

Frequently Asked Questions

Core Strategy Preferred Options

1. What is the Core Strategy?

The Core Strategy will, when completed and adopted, outline the general approach and overall strategy for the future development of the District. It discusses a range of planning issues including housing, infrastructure, employment and the protection and enhancement of the environment.

The Core Strategy does not include detailed policies used to decide planning applications or specify the exact sites for future development. This information will be included within other planning documents (Development Plan Documents) which will be produced later. These planning documents form part of what is known as the Local Development Framework (please see <http://www.rochford.gov.uk/rdc/main.asp?page=351> for more information on the Local Development Framework). The Core Strategy will guide what other planning documents say, as Development Plan Documents must conform to the policies within the Core Strategy.

2. What is the Core Strategy Preferred Options?

This document is not the final version of the Core Strategy; it is the Core Strategy Preferred Options. It sets out what our current preferred options for tackling the challenges the District faces and for taking advantage of the District's opportunities.

For each strategy and action we have stated our preferred option and, where appropriate, an alternative option, which will be subject to public participation and appraisal before a final version of the document is agreed.

3. How can I have my say?

It is important that the Core Strategy reflects the views of local communities and we have carefully considered the results of previous consultation exercises in drawing up this document.

The easiest way to comment on the Core Strategy Preferred Options is using our online consultation system (<http://rochford.jdi-consult.net/ldf/>).

Alternatively, those without access to the internet can call the Planning Policy team on 01702 318191 and we will organise alternative arrangements to allow you to view the document and submit your comments.

The document is open to public consultation from the 5th November to **5pm** on the **17th December 2008**.

4. What happens next?

Once the consultation period has ended we will analyse your thoughts and opinions on the preferred options we have put forward.

The final Strategy will then be produced having regard to these. We will write the final Core Strategy document, stating all the policies that will be applied to the District, and have a pre-submission consultation before submission to the Secretary of State. After that, the final Core Strategy document and all other supporting documents will be examined by the Secretary of State. It will only be approved if the document meets the legal requirements and tests of soundness.

The Core Strategy is scheduled to be adopted in 2010.

5. Why do we need to accommodate any more houses in the District?

The Government requires Rochford District to ensure at least 5,600 additional dwellings are built in the District between 2001 and 2025. This allocation is based on meeting current and future housing need.

Current need encompasses the number of people in the District who are living within a household wanting to move to their own accommodation and form a separate household but unable to do so (e.g. adult children).

Projected need is derived from the supposition that the population is projected to increase from 81,300 in 2007 to 87,000 by 2021.

6. How has the distribution of housing across the District been derived?

The proposed distribution of housing in the previous version of the Core Strategy Preferred Options has been reconsidered and revised having regard to the updated evidence base together with the implementation of other new strategies / developments since last year.

7. Where exactly is developed proposed to go?

This has not yet been decided. The purpose of the Core Strategy is not to identify specific locations but indicate general areas for development. More precise locations will be designated through the Allocations document at a later date.

8. Why do we need to build on Green Belt land?

'Green Belt' is a planning designation, not a description of land. Land can be 'brownfield', i.e. it has been developed in the past, but is still part of the Metropolitan Green Belt.

The term 'brownfield' refers to an area of land which has previously been developed, and may be suitable for alternative uses in the future i.e. redevelopment. 'Greenfield', however, encapsulates land which has not been developed in the past.

Housing Allocation – brownfield and greenfield

- Between 2001 and 31st March 2006 810 homes of the allocated 5,600 were built.
- Including building completions since 2006 and available brownfield land as identified in our Urban Capacity Study (2007), we only have the capacity to accommodate 1,301 of these on our remaining brownfield sites across the District.
- Thus, whilst the Green Belt will be protected as far as is possible, some Green Belt land will need to be released in order to meet our projected housing needs, of which there are 3,489 remaining.

The Urban Capacity Study (2007) can be viewed online at http://www.rochford.gov.uk/rdc/PDF/planning_evibase_urban_capacity_study_2007.pdf.

9. Will the projected housing need lead to further intensification of existing residential areas (e.g. replacing one house with many, within the same space)?

We aim to develop existing brownfield sites as identified in our Urban Capacity Study (2007) as far as practicable, but we will limit the intensification of existing residential areas, preventing redevelopment which is not in keeping with the density or character of the area.

10. How can our existing infrastructure cope with the additional housing requirements? Will the necessary infrastructure be provided along with new developments?

In determining areas of future development, the fact that accessibility to public transport and the reliance on the use of the car is unequally distributed across the District has been taken into consideration. Actions to promote alternatives to the car such as walking and cycling are proposed.

We recognise the need to provide additional infrastructure and improve existing infrastructure where necessary. The Core Strategy outlines in broad terms what infrastructure will be required and how this will be delivered.

11. What protection will there be for our District's green, open spaces?

Green spaces within urban areas are part of the social fabric of the community and will be protected.

The District itself is predominantly rural and we aim to minimise the development of Green Belt land. Where the release of Green Belt land is unavoidable, Green Belt land which contributes least towards the purposes of

the Green Belt will be favoured for development over other Green Belt locations.

12. How will you tackle anti-social behaviour?

Anti-social behaviour is a complex issue but we recognise that planning has an important role to play. From the design of new developments to ensure that natural surveillance deters anti-social behaviour, to the redevelopment of Rochford and Hockley town centres incorporating more community and youth facilities, to providing environments that all of the community can take pride in and ownership of, concerns regarding anti-social behaviour have been incorporated.

13. What about the needs of young people?

We recognise that there is a deficit in provision for the needs of the District's youth, and as such, we propose to provide additional youth facilities.

Young people will be consulted on what facilities they require, and their views will be incorporated into the development of these facilities where a need has been identified.

14. What is affordable housing?

Affordable housing does not mean housing that is of inferior quality. When we talk about affordable housing, we mean housing that the District's residents (e.g. young couples, key workers) can either buy or rent for less money than it would cost on the open market.

15. Why is the proportion of affordable housing not greater?

We propose that a deliverable proportion of affordable housing is provided within new residential developments. It is not feasible to require developers to provide 100% affordable housing on any one site.

16. What do you propose to do to preserve the character of the District and each local area?

We are committed to the preservation of the District's historic towns and villages. Provisions such as the extension of certain Conservation Areas and the reintroduction of a Local List of important buildings aim to prevent insensitive alterations to important areas.

17. How will our local shops be preserved or enhanced?

We recognise that existing neighbourhood and village shops are an important asset to the local community and we will support the development and preservation of shops within villages which serve everyday needs.

The main focus of retail enhancement will be within Rayleigh, Hockley and Rochford town centres.

18. With the proposed development of the District, how can our community spirit be retained?

‘Sustainability’ is the key vision for the future. To achieve this, it is essential that settlements are developed as necessary to maintain a vibrant and prosperous environment for future generations. We recognise the importance of community and this has been considered in all aspects of the Core Strategy, from the proposed housing distribution, to retail and town centre policies, to the proposed community facilities and leisure policies.

19. How will environmental objectives be included within new developments?

We propose to require high environmental standards from new developments.

We also propose initiatives to minimise the environmental impacts of these developments throughout the Core Strategy, for example the requirement to provide travel plans for new developments to minimise car use, promoting renewable energy and the utilisation of sustainable drainage systems to prevent localised flooding.