

The Planning Policy Team  
Rochford District Council  
South Street  
Rochford  
Essex SS41BW

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### **Public Consultation on Proposed Development of 175 Homes in South Hawkwell**

Dear Sirs

We write to challenge the choice of South Hawkwell as a suitable location for a development of 175 homes on currently designated green belt land.

Changes in planning law now require councils to carry out a detailed sustainability appraisal the result of which must fully justify the choice of preferred locations for housing growth by ensuring that the locations chosen are the very best available for sustainable development.

We have read the report and do not believe that Rochford District Council have provided clear evidence in the report about the environmental impact of all the locations chosen for large scale housing developments on our local environment.

In particular important areas such as Hockley Woods which are conceivably adversely affected by the large number of developments proposed.

We cannot find that analysis in the review nor can we find any analysis of the undoubted environmental effects on cumulative traffic flows which will inevitably increase pollution from cars, as a result of increased traffic congestion and traffic jams.

The report does express serious concerns over the loss of woodland area and the adverse impact on very diverse wildlife from the proposed development in South Hawkwell and yet the location is still included regardless of this most important consideration.

The council seems to think that new housing growth should be spread across the district so that every Parish shares in the loss of green belt rather than choose the very best locations for new development.

This seems a convenient political strategy which can be accepted by their councillors rather than an objective, professionally generated spatial plan.

South Hawkwell is relatively remote and it is reasonable to assume that large developments should be concentrated in the more urban areas of Hockley and Rochford which are more sustainable locations with proximity to buses, trains, doctors, dentists, shops and other services.

There has been much discussion on re-locating the few businesses on the Hockley Industrial estate to new sites adjacent to the A 127 Arterial Road and converting this existing brown field site to residential development.

We believe that this proposal has much to commend it as the existing Industrial Estate is very run down with a considerable number of vacant units, conversion to residential use will preserve green belt and meet much of the councils target for new home development.

When reading the full Sustainability Appraisal it is evident that South Hawkwell has not actually been compared to all the alternatives in the district only those in Hawkwell and Hockley.

Surely this approach cannot be correct, we would ask that you undertake a complete approach to the analysis because we believe the current assessment is unsound and has been a case of making the evidence fit a pre-determined proposal which we understand the inspector warned against.

Yours faithfully

