

**ROCHFORD LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – Response re
SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL/STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL TECHNICAL REPORT – ADDENDUM JUNE 2011**

I wish to make the following objections to the above proposal.

3. Further appraisal of alternatives – general housing development

Table 3.1 The following locations are selected:-

1. West Rochford, 5. S E Ashingdon, 6. East Ashington, 13. West Hockley, 14. South Hawkwell, 16. S W Hullbridge, 7. West Rayleigh.

With exception of West Rayleigh and SW Hullbridge, all sites approved will ultimately lead to expansion and coalescence of Ashingdon, Hawkwell, Hockley into one conurbation, seemingly to save Rochford and Rayleigh from development. Even proposed 'strategic gaps' can't hide that. In consideration of various locations, attention is paid to avoiding noise, pollution, traffic flows, jeopardising air quality, effect on 'conservation areas' in relation to those two settlements.

No such consideration is given to Ashingdon, Hawkwell, Hockley. Reference to latter sites under Cultural Heritage notes 'no significant effects' – unsurprising since, with official support and encouragement developers have systematically destroyed heritage in those settlements, unlike the case with Rochford and Rayleigh. (It is noticeable the number of buildings in Ashingdon, Hawkwell, Hockley which have been removed from the Local List in its current draft proposals. One recalls the former Local List was abolished to facilitate demolition of a Hockley dwelling that was on it: "Government now frowns on Local Lists" it was said). In fact West Rochford location is said to have '... potential to urbanise Hall Road – gateway to Rochford Town Centre..but this could be mitigated..with design'. Note concern with Rochford Town Centre, rather than Hall Road – thus sacrificing for Rochford's sake a traditional extensive green belt and agricultural area.

On the latter score, nearly all the sites chosen indicate 'located on Grade 1 – 3 agricultural land'. For understandable social reasons, from mid-19C UK relied on cheap grain imported from the US, but learned its lesson in World Wars I and II, when this policy was shafted as cargo vessels were regularly sunk. Hastily, UK agricultural land, particularly in this area, was resurrected. A half century ago, acreage of local land employed growing grain is now built over. How should the population eat in the next world conflict?

Traffic is already directed via Rayleigh through Hockley and Hawkwell to the Cherry Orchard bypass to Southend. Your proposals for increasing development in the above 3 settlements will exacerbate that. Use of the B1013 is already grossly over extended.

Likewise Hullbridge, with c.500 new units is preferred to any more development in Rayleigh, thus causing similar problems. This is proposed on flood plain. Proposed traffic improvements are unconvincing.

Options for Employment Sites

E1 – London/Southend Airport

This will not provide jobs – most of those will be moved here from industrial sites elsewhere planned to be used for housing instead. That will ruin existing businesses and/or provide insuperable commuting problems for current job holders. It will also further exacerbate existing traffic problems on B1013.

Table 2.1 – Summary Approach to Alternatives Assessment [selections]

Strategic Option 1 The Green Belt and Strategic Gaps between settlements

Option D (selected) 'strategic gaps will be defined and protected by policy' – with increasing coalescence and densification above, such gaps will just be cosmetic and eventually built on. As green belt has been 'settled' in the past, but is now being built on, why should we trust such policies for the future?

Strategic Option 4 – Housing numbers

Option D – ensuring enough land is allocated to accommodate all cascaded figure from East of England Plan (RSS 14) for 2001-21 It would be helpful if RSS were abolished.

Strategic Option 5: General development locations

Option E 'Allocate total number of housing units to top and second tier settlements, to gain smaller number of large sites which will deliver the greatest amount of infrastructure improvements'.

This could be intended as alternative to demolishing existing buildings within settlements, but not only is the latter still continuing, but one fears your proposals will exacerbate it. You appear to have allocated almost the total number in coalescence of Ashingdon, Hawkwell, Hockley, with no infrastructure improvement, but worsening of

traffic, mainly on B1013 – really you have also achieved Option D. Ashingdon, Hawkwell and Hockley should not be included with Rayleigh and Rochford as Tier 1 settlements.

I cannot see why 'minor settlements' cannot have some affordable housing – they are moribund, and have lost schools years ago.

I agree rejection of Option C – Rochford District is too small for a new settlement, although Ashingdon/Hawkwell/Hockley are rapidly being turned into one.

Strategic Option 11 – Character of Place

Option C – "Protection of identity..". Where Ashingdon, Hawkwell, Hockley are concerned over the years their identity has been destroyed for the sake of development proposals and that continues, unlike the case with Rayleigh and Rochford.

Strategic Option 15 – Compulsory Purchase

Option C "ensure employment, residential, recreational enhancements..brought forward using Compulsory purchase powers" – that in spite of widespread objections to that proposal in responses to previous Core Strategy documents.

CONCLUSION

It is apparent over use of the District will continue because it is evidently designated to accommodate all those compulsorily displaced from London by the Olympic site and other initiatives.

Finally I would add that not dealing with DPD Allocations consultation renders reconsideration of original Strategic Assessment inappropriate.

Further the Council requests views on supplementary information on areas of a consultation it undertook years ago. It will be impossible for locals to discuss effectively partial information to serve any purpose. The Strategic Assessment should be reviewed from the beginning.

