

Letter from Cllr. Michael Hoy

Miss Laura Graham BSc MA MRTPI
Planning Inspector
C/O The Programme Officer
Rochford District Council

Dear Miss Graham

I am writing with reference to your letter of 2 August in which you requested a topic paper from the council concerning Affordable Housing. I understand that you have set a closing date for comments in relation to this as 17 August 2010.

In absence of the requested topic paper and in relation to the statement made to you on 19 July, by the council's administration I am making representations to you, on behalf of residents, in relation to affordable housing and the topic paper.

I proposed a motion, with Cllr John Mason, in relation to housing needs at the Full Council meeting of 27 July due to dissatisfaction with the council's figures for affordable housing and the arbitrary change from 196 to 60 affordable dwellings per year. I have not found the linkage between the figure of 60 and the SHMA 2010. I see little evidence in fact that either figure is correct hence the motion for a housing needs study which was rejected by the majority administration. One of the major omissions appears to be the neglect of type specific dwellings including sheltered for elderly single people and couples.

I believe that the Statement and the Topic Paper should be subject to further district wide public consultation of a minimum of six weeks. However in relation to this I do not believe that the Council is sufficiently prepared to provide sufficient evidence to the consultees and the core strategy should therefore be declared unsound and be returned to the full council for major revision.

Further in relation to your pre penultimate paragraph the council has not given adequate reasons for the removal of Green Belt status for the development land as stated in the Core Strategy nor of the impact of the proposed developments on the Green Belt highways and ancillary infrastructure, certainly there appear to be no exceptional reasons, as laid out in PPG2, for the development of Green Belt Land.

I am formally asking that the council is ordered to undertake a full consultation on the Topic Paper and the statement, if you are unable to do this would you please issue an interim statement that the Core Strategy is unsound. If these actions are not possible it seems to me that the dates of 7 & 8 September are unrealistic date for a hearing to proceed given the Topic Paper has yet to be published.

Many residents are of the opinion that the council is failing to enact properly the recent statements of the Government in relation to the Core Strategy and this is being reinforced by the current lack of actions on their part.

Yours sincerely
Cllr Michael Hoy