategic relationships with</p>	<p>This relationship is illustrated in diagrammatic on page 19 of the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options document, when setting out the characteristics of the District, and has been used to influence the distribution of housing as it is considered appropriate to have a balance between areas that relate well to Southend and those that relate well to Chelmsford / Basildon. Appendix 1 attached is a combination of the identified relationships that Rochford District has with neighbouring areas depicted on page 35 of the Core Strategy Submission Document overlaying the Key Diagram on page 169 to show how the spatial characteristics of the District relate to the balanced strategy.</p> <p>As discussed earlier in relation to the findings of the Employment Land Study, such areas would preferably relate well to alternatives to the private car, but it is also necessary to consider impact on the highway network from a strategic perspective and the need to avoid generating traffic on local networks for non-local reasons. Areas where this is the case are identified above within the section of this table discussing the findings of the Employment Land Study.</p> <p>Rayleigh and Rochford town centres as well as Hockley centre play an important role in providing a range of services and facilities to meet the needs of local communities. There are however identified opportunities for enhancement which could improve the attractiveness of these centres and increase spending retention. Such opportunities are being explored through Area Action Plans.</p>
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	neighbouring Basildon, Chelmsford, Castle Point and Southend Councils which contribute to the leakage of expenditure outside the District. The role of village services is also recognised for their local day-to-day importance.	The importance of retaining village facilities is recognised. These provide convenient and accessible day-to-day services for local communities, and as such ensuring that they are sustained is fully supported. The allocation of some development to such locations is therefore necessary to ensure the continued viability of these important services.
Urban Capacity Study (63.EB21 – http://www.rochford.gov.uk/PDF/planning_evibase_urban_capacity_study_2007.pdf)	Identifies capacity for residential development outside of the Green Belt (pre-dated SHLAA guidance)	Most of the District's potential sources of housing supply are situated within the top tier settlements of Rayleigh, Rochford and Hockley. Housing for lower tier settlements will have to be provided primarily through development of Green Belt. When considering the balance of the distribution of dwellings by settlement, it will be necessary to bear in mind anticipated housing from sources other than urban extensions.
Essex School Organisation Plan (24.C14 - http://www.rochford.gov.uk/PDF/planning_essex_school_organisation_plan_2008_2013.pdf)	Identifies current and projected surpluses / deficits of schools places at the District's schools. In particular, schools in Canewdon, Great Wakering and Hullbridge (Riverside Infant and Riverside Junior schools) are projected to have significant spare capacity.	Schools are important community facilities. Without some growth in their respective villages, there is concern that schools in Canewdon, Hullbridge and Great Wakering cannot be sustained in the long-term.
East of England Plan (1.R1 -	Identifies London Southend Airport as important sub-regional economic driver	Important for residential development to relate well to future employment land. Areas that have the potential to relate to the airport whilst avoiding generating traffic on local

http://www.rochford.gov.uk/PDF/planning_policy_evibase_eastofenglandplan.pdf		<p>networks for non-local reasons include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West of Rochford • South of Hawkwell • South of Rochford
<p>Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans</p> <p>(28.D3 - http://www.rochford.gov.uk/planning/environment/conservation_areas.aspx)</p>	<p>There are 10 Conservation Areas in the district. Although these areas have been designated as Conservation Areas, they still face pressure for change, most notably for housing development, and there is a large element of modern infill in and around some of the areas.</p> <p>The east of the Rochford Conservation Area is dominated by a one-way system. The road network throughout the Rochford Conservation Area is vulnerable to traffic which creates busy junctions. These junctions are particularly hazardous to pedestrians. It is also noted that “The east end of Weir Pond Road lies outside the conservation area. It is one of the busy traffic interchanges at the edge of the historic town.” (paragraph 9.149). The busy junctions and one way system around the historic core of Rochford are identified in Figure 60 (page 69) of the Plan.</p>	<p>Any housing development in East Rochford would, having regard to the location of key centres, be likely to generate traffic through the Rochford Conservation Area to the potential detrimental of its character.</p> <p>Concern regarding the generation of additional traffic through Conservation Areas also applies to the East of Canewdon and East of Great Wakering. Development in the eastern end of these villages would be likely to increase traffic through the centre of the Conservation Areas.</p>
<p>Call for Sites</p> <p>(44.EB2 -</p>	<p>The Council undertook a call for sites exercise from February 2007, inviting developers, landowners and agents to put forward sites</p>	<p>Call for sites exercise identified a large number of sites that had the potential to be developed.</p>

<p>http://www.rochford.gov.uk/pdf/planning_rochford_district_allocations_dpd_call_for_sites.pdf)</p>	<p>they would be willing to develop. In addition, this exercise also elicited a response from Sustrans who propose a cycle route through the District, which they are keen to realise in conjunction with the LPA. The proposed cycle network has the potential to provide a sustainable transport option for the occupiers of new and existing residential developments connected to it.</p>	<p>Sustrans proposed network has potential to link with, and provide a sustainable transport option for, residential development in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Rochford • West Rochford • South Hawkwell • South Hockley • West Hockley • South East Hullbridge • South West Hullbridge <p>Development at any of the above locations would also have the potential to aid the implementation of the cycle route.</p>
<p>Thames Gateway Green Grid Strategy (9.SR2 - http://www.greengrid.co.uk/strategy.cfm)</p>	<p>Green Grid Strategy proposes a number of greenways - footpaths, cyclepaths and bridlepaths that connect to and through towns and the rest of South Essex area which, in addition to leisure and recreational routes, also provide alternative transport options.</p>	<p>Proposed greenways have the potential to link with and provide recreational opportunities and sustainable transport option for residents in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West of Great Wakering • Between Great Wakering and Rochford • South Rochford • East Rayleigh • West Rayleigh <p>Development at any of the above locations would also have the potential to aid the implementation of the greenways.</p>
<p>Hockley Parish Plan</p>	<p>The Hockley Parish Plan reflects resident's views in recognising the importance of</p>	<p>The importance of protecting the Green Belt where possible, and to reuse appropriate brownfield land is noted.</p>

<p>(40.SD1 - http://www.rochford.gov.uk/pdf/planning_hockley_pari h_plan_2007.pdf)</p>	<p>retaining Hockley's identity. It is noted on page 6 of the Plan that "There is a unanimous desire for Hockley to remain as a distinct community with clear boundaries and green spaces between Hockley and its neighbouring parishes."</p> <p>The Plan also indicates that additional housing is not popular; however, it does recognise that the redevelopment of employment sites are preferable if housing required. Indeed page 6 of the Plan states that: "Whilst aware of the Government proposal for 3700 additional dwellings in the Rochford district (including 400 in Hockley and Hawkwell), many would prefer no further development but, if it cannot be avoided, it should be on existing occupied residential or industrial property sites."</p> <p>Therefore there is a need to retain the character of Hockley with adequate green spaces between neighbouring settlements, and if development is required then this should take place on existing industrial land.</p>	<p>Hockley is a Tier 1 settlement and as the third largest settlement in the District it is considered to be suitable for additional development to meet its future needs. Many areas around Hockley have important nature conservation designations and other physical constraints which restrict the spatial identification of suitable general locations. Hockley also has a centrally located existing employment site within easy access of several sustainable transport options, whose opportunities will be explored through an Area Action Plan.</p> <p>Retaining the distinct identity and character of the District's settlements and the need for green buffers between them to prevent coalescence are recognised as being important. These factors have been taken into consideration in the identification of appropriate general locations.</p>
<p>Rawreth Parish Plan (41.SD2 - http://www.rochford.gov.uk/PDF/planning_rawreth_pari)</p>	<p>The historic centre of Rawreth Parish is considered to be in Rawreth village in the area around the school. It is noted that within the whole Parish "There is no village shop, no doctor's surgery and no post office but it can</p>	<p>Rawreth village has been identified as a fourth tier settlement, where additional development is considered to be unsustainable. The historic centre of Rawreth is situated to the west of A1245, and is spatially separate from important local amenities in other neighbouring settlements</p>

<p>sh_plan.pdf)</p>	<p>boast a hotel, two pubs, two garages, a number of small industrial sites and one major wholesale store.” (page 2)</p> <p>It is important to retain the identity of Rawreth village, and as recognised on page 6 of the Plan there is concern regarding this: “With the government’s proposals for the Thames Gateway and the plans to further develop housing along the northern banks of the Thames down to Southend-on-Sea, villagers are concerned that the village identity will be lost and that it will soon be seen as a suburb of Rayleigh.”</p> <p>Furthermore the Plan suggests that aside from erosion of village character, development within the village is not considered appropriate (page 6):</p> <p>“The concern is that any new building would be unsympathetic to the current environment and that there would not be necessary additional enhancement to services/amenities to deal with the increases. Over 70% of respondents did not want further development in Rawreth.”</p> <p>However, on page 6 it is also noted that “The village has in the past 10 years seen substantial housing development of executive</p>	<p>in the District such as Rayleigh and Hullbridge. Therefore the village of Rawreth has not been considered for future strategic development.</p> <p>The area to the west of Rayleigh, whilst situated towards the eastern extent of Rawreth Parish boundary, abuts the settlement of Rayleigh. Development there would have a functional relationship with Rayleigh. Rayleigh is identified as a Tier 1 settlement given the wide range of services it provides for local communities and is therefore considered to be a suitable general location for additional development.</p> <p>Retaining the rural character of the Parish is recognised, and a green buffer would provide an important function in preventing coalescence between neighbouring settlements. A designated area of public open space between the west of Rayleigh and the A1245 would fulfil this function.</p>
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	<p>homes which has led to the village population expanding by circa 30%." Following on from this the Action Plan on page 9 concludes that "Majority of survey showed that no further action required except for low cost housing for local residents".</p> <p>Therefore there is concern regarding loss of character and development in Rawreth village which would result in the village being perceived as a suburb of Rayleigh. Whilst development is not considered appropriate for the village, there has been development of large homes and there is a need for some affordable housing.</p>	
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On the 23rd September 2008, the LDF-Sub Committee (reports, related documents and minutes available via <http://cmis.rochford.gov.uk/CMISWebPublic/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=5474>) were presented with a report setting out the proposed preferred options for housing locations and the strategy behind these.

The report notes that the proposed strategy for the location of housing development has regard to an extensive and detailed evidence base and results and feedback from community involvement. The report explains that the proposed housing location strategy constitutes a balance between focusing development on the higher tier settlements, whilst allocating a proportion of the housing development to the lower tier settlements (with the exception of the fourth tier, where additional development is considered unsustainable), to ensure these established communities can be sustained and that rural services continue to be supported.

The report goes on to state that the aim of the housing strategy is to demonstrate a balanced approach to the delivery of the housing required to cater for the needs of the District's population.

It was minuted that the planning for the provision of infrastructure would form a crucial part of the consultation process and would be submitted as part of the final Core Strategy policy document. Details of proposed infrastructure in relation to each of the proposed sites would be listed in the draft Core Strategy that would be reported to the forthcoming Local Development Framework Sub-Committee meeting (14th October 2008).

At the 23rd September 2009 LDF Sub-Committee it was resolved that the locations and quantum of housing development as set out in Tables 1 and 2 in the accompanying report be accepted for inclusion in the Rochford Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options.

At the aforementioned LDF Sub-Committee on the 14th October 2008, (reports, related documents and minutes available via <http://cmis.rochford.gov.uk/CMISWebPublic/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=5475>) Members were presented with the proposed Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options

It was confirmed at this meeting that the Core Strategy looked spatially at the District as a whole rather than at individual localities. Members were also advised that, with respect to settlement tiers, there was a difference in interpreting administrative boundaries compared to geographical areas; particularly in Rawreth Parish where there was no settlement above tier 4.

The LDF Sub-Committee recommended the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options for approval for public consultation and community involvement, subject to changes set out in the addendum attached to the minutes.

Consultation response to Revised Preferred Options

As noted on page 16 of the Consultation Statement (http://www.rochford.gov.uk/PDF/planning_cs_consultation_statement.pdf) a number of alternative housing development locations were suggested, particularly in respect of Rayleigh, where the suggestion of dispersing the development to smaller sites, including to the east of the town, was made.

Conversely, other representations expressed concern that residential development was being too thinly spread through too many smaller sites, making the implementation of new infrastructure unviable. There was no real consensus on how housing should be distributed. The development of a new settlement was suggested in order to meet the District's housing requirements.

Some representations suggested that the Urban Capacity Study 2007 underestimated the capacity of previously developed land, with agents suggesting that the development quantum of specific sites could be increased.

Other consultation responses particularly relevant to the issue of housing locations included the following:

- Essex County Council stated that they generally supported the balanced strategy based on identification of tiers of settlements defined by reference to their accessibility to jobs, services and facilities (some of which lie outside the District) and the need to protect the valued environments within the District. Although further thought should be given to how to secure sustainable functional relationships between proposed development locations and established settlements and features.
- The Environment Agency stated that where planned development is only deliverable due to the presence of flood defences, it is not unreasonable to request that the developer contributes to the continued provision and maintenance of those defences - especially where any larger developments are concerned.
- EERA accepted that the 60% target may not be deliverable in all parts of the region, and encouraged the Council to maximise the development potential of all brownfield sites (including "windfall" sites) and, through its monitoring procedures, ensure that delivery does not fall below the proposed 30% level.
- EERA noted that whilst local policy seeks to protect the existing Green Belt, it does allow for some limited reallocation in order that built development can come forward. Where this release is considered to be unavoidable, the Core Strategy proposes that development occurs at a reasonably high density.
- EERA expressed some minor concerns over the amount of development that is planned to come forward on previously developed

land, and also on the Council's position with regards to larger scale renewable energy schemes. However, it considers that these do not give rise to any major conformity issue.

- Rawreth Parish state that they believe Rawreth should be included in Tier 4 - all other settlements, where additional development is considered unsustainable.
- Sustrans welcomed the principles in the preferred option and the route shown on the key diagram as part of an overall system of safe routes (on and offroad). Sustrans stated that they are keen to work with RDC, ECC, parish councils and residents' associations on developing routes and convenient links between communities, stations, airport, employment and shopping, etc., to reduce reliance on the car, particularly for short journeys.

Sustainability Appraisal of Revised Preferred Options

Sustainability Appraisal (including the requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment) of the Core Strategy Preferred Options was undertaken independently by Enfusion (http://www.rochford.gov.uk/PDF/planning_technical_report.pdf)

The Sustainability Appraisal was underpinned by the Strategic Environmental Assessment Baseline 2007-2008. This baseline report provided a detailed assessment of numerous characteristics in the District relevant to sustainability, including:

- Biodiversity, flora and fauna
- Water
- Soil
- Air quality
- Climatic factors
- Built environment
- Population and health
- Heritage

Sustainability objectives and decision-aiding questions, against which proposed policies would be tested, were developed having regard to the baseline and in consultation with Natural England, Environment Agency and English Heritage. The objectives and decision-aiding questions for the Revised Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal were as follows:

SA Objective	Decision-Aiding Question Will it (the Policy)...?
1. Balanced Communities (SEA topic: Population & Human Health, Material Assets)	
To ensure the delivery of high quality sustainable communities where people want to live and work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it ensure the phasing of infrastructure, including community facilities to meet ongoing and future needs? • Will it ensure the regeneration and enhancement of existing communities? • Will it ensure equal opportunities and that all sections of the community are catered for? • Will it meet the needs of an ageing population? • Will the policies and options proposed seek to enhance the qualifications and skills of the local community? • Will income and quality-of-life disparities be reduced?
2. Healthy & Safe Communities(SEA topic: Population & Human Health)	
Create healthy and safe environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it ensure the delivery of high quality, safe and inclusive design? • Will it improve health and reduce health inequalities? • Will it promote informal recreation and encourage healthy, active lifestyles? • Will green infrastructure and networks be promoted and/or enhanced? • Will it minimise noise pollution? • Will it minimise light pollution?
3. Housing (SEA topic: Population & Human Health)	
To provide everybody with the opportunity to live in a decent home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it increase the range and affordability of housing for all social groups? • Will a mix of housing types and tenures be promoted? • Will it reduce the number of unfit homes? • Does it promote high quality design? • Is there sustainable access to key services? • Does it meet the resident's needs in terms of sheltered and lifetime homes or those that can be easily adapted so?
4. Economy & Employment (SEA topic: Population & Human Health, Material Assets)	
To achieve sustainable levels of economic growth/prosperity and promote town centre vitality/viability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it promote and enhance existing centres by focusing development in such centres? • Will it improve business development? • Does it enhance consumer choice through the provision of a range of shopping, leisure, and

	<p>local services to meet the needs of the entire community?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it promote mixed use and high density development in urban centres? • Does it promote a wide variety of jobs across all sectors? • Does it secure more opportunities for residents to work in the district?
5. Accessibility (SEA topic: Population & Human Health, Air, Climatic Factors)	
To promote more sustainable transport choices both for people and moving freight ensuring access to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it increase the availability of sustainable transport modes? • Will it seek to encourage people to use alternative modes of transportation other than the private car, including walking and cycling? • Will it contribute positively to reducing social exclusion by ensuring access to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services? • Will it reduce the need to travel? • Does it seek to encourage development where large volumes of people and/or transport movements are located in sustainable accessible locations? • Does it enable access for all sections of the community, including the young, women, those with disabilities and the elderly? • Does it secure more opportunities for residents to work in the District, and for out-commuting to be reduced?
6. Biodiversity (SEA topic: Fauna & Flora)	
To conserve and enhance the biological and geological diversity of the environment as an integral part of social, environmental and economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it conserve and enhance natural/semi natural habitats, including the District's distinctive estuaries and salt marshes? • Will it conserve and enhance species diversity, and in particular avoid harm to protected species and priority species? • Will it maintain and enhance sites designated for their nature conservation interest? • Will it conserve and enhance sites of geological significance? • Does land use allocation reflect the scope of using brownfield land for significant wildlife interest where viable and realistic?
7. Cultural Heritage (SEA topic: Cultural Heritage, Landscape)	
To maintain and enhance the cultural heritage and assets of the District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it protect and enhance sites, features and areas of historical, archaeological and cultural value in both urban and rural areas? • Will it support locally-based cultural resources

	and activities?
8. Landscape & Townscape (SEA topic: Landscape ,Cultural Heritage)	
To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes and townscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it seek to enhance the range and quality of the public realm and open spaces? • Will it contribute to the delivery of the enhancement, effective management and appropriate use of land in the urban fringe? • Will it reduce the amount of derelict, degraded and underused land? • Will it conserve and/or improve the landscape character? • Will it preserve and/or enhance townscape character and value? • Will the local character/vernacular be preserved and enhanced through development?
9. Climate Change & Energy (SEA topic: Climatic Factors)	
To reduce contributions to climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by reducing energy consumption? • Will it lead to an increased proportion of energy needs being met from renewable sources? • Does it adapt to and provide for the consequences of climate change in a largely low-lying area and allow species room to migrate?
10. Water (SEA topic: Water, Fauna & Flora)	
To improve water quality and reduce the risk of flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it improve the quality of inland water? • Will it improve the quality of coastal waters? • Will it provide for an efficient water conservation and supply regime? • Will it provide for effective wastewater treatment? • Will it require the provision of sustainable drainage systems in new development? • Will it reduce the risk of flooding and promote sustainable flood management, including, where possible, the enhancement of habitats and landscape?
11. Land & Soil (SEA topic: Soils)	
To maintain and improve the quality of the District's land and soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it ensure the re-use of previously-developed land and urban areas in preference to Greenfield sites? • Will higher-density development be promoted where appropriate? • Will soil quality be preserved? • Will it promote the remediation of contaminated land? • Will the best and most versatile agricultural land

	be protected?
12. Air Quality (SEA topic: Air, Climatic Factors)	
To improve air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will air quality be improved through reduced emissions (eg. through reducing car travel)? • Will it direct transport movements away from AQMAs and/or potentially significant junctions?
13 Sustainable Design & Construction(SEA topic: Human Health, Material Assets, Climatic Factors, Fauna & Flora, Water, Air)	
To promote sustainable design and construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it ensure the use of sustainable design principles, e.g. encouraging a mix of uses? • Will it integrate new opportunities for biodiversity and habitat creation, where possible? • Will climate proofing design measures be incorporated? • Will it require the re-use and recycling of construction materials? • Will it encourage a reduction in waste and sustainable waste management? • Will it encourage locally-sourced materials? • Will it require best-practice sustainable construction methods, for example in energy and water efficiency?

In considering the general development locations set out in the Revised Preferred Options against the sustainability objectives and decision-aiding questions, the SA concluded that the distribution of housing was generally positive overall for sustainability in the District. Negative effects identified include a high proportion of development on Greenfield sites, with potential impacts on landscape. The SA stated (paragraph 5.10) that:

“The actual locations for growth proposed in the policy are considered to be the most sustainable options available, within the context of the overall high levels of population growth being proposed in the East of England Plan.”

However, the SA also stated (paragraph 5.5) that:

“Negative effects identified include a high proportion of development on Greenfield sites, with potential impacts on landscape, however this is seen as more of a policy conflict than a sustainability one.”

Submission Document

Development of Submission Document

During the production of the Core Strategy Submission Document, the Council produced a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. This superseded the Urban Capacity Study and provided a more accurate assessment of opportunities to accommodate dwellings in the District having regard to the most up-to-date government guidance. The SHLAA ascertained that fewer dwellings were required to be accommodated within the Green Belt than identified at the previous stage of the Core Strategy – in part due to the number of additional small sites coming through the planning process in the time since the previous assessment.

As noted earlier, one of the concerns identified with regard to the Revised Preferred Options was the quantum of development suggested for greenfield sites. Accordingly, and given that the SHLAA identifies the potential to do so, the quantum of development proposed for Green Belt land was reduced in the Core Strategy Submission Document.

As set out on pages 152-153 of the Consultation Statement, in the case of South West Rayleigh the figure can be reduced to a level that no Green Belt land is required to be released there, ensuring that Green Belt land is protected at this location whilst enabling the Council's balanced approach to the distribution of housing to be deliverable. The location North of London Road is considered more sustainable and more viable (particularly with regards to the delivery of infrastructure), and fits better with the balanced strategy to housing distribution.

In addition, having regard to the results of discussions with ECC Highways, it was considered that a new highway link between any residential development in South West Rayleigh and the A127 was highly unlikely to be viable. As such, traffic generated by the development would be directed through residential areas of Rayleigh.

The LDF Sub Committee met on 9th Feb 2009 (<http://cmis.rochford.gov.uk/CMISWebPublic/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=5784>). During the meeting, previous representations were discussed and it was noted that a number of alternative locations had been put forward as part of previous consultations, although the representations presented no consensus on how housing should be distributed. It was agreed at this meeting that Members would tour all viable locations, including any viable alternative locations arising out of the consultation responses. It was, however, indicated that some of the calls for sites received related to sites that could only accommodate up to 6 houses. It would be more realistic for Sub-Committee Members to view sites able to accommodate 50 or more homes within suitable parts of the District that did not, for example, fall within the flood plain

or ancient woodlands, sites of special scientific interest, and local wildlife sites.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation at this meeting stated that building all the housing in one location was untenable, and not sustainable. The sites proposed for new housing were located around existing infrastructure provided in the District's conurbations (not parishes).

A Member's tour of potential housing locations was organised. Members of the LDF Sub Committee visited a number of sites across the District during March 2009, including those put forward as part of the Call for Sites exercise, those put forward as alternative locations as part of the consultation responses and those sites put forward as suitable locations within each iteration of the Core Strategy. This then gave Members of the LDF Sub Committee an opportunity to give a considered view when evaluating site locations for inclusion within the submission document.

Further to this on the 1st July 2009, discussions took place at LDF Sub-Committee (reports, supporting documents and minutes available via <http://cmis.rochford.gov.uk/CMISWebPublic/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=5880>) around the alternative locations put forward by Rawreth Parish Council, all of which had been visited by the Sub Committee. It was then stated that the proposals constituted a series of piecemeal developments that did not offer the potential to deliver vital infrastructure and as such were unsustainable.

At the LDF Sub-Committee on 1st July 2009 one Member expressed concern that the proposals for North of London Road, Rayleigh, detailed in policy H2, would fail to achieve the objectives outlined on page 5 of the Core Strategy submission document. Particular reference was made to the proposal for 550 additional new dwellings in the area North of London Road resulting in the population of Rawreth being doubled and to the fact that Rawreth Lane was already highly developed. Concern was also raised that the wording relating to the buffer between new development to the North of London Road and agricultural land to the west should be strengthened to protect the proposed park land.

There was a general consensus that the statement relating to the park land buffer on page 43 should be strengthened. It was also felt that the 550 new dwellings proposed for that location was the only sustainable option for that part of the District.

One Member expressed thanks that the views of Hawkwell residents during the public consultation had been taken into account in developing the Submission document. The revised figure of new dwellings in South Hawkwell was an improvement on previous proposals.

The LDF Sub-Committee recommended to Council that subject to the amendments listed in the appendix to the Minutes, the Rochford Core

Strategy Submission Document be accepted for pre-submission consultation, followed by formal submission to the Secretary of State.

Sustainability Appraisal of the Submission Document

The Sustainability Appraisal reiterated the view that the locations identified are the most sustainable. Paragraph 5.17 of the Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy Submission Document states that:

“The actual locations for growth proposed in the policy (H2 and H3) are considered to be the most sustainable options available, within the context of the overall high levels of population growth being proposed in the East of England Plan. The policy recognises the distinctive landscapes and biodiversity areas in the District (including coastal landscaped and flood-prone areas in the east of the District) and takes an approach to development that minimises impact on these areas through steering development toward the more developed western side of the District.”

The Sustainability Appraisal also stated that:

“Amendments to these policies - since Preferred Options - include the removal of a number of potential areas for development and a reduction in the number of proposed dwellings to be developed on land allocated as Green Belt....this is due to an increase in proposed development on previously developed land (Policy H1), which will have positive effects on communities, housing and land and soils”.

In addition to the Sustainability Appraisal, the SEA Baseline Report 2008-2009 update included noise contour maps from London Southend Airport (Figures 15 and 16 of the document) which identified East and South Rochford as areas more vulnerable to noise pollution than other locations.

Council approval of Core Strategy for submission to Secretary of State

On the 9th September 2009 the Core Strategy Submission Document was approved by Full Council for pre-submission consultation, followed by formal submission to the Secretary of State. Minutes, reports and agenda for this meeting are available via

<http://cmis.rochford.gov.uk/CMISWebPublic/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=5882>.