

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment

To: Head of Planning
Planning Policy
Rochford District Council

From

8th July

Dear Sir, I submit the following objections regarding the
Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment

Location 12 - Rawreth Village & Location 7 West Rayleigh

Last years consultation seems to have been completely ignored, distorted or shelved in this latest report. I submit the following examples.

General Housing Development Locations.

The District Council's consultation document is unfairly weighted in favour of "Location 7 - West Rayleigh.

Putting it simply, the District Council are proposing building on 'land north of London Road' whereas, local residents prefer a smaller site in the centre of Rawreth as proposed by the Rawreth Parish Council.

Comments in the SA/SEA state *"Rawreth Village is detached from Rayleigh, and whilst it relates well to Basildon and Chelmsford centre, it would lead to isolated development poorly served by services"*.

This is an extremely negative response as many villages in Essex fall into the category of having approximately 400 to 500 residents (this being existing plus the 250 proposed) and are thriving communities even without the good standard of transport facilities in Rawreth, which has two regular hourly bus services (Monday to Saturday) and is within half a mile of a national rail link direct to London Liverpool St.

The village also has direct links to the major arterial roads of A127 and A130. How RDC can argue that, "it would lead to isolated development poorly served by services and facilities and performs poorly in terms of its sustainability" is beyond belief.

The Document also says of Location 7, "*Due to its location on the west side of Rayleigh it will also result in less air pollution and congestion in Rayleigh Town centre, as traffic will not need to travel through the centre*". This can be equally applied to Location 12 - Rawreth Village, but has been excluded by the RDC in order to strengthen the argument for Location 7 over Location 12, which RDC clearly do not want to consider in any shape or form. RDC wrote off Rawreth in the early stages of the Core Strategy and are obstinately maintaining this stance so as not to lose face. This is why very few changes from the original submissions are forthcoming in this SA/SEA. Something I feel should be investigated by the Inspector.

Flooding

- I also feel strongly that the risk of flooding at Location 7- Rayleigh West has not been fully addressed. The following meaningless and open-ended statement on page A1 – 12, headed 10. Water, states

"Some areas within this location are within flood zone 3, however it is likely that development can be accommodated outside of the flood prone area".

Firstly, I am pleased that RDC have at long last now admitted that some areas in Location 7 are within Flood Zone 3. This has always been denied at public meetings I have attended. There is no commitment in the wording of this statement. Surely something more positive than "likely" should be stated. This is a major factor in the possible development on this site. Surely, at this stage, facts not possibilities are essential. The Environment Agency has always classified this area as Flood Zone 3, both in talks to the public and on their Web Site.

Due to the fact that Location 12 has been all but ignored, an important factor regarding land drainage has been omitted from the SA/SEA. Rawreth Village is not within a Flood Zone 3 and can therefore cope with land drainage from new development. The land from the village has a natural slope and would go directly northwards into the River Crouch, instead of adding to the problems we already experience at Rawreth Brook, which currently carries run off water from Location 7 and will be at a far greater risk if the 770 dwellings are built on this green belt area.

Balanced Communities

- A further statement, regarding Location 7, which also distorts the truth is:

The quantum of development that can be delivered in this location provides sufficient economies of scale to fund/develop facilities required by the community, including a primary school, public open space and other community facilities.

This area already has lots of open space, some 70 acres of Sweyne Park for example, plus many pitches for football and cricket. About four years ago there was also a very good opportunity to provide community facilities, which had outline planning permission, adjacent to the Rayleigh Sports Centre but RDC bowed to the pressure from the major supermarkets and we got an Asda instead. Can we trust RDC on this proposal? I very much doubt it! As for a new primary school, St Nicholas School in Priory Chase was especially designed to have the capability to expand so even if 770 houses are to be built at Location 7, there would be no require a new primary school.

Conclusion

- There is currently much talk about legacies, especially in relation to Olympic Sites etc. My fear is that this SE/SEA proposal will provide Rochford District and especially Rawreth with a disastrous unwanted legacy.
 1. Loss of green belt –Unwanted.
 2. Mass housing in inappropriate locations – Unwanted.
 3. Future flooding that could be avoided – Unwanted.
 4. Dwellings that generally attract incomers currently living within the M25 who rarely add anything to local community and deny locals much needed housing – Unwanted.

The only positive outcome for the local residents would be to accept the realistic proposal of the Rawreth Parish Council for development of dwellings on the suggested brown field site at Rawreth Village and to abandon the unrealistic development north of London Road, which is an unsuitable location and has a high potential to flood.

This site is on the some of the best green belt and agricultural land that we have and should remain as such!

This would be a true legacy!!