

ROCHFORD CORE STRATEGY EXAMINATION

CALA HOMES JUDGEMENT

Having read the Cala Homes Judgement and noted the request from the Inspector for advice on what weight we, as local residents, attach to the intention of the Secretary of State to abolish the Regional Spatial Strategies, we advise that the proposal by the Secretary of State should be considered to be of paramount importance in the Inspectors determination of the public enquiry into the Rochford Core Strategy.

Notwithstanding the technical, environmental and social objections that we have put forward for the rejection of the Core Strategy, Hawkwell Parish Council believe that it must, as minimum, be delayed, or more, appropriately, be abandoned, pending the consideration by Parliament of the Localism Bill. We understand the Bill is at the Committee stage of its process through Parliament and is therefore more than a mere 'intention' by Government.

The Localism Bill is being described as the most radical shift in power since the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act. One of the main aims of the bill is to give unparalleled control over the future of our communities by giving real planning powers to Parish Councils thus rolling back the State and giving power to local people.

The Parish Council believes that Rochford District Council has singularly failed to recognise the legitimate concerns of local people over the proposals contained within the Core Strategy, as expressed by the Parish Council (and by many local residents via their action groups). It feels it is reasonable to say that the Parish and the neighbouring Parishes affected by this have been totally ignored, the consultation was a sham and local people feel disenfranchised.

To allow this gross intrusion with its long term consequences for our communities to proceed at the same time as Parliament is debating increasing the contribution local people can make to local planning decisions is perverse.

We therefore request that the Inspector finds the Core Strategy to be unsound on the basis that it is the intention of Government that local people should be directly involved in such decision making in the future. Rochford District Council has continually failed to respond to the legitimate concerns expressed and appears intent on forcing this through against the will of the majority of local people. The Core Strategy must, as a minimum be delayed or, more appropriately, be abandoned, until Parliament has concluded deliberations on the Localism Bill.

Hawkwell Parish Council, Planning Committee