

The Planning Policy Team
Rochford District Council
South Street
Rochford
Essex
SS4 1BW



8th July 2011

Dear Sir

Re: Sustainability Appraisal

Wish to make the following comments on Rochford District Councils decision in choosing South Hawkwell (Hawkwell West), (Christmas Tree Farm - Thorpe Road) as its choice of Preferred Locations for housing growth. 175 houses on a green field site should not be the first or the only choice surely brown field sites should be the Councils first choice when considering housing. Sustainability Appraisal Addendum states 'Green Belt to be used as a last resort and as late as possible'. This is clearly not the view of Rochford District Council.

The evidence put forward for 175 houses in South Hawkwell (Hawkwell West) is not robust. Where is the Councils evidence to justify placing a large (in fact two distinct housing estates segregated by a strip of green space (that no official within the Council appears to be able to define if this will be public open space or will remain in private ownership) on what is now Green Belt Land?

The planning application submitted by David Wilson Homes for 175 houses is premature because it is relying upon the Core Strategy to release Green Belt Land and no decision has been made to this effect.

Where has Rochford District Council provided clear evidence in the report on the Environmental Impact of all the locations chosen for large scale housing developments on our local environment? In particular Hockley Woods, the surrounding smaller woods such as Gustard Hall, Potash Woods in Hawkwell and Cherry Orchard Park on our boundary, they are likely to be conceivably adversely effected by the large number of developments proposed. Why isn't there an analysis in the review relating to these important issues?

Even the report expresses concerns over the loss of woodland area and the adverse impact on wildlife from developments in South Hawkwell, yet the location is included regardless of this relevant consideration.

Why has Rochford District Council not shown an analysis of the undoubted environmental effect on cumulative traffic flows which will inevitably increase pollution from vehicles, as a direct result of increased traffic congestion and traffic jams. Not forgetting the added pollution from an increased use of aircraft at Southend/Rochford airport and changed flight paths, now over Hawkwell and the increased road traffic envisaged when fully operational. Even more vehicles will be using the B130 which runs through Hawkwell South (West) than now. The traffic now is perpetual.

Rochford District Council is of the opinion that new housing growth should be spread across the District so that every Parish loses some Green Belt Land but how can this be justifiable if decisions are not based on the very best locations for development? It maybe a convenient political strategy which some Councilors may find acceptable but it is then not a objective, professionally generated spatial plan. If the Council had undertaken a proper sustainable analysis, which is now required by law, rather than this thinly veiled retrofit to meet predetermined allocations in the Core Strategy, then a re-allocation of the 175 houses for South Hawkwell would have been appropriate.

Hawkwell South (West) as a location for 175 houses should be rejected, it is semi rural and relatively remote as far as convenient amenities are concerned. Would it not make more sense to select Hockley or Rochford, both of which have a Railway station in fact Rochford has two and an airport, both areas are far more sustainable locations with frequent bus services, doctors, dentists, libraries, old peoples welfare centres, educational and social amenities such as evening classes. Hawkwell South (west) has a sports centre and village hall and very little else. Why did Hockley have its allocation reduced from 150 houses to just 50? This was an illogical decision.

Where is the housing need for housing in Hawkwell coming from? Looking at information received under FOI (2010) when asked for 'the present location of the applicants on Rochford housing waiting list' Hawkwell was not even listed but making the presumption that Hawkwell was combined with Hockey, the figure given was 51 applicants. This need could be met by windfall properties we do not have a need for 175 properties as outlined for Hawkwell South (West).

Reading the document (Sustainability Appraisal) South Hawkwell (West) has not actually been compared to ALL the alternatives in the whole District of Rochford, only those in Hawkwell and Hockley. This approach cannot be correct? Therefore I request that Rochford District Council undertakes a complete approach to the analysis because the way the Council has undertaken this is **unsound** making evidence fit pre-determined proposals which the Inspector had warned them against.

Your faithfully

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