

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



30th June 2011

Dear Sir / Madam,

Re: Proposed Housing Development in South Hawkwell (David Wilson Homes-176 houses in the Christmas Tree Farm / Thorpe Road area)- planning application no. 11/00259/FUL.

In light of the ongoing public consultation relating to the above, I feel that I must object strongly to this proposed development.

I have read the document relating to the Sustainability Approval / Strategic Environmental Assessment of this proposal, and in my opinion the reasons given for building 176 homes on this site contain flawed arguments, especially when compared to the arguments given for rejection of developments in other areas, not just within the Hockley / Hawkwell area but the whole of Rochford.

Much is spoken of a 'need' for this amount of housing within the South Hawkwell Area, but I have yet to see the evidence this is based on. Hawkwell cannot be considered a prime location for the development of this magnitude because the basic infrastructure does not exist to support it, and the reasons given for rejection of developments in other areas of Rochford do not seem to apply here.

West Hockley, a much more suitable site for development has had its proposed allocation of housing reduced from 150 to 50, yet is close to schools, shops, and other community benefits, but above all is close to the mainline rail station at Hockley offering the potential to reduce car use, and therefore air pollution, although the report states that air pollution due to increased traffic on the B1013 will increase, affecting biodiversity.

With this in mind, I cannot understand why this proposal is even being considered, given that the site lies only a few metres from the B1013 in question. At peak times, present traffic queues are unacceptably long waiting at the roundabout lining Rectory Road, and they can only increase significantly contributing to increased air pollution with a highly detrimental effect on biodiversity. The proposed widening of the approach to the roundabout, and the feeding of this proposed development onto Rectory Road via Thorpe Road and Clement's Hall Way will do nothing to ease the burden, as the vast majority of traffic will always travel and converge at this area to gain access to the B1013 and ultimately Cherry Orchard Way.

The fundamental problem lies in the fact that Hawkwell is situated too far from local services (as described above) and so most people, (despite the proposed provision and subsequent proximity of a cycle route, and the alleged improvements to the bus timetable) will continue to use their cars, thus contributing to increased pollution and congestion at more frequent times during the day.

More importantly, however, will be the effects on the local biodiversity (in addition to those caused by increased air pollution) of the reduction of woodlands and hedgerows, thus destroying the natural habitat of many wild animals-and no amount of re-planting and landscaping on completion of this development will alleviate that. It also occurs to me that no mention has been made of Hawkwell's low-lying position, and potential for flooding, and if more naturally-draining agricultural land is

'concreted over', so to speak, even the construction of land drains may be insufficient to cope in adverse weather.

To sum up, Hawkwell is a village, not a town, and I do not understand why the report suggests that it is need of 'regeneration', or why there is a 'need' for extra housing on this scale. To quote the report in its reference to Location 12- Rawreth Village, which bears many similarities to Hawkwell, it states in the 'Balanced Communities' section that 'Development of the scale envisaged for the west of Rayleigh would have an adverse effect through overwhelming the existing small village community.', and the 'Accessibility' section it states that 'This location performs poorly on accessibility due to the small size of the settlement and a lack of access to shops and services. Development at this location would be heavily car dependent'. In the light of this, I feel that there are many parallels to be drawn.

I would urge the Inspector of this report to listen to my, and many hundreds of other objections relating to this issue, and to give them careful consideration. A development of this magnitude would surely lead (via increased traffic, pollution, loss of natural environments) to the gradual absorption of Hawkwell into Hockley, thus losing its village identity and putting intolerable pressure on the already overstressed infrastructure.

I consider that the best course of action would be to take the wider view, and locate this housing (if it is really needed) in areas of Rochford (not just the Hockley / Hawkwell area) better suited, i.e. those areas served by existing shops, services and transport links, where smaller, more spread out developments would have a minimal impact.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts,

Yours sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.