

**Hockley Area Action Plan
Frequently Asked Questions:**

Q: Is the HAAP proposing a large supermarket for Hockley? If so, why?

A: One of the common misconceptions with the HAAP is that it will encourage development of a large supermarket in Hockley centre. On the contrary, the HAAP proposes that the current policy that restricts development on Eldon Way to industrial use be replaced with one that permits retail development within a dedicated area of Eldon Way, provided a number of criteria are met. One criterion includes that, if a food store is proposed it will only be permitted if it is no bigger than 3,000 square metres.

The HAAP also suggests that new retail development only be permitted on Eldon Way if it fully integrates with Spa Road and complements existing retail uses.

A study of the retail in Rochford District notes that very little of the money spent by residents of Hockley is spent on shopping in Hockley. An appropriately sized food store in the centre of Hockley would increase visitors to Hockley centre, and ensure more spending is done locally in local shops.

Given the nature of national planning policy (as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)) if development were to be unconstrained by local policy such as the HAAP, it would be difficult for the Council to resist applications for a larger food store in Hockley centre. This is significant because the Council's consultants have identified that the market would prefer a larger store than the HAAP suggests. Therefore the HAAP gives the Council a way to ensure that an inappropriately large supermarket within Hockley can be resisted.

Q: What does 'tenure blind' mean?

A: The term 'tenure blind' refers to the design of affordable housing. In order to be considered 'tenure blind' affordable housing must not be architecturally distinguishable from surrounding market housing.

Q: Is the Council redeveloping Hockley centre? If so, why?

A: The Council is not proposing to undertake redevelopment of Hockley centre, and does not own land to which policies in the HAAP relate. The purpose of the HAAP is to ensure that there is a plan in place with which to guide development brought forward by others as part of the normal development process.

The HAAP will provide a policy framework which gives the Local Planning Authority more control over the future of the centre and this form of positive planning is the kind of approach planning authorities are encouraged to take by the Government. Without the HAAP inappropriate development would be more likely to occur in future, and the local community would be given limited say on what developers could do in the centre.

Q: When is the development planned to commence?

A: The Council is not the landowner and the HAAP will only act as a guide for development when it comes forward. The Council believes that it is essential to have a plan in place to guide development if and when it is proposed. It is envisaged that development proposals promoted by the HAAP will come into effect by 2026.

Q: Why does the HAAP propose housing for the centre of Hockley?

A: The Government requires the Council to identify land where housing can be built in the District. In order to accommodate this housing, the Council has had to allocate greenfield sites for development, but it is important that brownfield sites are used where possible. Previous public consultation has identified that most people would prefer brownfield sites to be developed for housing ahead of greenfield sites. Housing in the centre of Hockley would also be well-located in relation to the train station, shops and services, and so helping support local businesses and services, and reducing reliance on the private car. However, we are also aware that many people are concerned about there being too much housing in the centre of Hockley. As such, the HAAP does not propose as many dwellings are permitted as previous studies have suggested would be possible.

Q: How have our comments been taken into account?

A: This iteration of the HAAP has been subject to several stages of public consultation.

Following the large response to the initial round of community involvement in early 2009 on the production of an Area Action Plan for Hockley, the Council has revisited the potential options for the centre of Hockley.

Potential options were developed and these were subject to public consultation between 30th November 2010 and 4th February 2011.

A number of options were generated. These range from relatively minor interventions to the appearance of the centre, through to options that entail significant redevelopment. In addition, there were also options for highway improvements, including at the Spa Road / Main Road roundabout.

An exhibition for the HAAP took place from 14 August 2012 to 28 August 2012 in the foyer of Hockley Library. The exhibition was an additional stage of public consultation on the HAAP which sought to update residents on the most recent options and thoughts in respect of Hockley centre. It also gave members of the public an opportunity to see, and comment on the progress of the Council's plan for Hockley centre.

Questionnaires were made available during the exhibition period. 57 questionnaires were submitted in response to the exhibition. 49 included general comments. Not all questions were answered in all questionnaires submitted.

As a consequence of the responses to the HAAP exhibition questionnaire, the options for the HAAP went through several iterations in order to take the views of members of the public into account.

The HAAP has evolved to take into account the views of Hockley's residents. For example the options suggested in the exhibition involved significantly less intervention than had been suggested in the past in previous consultations. There was also a greater emphasis on the retention of leisure use in the centre.

The final stage in the production of the HAAP before it is adopted is the Submission Document. This is the version which the council intends to submit to the Government for examination. The Examination in Public will be carried out by an Independent Planning Inspector.

Before Submitting the HAAP for examination the Council has published the document for consultation and is inviting interested parties to submit representations on it. As this is a formal consultation representations must focus on the soundness and legal compliance of the HAAP.

Representations may be made during the publication period beginning at noon on 29 November and ending at 5:00pm on 25 January 2013.

Q: Why do I have to use the representation forms or the online system to make my views known?

A: The HAAP is currently out for its final stage of public consultation prior to being submitted for Examination by the Planning Inspector. The results of the consultation will be passed to the Government appointed Inspector, who will consider whether the plan is legally compliant and sound. The Government requires that comments relate to the soundness and legal compliance of the document. The online consultation system and representation forms ensure that the comments submitted relate to soundness and legal compliance, and can therefore be considered by the Inspector.

Comments on the Hockley Area Action Plan Submission Document may be formally submitted between noon on 29 November 2012 and 5pm on 25 January 2013. This is a formal consultation stage before the document is submitted to the Government to be independently examined, as such, representations will only be regarded as duly made if supplied on the official representation form or made directly via the online consultation system at this link: <http://rochford.jdi-consult.net/ldf/>. Comments will be available to view on the online system as they are submitted, although please note that there may be a time delay between submission and appearance online.

On the online consultation system, comments may be submitted by selecting the relevant document then clicking on the pen symbol next to the policy on which you wish to comment. Before you submit comments for the first time you will need to register on the system. This is a simple process requiring a valid email address. If you are already registered on Rochford District Council's online consultation system you can use the same login and do not need to re-register.

We recommend that you also visit www.rochford.gov.uk to view the documents, access background information and, if

required, obtain help on using the online consultation system.

We recognise that not everyone has access to the Internet and that it is important that no one is excluded from participating. If you wish to submit your views but are unable to do so online, please contact the Planning Policy team on 01702 318191 for further help or to obtain an official representation form.

The documents can also be viewed at local libraries, the Council offices or online at <http://rochford.jdi-consult.net/ldf>.

Q: If a development is proposed in the area how will this affect my business?

A: If a developer were to submit a planning application that complied with the Policies of the Councils Local Development Framework, including the HAAP and other relevant material considerations, it could be granted planning permission. However it is important to note that the Council is not seeking to impose development in Hockley. Instead the HAAP seeks to ensure that appropriate and sustainable development occurs. As such the decision whether to implement development would be down to the individual land owners – the HAAP simply sets out what development would be acceptable.

Q: What kind of highways and infrastructure improvements are proposed within the HAAP?

A: The HAAP makes it clear that any development within Hockley will need to be considered in conjunction with an assessment of the impact that it will have on the highways and public infrastructure in Hockley.

The HAAP does not include prescriptive plans for highway and infrastructure improvement because any improvements should be appropriate to whatever development comes forward. Indeed changes to the areas infrastructure, if not properly integrated with other development has the potential to be counter productive.

The HAAP does identify opportunities for improvement which should be considered as part of any development. These include formalising and increasing the level of parking provision; improving cycling facilities; improving pedestrian routes and access across the settlement; enhanced crossing facilities along Spa Road at the Roundabout, at the entrance to Eldon Way and at Station Approach; street clutter and guardrail removal along Spa Road is also a possibility.

Q: Why do we need an Area Action Plan For Hockley?

It is important that a planning policy framework is in place for the area.

The production of an Area Action Plan enables the Council to take a proactive role in guiding the development of Hockley Centre. It will ensure that inappropriate development is avoided. It will ensure that necessary improvements are identified and implemented as development moves forward.

Without a plan in place setting out what development would be considered acceptable, and what would not, it would be difficult for the Council to refuse proposals by developers for inappropriate development – national planning policy states that if a District Council is “silent” on a planning matter, the Council should grant permission unless national planning policy states otherwise. It is therefore important that the Council has a clear and robust plan in place for the centre of Hockley to ensure that inappropriate development does not occur.

Q: What other areas will be subject to Area Action Plans?

A: Rochford District Council has commissioned Alliance and Morrison Urban Practitioners to produce Area Action Plans for all of its major settlements including Rochford, Hockley and Rayleigh. Although the content of each Area Action Plan will vary depending on the needs of the settlements the process by which the plans are produced and, published and examined will be the same. The Hockley AAP is the first to be published with the other two AAPs to follow early in 2013.

An Area Action Plan is also being produced with Southend-on-Sea Borough Council for London Southend Airport and environs.

Q: Why is there no detailed transport assessment with the HAAP?

There is no detailed transport assessment with the HAAP for several reasons. The HAAP does not set out pre determined improvements to be made in Hockley because improvements, including those made to the transport infrastructure, will depend on the type of development that is proposed.

Policy 3 of the HAAP states that all development proposals should either incorporate or contribute towards schemes identified within the AAP, this includes improvements to the transport network. This will ensure that improvements to the public realm are integrated with the development proposal and won't be hampered by them.

The approach taken to transport issues within the Rochford, Rayleigh and Hockley AAPs is the same as specified by the single contract for all of the AAPs. The consultancy charged with producing the AAPs included a specialist transport consultant, whose work has fed into the proposals set out in the Plan.

Q: Why is there no detailed layout showing redevelopment for Hockley centre?

The HAAP is intended to provide a strategic plan to guide the future development of Hockley. It is not intended as a point by point plan for the redevelopment of the centre.

It is important to remember that although the HAAP sets out the Council's planning policies for the development of Hockley it will still be necessary for developers to apply for planning permission and each application will be determined on its own merits having regard to the policies in the plan.