

84 Thorpe Road
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11 April 2011

Dear Madam

Budget 2011 – Planning for Growth

I write in reply to your invitation to comment on the planning policy changes announced by the Government and how they may affect the Hawkwell Action Group's case with regard to the Core Strategy (CS).

Eric Pickles statement that 'local people will have far greater influence over what is built in their area' could be totally offset by the default answer to development being YES. I ask how that would work and how should these two conflicting statements be reflected within the CS, because indeed they should be as this has the potential to prove a huge conflict of interest between the Council and local people?

The CS should be rewritten with consideration being given to Planning for Growth and taking into account local people's views on how they see their District developing. For example, no large housing estate in a semi rural location such as Hawkwell West, instead release smaller parcels of land across the area and not completely destroy the character of the place.

Planning for Growth talks about 'sustainable development' and 'retaining existing controls on greenbelt land' and I do not believe proper consideration has been given to these issues in the CS where Hawkwell West is concerned.

In Hawkwell West we have one variation of the same development site, where is the evidence that reasonable alternatives to this greenbelt site have even been considered?

I note we have not been invited to comment on the New Houses Bonus (NHB), where would this money be spent? Hawkwell could be landed with a 175 housing estate it does not want to the benefit of other parts of the

District. I believe the NHB changes everything and will have a material impact on Rochford District Council's planning decisions. There is now financial incentive for the Council to build as many houses as possible with no thought for planning, given they have declined to do a proper housing assessment of the area.

The Hawkwell Action Group therefore questions the soundness of the CS and its ability to deliver what is appropriate for the District and Hawkwell West in particular.

Yours sincerely

Carol Dutton

Carol Dutton
Spokesperson for the Hawkwell Action Group