

Examination of the Rochford Allocations Submissions Document
Canewdon Respondent's Statement of Common Ground

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Issue 2.

Is the housing site listed for Canewdon, justified, deliverable within the plan period and consistent with national policy? What are the alternative options?

Have the consultation procedures been adequate and compliant?

Would development conserve the heritage asset of St Nicholas Church?

Is the allocation contrary to H2 South Canewdon since the site lies to the west?

Would SC17 be sound?

We refer to the content of our representations, to which this is additional.

Deliverable.

There is no developer interest for the whole site, perhaps a consequence of the remote location of the village, which undermines any proposal to build in Canewdon. Without that interest, any discussion of deliverability is speculative, without foundation. We are aware of a developer interested in the Diocese land but we know that the bungalow section cannot be brokered and so the site remains undeliverable.

We note that the proposed site is only half the Diocese title referred to in the submission by Strutt and Parker dated January 2013. A modified proposal might extend the development to include the remaining Diocese land. This invites speculation of extension of the site to the west, where, as we have said, there is no defensible boundary for several miles.

Consultation

There has been none. There was a single meeting in 2010. The Chair of the Planning Committee, Keith Hudson, announced that Canewdon 'had to take its share' of new housing required by the Government. That is the extent of the pretence at consultation: telling the villagers what would happen, without an option.

We, the contributors to this statement of common ground, held a consultation meeting and conducted a survey of the village

in July 2013. We have consulted the Parish Council, who also opposes the proposed site. The consensus is that 60 new houses in front of the church are unwelcome, because of the visual impact and because a large estate of general market housing is inappropriate to the needs of the village. The village needs some housing, the numbers to be determined by evidence, sensitively located to minimise visual impact, of small houses for young people to stay in the village in their first home and older people to downsize, leaving larger houses free for families.

We conveyed these views to the Leader of Rochford District Council. Consultation that conformed to the legal duty on the District Council would have ascertained these views at an early stage. We would not then have the inappropriate proposals currently made. The District Council has failed in the legal duty to consult and take account of local opinion, not announce a pre-determined outcome.

Merits

'Taking a share', as announced by the Chair of the Planning Committee, Keith Hudson, is not a valid planning consideration. Development in Canewdon, as proposed, is without merit. The site has no defensible boundary on the west, with open country and a few scattered houses all the way to Ashingdon, some miles distant.

The proposals make no sense, are not evidence based and do not consider alternatives. The impact on visual amenity, especially the Church, but also the open Green Belt countryside, the unique qualities of Canewdon in scale and location, together with the lack of infrastructure and remote location, are all serious planning issues that the District Council have failed to take into account or advance any discussion.

The District Council defended a High Court challenge by Cogent LLP, promoting development on a site not distant from Canewdon. The District Council argued that development should be west of Rochford town centre, where infrastructure, employment, schools and access to the highway network and railways all lie. The District Council cannot now consistently argue for development in Canewdon.

60 houses makes minimal impact on the 4,600 required and the negative impact on the village and open countryside is out of proportion, compared to the correct location, as argued by the District Council in the Cogent case, on sites west of Rochford town centre.

Any development in Canewdon must be specific to the needs of the village, because the location is too remote to contribute to the general housing market in Rochford. Until a proper assessment of local need is made, with evidence, there is no basis for discussing alternative sites, though almost anything might be better than this ill considered and insensitive

proposal, arrogantly imposed on this ancient settlement. The inconsistency with Policy H2 adds to the farce.