

Local Development Framework

Development Management DPD Discussion and Consultation Document Regulation 25



LDF

Contents

Chapter

1. Introduction	1
2. Housing, Character of Place and Residential Amenity	9
3. The Green Belt and Countryside	26
4. Environmental Issues	51
5. Transport	57
6. Economic Development	61
7. Retail and Town Centres	65
8. Public Involvement	73

Introduction

The Role of Development Management Development Plan Document

Development management is a positive and proactive approach to shaping, considering, determining and delivering development proposals. It is led by the Local Planning Authority working closely with those proposing developments and other stakeholders. It is undertaken in the spirit of partnership and inclusiveness, and supports the delivery of key priorities and outcomes. Adopting the development management approach will enable us in conjunction with local communities and stakeholders, to promote and achieve the vision and objectives contained within the development plans and sustainable community strategies, as well as to deliver relevant regional and national objectives. This will assist us in shaping sustainable, prosperous, attractive and safe places where people want to live, work and relax.

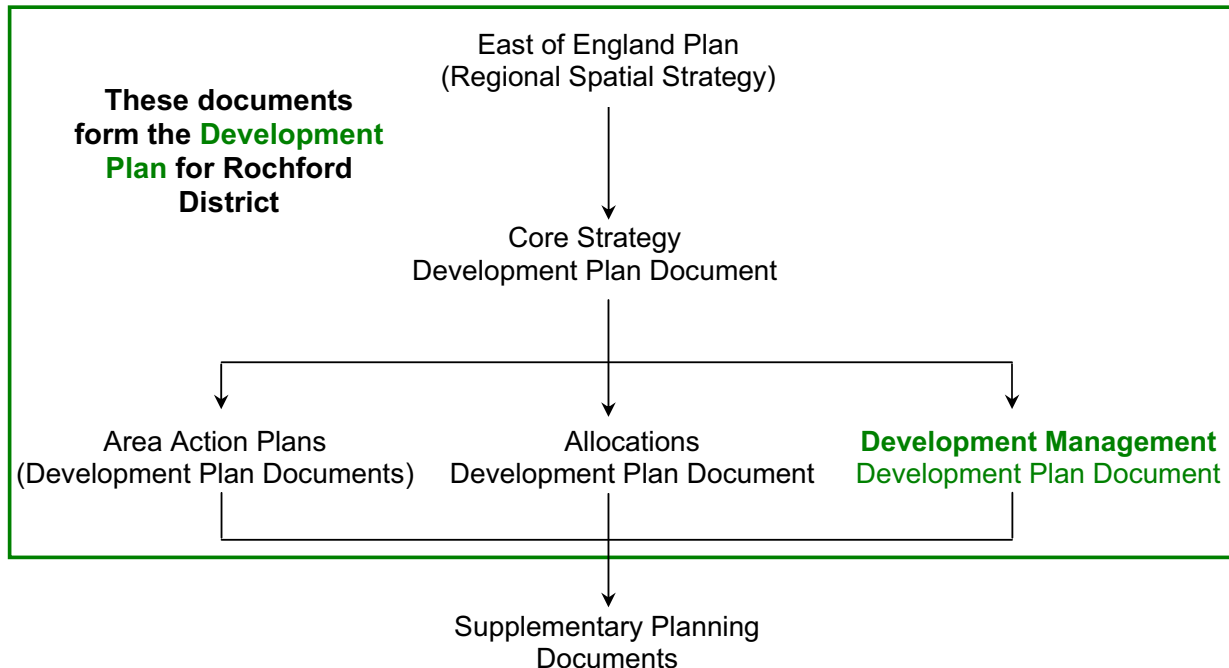
The Development Management Development Plan Document (DPD) will set out the detailed day-to-day planning policies through which development within the District will be delivered. It is a document which will form part of the portfolio of documents shaping the future of the District, known as the Local Development Framework.

The Core Strategy is the overarching document of the Local Development Framework. It sets out our core issues and policies for the future development of the District, which the development management policies must conform to in order to be found 'sound' and to deliver our vision. As such, the development management policies must not repeat the policies in the Core Strategy and should be read in conjunction with them. Therefore both these documents will be used in the determination of planning applications for the development and use of land and buildings in the District.

The Development Management DPD will be subject to several stages of public consultation, which will help shape its preparation. This consultation document is the first stage in the process and has been developed having regard to our approach to the future development of the District as set out in the emerging Core Strategy.

The diagram below (Figure 1) shows the documents which will comprise the Development Plan for the District. Planning applications are to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan. Supplementary Planning Documents, however, do not contain policies and as such are not part of the Development Plan. These documents will sit below the policy documents and provide additional advice and guidance where appropriate.

Figure 1 – The Development Plan



The Core Strategy has been submitted to the Secretary of State for public examination. The Development Management DPD will need to be adapted to reflect the approach of the adopted Core Strategy, as appropriate.

This document, although not the final version, should be read in conjunction with the approach outlined in the emerging Core Strategy submission document.

The Role of the Development Management Preferred Options

This document is a public consultation document which explains our preferred approach to managing future development within the District. It sets out the preferred options for development management policies reflecting the priorities set out in the emerging Core Strategy, and where appropriate, alternative options with explanations as to why such an approach is not preferred. This document has been subject to a sustainability appraisal.

This is the first stage in the preparation of the Development Management DPD. Following the initial round of community involvement, the submission version of this document will be prepared, having regard to these findings. It will then be subject to another six week period of public consultation, which is scheduled for September/October 2010, and a second sustainability appraisal before a final version of the document is agreed. The Development Management DPD itself will be submitted, along with the results of this consultation and other evidence, to the government. The document will then be subject to an independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State, and if found to be 'sound' is scheduled to be adopted in November 2011.

The Development Management DPD is divided into chapters containing preferred and

Introduction

alternative options for managing development within the District. These options are detailed within the following chapters:

- Housing, Character of Place and Residential Amenity
- The Green Belt and Countryside
- Environmental Issues
- Transport
- Economic Development
- Retail and Town Centres

We want your views on these options for development management in the District. Views submitted at this stage will be used to inform the production of the next draft Development Management DPD. The key stages in the development of this document are as follows:

- Preferred Options public consultation;
- Pre-Submission public consultation;
- Examination in Public; and
- Adoption.

Vision

Our vision is shared with that of the Local Strategic Partnership;

‘To make Rochford District a place which provides opportunities for the best possible quality of life for all who live, work and visit here’

To support this, we have four main corporate objectives. These are;

- Making a difference to our people
- Making a difference to our community
- Making a difference to our environment
- Making a difference to our local economy

The Core Strategy and Development Management DPD have a key role to play in the delivery of the vision for Rochford District. For each theme of development management, the vision and objectives for that topic as determined in the emerging Core Strategy have been set out. The Development Management DPD will contribute to the vision and objectives in conjunction with the Core Strategy. Together, these all contribute to the overall vision for the District.

Sustainability Appraisal

The preparation of a Sustainability Appraisal is a mandatory requirement under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 for the production of documents comprising the Local Development Framework. This ensures that the wider social, environmental and economic effects of the policies and proposals contained within Development Plan Documents are fully assessed. The preferred options contained in this document have been the subject of a

Introduction

Sustainability Appraisal. As such, the Sustainability Appraisal forms part of the evidence base of the Local Development Framework.

Community Involvement

In the preparation of this preferred options document, regard has been had to the community involvement exercises from the various public consultation stages which have informed the preparation of the emerging Core Strategy. This document will be subject to public consultation, and this will inform the submission version of the Development Management DPD.

Relationship with other strategies

As stated above, the Development Management DPD will have to conform to the emerging Core Strategy. The Core Strategy is being developed having regard to a wealth of other strategies, at higher and lower tiers to the District. The Development Management DPD should also have regard to these other strategies, and contribute towards their delivery.

The Sustainable Community Strategy (2009) is the long-term vision for the District and sets out the priorities for improvement intended to deliver the vision. It is developed by the Local Strategic Partnership – a partnership of local public, private and voluntary sector organisations who play a key part in the provision of services within the District.

Our Local Development Framework should aid the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy and acts as an umbrella for all other strategies devised for the area.

The Sustainable Community Strategy identifies seven key priorities:

- Supporting the Ageing Population
- Fostering Greater Community Cohesion
- Strengthening the Third Sector (voluntary sector)
- Increasing Accessibility to Services
- Keeping Rochford Safe
- Encouraging Economic Development: Skills, Employment and Enterprise
- Promoting a Greener District

The Core Strategy has a role to play in delivering all of the above. The Development Management Document DPD will address the Sustainable Community Strategy priorities primarily through aiding the delivery of the Core Strategy.

There are a number of other strategies which influence our Local Development Framework, as outlined below.

Introduction

Regional Strategies

- East of England Plan (2008)
- Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESA)
- Regional Economic Strategy (2008-2031)
- Regional Environment Strategy (2003)
- Regional Health Strategy 2005-2010
- Regional Housing Strategy 2005-2010
- Regional Social Strategy (2007)

Sub-Regional Strategies

Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership:

- Delivering the Future (2003)
- Green Grid Strategy (2005)
- Thames Gateway South Essex Sub Regional Housing Strategy 2008-11

County Strategies

Essex County Council:

- Adult Health & Community Well-being Accommodation Strategy
- Childcare Sufficiency Assessment
- The Children and Young People's Plan
- Disabled Accommodation Strategy
- Essex and Southend Waste Local Plan (2001)
- Essex Biodiversity Action Plan
- The Essex Design Guide (2005)
- Essex Sports Facilities Strategy 2007-2020
- Essex Strategy 2008-2018
- Essex Supporting People 5 Year Strategy 2005-2010
- Local Area Agreement 2 2008-2011
- Local Transport Plan 2006-2011
- Mental Health Accommodation Strategy
- School Organisation Plan 2008-2013
- The Urban Place Supplement

Introduction

District Strategies

- Asset Management Plan (2008)
- Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy 2008-2013
- Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans (2007)
- Contaminated Land Strategy (2004)
- Corporate Plan 2009
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy 2005-2008
- Crouch and Roach Estuaries Management Plan (2005)
- Cultural Strategy (2004)
- Economic Development Strategy (2009)
- Housing Strategy (2009)
- Partnership Guidance (2008)
- Play Action Plan (2008)
- Play Strategy 2007-2012
- Sustainable Community Strategy (2009)

Sub-District Strategies

Hockley Parish Plan Group:

- Hockley Parish Plan

Rawreth Parish Council:

- Rawreth Parish Plan

Rochford Parish Council:

- 2004 Vision Statement

In addition to conforming to the approach to managing development in the District as set out in the Core Strategy, government planning policy, in the form of Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs), Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and circulars, have also shaped the production of the Development Management DPD.

Evidence Base

This document, where appropriate, has also drawn upon the extensive evidence base which has informed the development of the emerging Core Strategy. These key documents are as follows:

- **Annual Monitoring Reports** report on a range of indicators on an annual basis since 2004.
- **Call for Sites** was carried out in early 2007 and resulted in the submission of a number of sites from developers, land-owners and agents for consideration by the Council.

Introduction

- **Community Involvement** carried out on the Issues and Options version of the Core Strategy in 2006, the first version of the Core Strategy Preferred Options in 2007 and the revised version of the Core Strategy Preferred Options in 2008. As well as reports on the results of the consultation of the general public and specific stakeholders, this includes reports on the results of workshops at King Edmund School, Fitzwimarc School and Greensward Academy undertaken to ascertain the views of young people in the District.
- **Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans (2007)** assess the characteristics of the District's Conservation Areas, as well as proposing action to ensure their value is retained or enhanced.
- **Employment Land Study (2008)** examines the supply and demand for various forms of employment land and compares this to the current and projected future economic profile of the District in order to determine the spatial requirements for future employment.
- **Essex Landscape Character Assessment (2003)** outlines the extent of the three broad landscape character types within the District, and includes an assessment of their sensitivity to different forms of development.
- **Essex Thames Gateway Water Cycle Study – Scoping Study (2009)** a sub-regional review of the existing condition of both the natural water environment and the water infrastructure which serves the population of the South Essex
- **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2008)** details a wealth of data around health and well-being issues in Essex.
- **Local Wildlife Site Review (2007)** is an assessment of existing and potential local wildlife sites to determine their importance as natural habitats.
- **Looking Back and Moving Forward – Assessing the Housing Needs of Gypsies and Travellers in Essex (2006)** provides an assessment of the projected future accommodation needs for Gypsies and Travellers up until 2016.
- **Open Space Study (2009)** examines the current provision and quality of a variety of open spaces throughout the District.
- **Retail and Leisure Study (2008)** examines the shopping and leisure use habits of the District's residents, and the spatial implications of these for the future development of the area.
- **Rochford District Historic Environment Characterisation Project (2006)** provides a wealth of evidence on the importance of the historic environment within the District and facilitates the integration of management and conservation principles within the planning process.
- **Rochford Futures Report** profiles the social, economic and environmental characteristics of Rochford District at a District and Ward level.

Introduction

- **Strategic Environmental Assessment Baseline Information Profile 2008-2009** presents a plethora of secondary data about the social, physical, environmental and demographic characteristics of the District.
- **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment** determines the availability, suitability and achievability of housing development sites within the District.
- **Strategic Housing Market Assessment** provides data on housing supply and demand at the sub-regional level.
- **Sustainability Appraisals and Strategic Environmental Assessments** were carried out on previous documents, assessing the social, economic and environmental impacts of proposed policies. The results of these have been incorporated into this document. Appraisals of this document have also been undertaken.
- **Thames Gateway South Essex Strategic Flood Risk Assessment** determined the areas at risk of flooding across the sub-region, and calculated the probability of their flooding, enabling land across the sub-region to be categorised as Flood Zone 1, 2, 3 depending on the risk.
- **Thames Gateway South Essex Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Review – Scoping Report (2009)** provides a review of the Thames Gateway South Essex Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) which was published in 2006.
- **Urban Capacity Study (2007)** examines the capacity to accommodate development within the District on existing appropriate sites. This study has been superseded by the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

Housing, Character of Place and Residential Amenity

Vision

In five years...

- New sustainable, residential developments are planned that are well related to infrastructure, community facilities, and play space. These have begun to be implemented. A number of residential developments, along with additional infrastructure, have been completed and are meeting the needs of local communities.
- The Council has adopted a Local List which has afforded additional protection to locally significant buildings.
- Work has begun on implementing the Conservation Area Management Plans which is having a positive impact on the character and appearance of the District's Conservation Areas.

By 2025...

- A range of high-quality, sustainable new dwellings that meet the needs of local people of all social groups are in place and integrated into communities.
- The vast majority of the District's Green Belt remains undeveloped.
- New infrastructure has accompanied new residential development, meeting the needs of local communities.
- The District's distinctive character and historical built environment has been retained.
- New development has been implemented which contributes positively towards the District's character.

Objectives

1. Ensure the delivery of an adequate supply of sustainable dwellings to cater for the District's growing demand, as per the requirements of the East of England Plan and a 15 year housing land supply.
2. Deliver a balanced strategy for the distribution of housing, directing housing growth to the most sustainable locations having regard to social, economic and environmental considerations.
3. Ensure the District's settlements remain viable and that rural services can be sustained.
4. Prioritise the redevelopment of appropriate brownfield sites for housing, to minimise the release of Green Belt land for development.
5. Ensure the delivery of housing which caters for the needs of all communities in terms of tenure, type and location.
6. Ensure that appropriate infrastructure accompanies new housing development.
7. Ensure that new development respect and make a positive contribution towards the built environment.
8. Support and enhance the local built heritage.

Introduction

The emerging Core Strategy contains key policies to ensure the efficient use of available land for housing through the utilisation of previously developed land, and identifies general locations which could accommodate appropriate sustainable extensions to the residential envelope to ensure a 15 year supply of housing in line with the East of England Plan (2008). Whilst ensuring the required quantum of housing and gypsy and traveller accommodation in the District is sustainably delivered, the emerging Core Strategy also seeks to ensure the appropriate mix of housing tenure and dwelling types, and requires compliance with the Lifetime Homes Standard to ensure that new dwellings are capable of meeting the District's changing demographic needs. Partnership working and consultation with the Council's Housing Strategy Team is required to ensure that this is achieved.

The protection and enhancement of the District's distinct settlement characteristics are also key issues which are covered in the emerging Core Strategy. It is important to ensure the high quality design of new developments and regard must be had to local design guidance. The Core Strategy also recognises the importance of protecting locally significant buildings which are of historic and architectural importance, through the appropriate management of the District's Conservation Areas and the reintroduction of the Local List.

This chapter elaborates on the core strategic issues by providing policies on specific housing issues and the protection of the historic environment. The design, scale and form of new dwellings, or modifications to existing dwellings within existing settlements can impact on the character of the streetscene and the surrounding built environment. It is important to ensure a positive impact on the surrounding environment and a coherent and interesting character through following good design principles and using locally distinct settlement characteristics. The design of new developments must also be considered with respect to the wider implications of such development on the form, flow and character of the built environment and its impact on sustainability objectives.

Protecting and enhancing the existing character and individual identities of the District's settlements is a key objective of the emerging Core Strategy. Therefore new development both within, and on the periphery of, existing settlements is encouraged to have regard to the character of the established streetscene in addition to the District's dwelling type requirements.

Reducing the District's carbon emissions and planning to adapt to climate change is an important theme running through the Sustainable Community Strategy (2009), and this is reflected in the emerging Core Strategy. Planning can play an important role through ensuring the sustainability of new developments and alterations to existing buildings, whilst seeking to increase the energy efficiency of existing dwellings, as appropriate.

The historic environment of the District contributes to the unique character and history of individual settlements, as well as the established local streetscene. The significant historic townscapes are protected through Conservation Area designation and the most nationally important buildings are protected through Listed Building status. It is, however, also important to consider the impact of development and change on the wider area beyond the boundary of protected areas and on locally important unlisted buildings which are cherished by the local community.

Housing

Design of New Developments

The design of new developments, whether major¹ or small-scale, can impact on the character of an area. It is important that additions or alterations to the residential envelope are in-keeping with the local characteristics and reflect the distinctiveness of the District's towns and villages to ensure the cohesion of new communities into existing settlements.

The planning of sustainable extensions to the residential envelope will be design-led and community focused to secure high quality sustainable development. This will require the appropriate integration of the means of access for pedestrians, cyclists, cars etc. and allowing sufficient functioning of the Council's recycling scheme. This will also require the integration of public open space, historic features, landscaping, public art and habitat creation, recreational facilities and educational provision, community facilities, including the provision of primary health care, as appropriate, and housing of mixed size and tenure within the new and adjoining communities. The provision of public open space within any proposed development should have regard to the findings of the Open Space Study.

It is also important to promote and support the enhancement of the environmental quality of the District's countryside and settlements. As such, regard should be had to the landscape character areas, which define the different geographical regions with a recognisable pattern of landscape characteristics, which create a distinct sense of place. We will also encourage the preparation of Village Design Statements and Parish Plans by local community groups throughout the District which will provide developers with guidance on the local character of individual settlements and help ensure that developments are sensitive to the local area and designed in a way that would be acceptable to the local population. Village Design Statements will be expected to have been produced in consultation with the public to ensure that they reflect local opinions and must be endorsed by the Council before they can be used. It is also important to have regard to the findings of the District's Historic Environment Characterisation Project (2006). This will enable the sensitivity of landscapes and the characteristics of local places to be fully considered in the context of individual planning applications.

We are concerned about the potential impact of climate change and will therefore expect developers to implement appropriate initiatives to mitigate the impact of new developments. The design and construction of buildings can directly affect the environment in terms of energy use and the generation of greenhouse gases and the subsequent impact on climate change through global warming. This will also affect the consumption of non-renewable natural materials. The implementation of appropriate measures to reduce the consumption of energy and natural resources will help achieve the wider objective of securing more sustainable forms of development within the District.

We will therefore expect that all new buildings are well designed, fit-for-purpose, appropriate for the site and its setting and adaptable for long-term use. New buildings should achieve high environmental standards through energy and resource efficient sustainable design and make best use of sustainable construction techniques. All dwellings must achieve the

¹ The Council considers major development as defined within the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment) (England) Order 2006

Housing, Character of Place and Residential Amenity

required Code for Sustainable Homes and Lifetime Homes Standards and non-domestic buildings must aspire to achieve the appropriate BREEAM rating. Further information on the Code for Sustainable Homes, Lifetime Homes and the BREEAM rating can be found in the emerging Core Strategy.

Whilst aspiring for sustainable construction of new buildings, we also actively encourage the provision of well designed high quality places, which is pivotal for both major and small-scale developments. Schemes should have a safe, inclusive layout with legible and well planned routes, blocks and spaces, integrated residential, commercial and community activity, safe public spaces and pedestrian routes without traffic conflict, secure private areas, attractive buildings and landscaped spaces.

All developments should consider the concept statements which will be prepared by the Local Planning Authority, where applicable. These will outline the appropriate design principles for a particular site in order to deliver the best possible social, economic and environmental benefits for the community.

DM1 Design of New Developments – Preferred Option

The design of new developments should reflect the character of the locality to ensure a positive contribution to the surrounding built environment and residential amenity.

The design and layout of proposed development should, in particular, consider:

- i). Accessibility;
- ii). Boundary treatment;
- iii). Car parking;
- iv). Density;
- v). Local open space requirements including the provision of greenspace, play space, private and communal gardens, allotments and other types of open space, as appropriate;
- vi). Impact on designated sites, Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings;
- vii). Landscaping;
- viii). Overlooking, privacy and visual amenity;
- ix). Relationship to existing and nearby buildings;
- x). Scale and form;
- xi). Concept statements; and
- xii). Village Design Statements and Parish Plans, where applicable.

Design briefs for major developments must show that they consider and reflect the identity of the surrounding area, and must allow for the effective running of the Council's recycling scheme.

Proposals should have regard to the detailed advice and guidance on the design and layout of new developments as set out in Supplementary Planning Document 2 – Housing Design, as well as to guidance in the Essex Design Guide for Residential and Mixed Use Areas, and the Open Space Study for open space provision.

DM1 Design of New Developments – Alternative Options

Option	Why is it not preferred?
Add to/delete criteria listed in the policy.	The Council believe that this is a comprehensive list of issues which should be considered when determining planning applications.

Density of New Developments

The density of new developments is critical to the efficient and appropriate use of available land in accessible and sustainable locations. However, it is also important to create high quality environments with sufficient public open space, parking and other amenities to promote good quality of life for new and existing communities.

Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3 – Housing) provides guidance on the provision of high quality, sustainable housing, with a mix of housing tenures which reflects local needs, ensuring the effective use of existing housing stock, and providing enough homes in appropriate locations through the effective and efficient use of land. It gives the Local Planning Authority flexibility in setting appropriate densities to specific localities, through encouraging a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare as a national minimum standard to ensure that available land is appropriately utilised.

Density can impact on the character and form of development, and as such, we will maintain a flexible approach towards the appropriate density of new developments to reflect the individual identities of each area. It is recognised in the emerging Core Strategy, however that some locations are more sustainable in terms of infrastructure and amenities, and can thus accommodate higher density development.

We therefore do not seek to be overly prescriptive with regard to density but will encourage appropriate densities which reflect the character, scale and form of the locality to create cohesive, sustainable environments.

DM2 Density of New Developments – Preferred Option

Proposals for residential development must optimise the capacity of the site in a manner that is compatible with the use, intensity, scale and character of the surrounding area and the size of the site.

The precise density for any individual site will be determined by its immediate context, on-site constraints, the type of development proposed and the need to provide an appropriate mix of dwellings to meet the community's needs.

DM2 Density of New Developments – Alternative Options	
Option	Why is it not preferred?
Prescriptive density.	It is not appropriate to set an overarching density for the whole of the District. Density should be site specific to reflect the character, scale and form of the surrounding built environment.
Allow the market to determine density.	Density should be site specific to reflect the character, scale and form of the surrounding built environment. Whilst allowing the market to determine the density of new developments would make efficient use of available land, it may not provide sufficient open greenspace, civic spaces, parking and other local amenities or the appropriate housing tenure and dwelling mix to meet the needs of local communities. New developments must also make a positive contribution to the character of the local area.
Higher minimum density to help deliver greater quantum of housing.	Density should be site specific to reflect the character, scale and form of the surrounding built environment. Whilst it is important to make the best use of available land and deliver greater quantum of housing, sufficient open greenspace, civic spaces, parking and other local amenities must be provided to ensure a high quality environment. New developments must also make a positive contribution to the character of the local area.

Infilling and Residential Intensification

Infilling can be defined as filling the small gaps between existing groups of dwellings with new development. We consider the limited infilling of existing settlements to be acceptable where the development conforms to the existing street pattern and density of the immediate locality. We will also permit an appropriate level of residential intensification within town centre areas where permitted densities are higher due to their sustainable locations, which will help safeguard Green Belt land in the District. The suitable density for town centre locations is 75 dwellings per hectare as set out in the emerging Core Strategy. However, the appropriateness of infilling in residential areas will be determined on a case by case basis primarily having regard to residential intensification, ‘town cramming’ and the impact on the character of the streetscene.

A restrictive approach is appropriate as infilling and residential intensification can have a negative impact on the amenity and character of settlements, and lead to increased traffic generation, and ‘town cramming’. As such, we will seek to avoid these adverse effects.

Housing, Character of Place and Residential Amenity

'Backland' development is where development is proposed to the rear of existing residential dwellings in large back gardens, or where several smaller plots can be amalgamated into one. 'Backland' development may be inappropriate due to the loss of private amenity space, residential intensification, the detrimental impact on the character of the streetscene and the amenity of neighbouring dwellings. Such development can often create problems of overlooking and loss of privacy as well as issues with inadequate access and parking. Generally such development is undesirable, although it may be considered appropriate in some circumstances. Thus the suitability of proposals will be determined on a case by case basis.

Whilst providing a mix of dwelling types within new developments is supported in the emerging Core Strategy, we seek to resist the loss of existing dwelling types, which can impact on the character of the streetscene in the District's existing settlements. Therefore the replacement of dwellings should usually be on a one-to-one basis, as appropriate. However, if it can be demonstrated that an alternative dwelling type would be more appropriate and ensure better utilisation of a site, without creating undue residential intensification and 'town cramming' e.g. the replacement of one bungalow on a wide plot of land with a pair of semi-detached houses, then this may be considered acceptable. We will determine whether the loss of an existing dwelling type is appropriate and applicants should consult the Council's Housing Strategy Team for advice and guidance. The demolition of individual dwellings to be replaced by multiple dwellings e.g. the replacement of a bungalow with a block of flats, is not supported.

DM3 Infilling and Residential Intensification – Preferred Option

Proposals for infilling, residential intensification or 'backland' development will be assessed against the following criteria:

- i). the design of the proposed development in relation to the existing street pattern and density of the locality;
- ii). the number and type of dwellings being proposed are appropriate to the locality;
- iii). the contribution to housing need, taking into account the advice and guidance of the Housing Strategy Team;
- iv). an assessment of the proposal's impact on residential amenity;
- v). the loss of important open space which provides a community benefit and visual focus in the streetscene;
- vi). the loss of private amenity space for neighbouring dwellings;
- vii). the adequate provision of private amenity space for the proposed dwelling as set out in Supplementary Planning Document 2: Housing Design; and
- viii). the availability of sufficient access to the site and adequate parking provision.

DM3 Infilling and Residential Intensification – Alternative Option

Option	Why is it not preferred?
Allow 'backland' development in all circumstances.	This type of development is often considered inappropriate because it can have a negative impact on the character of the streetscene and residential amenity, and as such, proposals should be considered on a case by case basis having regard to the criteria identified to ensure that development is appropriate to the locality and would not result in inappropriate residential intensification or 'town cramming'

Habitable Floorspace for New Developments

The habitable floorspace of a dwelling is considered by the Council as encompassing the floor area covered by any bedrooms, living rooms, dining rooms, kitchens and spare rooms which are used for these purposes. The term 'habitable floorspace' in this context also encompasses large rooms greater than 20sq.m, which could be subdivided, and as such, will be counted as two habitable rooms. Habitable floorspace, however, does not include any bathrooms, separate toilet facilities, cupboards, landings, hallways, or conservatories.

We recognise the importance of ensuring high quality development in addition to providing enough dwellings to meet the District's housing needs. Dwellings, whether comprising housing or flats, which are market or affordable, should be of an appropriate size and layout to provide suitable and comfortable accommodation for modern living.

Dwelling size must be proportionate and sufficient to meet the needs of the potential number of inhabitants and all habitable rooms must have an adequate size, height, and shape, with plentiful natural lighting and ventilation. An adequate dwelling size can also increase the adaptability and flexibility of the District's housing stock, accommodate features of the Lifetimes Homes Standard and give greater choice, whilst supporting the needs of the population.

The internal floor area of a dwelling should comply with the minimum guidance standards set by the Homes and Communities Agency² to ensure that the District's future housing stock is flexible and that all dwellings are of an adequate size to be utilised for affordable housing as appropriate. The Agency use Housing Quality Indicators (HQIs) to measure the quality of housing schemes funded through the National Affordable Housing Programme, however, these indicators score the internal dwelling area by bedspace rather than number of bedrooms, which from a development management perspective is considered to be impractical to implement. As such other standards have been sought, by number of bedrooms, which would meet the Homes and Communities Agency's requirements. In 2007, English Partnerships (which is now part of the Homes and Communities Agency) produced a

² Housing Quality Indicators (HQIs) available from <http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/>

Housing, Character of Place and Residential Amenity

quality standards document³ which identified minimum internal floor areas according to the number of bedrooms and occupancy.

The table below sets out English Partnership's minimum internal floor area according to the Homes and Communities Agency standards based on bedspaces. As such, the former standards are considered to comply with the current standards of the Homes and Communities Agency.

Unit Type (Number of bedspaces and storeys)	Homes and Communities Agency: Internal Floor Area	English Partnerships: Minimum Internal Floor Area
1 bedspace	30 to 35 sq.m	
2 bedspace	45 to 50 sq.m	51 sq.m (1 bedroom/ 2 person homes)
3 bedspace	57 to 67 sq.m	66 sq.m (2 bedroom/ 3 person homes)
4 bedspace	67 to 75 sq.m	77 sq.m (2 bedroom/ 4 person homes)
5 bedspace (1 storey)	75 to 85 sq.m	93 sq.m (3 bedroom/ 5 person homes)
5 bedspace (2 storey)	82 to 85 sq.m	
5 bedspace (3 storey)	85 to 95 sq.m	
6 bedspace (1 storey)	85 to 95 sq.m	106 sq.m (4 bedroom/ 6 person homes)
6 bedspace (2 storey)	95 to 100 sq.m	
6 bedspace (3 storey)	100 to 105 sq.m	
7 bedspace (2+ storey)	108 to 115 sq.m	
7+ bedspace	add 10 sq.m per bedspace	

Table 1 – Homes and Communities Agency floorspace standards compared with those of English Partnership

It is possible, not to mention desirable in respect of implementation, to translate standards relative to bedspaces into standards relative to number of bedrooms.

Table 2 combines standards set by HCA with those of English Partnerships to provide a workable and relevant standard for development management.

³ Place, Homes, People Policy Guidance – English Partnership's Quality Standards Delivering Quality Places. Revised: from November 2007 available from <http://www.englishpartnerships.co.uk/qualityandinnovationpublications.htm>

Housing, Character of Place and Residential Amenity

Both market and affordable housing should aspire to meet minimum approved standards for internal floor area. Each dwelling should comply with the minimum acceptable floorspace standards as defined below in Table 2.

Unit Type (Number of bedrooms)	Minimum Internal Floor Area (sq.m.)
Studio flat	32.5 sq.m
1 bedroom flat	51 sq.m
2 bedroom flat	66 sq.m
2 bedroom house	77 sq.m
3 bedroom dwelling	93 sq.m
4 bedroom dwelling	106 sq.m

Table 2 – Minimum Floorspace Standards

In addition to the minimum floorspace standards above, all habitable rooms should have a minimum floor to ceiling height of 2.5 metres⁴ (8.2 feet) and be of an appropriate width to accommodate their proposed uses/function. All non-habitable rooms should have adequate size, height and shape, with sufficient natural lighting, and be ventilated directly by external air via a window. These standards will apply to all dwelling types and both market and affordable housing.

Whilst dwellings should be reasonably sized, they must also have a suitably designed internal layout to ensure comfortable habitation for potential occupants. Therefore we will not only have regard to whether the minimum standard has been applied to all dwellings within the development, but will also determine if the internal layout is appropriate and fit for purpose.

DM4 Habitable Floorspace for New Developments – Preferred Option

New dwellings must have adequate habitable floorspace with well-designed and planned rooms which are suitable for modern living.

New dwellings (both market and affordable housing) must adhere to the minimum habitable floorspace standards set out in Table 2 and have a good internal layout with reasonably sized habitable and non-habitable rooms.

⁴ Housing Quality Indicators Form (updated April 2008) which identifies design and quality standards for affordable dwellings – available from <http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/>

DM4 Habitable Floorspace for New Developments – Alternative Option

Option	Why is it not preferred?
Do not set habitable floorspace standards for dwellings.	<p>It is important that the Local Planning Authority ensures not only an appropriate quantity of dwellings, but also that dwellings are of a sufficient quality.</p> <p>In addition, requiring space standards in line with the Homes and Communities Agency ensures that all dwellings within a new development would be an acceptable size should they be required for affordable housing. Previous developments have provided dwellings, which initially intended for market housing, do not meet the minimum standards for affordable housing required by the Homes and Communities Agency, and so could not be accepted as such.</p>

Light Pollution

Inappropriate lighting can create light pollution which can affect rural, coastal and urban areas. The pollution can have a detrimental impact on ecology and wildlife, obscure vision of the stars, and introduce a suburban feel into rural areas which can thus affect local character and cause stress and anxiety for those adversely affected.

Light pollution can take several forms including:

- Sky glow - the glow seen above urban areas caused by stray artificial light being scattered by dust particles and water droplets in the sky.
- Glare - the uncomfortable brightness of a light source when viewed against a darker background.
- Light trespass - light spilling beyond an area intended to be lit.

There is a need to minimise the adverse impacts of illumination by avoiding unnecessary lighting, ensuring the level of lighting in new developments (including roads) is the minimum necessary for public safety, is energy efficient and respects the character of the locality. In some cases, full horizontal cut-off (the prevention of light spillage into adjoining areas) and other forms of containment of the light source may be required to prevent spillage and glare.

DM5 Light Pollution – Preferred Option

Details of any lighting scheme required as part of any new development must be submitted as part of the planning application. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate that the scheme proposed is the minimum needed for security and working purposes.

Proposed schemes must demonstrate that they will not have an adverse impact on residential and commercial areas, important areas of nature conservation interest, highway safety and / or the night sky.

Telecommunications

The implementation and maintenance of effective telecommunications networks such as telephone and radio masts within the District are essential to the development of the local economy and for the benefit of the local community.

Planning Policy Guidance 8 (PPG8 – Telecommunications) recognises the need to ensure the continued functioning and extension of existing telecommunications systems and the development of new networks whilst balancing the need to protect visual amenity and minimise environmental impacts. As such, we will seek to ensure that, particularly in the more rural areas of the District, there are adequate telecommunications systems (either through the maintenance or extension of existing networks, or the provision of new networks). Adequate provision will be balanced against ensuring that there are no unacceptable effects on the built and natural environment (in particular sites of national and international importance, or historic significance such as Conservation Areas), and the impact on visual and residential amenity is minimal.

Where environmental improvements are to be encouraged, especially in the District's Conservation Areas, and other town and village centres, we will seek the co-operation of telecommunication providers in ensuring wherever possible that telephone cables are provided underground and that telephone boxes are sensitively designed and appropriately sited. Providers will be encouraged to dismantle all disused overhead lines.

The siting of substantial masts, which are essential to the operations of the various mobile phone companies, must be carried out with great care to ensure that sensitive areas do not suffer a loss of residential or visual amenity. Regard must be had however, to the limitations imposed by the nature of the telecommunications network and the technology that can constrain operators' choice of sites. A balance, therefore, needs to be struck.

Where the erection of a mast requires planning permission, their siting should be avoided in the sensitive areas of the District, as appropriate. These areas include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), the Coastal Protection Belt, Conservation Areas, Ancient Woodland, Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) and the Upper Roach Valley. There is also a need to assess whether masts will affect any bird migration patterns and consultation will be undertaken with Natural England to assess this risk.

Furthermore, there is a clear need to ensure communication between the different companies to avoid the need for the erection of duplicate masts. Careful consideration needs to be given to the potential for mast sharing and also the placing of masts on existing buildings where their overall impact can be less than for a freestanding structure.

DM6 Telecommunications – Preferred Option

Where planning consent is required, proposals for the development of telecommunications networks, including the proposed equipment and associated structures, will be considered acceptable provided that:

- i). if located on an existing building, mast or other structure, telecommunications equipment is sited and designed to ensure that there is minimal impact to the external appearance of the structure;
- ii). if sited in an undesirable location (including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), the Coastal Protection Belt, Conservation Areas, Ancient Woodland, Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) and the Upper Roach Valley), it has been clearly demonstrated that there are no suitable alternative sites for the development of telecommunications systems available in the locality, the development is essential, it is to the benefit of the local community and it would not have a negative impact on local landscape character. Such evidence should accompany any application made and should be to the Council's satisfaction;
- iii). evidence is provided along with applications which propose the siting of a new mast, to demonstrate that the possibility of erecting telecommunications equipment on existing buildings, masts or other structures has been fully explored. Where it can be proved that this is not possible, telecommunications development requiring an application for prior approval of siting and appearance will only be considered acceptable where the equipment is of a design, height, material and colour, and where appropriate is screened, so as to minimise visual intrusion. Proposals should also consider the impact on the topography and natural vegetation, the proximity to areas of nature conservation interest or other sensitive areas, its relationship with other existing masts, structures or buildings; and its relationship to residential property, educational and healthcare facilities, employment and recreational sites; and
- iv). if proposing development in a sensitive location, it should be clearly demonstrated there would not be a negative impact on these areas. Such evidence should accompany any application made.

When considering applications for telecommunications development, we will have regard to the operational requirements of telecommunications networks and the technical limitations of the technology. Additionally, arrangements will be put in place to ensure that, if such development falls into disuse, any structures are removed and the land restored to its condition before development took place or other agreed beneficial use.

Character of Place

Local List

The new Local List, which is being reintroduced through the emerging Core Strategy, identifies individual buildings, groups of buildings or items of street furniture which are of local historic, architectural or visual importance, are locally distinctive or are considered to be character enhancing.

We recognise the importance of such buildings which contribute to the distinctive character of each area within the District and enhance the local environment. The setting of such buildings is considered to be of particular importance. We do not want to be overly restrictive but aim to provide guidance and criteria which will help to protect special characteristics of locally listed buildings or street furniture and encourage sensitive alterations and modifications, where appropriate.

DM7 Local List – Preferred Option

Alterations to buildings included on the Local List must be sensitive to the individual character of the building or group of buildings and retain important features or characteristics which make the building(s) worthy of local listing. The descriptions of the buildings which highlight the important features should be taken into consideration when alterations are proposed.

Extensions should be in-keeping with the character and visual balance of the building, having regard to its overall appearance. Items of street furniture should not be altered unless this would improve their condition.

We will work with owners of buildings included in the Local List at all stages of the planning process, and encourage them to avoid demolition, unsympathetic alterations or changes which will diminish the value of their buildings in historic, architectural or townscape terms.

We expect owners to consider the retention, restoration and / or replacement of:

- i). Important architectural and character features such as weatherboarding, modillions, bargeboards, existing roof material, cornerstones and ridge tiles, although this is not an exhaustive list; and
- ii). Original windows for example sash windows should be retained and replaced with similar windows. The use of plastic PVC windows should be avoided.

If the building is part of a group then alterations should be consistent with the character or uniform appearance of the group.

DM7 Local List – Alternative Options

Option	Why is it not preferred?
Take a less restrictive approach to the protection of locally listed buildings.	Locally listed buildings are recognised for their historic, architectural or townscape value. Significant alterations or the loss of such buildings can negatively impact on the character of the District's settlements.
Adopt a more restrictive approach to the protection of locally listed buildings.	We recognise that locally listed buildings do not have statutory protection and, as such, it is necessary to take a positive and flexible approach to the management of any development to them.

Demolition within Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas, as designated by the Council, are areas of special architectural or historic interest where we have a statutory duty to preserve or enhance their character and appearance. The character of an area derives from a number of elements; these can include the siting and design of its buildings, open spaces, views and features such as walls, the landscape, streetscene, materials and the activities that take place there.

We have control over the demolition of most buildings (including walls and structures) within Conservation Areas by virtue of Section 74 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The prime consideration when assessing such applications will be the desirability of preserving or enhancing the appearance of the area. The contribution made by the building to the architectural and / or historical interest of the area, and the wider implications of the building's demolition on its surroundings and on the Conservation Area as a whole will be taken into consideration.

Consent for the demolition of any building will not be granted unless there are acceptable plans for the future use of the site. In cases where redevelopment of the site is proposed, consent for the demolition will not be granted until full planning permission has been approved for the redevelopment scheme, and no demolition may occur until a legal agreement between Rochford District Council and the developers for redevelopment is in place.

DM8 Demolition within Conservation Areas – Preferred Option

Consent for the demolition of a building in a Conservation Area will only be granted in cases where all of the following criteria are met:

- i). the building to be demolished is of no architectural or historical interest and does not make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area;
- ii). detailed plans for the after-use of the site have been submitted to, and approved by, the Local Planning Authority. (In cases where the after-use of the site includes development requiring planning permission, such permission must have been applied for and granted in order that the terms of this criterion be met).

Additionally we will require the signing of a legal agreement between Rochford District Council and the developers before permission for demolition is granted, requiring the redevelopment of the site within an agreed timeframe, and no demolition may occur without a contract to redevelop the site.

DM8 Demolition within Conservation Areas – Alternative Option

Option	Why is it not preferred?
Allow the demolition of existing buildings in the Conservation Area if the replacement is of significant architectural quality.	Conservation Areas are designated to protect areas of special architectural or historic interest. Within Conservation Areas it is important to consider the group value of buildings. Even though a replacement building may be of greater architectural quality it may not have a positive contribution to the overall quality and character of the Conservation Area.

Development on the edge of Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas are designated to protect the character and important value of particular townscapes. Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans have been produced to aid their protection and enhancement, and Conservation Areas are protected through national guidance and legislation. Development in areas adjacent to Conservation Areas can have an impact on the visual amenity, character and value of those areas which are protected and so will seek to ensure that they do not have a negative impact on the Conservation Area.

DM9 Development on the edge of Conservation Areas – Preferred Option

Developments on the boundaries of Conservation Areas must have regard to their impact on the overall streetscene, individual buildings or groups of buildings on the edge of the Conservation Areas.

Developments should consider the impact of changing building materials, window alterations, extensions and alterations to the buildings appearance on the adjacent Conservation Area.

DM9 Development on the edge of Conservation Areas – Alternative Option

Option	Why is it not preferred?
Take a more restrictive approach to development on the edge of Conservation Areas.	Development on the edge of a Conservation Area can impact on its character. However, it would be inappropriate and detrimental to the surrounding area to be overly restrictive. A balance therefore needs to be struck.

Are there any other issues which should be addressed within this chapter?

The Green Belt and Countryside

Vision

In five years...

- The openness and character of the Rochford Green Belt continues to be protected, though small areas next to settlements have been released for development.
- Existing businesses in the Green Belt which are important to the local economy continue to be supported.
- Redevelopment of unattractive buildings in Battlesbridge Conservation Area is taking place, enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area whilst respecting the objectives of the Green Belt.
- A number of rural buildings have been converted to enable and support green tourism projects and rural diversification.

By 2017...

- Green tourism initiatives have been developed which provide sustainable opportunities for rural businesses whilst maintaining a high quality environment. These initiatives have encouraged small-scale tourism projects sensitive to the local environment which help to sustain the rural economy without contributing to climate change.
- Acceptance of greater flexibility towards rural diversification has resulted in the development of a number of bed and breakfasts and hotels, facilitating stays in the countryside for visitors to the area.
- The first phase of sustainable urban extensions to meet the District's housing needs over the plan period have been implemented. A small area of the District's Green Belt has been reallocated for employment use in order to facilitate the creation of new jobs which meet the population's needs and contribute towards the District's economy.

By 2025...

- The Green Belt remains predominantly undeveloped and open in character.
- Rochford District continues to be recognised as the green part of the Thames Gateway South Essex.
- The second phase of sustainable urban extensions is completed.
- Rochford is recognised as a tourist destination, with good access to the rivers and waterways and many visitors to the nationally recognised wetlands at Wallasea.

Objectives

1. Continue to protect the openness and character of the District's Green Belt.
2. Ensure the minimum amount of Green Belt is allocated to meet the District's housing and employment needs, and that extensions to the residential envelope are in sustainable locations, which retain the individual identities of settlements and prevent coalescence.

The Green Belt and Countryside

3. Ensure existing lawful businesses in the Green Belt are able to continue to function and contribute to the local economy, as appropriate, having regard to the impact on the openness and character of the Green Belt.
4. Ensure appropriate forms of diversification are encouraged to support the local rural economy and help achieve the vision of developing green tourism in the District.

Introduction

Rochford District is predominantly rural, and the majority of land within the District is designated as Metropolitan Green Belt. In addition, there are areas of countryside at the eastern extremity of the District which are isolated, undeveloped and rural in character but sit outside of the Green Belt. The emerging Core Strategy notes that the Council envisages Rochford District will continue to be the green part of the Thames Gateway. National policy on the Green Belt is contained within Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 – Green Belts (PPG2). The most important aspect of the Green Belt is its openness. PPG2 states that the five purposes of including land within the Green Belt are as follows:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The emerging Core Strategy continues to maintain the restrictive approach towards development within the Green Belt to protect its openness and character. It is, however, recognised that the minimum amount of Green Belt necessary will need to be reallocated for appropriate alternative uses to meet the requirements in the East of England Plan (2008).

It is recognised nationally (e.g. Planning Policy Statement 4 – Planning for Sustainable Economic Development) that rural diversification, including non-agricultural activities, is important for the rural economy. However, it is also necessary to consider the impact of diversification on the character of rural areas, economic development in urban areas, and wider sustainability issues. It should also be noted that the majority of the District's countryside is designated as Green Belt, and as such is expected to perform an important role as described above. Accordingly rural diversification is encouraged in the emerging Core Strategy (e.g. the conversion of buildings to bed and breakfasts / small-scale hotels) which will enhance the rural economy whilst respecting the principles set out in PPG2.

Rural diversification is considered within the Green Belt chapter of the emerging Core Strategy, however, specific planning issues with respect to development within the Green Belt and countryside, including the impact of permitted development rights and tourism, needs further elaboration.

The classification of land as 'Green Belt' is a planning designation, rather than a description of the land itself; nevertheless its designation is fundamental in maintaining the green open character of the District and preventing the coalescence of settlements. It is recognised, however, that not all areas of the Green Belt are of the same character; rural diversification will be more appropriate in some parts than others. Such areas are no less worthy of Green Belt designation and continue to perform an important role in preserving the character and openness of the District but they may also afford tourism, rural diversification and leisure and recreational opportunities, where appropriate.

The Green Belt and Countryside

It is recognised that whilst the majority of the District is designated Metropolitan Green Belt, a proportion of the land mass to the east is open countryside which is not afforded this designation. This area around Foulness is encompassed by the Coastal Protection Belt and other nature conservation designations (further information can be found in the SEA Baseline Information Profile). Accordingly it is important to have policies which refer to both the Green Belt and the wider countryside as appropriate.

Some of the issues and proposed options set out in this chapter are applicable to Green Belt and not the countryside, whilst others apply to both. Text within the sections themselves explain whether they are applicable to just the Green Belt, or the Green Belt and wider countryside.

Landscape Character

Rochford District is divided into three landscape character areas (see Figure 2);

- Crouch and Roach Farmland - The coastal character of the area is defined by the narrow estuaries which penetrate far inland, with associated low lying mudflats, salt marsh and reclaimed marshlands, including grazing marsh. The land between the estuaries and their immediate margins is undulating arable farmland.
- Dengie and Foulness - This is an extensive, remote area of reclaimed marshland, tidal mudflat sands and fringing salt marshes (which is rich in wildlife) beyond the sea wall; and
- South Essex Coastal Towns - An area of very mixed character, but unified by the overall dominance of urban development, with frequent views of an urban skyline.

The sensitivity of these landscape character areas to change is quite variable. The most sensitive area is the Dengie and Foulness Coast. The South Essex Coastal Towns landscape area is generally the least susceptible, although there are important nature conservation designations within this area (e.g. the Upper Roach Valley) which will need to be considered. This landscape is also highly sensitive to infrastructure development (e.g. masts, pylons) and to a decline in countryside management.

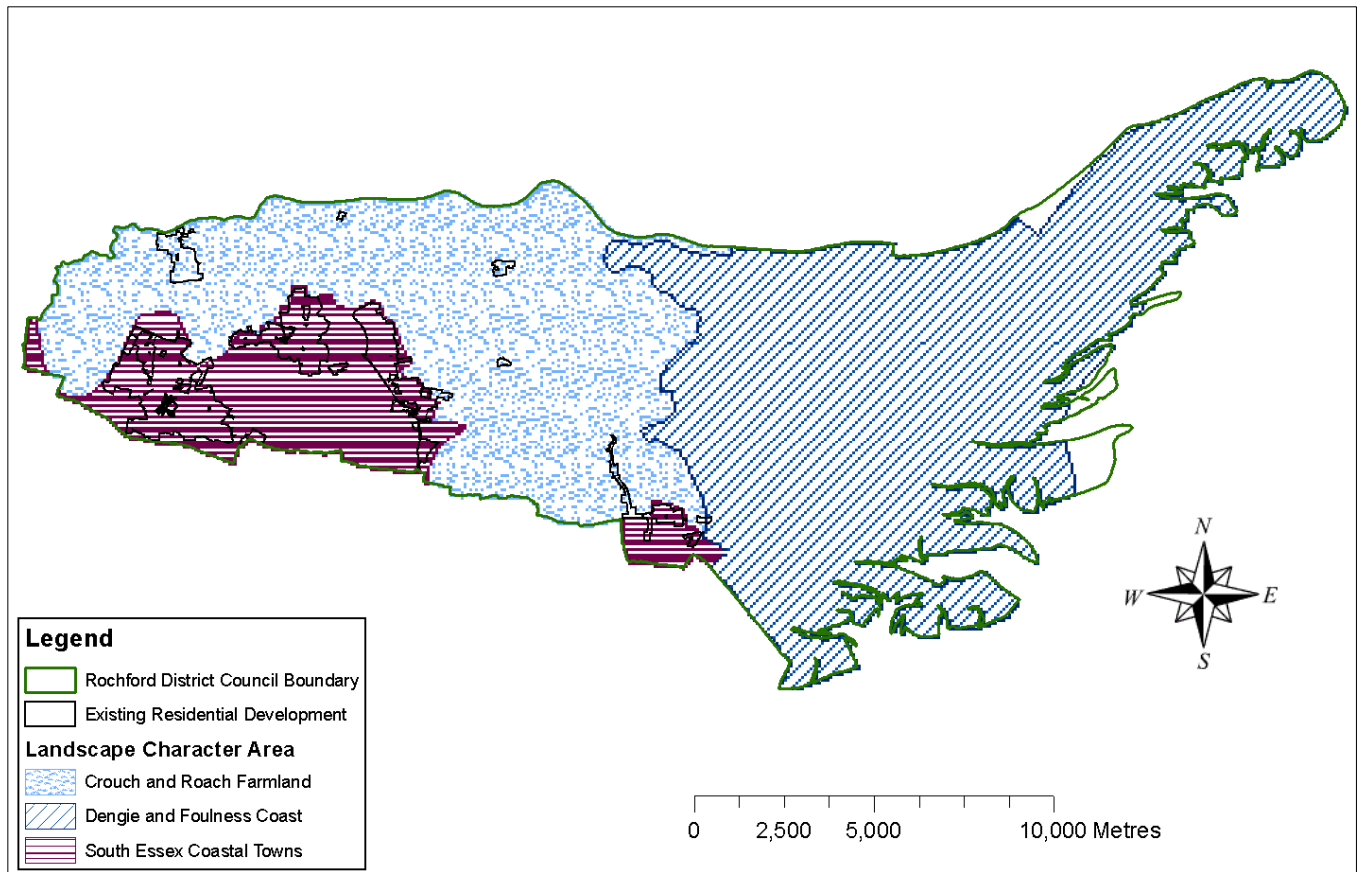


Figure 2 – Landscape character areas of Rochford District (Source: Essex County Council)

Agricultural Land

Over half of the agricultural land located within Rochford District is classified as Grade 3. The majority of Grade 1 agricultural land is located to the south and south east of the District. The majority of Grade 2 agricultural land is centrally located in the District, as well as there being a small isolated area present to the east (see Figure 3).

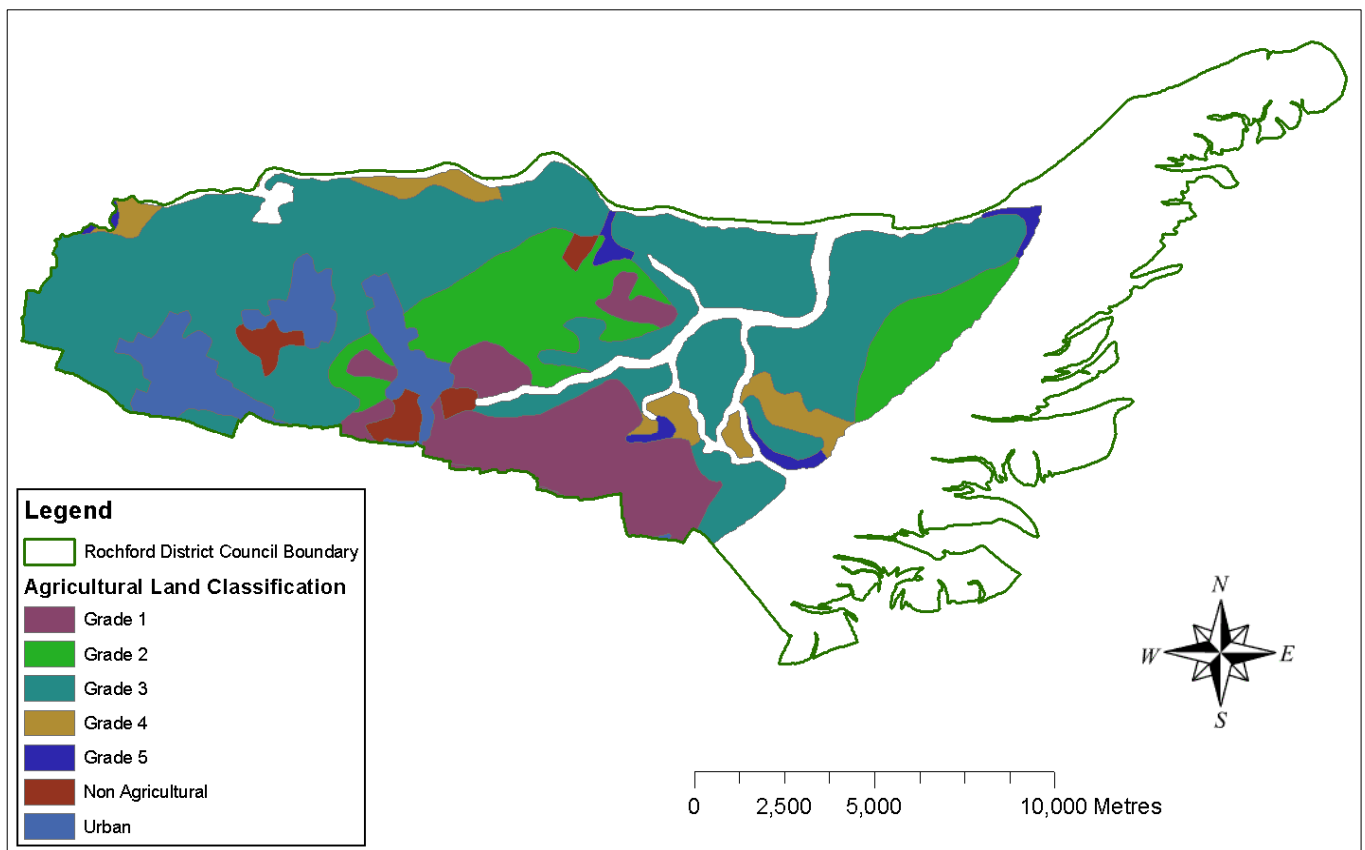


Figure 3 – Agricultural land classification of Rochford District (Source: Essex County Council)

Employment Opportunities in the Green Belt and Countryside

The Council supports the sustainable economic development of the District, including through developing existing spatial patterns of employment as outlined in the emerging Core Strategy, and seeking to ensure the continued functioning and growth of small and medium sized businesses. These businesses play an important role, particularly in the sustainability of rural economies in creating local employment opportunities within the District; however, the Council recognises that it is imperative to balance the potential for economic growth with the protection of the District's countryside, and Green Belt land in particular.

There are a number of issues in respect of economic development in rural areas outside of the Green Belt which are adequately addressed by national planning policies and as such should not be repeated in the District's own policies. However, it is recognised that there is a potential conflict between national policies promoting economic development in rural areas, and those that seek to protect the Green Belt. As such, DM10 and DM12 below relate, as detailed in the text and options, only to the Green Belt and seek to address this potential conflict. With regards to rural diversification the Council believes that further elaboration on national policy is required, as such DM11 looks at rural diversification in the Green Belt and in non-Green Belt countryside.

Existing Businesses in the Green Belt

There is already a diverse range of businesses operating within the Green Belt, for a variety of historical and operational reasons. These locations are not designated as employment land because they are not appropriate for intensification or additional business uses, as these would negatively impact on the character of the area and would be unsustainable. The Council acknowledges that these businesses make an important contribution to the local rural economy; however, their location still merits Green Belt designation.

The Council recognises the importance of encouraging and sustaining local economic growth throughout the District. However, the desirability of economic growth needs to be weighed against the impact of the businesses operations and presence on the objectives of the Green Belt, in particular its openness and character as well as wider sustainability objectives. The Council will support lawfully established businesses in appropriate and accessible locations to encourage the vitality of the local economy and to fulfil the potential of local businesses. To preserve openness as far as possible and to protect the character of the Green Belt, existing lawfully established businesses will be limited, as a guide, to no more than a 25% cumulative increase of gross floorspace over that of the original building.

The growth of the business should not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of nearby residential dwellings through a significant increase in traffic generation (either on the rural highway network or through the provision of additional car parking), or pollution (through noise, lighting, or other forms of emissions).

DM10 Existing Businesses in the Green Belt – Preferred Option

The Council will support existing lawfully established businesses in the Green Belt, allowing extensions to existing business premises and changes of use to enable diversification, where appropriate, subject to the following:

- i). extensions and / or changes of use relate to an existing business which is lawfully established and would not be detrimental to nature conservation interests, landscape character, valuable agricultural land or residential amenity;
- ii). where an extension is proposed it would not result in a disproportionate increase in gross floorspace over that of the original building;
- iii). it can be demonstrated that the proposal is necessary for the functioning of the existing business, and the proposed development would not be better situated in a deliverable and available location elsewhere in the District;
- iv). the development has been designed to minimise impact on the character, appearance and openness of the Green Belt;
- v). the scale, design and materials of the original building is respected;
- vi). the development would not undermine town centre regeneration; and
- vii). the type or volume of generated traffic, particularly heavy goods vehicles, would be appropriate to the rural highway network, would not have an unacceptable adverse effect on highway safety, the amenity of nearby residential occupiers or important wildlife habitats.

DM10 Existing Businesses in the Green Belt – Alternative Options

Option	Why is it not preferred?
Allow more than 25% increase in gross floorspace of existing business premises	A greater increase in gross floorspace would have a greater detrimental impact on the openness and character of the Green Belt and may significantly increase the scale of the existing business.
Adopt a more restrictive approach	This would not ensure the sustainability of local rural businesses and may have a negative impact on the local economy.

Rural Diversification

Supporting rural diversification is important to ensure the prosperity of the local economy. As identified in the emerging Core Strategy, the Council supports activities which would complement the current functioning of agricultural establishments, the conversion of existing agricultural buildings for small-scale B1 employment use, green tourism, conversion of farm buildings to bed and breakfasts / small-scale hotels and outdoor recreation and leisure activities. Retail and residential development, however, are not considered acceptable forms of rural diversification in the Green Belt or rural areas outside the Green Belt.

The use of existing agricultural buildings for bed and breakfasts is acceptable within the Green Belt and wider countryside because they can make a positive contribution to the local rural economy and support the development of local green tourism initiatives. However, the use of existing agricultural buildings for residential is not considered appropriate as such a use does not in itself generate economic activity within the Green Belt or countryside and would not make a positive contribution to the rural economy. Even if a bed and breakfast venture becomes economically unviable, the conversion of such a use for residential purposes is not supported. Residential uses would not positively contribute to the local rural economy and green tourism and therefore would not be considered appropriate.

Permission for development within the Green Belt and countryside must have regard to the landscape character, and the sensitivity of such a landscape to the development proposed, and the grade of agricultural land. It is recognised that the landscape areas less sensitive to development are also those that are generally less isolated and are more accessible. As such, these areas tend to offer more viable and sustainable opportunities for rural diversification.

It is, however, recognised that agricultural establishments looking to diversify their activities are often located within Crouch and Roach Farmland and Dengie and Foulness landscape character areas. Established agricultural buildings already have an impact on the openness of the Green Belt and character of the countryside. As such these have the potential to still benefit from rural diversification opportunities, where appropriate, without further undue harm to the openness of the Green Belt or character of the countryside.

DM11 Rural Diversification – Preferred Option

Rural diversification will be supported so long as it involves an appropriate form of rural activity, as outlined in the emerging Core Strategy, and having regard to the following:

- i). the need to ensure that the proposed use would not have an undue impact on the openness of the Green Belt, character of the countryside nature conservation interests, visual amenity or residential amenity;
- ii). the need to ensure that the proposed use would not introduce additional activity or traffic movements likely to materially and adversely affect the character of the Green Belt or character of the countryside, or place unacceptable pressures on the surrounding highway network;
- iii). the sensitivity of the landscape character area in which the proposal is situated to the development proposed;
- iv). the impact of the proposal on the agricultural potential of the land; and
- v). where rural diversification for employment opportunities is proposed, the area should have good links to the highway network.

DM11 Rural Diversification – Alternative Options

Option	Why is it not preferred?
Disregard the different grades of agricultural land	It is important to protect the District's most valuable agricultural land from undue impact.
Disregard the different landscape character areas	It is important to protect the diverse character of the District's Green Belt from undue impact.

Conversion of Existing Agricultural Buildings in the Green Belt

Planning Policy Statement 4 sets out the government's planning policies for economic development in rural areas, including country towns and villages and the wider, largely undeveloped countryside up to the fringes of larger urban areas. The guidance encourages the reuse of existing farm buildings in the interest of rural diversification where practicable. The Council supports this objective and the conversion of existing agricultural buildings in the countryside, and Green Belt where this is appropriate and compatible with PPG2. As such, it is necessary to set out a policy for the conversion of agricultural buildings in the Green Belt which balances the guidance in PPS4 with that in PPG2.

Residential conversion of existing agricultural buildings is not considered appropriate in the Green Belt or the wider countryside because it will undermine the Council's strategic approach to residential development and overarching sustainability objectives as detailed in the emerging Core Strategy.

The Council does not wish to see listed agricultural buildings such as outbuildings, barns and stables, which contribute to the heritage of the District to become neglected through a restrictive approach to their use. These buildings may be capable of serving a useful purpose in the rural environment and can contribute to the functioning of the local economy. As such, rural diversification of listed farm buildings will be accepted, however, significant alterations will

only be considered if they do not have adverse impact on the integrity of the existing structure. Supporting evidence from a structural engineer should accompany any application for the conversion of listed agricultural buildings.

DM12 Conversion of Existing Agricultural Buildings in the Green Belt – Preferred Option

The reuse or adaptation of existing agricultural buildings will be supported provided that:

- i). the application relates to an existing building with a form, bulk and general design in-keeping with its surroundings;
- ii). the application relates to an existing building of permanent and substantial construction;
- iii). the proposed use would not introduce additional activity or traffic movements likely to materially and adversely affect the openness of the Green Belt, or place unacceptable pressures on the surrounding highway network;
- iv). the proposal does not exceed the existing footprint of the original building (at the date of application), with the exception of an allowance for additions that would be permitted in accordance with **Preferred Option DM10**;
- v). there would be no detrimental impact on nature conservation interests;
- vi). where the conversion of listed agricultural buildings is proposed it should:
 - a). not negatively impact on the quality of the listed structure; and
 - b). not affect the integrity of the existing structure. A structural engineers report should accompany any application for conversion of a listed building.

Where conversion incorporates additions in accordance with **Preferred Option DM10**, further extensions will be restricted.

DM12 Conversion and Replacement of Existing Agricultural Buildings in the Green Belt – Alternative Options

Option	Why is it not preferred?
Require replacement structures to be the same height or less as the agricultural buildings which they replace.	There is concern that many agricultural buildings in the District are, for historical reasons, of a height which is too low to allow viable conversion to alternative uses. Agricultural buildings could be subject to modest increases in height to enable them to be utilised for rural diversification without undue harm to the openness of the Green Belt or character of the countryside.

Tourism Opportunities in the Green Belt and Countryside

Green Tourism

The potential for the development of tourism within the District has been recognised as an avenue for enhancing the local economy, particularly in rural areas. The Council aims to encourage the promotion of green tourism which would benefit the local population through rural diversification and promote the District's green open spaces. There is the possibility of exploring landscape tourism based upon the differing landscape characteristics across the District.

Green tourism refers to sustainable tourism activities which can be promoted within the countryside (including within the Green Belt) and are sensitive to the environment and sustainable in terms of stimulating rural economic growth and encouraging diversification of rural activities. Small-scale outdoor recreational and leisure activities such as walking and small-scale fishing lakes are considered appropriate forms of green tourism. Proposed activities should have a positive impact on the local environment and visual amenity of the surrounding area. The promotion of green tourism must respect nature conservation interests and proposals must not adversely affect sites of ecological importance.

The majority of the District is designated Green Belt land, and as such, the impact of this must be considered within the promotion of green tourism. Activities should not impact on the openness of the Green Belt, and where ancillary facilities may be needed, existing rural buildings should be utilised, where appropriate. In considering proposals for tourism activity, the landscape character and quality of the agricultural land affected will be considerations.

DM13 Green Tourism – Preferred Option

Green tourism will be permitted having regard to:

- i). the impact on the openness of the Green Belt (if applicable) and character of the countryside;
- ii). the impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area;
- iii). the impact on important areas of nature conservation, including any potential disturbance to nearby sites;
- iv). the sensitivity of the landscape character area in which the proposal is situated to the development proposed;
- v). the impact of the proposal on the agricultural potential of the land; and
- vi). the impact of the proposal on the highway network, having regard to the likely scale of tourism that the proposal would generate.

Where ancillary facilities are proposed for the purposes of green tourism, it must be demonstrated that such facilities are necessary for the functioning of the activity. Existing agricultural buildings should be reused and converted for the accompanying uses, wherever possible and appropriate. Any new structures must be the minimum size, height and bulk to accommodate the proposed use. Ancillary facilities should not have an undue impact on the openness of the Green Belt or character of the countryside.

The conversion of existing agricultural buildings to bed and breakfasts / small-scale hotels will be permitted in appropriate locations provided that this will not result in an agglomeration of similar facilities.

DM13 Green Tourism – Alternative Options

Option	Why is it not preferred?
Disregard the different grades of agricultural land	It is important to protect the District's most valuable agricultural land from undue impact.
Disregard the different landscape character areas	It is important to protect the diverse character of the District's Green Belt and countryside from undue impact.

Leisure and Recreational Opportunities in the Green Belt and Countryside

The Council recognises that the District's countryside offers the opportunity for numerous leisure and recreational activities as outlined in the emerging Core Strategy. Equestrian facilities and playing pitches, in particular, are supported as appropriate forms of rural diversification for leisure and recreational purposes in the countryside. However, other forms of small-scale leisure and recreation activities may be considered appropriate providing that they do not have an undue impact on the openness of the Green Belt and character of the countryside.

Equestrian Facilities

The provision of equestrian facilities is a popular form of rural diversification. Increasing demand for equestrian facilities within the District, however, enforces the need to ensure a balanced approach through weighing the need for adequate recreational facilities for equestrian activities against the protection of the Green Belt and countryside, and wide-ranging nature conservation interests throughout the District. PPS4 sets out the government's approach to development in rural areas. It recognises that such facilities can be easily integrated with current farming activities and can form an important part of sustaining local rural economies. The vast majority of the District's rural areas are designated as Green Belt and, as such, advice and guidance in PPG 2 must also be considered.

The Council support the diversification of rural economies and as such encourage diversification into equine activities, in appropriate circumstances, where the proposal is suitably located and would not negatively impact on the environmental quality of the local area, openness of the Green Belt or the character of the countryside. As such, proposals should have regard to landscape character, biodiversity, impact on the openness of the Green Belt (where applicable) and nature conservation value of the area in which it is proposed.

PPS4 takes a positive approach to equine development but does not specifically cover what scale of development is appropriate. In this case PPS7 is still applicable. Small-scale equestrian proposals (offering stabling for up to 10 horses⁵) and large-scale proposals (proposing stables for 10 horses or more), where permitted, should ensure full reuse of existing farm or agricultural buildings before proposals for new development are considered. Where it is demonstrated that existing farm or agricultural buildings are inappropriate or

⁵ As defined in PPS7

insufficient for the purposes of the enterprise, new equestrian development may be permitted, providing it is closely located and related to existing development and not sited in remote or isolated rural locations. Isolated development can often appear intrusive in open countryside and can lead to the intensification of uses once established. As such, equine development may be more favourable within the South Essex Coastal Towns landscape character area.

Furthermore, proposals should seek to minimise the impact of proposed development on the openness of the Green Belt and character of the countryside by ensuring that any new buildings are of a modest design and scale, which is appropriate and the minimum size necessary for their intended purpose. Facilities should be located within one building, if appropriate, or in close proximity to other buildings to ensure visual intrusion is minimised. The Council considers that large-scale development of stables is inappropriate because such an enterprise would materially affect the landscape character and the integrity of the countryside and have an undue impact on the openness of the District's Green Belt.

Any proposed stable facility will have regard to the British Horse Society Standards in terms of stable size and grazing area. The Society, for example recommends 0.4 hectares (approximately 1 acre) of grazing land per horse.

DM14 Equestrian Facilities – Preferred Option

Applications for equestrian development with essential ancillary facilities will be supported, provided that:

- i). the proposal is for small-scale equestrian development (fewer than 10 stables) which does not create a proliferation of similar businesses in the same locality;
- ii). proposals for equestrian establishments whether for private use or as a commercial livery will need to demonstrate that there is adequate land within the curtilage of the site to allow for the proper care of horses, including stabling, grazing and exercise, in accordance with the British Horse Society Standards or equivalent;
- iii). proposals for buildings to serve private use or commercial livery are preferably sited near to existing settlements in a sustainable location, and should be situated on land under the control of the applicant for accessibility reasons (for example an area of paddock land immediately adjacent to the applicant's dwellinghouse) if possible;
- iv). the proposal utilises redundant existing agricultural buildings, as appropriate. Where it can be demonstrated that existing buildings are inappropriate or insufficient for the proposed use, new buildings will be permitted provided that they are the minimum size necessary for their intended purpose and facilities are proposed to be sited in one location/building, if appropriate;
- v). the proposal is well related to existing or proposed bridleways and will not cause conflicts between equestrians, and have no adverse effect on the road or highway safety of the area;
- vi). the proposed stabling and other small-scale essential facilities is modest and appropriate in scale and designed to minimise the potential detrimental impact on the openness of the Green Belt, character of the countryside or important areas of nature conservation interest; and
- vii). there will not be a detrimental affect on the amenity of the local area by virtue of noise, smell or disturbance.

DM14 Equestrian Facilities – Alternative Option

Option	Why is it not preferred?
Permit large-scale equestrian development.	PPS4 encourages Council's to support equestrian development, however, it also recognises that activities should respect environmental quality and countryside character. The Council considers small-scale development (specifically mentioned in PPS7, although this has now been superseded by guidance in PPS4) more appropriate in the District, given the potential of large-scale equestrian development to materially affect landscape character and integrity of the countryside. It is also imperative to protect the openness of the Green Belt in accordance with PPG2.

Playing Pitches and Other Leisure and Recreational Activities

Playing pitches are an important community facility, and as such they should be sited within locations which are accessible to the general population. Their siting should also be considerate to the landscape character area and quality of the agricultural land in which they are proposed. Such facilities are an acceptable form of leisure and recreational development within the Green Belt and wider countryside, and will thus be supported in principle subject to the provisions set out in the emerging Core Strategy.

The current supply and demand for playing pitches within the District is monitored within the Playing Pitch Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This SPD also provides recommendations for future provision of these facilities, and as such, the provision within new developments should have regard to the findings. Playing pitches for the purpose of the study, however, only encompasses facilities for football, rugby, cricket and hockey.

The Council recognises the importance of other sport and recreational activities, in addition to the provision of playing pitches (for the sports defined above) and equestrian facilities within the District, which can make an important contribution to resident's quality of life. The provision of such facilities is preferable within the South Essex Coastal Towns landscape character area to maximise the benefits for existing and new communities and to reduce the need to travel, thus enhancing their sustainability. However, other areas of the District may be more appropriate locations depending on the level of supply and demand for particular leisure and recreational activities. The Council will keep such supply and demand under review. When proposing other leisure and recreational activities, regard will be had to the Open Space Study evidence base document, as recommended within Planning Policy Guidance Notes 17 (Assessing needs and opportunities: a companion guide to PPG17), which identifies the spatial distribution of key open spaces, leisure and recreational activities within the District.

Leisure and recreational activities are often accompanied by permanent structures, which can impact on the openness of the Green Belt and character and appearance of the countryside.

Ancillary facilities will be supported within the Green Belt and wider countryside provided that they are in accordance with the emerging Core Strategy, are small-scale and essential to the functioning of the sport or leisure activity, and seek to minimise the potential impact on the Green Belt and on nature conservation interests. The facilities should be the minimum size necessary for the functioning of the activity which will be determined on a case by case basis, with regard to the guidance published by Sport England in *Design Guidance Notes: Pavilions and Club Houses*⁶. The development of such facilities must not exceed the minimum size as stated within the Sport England guidance.

DM15 Playing Pitches and Other Leisure and Recreational Activities – Preferred Option

Proposals for football, rugby, cricket or hockey playing pitches will normally be expected to be located within an area where a deficit in supply has been identified in the Playing Pitch Strategy SPD. Proposals for the siting of these playing pitches and other leisure and recreational activities will be permitted provided that:

- i). they are proposed in an area where a deficit in supply has been identified. Alternative locations where a deficit has not been identified may be acceptable where it can be demonstrated that it is not feasible to share facilities or utilise other existing facilities in the locality, for example school playing fields; or where it can be demonstrated that the deficit location would not be viable to meet the teams/activities needs;
- ii). they are located on the edge of residential settlements. Regard must be had to the landscape character area in which the proposed pitches reside. Such leisure and recreational activities may be considered more appropriate in the South Essex Coastal Towns landscape character area, however, their location should be determined by demand, where appropriate;
- iii). they are accessible via a variety of alternative transport options such as cycle and bus routes, as well as ensuring opportunities for walking. Provision for cycling routes alongside footpaths and roads will need to be considered; and
- iv). the proposal would not impact on the openness of the Green Belt, character of the countryside, generate undue levels of noise, to the detriment of residential amenity, have an undue impact on nature conservation interests or have an adverse impact on the visual amenities of the area.

Where additional permanent facilities associated with the provision of playing pitches will be required, they will be permitted provided that:

- a). they are small-scale and it can be demonstrated that such facilities are essential to the functioning of the activity;
- b). they are suitably located so as to minimise the impact on amenity for neighbouring properties; and
- c). ancillary facilities are modest in size, bulk and height to ensure minimal impact on the Green Belt.

Planning permission for a change of use to playing pitches and other leisure and recreational activities will be subject to conditions restricting the siting of containers and/or portable buildings.

⁶ Sport England guidance document available from: <http://www.sportengland.org/>

DM15 Playing Pitches and Other Leisure and Recreational Activities – Alternative Option

Option	Why is it not preferred?
Permit large-scale ancillary facilities for playing pitches and other leisure and recreational activities.	Facilities which are necessary for the functioning of the proposed leisure or recreational activity should be small-scale, so as to limit undue detrimental impact on the openness of the Green Belt as per PPG2.

Residential Uses in the Green Belt

Extensions to Dwellings in the Green Belt

There are a number of dwellings that exist within the Green Belt, for a variety of historical reasons. It is entirely reasonable for those living within the Green Belt to be able to extend their homes to meet changing circumstances. However, it is equally reasonable that the scale of such extensions be managed to ensure that it does not undermine the objectives of the Green Belt.

Planning Policy Guidance 2 (PPG2 – Green belts) acknowledges this situation and states that limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings within the Green Belt is not inappropriate provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

Permitted development rights enable certain development to be undertaken without the need to obtain planning permission. The permitted development rights introduced in October 2008 (Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (No. 2) (England) Order 2008) provides greater flexibility in terms of extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt, as it allows extensions without the need to obtain planning permission relative to the size of the original dwelling, regardless of its location. Accordingly the Council considers that the previous 35sq.m of additional habitable floorspace as set out in the 2006 Rochford District Replacement Local Plan no longer relates appropriately to the permitted development rights. As such, a revised approach is required.

Given that PPG2 states that extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt should not result in disproportionate additions over and above the original size of the dwelling, a policy which allows additions proportional to the original floor area of dwellings is considered appropriate. Proposed extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt that would result in a greater than 25% increase in the floor area above that of the original building are considered disproportionate. Proposals for extensions should not be more visually intrusive or have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than those which are permitted under the permitted development rights (Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (No. 2) (England) Order 2008).

DM16 Extensions to Dwellings in the Green Belt – Preferred Option

Applications for extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt will be permitted provided that the proposal would result in no more than a 25% increase in floorspace of the original dwelling, and provided that:

- i). the proposal does not involve a material increase in the overall height of the dwelling; and
- ii). the proposal ensures a better layout and design which may have a lesser impact on the openness of the Green Belt than would be permitted under the permitted development rights.

Any grant of planning consent will be conditioned to restrict permitted development extensions within the curtilage of the dwellinghouse.

DM16 Extensions to Dwellings in the Green Belt – Alternative Options

Option	Why is it not preferred?
Limit extensions in the Green Belt to a specific floor area.	<p>Such an approach was logical when permitted development rights included limits to the volume of extensions. New permitted development rights relate to the size of the existing dwelling and, as such, a policy setting out a finite floorspace limit is no longer applicable.</p> <p>Whilst such approach may be considered fair to all residents in the Green Belt, the Council seek to minimise the impact of dwellings on the openness and character of the Green Belt, and consider determining extensions on a case by case basis, as per the permitted development rights, as a more appropriate way of managing the impact on the openness of the Green Belt.</p>
Permit extensions in accordance with the floor area allowed under the permitted development rights.	<p>This approach seems appropriate and in accordance with the permitted development rights, ensuring homeowners do not lose out because they want a different design and layout than permitted through the new rights.</p> <p>However, the potential for immeasurable extensions for some homeowners means that more restrictions are required to ensure the protection of the openness and character of the Green Belt, as far as practicable.</p>

Agricultural, Forestry and Other Occupational Dwellings

The provision of new dwellings in the countryside and Green Belt, where it can be demonstrated that the existence of on-site accommodation is crucial to the success of an agricultural or forestry business, is considered appropriate. Planning Policy Guidance 2 (PPG2 – Green belts), which applies to the vast majority of rural land within the District, also allows the construction of new buildings for the purposes of agriculture and forestry in the Green Belt, unless permitted development rights have been withdrawn.

However, given the need to balance rural activities with protecting the character of the countryside and openness of the Green Belt, it is important to establish whether there is a functional need for someone to live on the site, whether the enterprise is, or will become financially viable, and whether such viability is likely to be sustainable in the long term. Applications for agricultural or forestry uses which may give rise to the need for a permanent dwelling to be situated on the site should be accompanied by full business plans and / or appraisals carried out by suitably qualified people (e.g. agricultural consultants) and, in respect of applications for dwellinghouses, fully audited accounts for the three years preceding the application. Applicants will be expected to be able to demonstrate that the enterprise provides sufficient income for investment in the business (e.g. money for buildings, machinery, livestock, etc.) in line with the business plan, in addition to income for the construction of the house, personal / family and other needs.

Before permission can be granted for a permanent dwellinghouse, it is imperative for an applicant to demonstrate that their business is economically viable, and has every prospect of remaining so in the longer term. Therefore, where a new business is proposed, an application should first be made for the stationing of a mobile home, or another type of temporary accommodation. Permission for a temporary mobile home will usually be granted for a period of three years, providing it meets the criteria, to give the applicant sufficient time to establish their business, and so meet these objectives. If it can be demonstrated that the business is successful, consideration can then be given to the provision of a permanent dwellinghouse. Permission for the siting of a mobile home will not, however, be granted for a period exceeding three years, nor will permissions normally be renewed if, at the end of the temporary period, the business is still not viable.

Careful consideration should be given to the siting of new dwellings to ensure that they meet the identified functional need, but are also well-related to existing buildings. Such consideration should also extend to the siting of temporary mobile homes, as it will not normally be appropriate to grant permission for a mobile home in a location where a permanent dwelling would not be permitted. Planting schemes will be required to further reduce the visual impact of dwellings in the landscape.

The size of new dwellings should be proportionate to the functioning of the business in accordance with PPS7, and as such, it should be determined by the needs of the business rather than those of the owner or occupier. Given the District's predominant Green Belt designation, and the Council's previous agricultural dwelling policy and Green Belt extensions policy set out in the 2006 Rochford District Replacement Local Plan, it is considered reasonable to apply a consistent parameter to new agricultural, forestry and other occupational dwellings.

In the 2006 Replacement Local Plan, new agricultural dwellings were permitted a total floorspace of 140sq.m + 35sq.m Green Belt extension, which permits agricultural dwellings to be extended by the same amount as other dwellings in the Green Belt. The Council's 'one size fits all' approach to extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt is still considered appropriate to ensure that dwellings within the Green Belt and wider countryside are reasonably sized and to protect the openness of the Green Belt in accordance with PPG2, as well as the character of the countryside. **Preferred Option DM16** advocates a 25% increase in floorspace of the original dwelling be permitted. Therefore new agricultural or forestry dwellings will be permitted a maximum floor area of 175sq.m (140sq.m + 35sq.m) which coincides with the Council's previous policy in the 2006 Replacement Local Plan. Planning permission will be conditioned withdrawing permitted development rights from the new dwelling to restrict further extension, and to further limit undue impact on the openness of the Green Belt and character of the countryside. Greater floorspace will be permitted only in exceptional circumstances where it can be sufficiently demonstrated to the Council that the functional need of the business truly requires a larger dwelling.

Planning conditions will be imposed to limit the occupation of all new dwellings to persons employed, or last employed, in agriculture in the locality. This will ensure that dwellings are kept available to meet the needs of other agricultural businesses in the area as a whole if, for whatever reason, a dwelling is no longer required to meet the needs of the original business. The combination of agricultural occupancy conditions with a policy criterion restricting the scale of agricultural dwellings to modest proportions will help to maintain a supply of housing that is available (and affordable) to agricultural workers, and avoid a proliferation of new dwellings in the open countryside. Applications for the removal of agricultural occupancy conditions will not, therefore, be permitted except in the most exceptional circumstances.

DM17 Agricultural, Forestry and Other Occupational Dwellings – Preferred Option

Within the Green Belt and countryside, permanent dwellings for agricultural and forestry workers will be considered appropriate provided it can be adequately demonstrated that:

- i). it is essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise for at least one person to be present on the holding at most times of the day and night;
- ii). the functional need relates to a full-time agricultural / horticultural worker;
- iii). the unit and the agricultural enterprise in question, have been established for at least three years, have been profitable for at least one of them, are currently financially sound and have every prospect of remaining so in the long term;
- iv). the functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other accommodation in the area as a whole that is suitable for, and available to, the worker(s) concerned;
- v). no dwelling or other building suitable for conversion to a dwelling has recently (generally considered to be within the past two years) been sold or let by the applicant that would have otherwise met the functional need; and
- vi). the size of the dwelling is commensurate with the established functional requirement of the unit (dwellings will normally be expected to be bungalows or chalets and should not, in any case, accommodate in excess of 175sq.m of floorspace).

Planning consent for new farm dwellings will be subject to conditions, *inter alia*, to restrict their occupation to persons solely or mainly employed, or last employed, in agriculture in the locality and remove permitted development rights in order to control their scale, appearance and impact on the openness of the Green Belt and character of the countryside.

DM18 Temporary Agricultural Dwellings – Preferred Option

Applications for the stationing of mobile homes for agricultural workers in the Green Belt and countryside will be permitted provided it can be demonstrated that:-

- i). it is essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise for at least one person to be present on the holding at most times of the day and night;
- ii). the functional need relates to a full-time agricultural / horticultural worker;
- iii). there is clear evidence of a firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise concerned;
- iv). there is clear evidence that the proposed enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis;
- v). no dwelling or other existing building suitable for conversion to a dwelling has recently (generally considered to be within the past two years) been sold or let by the applicant that would have otherwise met the functional need; and
- vi). the functional need could not be fulfilled by another dwelling on the unit, or any other accommodation in the area as a whole that is suitable for, and available to, the worker(s) concerned.

Permissions for mobile homes will be subject to conditions, *inter alia*, to restrict their occupation to persons solely or mainly employed, or last employed, in agriculture in the locality and require their removal from the holding after a maximum period of three years.

Basements in the Green Belt

The construction of dwellings in the Green Belt with basements would not generally result in overly intrusive, bulky or high dwelling, or extensively impact on the openness of the Green Belt, in terms of the physical impact. However, such alterations to a dwelling can pose problems of residential intensification, and introducing further residential activity in the Green Belt.

Single storey basements will be permitted in addition to the 25% increase in floorspace of the dwelling permitted within **Preferred Option DM16**, however, such structures must not exceed the footprint of the original dwelling (based on the footprint of the original building as at 1st July 1948 or, when it was first constructed, if this is later). In addition where a basement is permitted, permitted development rights (Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (No. 2) (England) Order 2008) for extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt will be removed to prevent unreasonably sized dwellings and to prevent any potential negative impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

DM19 Basements in the Green Belt – Preferred Option

The development of basements for a dwelling will be permitted provided that:

- i). the proposal does not exceed the footprint of the dwelling;
- ii). the proposal does not give rise to the formation of a self-contained unit of accommodation such as a 'granny flat'; and
- iii). the proposal does not impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Where a basement extension is permitted, planning permission shall be conditioned to restrict further permitted development extensions within the curtilage of the dwellinghouse.

DM19 Basements in the Green Belt – Alternative Options

Option	Why is it not preferred?
Include basements within the Green Belt allowance.	Whilst basements have some impact on the Green Belt through increasing residential intensification, physically it does not impact on the openness of the Green Belt.
Refuse all applications for basements.	Basements do have some impact on the openness of the Green Belt through encouraging more residential activity. However they are considered to have a lesser impact on the openness of the Green Belt compared to above ground extensions, and as such the Council consider it more appropriate to permit these types of extensions providing they are not unreasonable and do not result in intensification or the creation of self-contained units.

The Replacement or Rebuild of Existing Dwellings in the Green Belt

The replacement or rebuild of existing dwellings in the Green Belt will be permitted with an additional extension no greater than 25% floorspace over that of the existing dwelling to ensure consistency between the extension policies in this chapter. It will be necessary to impose a planning condition withdrawing permitted development rights for extensions (Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (No. 2) (England) Order 2008) in appropriate circumstances. This includes the conversion of roof and garage space to habitable rooms in order to ensure that alterations cannot be made to the new dwelling without the consent of the Local Planning Authority.

The Council will favour the utilisation of low pitched roofs, which ensures that a roof area cannot be converted into habitable accommodation thus rendering the roof space unusable for such purposes. The use of a low pitch roof has the additional benefit that the overall visual impact of the dwelling is reduced thus reducing the impact on the Green Belt. Indeed, the visual impact of a dwelling may be reduced further still if a hipped roof is used in lieu of a

gabled roof. However, the appropriateness of requiring the low pitch roof design in order to control the scale and floor area of the dwelling in question, in addition to providing visual benefits, will be considered for replacement dwelling applications and applicants will be advised accordingly.

Permitting the replacement or rebuild of existing dwellings offers the opportunity to achieve an improvement in the appearance of many dwellings in the Green Belt. The type of materials, design, location within the plot and landscaping of the site are all matters which will be examined in great detail to ensure that the completion of the dwelling is to a very high standard.

As a consequence of the demand for housing, the majority of dwellings in the Green Belt have been maintained in a reasonable condition. However, a number of former dwellings in the Green Belt are derelict or abandoned. In this context, derelict refers to properties that are in an advanced state of disrepair, e.g. they have unsound roofs. In considering whether or not a dwelling has been abandoned it is necessary to consider how long ago the use ceased; whether there has been an intervening use; and evidence as to the owner's intentions regarding the resumption of the use. Derelict or abandoned dwellings can no longer be considered part of the housing stock and, as such, their development for housing in the Green Belt would be inappropriate.

DM20 The Replacement or Rebuild of Existing Dwellings in the Green Belt – Preferred Option

The replacement or rebuild of existing dwellings in the Green Belt will be permitted, taking into consideration:

- i). the total size of the dwelling, provided that it would result in no more than a 25% increase in floorspace of the original dwelling;
- ii). the condition of the original dwelling;
- iii). the visual mass of the new dwelling should be no greater than that of the existing dwelling (taking into consideration any additional mass allowed for in respect of criterion (i) above). The overall height of the replacement dwelling should not exceed that of the existing dwelling, unless a modest increase in height can be justified on design or visual amenity grounds. Where the existing dwelling is a bungalow it should be replaced by a bungalow; and
- iv). the proposed siting of the replacement dwelling. A replacement dwelling should be sited in the same location within the plot as the original dwelling, unless an alternative siting is proposed where it can be demonstrated, to the Council's satisfaction, that it would be a more appropriate siting in the Green Belt in terms of the impact on openness or amenity;

Where resiting is agreed, arrangements must be secured to ensure the demolition of the replaced dwelling and its outbuildings.

Planning consent for a replacement or rebuild of an existing dwelling will be conditioned withdrawing further permitted development rights within the curtilage of the dwellinghouse.

DM20 The Replacement or Rebuild of Existing Dwellings in the Green Belt – Alternative Option

Option	Why is it not preferred?
Not allow the replacement of existing dwellings in the Green Belt.	<p>It would be unreasonable to prevent the replacement of existing dwellings in the Green Belt. PPG2 permits the limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings, which are appropriate and not disproportionate to the size of the original building.</p> <p>Given the flexibility of the current permitted development rights, the Council considers that a 25% increase in floorspace is an appropriate addition to the size of the existing dwelling in the Green Belt, including replacements to ensure consistency with other extension policies.</p>

Extension of Domestic Gardens in the Green Belt

A domestic garden is categorised in Planning Policy Guidance 17⁷ (PPG17 – Planning for open space, sport and recreation) as amenity greenspace, generally found within the residential area, and as such, it can be defined as a private or semi-private area of open space normally attached to a dwelling(s).

Garden extensions can be harmful to the visual appearance and openness of the Green Belt, particularly where it leads to the erection of additional domestic buildings, fences, structures and other domestic paraphernalia.

Applications to extend domestic gardens beyond the current designation of the residential fringe will be considered and permitted only where the impact on the surrounding environment, or visual amenity (the value, attractiveness or desirability of a particular view) for neighbours or the public is minimal.

Proposals for extensions to domestic gardens in the Green Belt should not impinge on the openness or character of the Green Belt through the erection of fences, additional buildings and other built structures, consume valuable agricultural land (particularly that which is Grade 1 or 2), or cause unnecessary disturbance to natural areas which are of conservation importance.

⁷ PPG17 Annex

DM21 Extension of Domestic Gardens in the Green Belt – Preferred Option

Extensions to domestic gardens which currently reside within, or would encroach onto the designated Green Belt land, will only be permitted provided that:

- i). the proposal would ensure a defensible and robust Green Belt boundary, for example where the extension would infill the residential fringe inline with other gardens adjacent to the dwelling;
- ii). the proposal would not impact on the openness or undeveloped character of the Green Belt;
- iii). the proposal would not encroach on high quality agricultural land (particularly Grade 1 or 2); and
- iv). the proposal would not adversely impact on the conservation value or protection of natural areas of local wildlife value, or sites of national and international importance.

Conservation Areas and the Green Belt

It is important to protect and enhance the character of Conservation Areas. Where a Conservation Area is situated within the Green Belt there is the potential for this objective to conflict with Green Belt objectives. A balance needs to be struck which allows for enhancements to the Conservation Area, whilst maintaining the openness of the Green Belt. As such, some redevelopment will be permitted in Conservation Areas within the Green Belt, provided this enhances the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The Council have produced Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan documents for the District's ten Conservation Areas and any development within the Conservation Areas that lie in the Green Belt will be expected to contribute towards the recommendations within these, whilst seeking to minimise any impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Replacement buildings should only be permitted where the existing structure is unsound, or the existing structure detracts from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Where a replacement is proposed, the building should be not be materially larger than the existing building, and should be consistent with the character and appearance of surrounding buildings in the Conservation Area.

In the case of employment operations, redevelopment should retain existing uses, where appropriate, or propose alternative employment uses if the new use would complement the surrounding land uses and have a positive impact on the appearance and value of the Conservation Area.

DM22 Conservation Areas and the Green Belt – Preferred Option

Redevelopment will be considered acceptable within Conservation Areas situated in the Green Belt, provided that:

- It will make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and will contribute to the recommendations of the relevant Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan;
- The use of the previous building is retained or is changed to one which is more appropriate in the Green Belt; and
- The proposal does not undermine the purpose of including the land within the Green Belt and is such that the impact on the openness of the Green Belt has been minimised.

DM22 Conservation Areas and the Green Belt – Alternative Options

Option	Why is it not preferred?
Only permit development which is on a one to one basis (for example the replacement of a B1 use building with a B1 use building).	This is unnecessarily restrictive as alternative employment uses may be more appropriate to its location within the Conservation Area.
Do not permit redevelopment in Conservation Areas which reside within the Green Belt.	This could undermine efforts and restrict opportunities to enhance the character and appearance of Conservation Areas.

Are there any other issues which should be addressed within this chapter?

Environmental Issues

Vision

In five years...

- New homes are being developed in sustainable locations, all of which meet at least Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.
- Initiatives to reduce carbon emissions from new and existing developments are being encouraged.
- Local, national and international sites of nature conservation importance are protected.

By 2017...

- Local, national and international sites of nature conservation importance are being increasingly protected and enhanced to improve their biodiversity and wildlife value.
- Conditions have been created which enables wildlife to thrive in the Roach Valley. The area's size and layout allow for people and wildlife to utilise the space with minimum conflict.
- The Coastal Protection Belt continues to be protected from unnecessary development and other potentially detrimental impacts.
- Later phases of sustainable extensions to the residential envelope are being planned and have begun to be implemented. These strategically located and planned developments are predominantly situated within areas least at risk from flooding.
- New residential developments are carbon-neutral, meeting Code level 6 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.
- New non-residential developments are of a sustainable construction, meeting the BREEAM rating of 'Very Good' as a minimum. The District's Eco-Enterprise Centre is a flagship building meeting the BREEAM rating of 'Excellent' and providing a model for other developments to utilise sustainable, carbon-neutral construction.

By 2025...

- The protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest has resulted in improvements to the percentage of which, by area, are in 'favourable' or better condition.
- The proportion of the District's energy supply from renewable and low carbon sources has been increased.
- Existing dwellings incorporate renewable energy technologies to reduce their carbon emissions and energy costs.
- New residential and non-residential developments, as appropriate, obtain a proportion of their energy needs from renewable or low carbon sources produced on-site.
- New sustainable dwellings that meet the needs of local people of all social groups are in place and integrated into communities.

Objectives

1. Protect and enhance sites of local, national and international importance and protect the District's historical and archaeological sites.
2. Ensure development is directed away from the Coastal Protection Belt.
3. Ensure development is away from the areas most at risk from flooding, or where this is unavoidable; ensure that appropriate flood mitigation measures are implemented before development ensues.
4. Work with the Environment Agency to maintain the District's flood defences.
5. Reduce the impact of new development on flood risk
6. Increase air quality and decrease the negative impact on the District's residents.
7. Encourage the growth of renewable energy projects and the integration of on-site renewable or low carbon energy technologies for new developments, as appropriate.
8. Ensure new developments are sustainable in terms of their impact on the environment and resources.
9. Encourage the remediation of contaminated land to fully utilise the District's brownfield sites.

Introduction

Many of the environmental issues facing the District are detailed within the emerging Core Strategy, as these are considered to be of critical importance to the future sustainable development of the District. The emerging Core Strategy explores the wide range of environmental challenges and opportunities primarily through the protection and enhancement of the natural environment and reducing the environmental impact of new development.

The emerging Core Strategy goes a long way to delivering the environmental objectives of the District, and the Council's vision in this regard. The Core Strategy covers the following key environmental issues, including:

- Local Wildlife Sites (LoWSs);
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs);
- The Crouch and Roach estuaries;
- Special Protection Areas (SPAs);
- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC);
- Ramsar Sites (Wetlands of International Importance);
- Historical and archaeological sites;
- The Coastal Protection Belt;
- Flood risk;
- Air Quality Management Areas;
- Renewable energy (including large and small scale renewable energy projects and on-site renewable and low carbon energy generation);
- Code for Sustainable Homes;
- BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method); and
- Contaminated land.

The Council is committed to improving the biodiversity and wildlife value of the District and to protect and enhance, where appropriate, local, national and international sites of nature conservation importance, including the Coastal Protection Belt. The importance of protecting local historical and archaeological sites is also recognised within the emerging Core Strategy.

Some areas, particularly towards the less populated, rural east of the District are vulnerable to flooding. Flooding is therefore a key environmental issue which is addressed within the Core Strategy. Development will be directed away from areas most at risk of flooding (Flood Zone 2 and 3), as far as practicable, and flood risk will be appraised, managed and reduced in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 25 (PPS25 – Development and Flood Risk).

The emerging Core Strategy also seeks to reduce the impact of new development on the District, for example through requiring the inclusion of sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) to reduce flood risk, the designation of air quality management areas (AQMA), as appropriate, and encouraging the use of renewable energy technologies. Appropriate sustainable construction standards are required to ensure that schemes are deliverable through compliance with the Code for Sustainable Homes standard for new residential development and BREEAM assessment criteria for new non-residential development. The remediation of contaminated land is important to ensure the deliverability and full utilisation of previously developed land in the District to meet government guidance and

Environmental Issues

objectives. The emerging Core Strategy therefore encourages the reuse of all brownfield sites including the remediation of contaminated land and the mitigation of potential risks to ensure the appropriate and efficient use of available land within the District.

This chapter covers more specific issues concerning the protection and enhancement of the local environment. The Crouch and Roach estuaries are ecologically important environs which encompass some of the most sensitive habitats within Rochford District. The national and international importance of the estuaries is detailed within the emerging Core Strategy. The estuaries are therefore significant habitats for wildlife and are a valuable environment of ecological significance, which the Council wants to protect from any undue disturbance that may not have a positive effect. Further information on the constraints surrounding the Crouch and Roach estuaries can be found in the Council's Strategic Environmental Assessment Baseline Information Profile.

Uses within the Natural Environment

Houseboats

Houseboats which have a permanent mooring are considered to be a form of residential development within the District, because the occupation of such dwellings would require the implementation of infrastructure necessary for permanent occupation, which is associated with traditional permanent housing, including roads, car parks and toilets. This would not only impact on the wildlife and the nature conservation importance of the estuaries, but also undermine the Council's housing strategy, because the Council promote the development of residential dwellings within sustainable locations with good access to local services and community facilities. Such development would also conflict with the Council's Green Belt policy. If moorings are located on Green Belt land, then permanent occupation within the sensitive locale of the Crouch and Roach estuaries is unlikely to be considered appropriate.

DM23 Houseboats – Preferred Option

Permanent moorings of houseboats are not normally considered to be appropriate within the Crouch and Roach estuaries, but will be permitted if it can be demonstrated that they will not have a negative impact on the:

- Conservation or wildlife value of the estuaries which fall within the designated Ramsar site; Special Areas of Conservation; Special Protection Areas or Sites of Special Scientific Interest, or other nature conservation interests;
- Coastal Protection Belt;
- Openness and character of the Green Belt;
- Conservation Areas;
- Visual amenity of the area;
- Water and air quality; and
- Other users of the estuaries.

Permanent moorings, where permitted, should not cause disturbance or pollution to the surrounding environment, and associated infrastructure, should not impact on the appearance of the local area or the objectives of the Green Belt.

DM23 Houseboats – Alternative Option

Option	Why is it not preferred?
Houseboats, whether in temporary or permanent occupation will not be permitted within the Crouch and Roach estuaries.	This approach is considered too restrictive. The Council want to encourage some leisure use of the area where it would not have a detrimental impact on the environment or nature conservation interests.

Nature Conservation

Other Important Landscape Features

Existing landscape features such as ponds, hedgerows and tree belts have a vital role to play both in supporting this biodiversity and contributing to the quality and appearance of the local environment. Some important hedgerows are also protected by the Hedgerow Regulations.

The Council will require developers to integrate existing features such as these into development schemes and to provide replacement features, using appropriate native species, in cases where the removal of existing features proves unavoidable. Developers must have regard to the different landscape characters and their differing habitats as defined within the **Green Belt** chapter and the findings of the Rochford District Historic Environment Characterisation Project (2006).

DM24 Other Important Landscape Features – Preferred Option

When considering proposals for development, it must be shown that the developers have considered the landscape character of the area and findings of the Rochford District Historic Environment Characterisation Project. The Council will protect the following landscape features when considering proposals, which are of importance for fauna and flora from loss or damage:

- i). Hedgerows;
- ii). Linear tree belts;
- iii). Plantations and woodlands;
- iv). Semi-natural grasslands;
- v). Marshes ;
- vi). Watercourses ;
- vii). Reservoirs ;
- viii). Lakes;
- ix). Ponds; and
- x). Networks or patterns of other locally important habitats.

Development which would adversely affect, directly or indirectly, the landscape features listed above will only be permitted if it can be proven that the reasons for the development outweigh the need to retain the feature and that mitigating measures can be provided for, which would reinstate the nature conservation value of the features.

Appropriate management of these features will be encouraged through the imposition of conditions on planning permissions where appropriate and/or the completion of a legal agreement to secure the provision of a replacement feature of equivalent value, and to ensure the future management thereof.

DM24 Other Important Landscape Features – Alternative Option

Option	Why is it not preferred?
Alternative features are protected.	This is considered to be a comprehensive list of important landscape features which the Council want to protect.

Are there any other issues which should be addressed within this chapter?

Transport

Vision

In five years...

- Transport schemes have been initiated to help reduce congestion on the District's roads, such as online road improvements and the implementation of travel plans.
- Improvements have led to a more frequent, reliable and comprehensive public transport system with better linkages between bus and rail.
- Work will be undertaken with the County Council as highway authority to look at potential solutions to congestion issues across the District to ensure the highway infrastructure becomes 'fit for purpose'.
- The Rochford District Council Transport Strategy Supplementary Planning Document has been adopted and will help to ease transport issues across the District.

By 2017...

- A walking cycling and bridleway network has been implemented across the District. There is improved public access to the District's rivers.
- Residential development will have considered community facilities provision and access to these will be easy and sustainable.
- Appropriate infrastructure will have been put into place to secure access to the wharfage at Baltic Wharf, thus helping to secure its future as an employment area.
- The South Essex Rapid Transit System (SERT) has been implemented giving people a genuine sustainable alternative to the private car.

By 2025...

- Developer contributions have ensured that new developments are well integrated with public transport. Cycle and pedestrian networks have been developed linking important areas.
- New employment parks are accompanied by travel plans and are accessible to workers by a range of transport options.
- Road infrastructure through the District will have been secure and improved with easier access to the A127 and A130.
- Wallasea Island will be accessible by secure and improved road access.
- The employment park in the west of the District will have easy access on to the main transport networks.

Objectives

1. Deliver developments that will reduce reliance on the private car, and that are well related to the public transport network.
2. Deliver online improvements on the east to west road networks in partnership with the Highways Authority, Essex County Council.

Transport

3. Identify and assess locations in the District that currently suffer from poor highway connectivity and congestion, and work with the Highways Authority to identify solutions.
4. Work alongside Essex County Council and other Thames Gateway authorities to support the implementation of the South Essex Rapid Transit system, in particular ensuring that SERT connects the residential areas with the employment areas within Rochford District.
5. Ensure that all new developments including residential, employment, education and leisure, implement travel plans to reduce the reliance on the private car.
6. Work with Essex County Council and other organisations, such as Sustrans, to ensure that a safe, accessible and convenient network of cycle and pedestrian routes is implemented across the District.
7. Aid the delivery of greenways identified in the Thames Gateway Green Grid Strategy, alongside Essex County Council and neighbouring authorities.
8. Ensure appropriate car parking provisions accompanies development at a level which strikes a balance between meeting the needs of motorists, ensuring that parking does not take up excessive amounts of developable land, and encouraging alternatives to car use.

Introduction

The District is predominantly rural with poor accessibility, particularly to the east, which, coupled with a lack of public transport provision, has resulted in high levels of private vehicle ownership and dependency, and associated congestion and pollution. Reducing dependency on private vehicles is an aspiration for future sustainability, encouraged by regional and national guidance, through planning and promoting alternative forms of transport to the car, such as public transport, walking and cycling.

The emerging Core Strategy considers a variety of important transport issues across the District, relating to:

- improvements to the current highways network, where appropriate;
- ensuring new developments are suitably located in proximity to public transport;
- supporting the development of South Essex Rapid Transit System (SERT)
- requiring the provision of travel plans for both residential and non-residential development;
- working with other organisations to provide additional walking and cycling opportunities throughout the District;
- supporting the delivery of greenways, along with partners, as part of the Green Grid Strategy; and
- stipulating the general approach to parking standards within the District.

This chapter elaborates on the implementation of appropriate parking standards and seeks to require improvements to traffic management alongside development.

Transport Issues

Parking Standards

The Council will apply maximum car parking standards for key trip destinations to discourage private vehicle use for these destinations, ease congestion and encourage the use of more sustainable transport modes. Such development will still be required to include adequate parking provision. Seeking to restrict the numbers of parking spaces at trip origins does not limit car use, particularly within a rural area such as Rochford District where levels of car usage are relatively high. As such, minimum parking standards will be applied to residential development, including visitor parking, to ensure that sufficient parking spaces are provided within new developments. The minimum standards will be less restrictive for residential development within town centre locations and for sites in close proximity to any of the District's train stations.

It is important to have regard to countywide standards to ensure the consistency between approaches and the viability of developments through the area. Essex County Council has produced a document for vehicle parking standards '*Parking Standards: Design and Good Practice (2009)*', which conform to the approach the Council want to apply throughout the District, as outlined in the emerging Core Strategy. The Council will therefore adopt these parking standards and Essex County Council's document which will replace Supplement Planning Document 5 as they conform to the Council's aspirations. The Standards were

Transport

prepared by a working group of representatives from Essex County Council and District Councils.

DM25 Parking Standards – Preferred Option

The Council will adopt Essex County Council's '*Parking Standards: Design and Good Practice (2009)*', which applies minimum parking standards for residential development (although this may be relaxed in residential areas near town centres and train stations), and appropriate maximum parking standard for trip destinations.

DM25 Parking Standards – Alternative Option

Option	Why is it not preferred?
Do not have regard to countywide parking standards	This is considered inappropriate as it could undermine the viability of developments as parking standards will vary across the county.

Traffic Management

Any new development will have an impact on the District's highways network, and as such effective traffic management is essential to create thriving sustainable communities, to improve road safety and reduce air pollution, noise, severance and visual impacts caused by transport and transport infrastructure. This is important in both the highly populated west of the District, and the sparsely populated, comparatively inaccessible east. Developers must have regard to the management and mitigation of additional traffic generation which may be a consequence of development. Opportunities will be sought to reduce the impact of traffic in sensitive areas including those which suffer from through traffic.

DM26 Traffic Management – Preferred Option

Any new developments must include appropriate traffic management measures to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods by all modes whilst protecting and enhancing the quality of life within communities, facilitating the appropriate use of different types of road and environment, and achieving a clear, consistent and understandable road, cycle and pedestrian network. These measures will comprise, amongst others, reducing the impact of motorised traffic, traffic calming measures to assist public transport, cycling, and walking, horse riders, congestion relief and other speed and demand management measures.

Are there any other issues which should be addressed within this chapter?

Economic Development

Vision

In five years...

- The Council are using the findings of the Employment Land Study to ascertain future employment provision to meet the District's needs, and to assist in identifying alternative locations for old and poorly located employment sites which are no longer fit-for-purpose.
- The long term future of the wharfage at Baltic Wharf as an employment area has been secured.
- Area Action Plans for Rochford, Rayleigh and Hockley have been finalised and the first phase of enhancement opportunities are being implemented.
- The potential of London Southend Airport and its environs is beginning to take shape through the provision of a Joint Area Action Plan in partnership with Southend Borough Council.
- The Joint Area Action Plan seeks to realise the airport's potential as a driver for the sub-regional economy, providing significant employment opportunities and ensuring the quality of life for its residents and workers.

By 2017...

- Sustainable, well used and strategically located industrial estates are being protected and enhanced, where appropriate.
- New businesses are being supported at the most vulnerable points in their lifecycle through the development of an Eco-Enterprise Centre.
- The Eco-Enterprise Centre is a flagship, eco-friendly building creating an inward investment draw which is bringing new businesses into the area.
- Appropriate uses within the District's commercial centres are being supported.
- London Southend Airport and its environs has become a driver for the sub-regional economy, providing a range of aviation and non aviation-related employment opportunities for the local population.
- A skills training academy within the vicinity of London Southend Airport and its environs has been established to provide high-skilled training in aviation-related industries.
- The Joint Area Action Plan supports and regulates the operations of London Southend Airport taking into consideration environmental and social effects, and residential amenity.
- A new airport terminal building at London Southend Airport has been completed and is operational following the implementation of an agreed surface access strategy.
- A new employment park in the west of the District with good links to the main access networks has been developed which caters for a range of employment types in a flexible manner that adapts to changes in the economy.

By 2025...

- Old, poorly located, "bad neighbour" industrial estates have been relocated to fit-for-purpose sites in sustainable locations which meet the needs of businesses and benefits residential amenity.

Economic Development

- The new employment park is accompanied by a travel plan and is accessible to workers by a range of transport options.
- At least 3000 jobs have been provided by 2021, and additional employment which meets local need continues to be generated.

Objectives

1. Ensure the growth of local employment opportunities and deliver an additional net 3000 local jobs by 2021.
2. Enhance the local skills base in the District through providing additional training and support.
3. Implement the London Southend Airport and Environs Joint Area Action Plan to realise the potential of this local resource.
4. Ensure the delivery of an Eco-Enterprise Centre which will provide valuable support for new businesses within the District.
5. Support the continued functioning and growth of small and medium sized businesses, and encourage flexible practices such as home-working to enhance the range of local employment opportunities in the District.
6. Implement Area Action Plans for the commercial centres of Rayleigh, Rochford and Hockley to enhance their attractiveness and increase spending retention within the District.
7. Support projects within the District such as Cherry Orchard Jubilee County Park and aid the delivery of priorities in the Economic Development Strategy.
8. Ensure the protection of existing employment land in sustainable locations, and reallocate “bad neighbour” industrial estates for more appropriate uses, such as residential, to meet the District’s housing needs.
9. Allocate the minimum amount of Green Belt necessary for additional employment land, as appropriate, and fully utilise the office space potential of Rayleigh and Hockley centres.

Introduction

The overarching approach to economic development in the District is detailed within the emerging Core Strategy. There are four key strategic economic issues identified seeking to enhance the growth, adaptability and flexibility of the local economy. These are employment growth, London Southend Airport, existing employment land and future employment allocations.

The emerging Core Strategy identifies several important areas which can encourage the growth of local employment opportunities including the development of Wallasea Island Wild Coast Project, the enhancement of the District's commercial centres and the development and growth of home-working. The emerging Core Strategy also supports the Economic Development Strategy.

London Southend Airport is recognised as an important employment generator in the District with the potential to become a catalyst for economic growth and employment generation in the sub-region. It is recognised that the development of this local facility needs to be weighed against any detrimental impacts on the local environment and residential amenity. As such, specific policies regarding London Southend Airport will be determined through the Joint Area Action Plan produced in conjunction with Southend on Sea Borough Council.

The Core Strategy also seeks to protect important employment land and reallocate "bad neighbour" employment land, having regard to the Employment Land Study (2008). Where new allocations for employment land are proposed to meet local employment and economic needs, the sites will be expected to be of high quality and to incorporate appropriate environmental controls.

This chapter elaborates on the appropriate use of employment land and the encouragement of home working in the District.

Employment Land

It is important to maintain the viability and vibrancy of employment land within the District. Appropriate uses on designated employment land should be within classes B1 (Business) and B2 (General Industrial) as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 and as amended by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Order 2006. However, we recognise the necessity of maintaining a flexible approach to employment uses to reflect the current economic and employment situation and ensure that employment land remains vibrant with minimal vacancies. Alternative use classes will be permitted if they are an appropriate use which does not undermine existing employment uses and positively contributes to the viability of the employment land.

DM27 Employment Land – Preferred Option

New and existing employment land should have a predominance of B1 (Business) and/or B2 (General Industrial) employment uses. Alternative uses will be considered having regard to:

- i). the number of jobs likely to be provided;
- ii). the viability of retaining B1 and B2 uses;
- iii). the impact on the vitality and vibrancy of the District's town centres;
- iv). the proportion of alternative uses present; and
- v). wider sustainability issues.

Retail use is not normally permitted on employment land. However where the proposal passes our sequential approach to the location of retail development, then consent may be granted for businesses selling bulky goods.

Working From Home

Advancements in technology mean that there is more scope for residents to work from home. This can enable people to become economically active who may otherwise be denied the opportunity. However, whilst there are economic and social benefits to working from home it is important to ensure that proposals do not have a detrimental impact upon the character or amenity of the surrounding residential area.

Some forms of home working do not require a formal planning application, but consent will be required for other forms, particularly when the activity constitutes a material change of use. In these cases a material change of use will create a mixed use at the property, where formerly it was solely residential. The employment element must remain linked to the residential use of the dwelling with the residential use remaining dominant for planning consent to be granted in order to prevent a gradual change in the character of residential areas. Furthermore proposals for working from home should relate to business uses within Class B1 as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 and as amended by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Order 2006.

DM28 Working From Home – Preferred Option

Proposals for B1 business uses operating from dwellings, which require planning permission, will be supported provided that the use:

- i). is ancillary to the residential use and does not become a separate commercial unit;
- ii). will not have a significant adverse effect on residential amenity;
- iii). will not have a detrimental effect upon the visual character of the surrounding residential area; and
- iv). will not create on street parking or unacceptable highway problems.

Where such uses are approved they will be subject to appropriate conditions, for example controlling the size and frequencies of delivery vehicles, times of deliveries, visits, etc. as well as a condition relating the use solely to the person who occupies the dwelling and undertakes the activity.

Are there any other issues which should be addressed within this chapter?

Retail and Town Centres

Vision

In five years...

- Area Action Plans for Rochford, Rayleigh and Hockley town centres have been produced and adopted. The plans provide a clear framework, developed having regard to the results of community involvement, to guide the regeneration of these centres.

By 2025...

- The District's town centres are vibrant places containing a range of shops, services and facilities that meet local demand.
- The vast majority of new retail development has been directed to Rochford, Rayleigh and Hockley. Some additional retail has been provided within the District's smaller settlements and within residential areas outside of the designated centres which provides convenient, accessible top-up shopping for local communities and reduces the need to travel.
- The leakage of retail expenditure outside of the District has been significantly reduced, with shoppers attracted to the District's town centres not simply due to the provision of retail, but because of the range of activities and the quality of the environment.

Objectives

1. Direct retail development to the District's town centres of Rochford, Rayleigh and Hockley.
2. Enhance the centres of Rochford, Rayleigh and Hockley ensuring they are vital and vibrant places containing a range of uses and activities for all.
3. Reduce the leakage of retail expenditure out of the District.
4. Ensure that village and neighbourhood shops provide a service for local communities, particularly for those with limited access to transport.

Introduction

Creating the appropriate retail mix in the District's commercial centres to enhance the retail offer and increase spending retention, whilst ensuring the needs of all local communities are met, is a challenge. The emerging Core Strategy details the Council's overarching approach to retail enhancement within town, village and neighbourhood centres. In particular it focuses on the current performance of the District's three main town centres and the potential opportunities that they present. Rayleigh, Hockley and Rochford are important local commercial centres with distinct characteristics and different retail offers, which would significantly benefit from some enhancements. The emerging Core Strategy identifies the general outcomes which should be delivered within these three areas through the emerging Area Action Plans.

In addition to retail, it is important that town centres contain a variety of uses, such as leisure, residential and community development, in order to ensure that they are vital and vibrant spaces. Whilst it is important for town centres to contain a core of attractive retail uses, it is recognised that town centres are dynamic environments and their management should reflect changing local circumstances, for example changes in consumer demand and the local economy.

This chapter further details the management of retail development within the District, with regard to the mix of appropriate uses, meeting the needs of local communities and respecting the character of the built environment. Thriving and sustainable town centres are important within the District to retain local expenditure and prevent leakages into other neighbouring town centres, thus, it is crucial that they have at their core a predominance of attractive retail uses. The Council seeks to support the continued vitality of the District's commercial centres through the development and implementation of Area Action Plans.

Development of the commercial centres, however, must respect the character of the locality and the local businesses currently operating there, and the siting of advertisements must have regard to the appearance and desirability to preserve and enhance Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings, as appropriate.

Town Centres

Town Centre Shopping Frontages

We are currently preparing Area Action Plans for each of the District's town centres. These Plans will be site specific and contain detailed policies to ensure the balance of appropriate uses and direct positive enhancements for each commercial centre, including specifying the suitable mix of retail and non-retail uses and enhancing accessibility to ensure vibrancy and vitality. However whilst the town centre Area Action Plans will have specific planning policies it is necessary to have an overarching policy which ensures the appropriate mix of retail and non-retail uses within each of the town centres.

It is considered necessary to retain and encourage a balanced mix of uses within the District's town centres to cater for a variety of user needs. Whilst we want to retain the dominance of A1 uses (retail) with some A2 uses (financial and professional services) within core shopping frontage areas, we also want to encourage other complementary uses to ensure a greater

combination of uses and enhance the local appeal of these retail centres. To ensure the right balance between retail and non-retail use is achieved, regard must be had to shifts in consumer preferences and market changes.

If a unit within a town centre is vacant for a length of time and cannot be used for retail purposes, either through a lack of demand for that retail use or economic viability reasons, then an alternative use may be appropriate. Other complementary uses may include A3 use (restaurants and cafes) which will enhance the day and evening economy within town centres through providing wider benefits such as utilising the public realm with tables on pavements, as in some areas of the town centres the pavement is quite wide and often under-utilised.

Whilst encouraging appropriate non-retail uses within the District, such as banks, building societies and restaurants, we will endeavour to ensure that the effect of dead frontage is minimised by requiring that such premises continue to use shop windows for display purposes. Where a non-retail use is proposed (such as A2, A3, A4, A5, sui generis or B1 uses) for ground floor locations in core shopping frontages, we will have regard to the appropriateness of the use and the uses already present in the frontage. The proposal should not lead to or add to a concentration of non-retail uses in an individual frontage or parade.

Non-retail uses should not result in the loss of any independent means of accessing the upper floors of the building, and so preventing their beneficial use as self-contained living accommodation, or for other appropriate purposes.

In considering the appropriate mix of retail and non-retail development, we will have regard to evidence provided by the most up-to-date Retail and Leisure Study for the District available.

DM29 Town Centre Shopping Frontages – Preferred Option

The frontages within Rayleigh, Hockley and Rochford's Primary Shopping Areas will comprise predominantly A1 retail use.

The change of use of shopping frontages for non-retail purposes (in particular A3 use which includes restaurants and cafes), which make a positive contribute to the vibrancy and vitality of the town centres will be permitted providing that:

- i). the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on, or undermine, the dominance of A1 use businesses within the retail centre;
- ii). the proposal would not create a cluster of similar non-retail businesses within the locality; and
- iii). the proposal would positively contribute to the retail/non-retail offer and encourage people into the town centre.

DM29 Town Centre Shopping Frontages – Alternative Options

Option	Why is it not preferred?
Maintain a restrictive approach to non-retail use within town centres as per the 2006 Replacement Local Plan, aiming for no more than 25% of frontage to be occupied by non-retail development within town centres.	It is important to maintain a flexible approach to uses within town centres to ensure their vibrancy and vitality. Introducing complementary uses to the existing retail offer is necessary to create a balanced environment which will increase footfall and the variety of uses throughout the day. Particularly in the current economic climate it is important to encourage an appropriate mix of uses within the town centre and limit the amount of dead frontage as appropriate.
Let the market determine the mix of town centre uses.	This is considered inappropriate because such an uncoordinated approach may lead to a combination of uses which undermines the vitality and vibrancy of the town centres. It would not ensure that an appropriate mix of uses, which meets the needs of local communities.

Upper Floor Locations in Town Centres

Town centres are important focal points for the local community which can provide both commercial and residential functions. Commercial premises in town centres with vacant units above present an ideal opportunity to increase the numbers of people living within sustainable locations, contributing towards the District's housing requirements. The conversion of upper floors in town centre locations, however, should have regard to potential additional leisure or retail uses which could be suitably located within the unit. Where such uses are not appropriate or it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that there is a lack of demand within the local area, then residential conversion should be permitted. A change of use should not result in a net loss of leisure or retail use within the town centre.

Encouraging the use of units above shops for residential purposes, where appropriate, has the benefit of providing additional housing in appropriate locations, increases natural surveillance, contributes to regeneration, and promotes sustainable utilisation of town centres which reduces the pressure on greenfield sites, whilst satisfying the demand for such locations. It is important, however, to ensure that the use of upper floors of commercial buildings in town centres for residential accommodation is within a suitable location with adequate access and servicing and does not negatively impact on the surrounding uses. Regard should be had to the air quality within town centre locations when proposing residential development, in particular to the designation of any Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs).

DM30 Upper Floor Locations in Town Centres – Preferred Option

We will permit the use of the upper floors of shops and other commercial premises for residential purposes. However, residential development will only be permitted where this would not result in a net loss of leisure or commercial uses within town centre locations. Permission will be granted, where appropriate, to ensure that accommodation is self-contained and suitably located with separate access from the street and that such accommodation provides a satisfactory standard of residential convenience and amenity.

Where an Air Quality Management Area is designated, residential conversion of upper floor town centre locations will be restricted until the applicable air quality target is achieved.

DM30 Upper Floor Locations in Town Centres – Alternative Option

Option	Why is it not preferred?
Permit residential uses above ground floor level notwithstanding the loss of leisure uses.	It is important to retain an appropriate mix of uses to maintain and enhance the vibrancy and vitality of the District's town centres.

Village and Neighbourhood Shops

Village and Neighbourhood Shopping Frontages

The retention and enhancement of existing village and neighbourhood shops is essential within the District's smaller settlements to ensure that the day-to-day needs of the local population are served. It may be appropriate, however, to change the use of premises to a use that would provide a similar service for local residents, or convert premises for alternative uses, where a lack of demand for the current use has been demonstrated. The proposed new use must be compatible with its location, due to their typically close proximity to residential properties. For example a change of use to A5 (hot food takeaways) may not be considered appropriate if adjacent to residential development.

We consider that it is important to retain and enhance small rows of shops in addition to parades of shops which perform the same function within the defined settlements.

DM31 Village and Neighbourhood Shops – Preferred Option

We will seek to ensure that retail premises in village and neighbourhood shopping frontage areas outside town centres are retained.

The change of use of the ground floor of existing retail premises to non-retail use outside town centres will be permitted providing that the following conditions are met:

- i). the loss of the retail unit is justified because the unit is vacant or that an A1 retail use is not financially viable. In either case, applicants should be able to demonstrate that all reasonable attempts have been made to sell or let the premises for retail use, but without success;
- ii). the proposed use would serve the day-to-day needs of local residents;
- iii). the proposed use would not reduce the quality of life of residents living in the immediate vicinity of the premises, as a result of noise, disturbance, cooking smells, litter or other factors;
- iv). the proposal would not result in the removal of any independent means of accessing the upper floor(s) of the premises or otherwise prevent an effective use being made of the upper floor(s); and
- v). where the proposal relates to premises with an existing shopfront, the shop window would continue to be used for display purposes.

DM31 Village and Neighbourhood Shops – Alternative Option

Option	Why is it not preferred?
Take a more permissive approach to the loss of A1 uses in villages and neighbourhood shopping areas.	Retail use is important to ensure the vitality and vibrancy of any shopping frontage and to meet the needs of local communities.

Advertisements in the District

Advertisements

Advertising is necessary for the promotion and functioning of the District's commercial activities, but a balance needs to be struck to ensure that this is not detrimental to the appearance or value of a particular streetscape or building(s).

Inappropriate signage which is poorly located, designed or excessively illuminated within the context of the surrounding area can detract from the visual amenity, character and quality of the local environment and may present, particularly with inappropriate illumination, a road safety hazard. Furthermore a proliferation of signage on one building or along one street can create a cluttered streetscene which can cause distractions and confusion for the general public.

The siting, design, scale, proportion, colour and materials of advertisements should therefore have regard to the character of and impact on the streetscene, individual building(s) or the wider area, and should make a positive contribution to the overall appearance of the streetscene.

DM32 Advertisements – Preferred Option

The design and siting of advertisements throughout the District must have regard to the visual impact of the building(s) on which they will be displayed and the character of the surrounding area. Advertisements will be permitted, provided that they:

- i). do not add to visual clutter or detract from the visual amenity of the area;
- ii). are appropriately designed and sited within the context of the area and well related to the building(s) to which they are attached;
- iii). have had regard to the use of appropriate materials;
- iv). do not generate an excess of signage which creates a cluttered streetscene;
- v). are of an appropriate size in relation to the building(s) or other advertisements within the area;
- vi). are suitably illuminated without adding to light pollution or whose intensity does not affect visual amenity or road safety; and
- vii). respect the architectural features of locally listed buildings.

DM32 Advertisements – Alternative Option

Option	Why is it not preferred?
Do not have regard to the points listed above when determining the suitability of advertisements.	It is important to consider the impact of advertisements on the amenity and character of the surrounding area.

Advertisements affecting Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings

Conservation Areas tend to relate to town and village centres, whose appearance is worthy of retention. Several of Rochford District's designated Conservation Areas are valuable commercial centres, where significant commercial activities take place. These areas are, however, more sensitive to the presence, and in particular, the style of advertising employed. Many Conservation Areas encompass Listed Buildings whose character it is important to preserve and enhance as appropriate.

Advertisements will be kept to a minimum within Conservation Areas to ensure that they do not detract from the overall appearance of the Conservation Area and character of individual buildings. Advertisements proposed to be sited on Listed Buildings should have a positive impact on the character and appearance of the building and the wider area.

The appropriateness of advertisements such as illuminated signs, lettering and coloured fascias, window stickers and window displays in Conservation Areas, and on or near Listed Buildings, or within the overall context of the streetscene where it may create visual clutter, will be carefully assessed. Other external items which can impact on the character of Listed Buildings and buildings in Conservation Areas such as external roller shutters or illuminated signs are unlikely to be acceptable.

DM33 Advertisements affecting Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings – Preferred Option

Advertisements will be permitted on Listed Buildings, in appropriate circumstances, where it can be demonstrated that adverse harm to the character or structure of the building would not result. Where permitted on Listed Buildings and in Conservation Areas, advertisements should adhere to the general preferred option as outlined above, and should be sensitive to the character of the area, visually unobtrusive, well designed and well located. Traditional wooden, painted fascias and hanging signs for example will be preferred to coloured plastic fascias and boxes.

Advertisements will be allowed provided that they respect the character of the building(s) on which they are to be sited and the surrounding area, and do not include:

- prominent lettering, lighting, symbols, material or colour of fascia displays, window stickers, pavements signs and other signage;
- internally illuminated or other projecting fascia signs;
- prominent externally illuminated signs;
- prominent blinds (especially external roller shutters) or window / door canopies.

Advertisements and other external items (especially illuminated signs, where permitted) should be unobtrusive and benefit rather than detract from the value of the Conservation Area and character of the Listed Building, such as spot lighting of hanging signs or other discreet forms of lighting.

The quantity of advertisements within Conservation Areas and on Listed Buildings will be kept to the minimum necessary to identify the building and its function in order to protect the appearance of the area and individual buildings as appropriate.

DM33 Advertisements affecting Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings – Alternative Option

Option	Why is it not preferred?
Do not have regard to the impact of advertisements on the character and value of Conservation Areas or Listed Buildings.	It is important to preserve and enhance the appearance of Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings.

Are there any other issues which should be addressed within this chapter?

Public Involvement

As a statutory Development Plan Document this document is being prepared in accordance with Government Regulations. The process and the time scales are as follows:

- Development Management Development Plan Document Public Consultation: 17th March 2010 – 30th April 2010
- Pre Submission Consultation: September-October 2010
- Submission to the Secretary of State: January 2011
- Examination in Public: May 2011
- Adoption: November 2011

The first stage in the processes outlined above is the culmination of research and analysis that has taken place which involved public consultation throughout the preparation of the emerging Core Strategy, working with key stakeholders, and evidence gathering.

We are seeking your views on the Development Management Development Plan Document in order to feed into the next stage of the document: the Pre Submission version and as such, the feedback received from this round of Public consultation will help to shape the final document.

To make comments:

An online facility has been set up in order to enable respondents to put forward their views quickly and easily with confirmation of receipt. This can be found at:

<http://rochford.jdi-consult.net/ldf/>

We recognise that not everyone will have access to the internet and if you are unable to do so, please contact the Planning Policy Team on 01702 318191 to obtain paper representation forms.