



Councillor John Mason

Representing the Hawkwell West Ward

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Member Correspondence

Date: 29 September 2011

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

Dear Miss Graham

I note from your response to the Council's request for Suspension that you acknowledged that it could be possible that this consultation could raise matters that could conceivably influence the recommendations of the Inspector.

Or the CS or even give rise to an assessment of Unsoundness?

Whilst I acknowledge that the Inspector has already recommended to the Council that it must commit to an early review of the CS in the light of Planning for Growth, Localism Bill and the NPPF I trust that the Inspector recognises that a series of verified planning applications equivalent to several years building at CS rates have already been submitted and unless a critical eye is passed over the CS in relation to these then these planning applications are unlikely to yield the balance to deliver a choice of quality homes.

The heading of section 111 of the NPPF references delivery a choice of quality homes.

My contention is that there is a significant gap in the delivery proposed by the CS which must be addressed before these planning applications are determined and I do not agree that because of this that the CS is SOUND.

To quote section 111.

Deliver a wide choice of quality homes

111. To deliver a wide choice of quality homes and widen opportunities for home ownership, local planning authorities should:

- plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as families with children, the elderly and people with disabilities)*
- identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand;*

You will note the reference to provision of quality homes for the elderly. The Council recognises that there is an aging population but there is no provision made in the CS.

The older component of our population is said in the Council Paper presented on 14/10/10 to be a block on the release of "previously owned homes" and yet the Council has no proposals to release the blockage by requiring the provision of smaller homes in developments like Coachman's Court (Rochford, Sheltered/wardened Flats for over 55's) or even retirement villages including all services including shops etc., If this were part of the Core Strategy then much less green belt would need to be released.

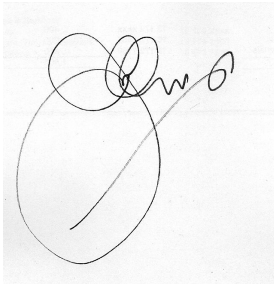
The Inspector is urged not to recommend the CS as Sound and the above is an objection to a finding of Soundness.

The NPPF introduces the requirement of a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

During the iterative process of developing the CS, Shaun Scrutton put it to me when I raised concern as to the sustainability of certain chosen Locations that these issues would be dealt with in the context of a planning application in due course. That raises concern in my mind that the Sustainability Appraisal is likely to have been far less rigorously undertaken than will be necessary if the presumption on sustainability can be actually applied when considering a planning application. The SAAR consultation was conducted recently by the Council and many concerns were raised by consultees and which were not reconsidered by the Council.

It is asked that the Inspector reviews the SA in detail against this objection to a finding of Soundness. The contention is that the CS does not allow the presumption of sustainability to be applied.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Mason', written over a large, faint circular stamp or watermark.

Councillor John Mason BSc FLS ACIB