

To

Kerry Freeman
Programme Officer
Planning department
Rochford District Council
Essex

Brian Marsden-Carleton
Hullbridge Residents Action Group

23. 01. 14
(For 04. 09. 13)

Written Speech made on 4th September 2013 at the Hullbridge Hearing in the Rayleigh Civic Suite and presided over by Mr. David Smith, Government Planning Inspector.

Core Strategy – SER 6 (Hullbridge- Essex)

Good morning Sir,

I am Brian Marsden-Carleton representing the residents of Hullbridge, who now number over 4644 people which is 91.90% (extrapolated = 98.48%) of our village population.

- (i) We have no confidence in the RDC and the Allocation Submission Document as produced, and presented by the Rochford District Council. Consultation was minimal as indicated in many of the submissions. Until our public meeting, very few people in Hullbridge had full knowledge of what the Core Strategy was all about. Therefore we can only conclude that the whole consultation procedure lacked credibility and is not compliant with the Statement of Community Involvement and the T & C Planning Regulations 2012.

We do not trust the present regime at the RDC because of the dismissive way some of the Councillors and their representatives have behaved towards the Hullbridge Electorate.

We refer to the minutes of a council meeting on the 21st July 2011- Item Motions On Notice No. 188 concerning 867 Letters dismissed by Council in respect of protest against the 500 houses, read what you wish in that statement.

- (ii) In our **Plea for withdrawal** (EXA 142) we state there is no justification for the selection of site SER6. We believe that, the issues of Flood, inadequate existing Infrastructure, the congestion in the area, and the poor state of Watery Lane have been ignored by the RDC, Highways, Water board and the RDC Planning Councillor. Many statements have been made by councillors suggesting that the site as set out in the Core Strategy will get the go ahead no matter what, undermining and placing the Government Planning Inspector in an embarrassing position, which we consider is totally disrespectful. People have the impression that this is a ‘Done deal’
Several alternative sites have been identified which are eminently more suitable than SER6. For example, some Brownfield sites have been reclassified as Greenbelt land,

which otherwise would have been preferred Brownfield sites suitable for development. We have not been given an explanation for this.

We refer to 'site 112' – The Cherry Orchard Rd. Rochford, being converted from 'Brownfield land to 'green field' land.

There are more examples of this conversion in the 'site Allocation documents.

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The selection of Hullbridge as a 500 home development with no railway connections, and no inward employment will mean that a whole new commuter town will be created where the working population will need to travel to a station (Rayleigh) or by car. This will have a negative impact on the environment and traffic density.

• (iii) Many issues arise from the proposed development of site SER6. My feasibility costings suggest the whole development may be as high as £231m, which has been made more complicated by the untimely demise of the owner of the site. The infrastructure constraints are really enormous !! Having produced a 'feasibility study' we estimate the probable cost of upgrading the whole of the existing infrastructure to be in the region of £16.3 millions all at the expense of the developer. In my experience as a chartered surveyor this will never happen.

Enabling and Infrastructure works would normally take, for a site like this one, anything between 6 and 18 months making the target of 5yr plan undeliverable within that period.

• (iv) The site boundaries as set out in the Core Strategy are under some scrutiny by Rawreth Parish Council. This is mentioned in their meeting minutes of 3rd July 2013. They state that part of the site is within the boundary of Rawreth and we suspect this is SER 6b. Using the Localism Act, Community Rights to challenge, Plans & Strategies, Neighborhood Planning and Consultation clauses, we request the withdrawal of site SER 6 for the purpose of redefining the boundaries.

We believe there is a need for a thorough review of the boundaries to be compliant with the Core Strategy policies of 'keeping communities intact as existing'.

• (v) We consider it unreasonable to ask this question. Our plea is for a total withdrawal and we are concerned that this question is framed on the assumption that SER 6 has already met with RDC approval.

• (vi) Yes the infrastructure in the area can be provided as long as the RDC, Highways and the Water board collaborate to upgrade Watery lane to 'A' Road status.

There is only one way in and out of Hullbridge, presently congested, and Watery lane is a relief road for that traffic. We find it difficult to understand why the powers that be are unable to see, or understand our communities' frustration, with their attitude towards this village, being made to feel that we are the 'dumping ground' just to please Government Housing requirements. The Core Strategy allows for 'flexibility' but we are unable to see this is applied by the way the allocation of sites has been dealt with.

We strongly disagree with the statements made on page 12 of the 2011 inspector's report (EXA134 clause 50) that the local Highways Authority are satisfied that the traffic

congestion can be satisfactorily mitigated. There has been no formal traffic survey conducted as stated by ECC Highways dept. yesterday. The Highways Authority have stated that there are no plans to upgrade Watery Lane which is prone to frequent flooding, and is unsuitable as a major route in and out of Hullbridge.

Flood: Using information received from AVIVA who used post codes SS11 and SS5 it is suggested that the risk levels to flood in these areas are coloured **Red Alert** using the Hawkeye scheme. This risk assessment, fluctuating each year by the climate changes will possible increase the insurance premiums from £2500.00 to £5000.00

The existing drainage system is in need of urgent upgrading, there are a number of our residents experiencing effluent overflow into their gardens and we wonder if the present sewage works can cope with the present capacity let alone the increased capacity which will be required for the 500 dwellings.

- (vii) The Hullbridge Community do not see any way the present allocation/distribution of dwellings can be accommodated into the existing village. It is proposed by the Core Strategy that there should be a “green Buffer Strip” division between the old and new village. We see this as being the source of division between the communities and would certainly not provide “cohesion” in the village which is a main requirement of the Core Strategy.

- (viii) Alternative sites are well stated in the Allocations Document, particularly the identified ‘brown field sites’ which to all intents and purposes seem to be ignored. It is quite clearly stated in the CS that the use of green belt should be the last resort for conversion to development land.

We dispute the fact as stated by RDC, that Hullbridge ‘needs 500 houses’ however, we disagree and submit that they are not required. It is RDC who needs to find where to locate 500 houses. Hullbridge was the soft option. Furthermore, we are not convinced that 175 Social housing dwellings would be occupied by the young folk of our indigenous population. We strongly feel that **all** these dwellings are destined to be occupied by the London Overspill.

- (ix) Site 17 presents similar issues to SER6 and is not acceptable to the Hullbridge community. Hullbridge has had small pockets of development over the years and we could accommodate small scale sensitive developments. Our aim is to preserve the individual character of our village and not have it destroyed under brick, concrete and tarmac.