

1. Introduction

The Rochford District Core Strategy was submitted to the Government for independent examination in January 2010, and following thorough scrutiny was found sound by the Inspector conducting the examination in October / November 2011. Rochford District Council subsequently adopted the Rochford District Core Strategy on 13 December 2011.

As an integral part of the preparation of the Rochford District Core Strategy, and in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Section 19 (5), the Plan has been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA). The SA process assesses the likely significant economic, social and environmental effects of the Plan.

The SA of the Rochford District Core Strategy fully incorporates the requirements of the European Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004), and has played an important role in the development of the Rochford District Core Strategy. The SA has been prepared and updated at each stage in the preparation of the Plan. A timeline in the development of the Rochford District Core Strategy and accompanying SA undertaken is set out below (Table 1).

Table 1: Stages of Plan Production and accompanying SA/SEA work undertaken

Stage of Plan Production	Date	SA/SEA Work Undertaken
Identifying key sustainability issues	November 2005	SA Scoping Process (November 2005)
Rochford District Core Strategy Issues and Options	September 2006	Strategic Environmental Assessment And Sustainability Appraisal Environmental Report (September 2006)
Rochford District Core Strategy Preferred Options	May 2007	Strategic Environmental Assessment And Sustainability Appraisal Environmental Report (June 2007)
Rochford District Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options	October 2008	Sustainability Appraisal/ Strategic Environmental Assessment Sustainability Appraisal Technical Report (including update to SA Framework) (October 2008)
Rochford District Core Strategy Submission Document	September 2009	Sustainability Appraisal/ Strategic Environmental Assessment Sustainability Appraisal Technical Report (September 2009)
		Core Strategy Sustainability

Table 1: Stages of Plan Production and accompanying SA/SEA work undertaken

Stage of Plan Production	Date	SA/SEA Work Undertaken
		Appraisal Addendum 2011 (July 2011)
Rochford District Core Strategy Schedule of Minor Amendments	September 2011	SA / SEA implications reviewed
Inspector's Recommendations	October / November 2011	SA / SEA implications reviewed

At the national level, the guidance provided within Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning (PPS12) recognises that the SA process is an important component in providing a sound evidence base for the Plan. The SA process provides an assessment of the reasonable alternative options to the preferred strategy within the Plan, a procedure which was clarified in the Forest Heath Case¹.

The SA work undertaken in support of the Rochford District Core Strategy can be viewed on the Council's website².

The Council is required, as part of the procedures of adoption for the Rochford District Core Strategy in Regulation 36 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, to prepare a statement explaining:

- how sustainability considerations have been integrated into the development plan document;
- how the options and consultation responses received on the development plan document and sustainability appraisal reports have been taken into account;
- the reasons for choosing the development plan document in light of other reasonable alternatives; and
- monitoring measures.

Each of the above matters will be considered in turn within this SA Statement.

2. How sustainability considerations have been integrated into the development plan document

The SA, incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), has played an integral part in the preparation of the Rochford District Core Strategy.

Each stage of the preparation of the Rochford District Core Strategy has been appraised against the SA Objectives, which have been refined and updated

¹ *Save Historic Newmarket v. Forest Heath District Council*

² www.rochford.gov.uk

throughout the development of the Plan and the accompanying SA. Where significant adverse effects, including environmental effects, have been predicted, the SA has sought where possible to identify means of offsetting these effects. Where it was considered that there were opportunities to enhance the sustainability of the proposals, recommendations were made as appropriate.

SA Scoping

During late 2005 a scoping process for Rochford was carried out by Essex County Council to help ensure that the SA covered key sustainability issues relevant to Rochford. Plans and programmes were reviewed and information was collated relating to the current and predicted social, environmental and economic characteristics of the areas. From these studies, key sustainability problems and issues were identified. An SA Framework was compiled, which comprised of a list of SA Objectives that aim to resolve the issues and problems identified. These SA Objectives were refined throughout the process and were used to test the draft DPDs as they were being prepared.

Issues and Options & SA/SEA Alternatives

The Core Strategy Issues and Options were developed initially during early 2006 and set out a range of options (or alternatives) for the following themes:

- The Green Belt and Strategic Gaps between Settlements
- Protection and Enhancement of the Upper Roach Valley
- Protection and Enhancement of Special Landscapes, Habitats and Species
- Housing Numbers and Phasing
- General Development Locations
- Affordable Housing
- Employment
- Good Design and Design Statements
- Character of Place and the Historic Environment
- Landscaping
- Energy and Water Conservation
- Renewable Energy
- Compulsory Purchase and Planning Obligations
- Community, Leisure and Tourism Facilities

This document was subject to SA in March 2006 by Essex County Council's environmental assessment team. This is reported in the Draft Core Strategy DPD SA/SEA Environmental Report, issued in September 2006. The range of options (63 in total) set out in the Issues and Options Document were assessed against the SA/SEA Objectives, set out in the report³.

³ Draft Core Strategy DPD SA/SEA Environmental Report available from http://www.rochford.gov.uk/PDF/planning_strategic_environmental_assessment_and_sustainability_appraisal_environmental_report.pdf (page 24)

The Environmental Report for the Issues and Options sets out the scoping report, baseline information and context for the appraisal of the options identified to address the issues in the Plan. The technical annexes appended to the main report systematically assess each of the options against the SA/SEA Objectives. The findings of this assessment have been summarised and included within the Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Addendum 2011⁴ (Table 2).

Table 2: Summary of Approach to Alternatives Assessment and Selection

Options Considered and Appraised; Published Reports and Public Consultation	Reasoning for Progressing or Rejecting the Option in Plan Making
September 2006 Issues and Options SA Report:	
<p>Strategic Option 1: The Green Belt & Strategic Gaps between Settlements</p> <p>Four alternatives considered: A- Relaxation of greenbelt policy. B - No strategic gaps, allowing coalescence in areas where the greenbelt performs only a token purpose. C - Continue its restrictive suite of policies for development within the greenbelt, in line with national guidance. D - Strategic gaps will be defined and protected by policy.</p>	<p>Options A and B were not taken forward due to the negative impacts they would have on the openness of the greenbelt and on the District as a whole. A combination of the other options was taken forward to reflect better sustainable development, and to promote a more sustainable strategic approach whilst minimising negative impacts on the District.</p>
<p>Strategic Option 2: Protection and Enhancement of the Upper Roach Valley</p> <p>Five alternatives considered: A - No country park allocation. B - No local landscape designations. C - No need for a further designation. D - A policy providing for protection/ enhancement and increased recreation opportunities. E - Identify land to be included in the Cherry Orchard Jubilee County Park and any further proposed extensions.</p>	<p>Option A was rejected as it has the most detrimental impact and greatest proportion of negative impacts. In contrast options D and E have the greatest proportion of major positive and positive impacts.</p>
<p>Strategic Option 3: Protection and Enhancement of Special Landscape Areas</p> <p>Seven alternatives considered: A - No local landscape designations. B - No coastal protection belt.</p>	<p>Options A, B and C resulted in significant negative impacts and so were discounted. Option D shows a high uncertain result in the short medium and long term.</p> <p>Options E, F and G showed some</p>

⁴ Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Addendum 2011 available from http://www.rochford.gov.uk/PDF/pla_policy_corestrat_sa_appraisal2011.pdf

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Options Considered and Appraised; Published Reports and Public Consultation	Reasoning for Progressing or Rejecting the Option in Plan Making
September 2006 Issues and Options SA Report:	
<p>C - No protection for the landscape. D - Freedom for agriculture, horticulture, equine uses, leisure and tourism uses whilst restricting employment and housing uses. E - Protection for the undeveloped coast. F - Protection for the three Special Landscape Areas. G - Protection of the Area of Historic Landscape and Ancient Woodlands.</p>	<p>major positive impacts and as such, a combination of Options E, F and G was taken forward.</p>
<p>Strategic Option 4: Housing numbers</p> <p>Four alternatives considered: A - Not attempting to meet the cascaded figure due to the restrictive development position with regard to the green belt. B - Relying on windfall development and urban intensification, to prevent the need for any green belt releases. C - Not allocating land to accommodate all the dwelling units and relying on a percentage of windfall development and urban intensification. D - Ensuring enough land is allocated to accommodate all of the cascaded figure for homes from the East of England Plan (RSS14) for the period 2001 to 2021.</p>	<p>Options A, B and C demonstrate a declining positive effect over time, with negative implications in the future. Option D has a positive to uncertain effect in all temporal extents.</p> <p>As such, and having regard to the requirements for Development Plan Documents, Option D was taken forward.</p>
<p>Strategic Option 5: General Development Locations</p> <p>Five alternatives considered: A - Greater dispersal to minor settlements, enabling possible regeneration of local facilities. B - Split the housing allocation evenly between the parishes (excluding Foulness), so that each area gets a small amount of housing. C - Develop a new settlement, well related to transport links and providing its own basic infrastructure. D - Focus solely on an expansion of one settlement, creating a significant urban expansion. E - Allocate the total number of housing</p>	<p>The September 2006 Issues and Options SA Report noted Options A and B have major negative effects in the short, medium and long term. It was also demonstrated that option C would result in increasingly negative impacts throughout time. Option D has a diverse range of impacts with both negative and positive effects whilst Option E has the greatest concentration of positive effects.</p> <p>As such, Option E was carried forward and subsequently developed having regard to the evidence base and the results of community involvement.</p>

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Options Considered and Appraised; Published Reports and Public Consultation	Reasoning for Progressing or Rejecting the Option in Plan Making
September 2006 Issues and Options SA Report:	
units to the top and second tier settlements, to gain a smaller number of large sites which will deliver the greatest amount of infrastructure improvements.	
<p>Strategic Option 6: Affordable Housing</p> <p>Three alternatives considered: A - 30% of all new homes in the District be affordable on all sites. B - 50% of all new homes on sites in excess of 10 units will be affordable. C - Affordable housing will be set at 40% on sites specified in the Allocations DPD.</p>	<p>Option A has no impact on a number of the sustainability criteria; however there are positive impacts on criteria related to housing. Option B also has a high degree of no impact and uncertainty; however there is a greater concentration of positive impacts. Option C has a greater number of major positive impacts.</p> <p>The preferred option on affordable housing was taken forward having regard to the above, as well as issues of viability and the findings of additional evidence base documents.</p>
<p>Strategic Option 7: Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers</p> <p>Two alternatives considered: A - No Gypsy or Traveller Site to be identified in the green belt. B - Accommodation needs for Gypsy and Travellers will be met by identifying in an existing residential area for a site and formally specifying it in the Allocations DPD.</p>	<p>Option A generally indicates no significant effects for the short-longer term with some minor negative impacts. The adoption of Option B would result in a greater amount of positive effects over the same time period.</p> <p>The preferred approach was developed having regard to the above, and other issues such as deliverability and land supply.</p>
<p>Strategic Option 8: Rural Exceptions</p> <p>Two alternatives considered: A - No rural exceptions policy. B - For windfall sites, 30% of all units will be required to be affordable. On rural exception sites all the units will be required to remain affordable in perpetuity.</p>	<p>Option A generally demonstrated strong neutral impacts, with some negative impact also. Option B in comparison had no negative impacts, but a greater degree of uncertainty.</p> <p>Having regard to the above, Option B was taken forward into the next iteration of the Core Strategy as a preferred option.</p>
<p>Strategic Option 9: Employment</p> <p>Four alternatives considered: A - No jobs figure to be included.</p>	<p>Options C and D displayed greater positive impacts and significantly lower no impact or negative effects than options A and B.</p>

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Options Considered and Appraised; Published Reports and Public Consultation	Reasoning for Progressing or Rejecting the Option in Plan Making
September 2006 Issues and Options SA Report:	
<p>B - Provide no details of the general locations C - Allocate a total number of jobs to be created in the District. It will specify areas within the District and their share of the overall total. D - Programme employment development in advance of new housing.</p>	<p>Having regard to the above a combination of Options C and D was taken forward into the next iteration of the Core Strategy as a preferred option.</p>
<p>Strategic Option 10: Good Design and Design Statements</p> <p>Seven alternatives considered: A - No emphasis on design. B - No emphasis on lifetime housing. C - No emphasis on sustainable design. D - Prescriptive design guidance within policy to ensure uniform design and high standards. E - Push design statements to the fore of the planning application process. F - Require 25% of units provided on all housing sites over 10 units to meet a lifetime housing standard. G - Require, at least compliance with Code for Sustainable Homes the minimum standards.</p>	<p>Options A and B show mostly no impact with some negative impacts, whilst Option C indicates mostly no impact results alongside some positive effects.</p> <p>Options D and E exhibit a combination of mostly no impact effects, with major positive and negative impacts. Option F shows a very high no impact result with less major positive results than other options. Option G demonstrates a slightly lower no impact effect, as well as major positive and positive results.</p> <p>Consequently a combination of the above was taken forward to the next stage.</p>
<p>Strategic Option 11: Character of Place</p> <p>Three alternatives considered: A - No emphasis on character of place. B - Prescriptive design guidance within policy to ensure uniform design and high standards. C - Protection of the District's identity and ensuring that new development respects the local character.</p>	<p>Options A and B display a high level of no impact and negative results, with option B showing positive impacts too. Option C has the greatest concentration of major positive and positive effects - and consequently Option C was taken forward.</p>
<p>Strategic Option 12: Landscaping</p> <p>Three alternatives considered: A - No emphasis on landscaping. B - Continue determining landscaping details post-application and through enforcement work. C - Push landscaping to the fore of the</p>	<p>Options A and B show strong no impact results, with some negative and uncertain results. Option C also shows a high concentration of no impacts, but also major positives.</p> <p>As such, Option C was taken forward as the preferred option in the next</p>

Table 2: Summary of Approach to Alternatives Assessment and Selection

Options Considered and Appraised; Published Reports and Public Consultation	Reasoning for Progressing or Rejecting the Option in Plan Making
September 2006 Issues and Options SA Report:	
planning application process and making them a prerequisite for determination for certain application types.	iteration of the Core Strategy.
<p>Strategic Option 13: Energy and Water Conservation</p> <p>Four alternatives considered: A - No emphasis on sustainable design. B - Deliver carbon-neutral development. C - Ensure new development promotes energy and water efficient buildings-also reduces the need to travel. D - Require compliance with the minimum standards, as set out in the Code for Sustainable Homes.</p>	<p>Options A, B and C all display strong no impact results, with some uncertain effects. Option D shows a higher quantity of no impact result, however, also shows major positive impacts.</p> <p>Option D was taken forward in order to achieve the most positive impacts.</p>
<p>Strategic Option 14: Renewable Energy</p> <p>Three alternatives considered: A - Push for any renewable energy uses in any location. B - Set a threshold for development size or number before requiring renewable energy to be included. C - Require all new housing and employment development to include renewable energy provision.</p>	<p>Option A has major negative and negative effects as well as no impact results. Option B shows a high no impact effect result, with no negative impacts. Option C indicates the same outcome as Option B but with additional benefits for provision of renewable energy.</p> <p>As such, Option C was taken forward as the preferred option in the next iteration of the Core Strategy.</p>
<p>Strategic Option 15: Compulsory Purchase</p> <p>Three alternatives considered: A – No compulsory purchase policy and attempt to use the legislation if required. B - Designate specific potential compulsory purchase sites. C - Set the framework to ensure that employment, residential, recreational and environmental enhancements for the district can be brought forward using compulsory purchase powers.</p>	<p>Option A has a high no impact and uncertain effect similar to Option B which also shows strong positive and major positive effects.</p> <p>Option C shows no uncertain impacts and shows high major positive and positive effects.</p> <p>As such, Option C was taken forward as the preferred option in the next iteration of the Core Strategy.</p>
<p>Strategic Option 16: Community, Leisure and Tourism Facilities</p> <p>A - Protect the green belt without providing any further guidance, leaving it</p>	<p>Option A shows a consistent positive effect, uncertain effect and no impact, with no negative implications. Options B and C show a higher degree of uncertainty and a higher negative</p>

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September 2006 Issues and Options SA Report:	
<p>up to central government in its review of Planning Policy Guidance Note 2.</p> <p>B - Reduce protection of the green belt to allow for community, tourism and leisure facilities.</p> <p>C - No policy on this issue, as it is currently not a major factor in the District.</p> <p>D - Provide a policy dealing with community, leisure and tourism proposals, which will provide clarity for developments, particularly within the Green Belt.</p>	<p>element whereas Option D has completely uncertain implications.</p> <p>As such, Option A with elements of Option D were taken forward to the next iteration of the Core Strategy, in order to provide the greatest positive impact whilst accounting for local circumstances within a central government policy.</p>

The development of the Issues and Options Document, and the subsequent SA/SEA work undertaken considering the alternative options, informed the development of the Preferred Options Document.

Preferred Options

The Preferred Options Document was prepared in 2007, and addressed the same themes as the Issues and Options Document. It was subject to detailed SA by Essex County Council's environmental assessment team which was reported in the Core Strategy Preferred Options SA/SEA Environmental Report in June 2007. The options set out in the Preferred Options Document were thoroughly assessed against the SA/SEA Objectives, set out in the report⁵ identifying the impact of the Preferred Options on the sustainability objectives and potential cumulative and significant effects.

The SA of the Preferred Options Document identified a number of cumulative and significant effects to be considered as a result of the preferred strategy. Furthermore, the SA made recommendations for further consideration, which are set out in Table 3. This table also details how they have been considered in the development of the next iteration of the Plan.

Table 3: Recommendations for further consideration and how these have been considered in the development of the Plan

Recommended issues for further consideration	How have these been considered?
Further consideration should be given to the alignment between the spatial strategy for the District and the	The Revised Preferred Options Document significantly altered the spatial strategy. This document

⁵ Core Strategy Preferred Options SA/SEA Environmental Report
http://www.rochford.gov.uk/pdf/planning_strategic_environmental_assessment_and_sustainability_appraisal_environmental_report_2007.pdf (page 9-11)

Table 3: Recommendations for further consideration and how these have been considered in the development of the Plan

Recommended issues for further consideration	How have these been considered?
associated topic-based policies.	<p>identified in the Characteristics, Issues and Opportunities chapter that “Different parts of the District have a stronger relationship with nearby towns” (page 18).</p> <p>From this the balanced strategy to the distribution of housing was developed, which primarily focuses development within the highest tier settlements with some housing directed towards the lower tiers (with the exception of tier 4) to ensure the retention of local services and facilities. This strategy also links housing with areas which have a close relationship with the District’s settlements such as Southend, Chelmsford and Basildon.</p>
Further consideration should be given to the alignment between the settlement strategy and the economic and transport strategy for the District.	<p>This was reconsidered within the next iteration of the Core Strategy. Options were subsequently appraised in the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment Sustainability Appraisal Technical Report (October 2008).</p>
Further consideration should be given to further appraisal of the range of development locations in the light of the scale and distribution of development commitments and potential further urban capacity.	<p>More specific, yet still strategic, general locations were considered in the next iteration of the Core Strategy. The Urban Capacity Study was updated, and a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment was produced with the results accounted for in later iterations.</p>
Further consideration should be given to undertaking an Employment Land Review and appraisal of employment locations.	<p>An Employment Land Study was undertaken in 2008. Following this appraisal and the recommendations suggested for the spatial strategy for future employment, the next iteration (the Revised Preferred Options Document) included more robust and spatial options for employment development based on these findings. These options were subsequently appraised in the Sustainability</p>

Table 3: Recommendations for further consideration and how these have been considered in the development of the Plan

Recommended issues for further consideration	How have these been considered?
	Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment Sustainability Appraisal Technical Report (October 2008).
Further consideration should be given to seeking a screening and scoping opinion on the need for appropriate assessment of possible effects on nearby European sites under the Habitats Directive.	<p>The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report is the culmination of work that had been ongoing since February 2009 that included HRA workshops (Council officers supported by specialist consultants Enfusion Ltd, 12 February and 8 July 2009), as well as discussions with Natural England with regard to the scope, approach, findings and recommendations of the HRA. The final report was completed in January 2010.</p> <p>As set out in the Statement of Common Ground between the Council and Natural England published in April 2010⁶, it was agreed between the two parties “that the Core Strategy can be made sound and legally compliant through suggested changes, without the need to revisit a previous stage in the Core Strategy process.” (paragraph 1.25).[</p>
Further consideration should be given to discussion with transport and service authorities and operators to define infrastructure and services required to support the spatial strategy.	Discussions and consultation with transport and service authorities and operators have been ongoing throughout the development of the Rochford District Core Strategy. Strategic issues were addressed in subsequent iterations.
Further consideration should be given to the alignment between the spatial strategy and the requirements for its implementation in a sustainable manner.	In order to support the spatial vision, and development in the identified general locations, further details in respect of how development was to be implemented were set out in subsequent iterations of the Plan
The next iteration of the Plan should be accompanied by a Draft Monitoring Framework that includes	A draft Implementation, Delivery and Monitoring chapter for the preferred options was included within the next

⁶ Statement of Common Ground between Rochford District Council and Natural England available from http://www.rochford.gov.uk/pdf/corestrat_rep_ne_rdc.pdf

Table 3: Recommendations for further consideration and how these have been considered in the development of the Plan

Recommended issues for further consideration	How have these been considered?
proposed indicators, particularly for the potential significant effects.	iteration of the Plan.
The next iteration of the Plan should be accompanied by a Draft Implementation Framework that includes a list of necessary infrastructure and service provision and mitigation measures to facilitate implementation of the strategy, together with their delivery timescales.	A draft Implementation, Delivery and Monitoring chapter for the preferred options was included within the next iteration of the Plan. A list of infrastructure requirements, developed in consultation with service providers, was defined in the next iteration of the Plan (Appendix H1). Such infrastructure requirements are also accompanied by indicative costs (Appendix CLT1).

Following the findings of the SA on the 2007 Preferred Options Document, and taking into account other evidence base considerations, such as consultation responses, the Council significantly revised the Plan during 2008.

Revised Preferred Options

The Revised Preferred Options for the Core Strategy were developed during spring / summer 2008 and the document was subject to detailed SA by specialist consultants, Enfusion, in October 2008. A revised SA Framework was also prepared and was sent out to statutory consultees for comment in September 2008. The finalised SA Framework which included 13 SA objectives is set out in Table 4. The vision and objectives were appraised and performed well against the majority of the 13 SA objectives⁷. Each Preferred Option was assessed against the full SA Framework objectives. This is detailed within Appendix VI of the Revised Preferred Options SA.

Table 4: The Revised Preferred Options SA Framework

SA Objective	Decision-Aiding Question Will it (the Policy)...?
1. Balanced Communities (SEA topic: Population & Human Health, Material Assets)	
To ensure the delivery of high quality Sustainable communities where people want to live and work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Will it ensure the phasing of infrastructure, including community facilities to meet ongoing and future needs? _ Will it ensure the regeneration and enhancement of existing communities? _ Will it ensure equal opportunities and that all sections of the community are catered for?

⁷ Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment Sustainability Appraisal Technical Report (October 2008) available from http://www.rochford.gov.uk/PDF/planning_technical_report.pdf (page 13-16)

Table 4: The Revised Preferred Options SA Framework

SA Objective	Decision-Aiding Question Will it (the Policy)...?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Will it meet the needs of an ageing population? _ Will the policies and options proposed seek to enhance the qualifications and skills of the local community? _ Will income and quality-of-life disparities be reduced?
2. Healthy & Safe Communities (SEA topic: Population & Human Health)	
Create healthy and safe environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Will it ensure the delivery of high quality, safe and inclusive design? _ Will it improve health and reduce health inequalities? _ Will it promote informal recreation and encourage healthy, active lifestyles? _ Will green infrastructure and networks be promoted and/or enhanced? _ Will it minimise noise pollution? _ Will it minimise light pollution?
3. Housing (SEA topic: Population & Human Health)	
To provide everybody with the opportunity to live in a decent home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Will it increase the range and affordability of housing for all social groups? _ Will a mix of housing types and tenures be promoted? _ Will it reduce the number of unfit homes? _ Does it promote high quality design? _ Is there sustainable access to key services? _ Does it meet the resident's needs in terms of sheltered and lifetime homes or those that can be easily adapted so?
4. Economy & Employment (SEA topic: Population & Human Health, Material Assets)	
To achieve sustainable levels of economic growth/prosperity and promote town centre vitality/viability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Does it promote and enhance existing centres by focusing development in such centres? _ Will it improve business development? _ Does it enhance consumer choice through the provision of a range of shopping, leisure, and local services to meet the needs of the entire community? _ Does it promote mixed use and high density development in urban centres? _ Does it promote a wide variety of jobs across all sectors? _ Does it secure more opportunities for residents to work in the district?
5. Accessibility (SEA topic: Population & Human Health, Air, Climatic Factors)	
To promote more sustainable transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Will it increase the availability of sustainable transport modes?

Table 4: The Revised Preferred Options SA Framework

SA Objective	Decision-Aiding Question Will it (the Policy)...?
choices both for people and moving freight ensuring access to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Will it seek to encourage people to use alternative modes of transportation other than the private car, including walking and cycling? _ Will it contribute positively to reducing social exclusion by ensuring access to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services? _ Will it reduce the need to travel? _ Does it seek to encourage development where large volumes of people and/or transport movements are located in sustainable accessible locations? _ Does it enable access for all sections of the community, including the young, women, those with disabilities and the elderly? _ Does it secure more opportunities for residents to work in the District, and for out-commuting to be reduced?
6. Biodiversity (SEA topic: Fauna & Flora)	
To conserve and enhance the biological and geological diversity of the environment as an integral part of social, environmental and economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Will it conserve and enhance natural/semi natural habitats, including the District's distinctive estuaries and salt marshes? _ Will it conserve and enhance species diversity, and in particular avoid harm to protected species and priority species? _ Will it maintain and enhance sites designated for their nature conservation interest? _ Will it conserve and enhance sites of geological significance? _ Does land use allocation reflect the scope of using brownfield land for significant wildlife interest where viable and realistic.
7. Cultural Heritage (SEA topic: Cultural Heritage, Landscape)	
To maintain and enhance the cultural heritage and assets of the District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Will it protect and enhance sites, features and areas of historical, archaeological and cultural value in both urban and rural areas? _ Will it support locally-based cultural resources and activities?
8. Landscape & Townscape (SEA topic: Landscape ,Cultural Heritage)	
To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes and townscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Does it seek to enhance the range and quality of the public realm and open spaces? _ Will it contribute to the delivery of the enhancement, effective management and appropriate use of land in the urban fringe? _ Will it reduce the amount of derelict, degraded and underused land? _ Will it conserve and/or improve the landscape character?

Table 4: The Revised Preferred Options SA Framework

SA Objective	Decision-Aiding Question Will it (the Policy)...?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Will it preserve and/or enhance townscape character and value? _ Will the local character/vernacular be preserved and enhanced through development
9. Climate Change & Energy (SEA topic: Climatic Factors)	
To reduce contributions to climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Will it reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by reducing energy consumption? _ Will it lead to an increased proportion of energy needs being met from renewable sources? _ Does it adapt to and provide for the consequences of climate change in a largely low-lying area and allow species room to migrate?
10. Water (SEA topic: Water, Fauna & Flora)	
To improve water quality and reduce the risk of flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Will it improve the quality of inland water? _ Will it improve the quality of coastal waters? _ Will it provide for an efficient water conservation and supply regime? _ Will it provide for effective wastewater treatment? _ Will it require the provision of sustainable drainage systems in new development? _ Will it reduce the risk of flooding and promote sustainable flood management, including, where possible, the enhancement of habitats and landscape?
11. Land & Soil (SEA topic: Soils)	
To maintain and improve the quality of the District's land and soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Does it ensure the re-use of previously-developed land and urban areas in preference to Greenfield sites? _ Will higher-density development be promoted where appropriate? _ Will soil quality be preserved? _ Will it promote the remediation of contaminated land? _ Will the best and most versatile agricultural land be protected?
12. Air Quality (SEA topic: Air, Climatic Factors)	
To improve air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Will air quality be improved through reduced emissions (eg. through reducing car travel)? _ Will it direct transport movements away from AQMAs and/or potentially significant junctions?
13 Sustainable Design & Construction (SEA topic: Human Health, Material Assets, Climatic Factors, Fauna & Flora, Water, Air)	
To promote sustainable design and construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Will it ensure the use of sustainable design principles, e.g. encouraging a mix of uses? _ Will it integrate new opportunities for biodiversity and habitat creation, where possible?

Table 4: The Revised Preferred Options SA Framework

SA Objective	Decision-Aiding Question Will it (the Policy)...?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Will climate proofing design measures be incorporated? _ Will it require the re-use and recycling of construction materials? _ Will it encourage a reduction in waste and sustainable waste management? _ Will it encourage locally-sourced materials? _ Will it require best-practice sustainable construction methods, for example in energy and water efficiency?

Where there were any potential adverse effects predicted for sustainability, or opportunities identified to improve the sustainability of the Core Strategy, recommendations were made. The Core Strategy Preferred Options SA Report identified a number of recommendations for enhancement and mitigation, and identified a number of areas that could be given further attention in the development of the Submission Document, to ensure that an overall consistent and holistic approach to sustainability is adopted⁸. The Core Strategy Submission SA Report⁹ details how the recommendations suggested at the Revised Preferred Options stage through SA work have been incorporated into the next iteration of the Plan (Table 5 and 6).

The table below sets out the recommendations for mitigation and enhancement for further consideration identified at the Revised Preferred Options stage and how these have been integrated into the development of the Submission Document.

Table 5: Recommendations for mitigation and enhancement and how these have been incorporated into the Submission Document

Recommendations for Mitigation & Enhancement	How the Plan has incorporated the recommendations
Further consideration could be given to the relationship between housing and employment development in the plan and how a mix of uses can be encouraged in new development.	Submission Policies RTC4, RTC5 and RTC6 for town centres seek to engender mixed-use developments and provide additional employment uses within close proximity to residential areas.
Some concern was raised as to the impact on existing communities of new development proposed at Great	The Council has advised that there will be considerable community involvement in the preparation of the

⁸ Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment Sustainability Appraisal Technical Report (October 2008) available from http://www.rochford.gov.uk/PDF/planning_technical_report.pdf (page 51-53; a detailed table of recommendations for enhancement and mitigation is provided in Appendix VII)

⁹ Core Strategy Submission SA Report available from http://www.rochford.gov.uk/PDF/planning_cs_sustainability_appraisal_core_strategy_submission_document.pdf (section 7; Tables 7.1 and 7.2; Appendix VIII)

Table 5: Recommendations for mitigation and enhancement and how these have been incorporated into the Submission Document

Recommendations for Mitigation & Enhancement	How the Plan has incorporated the recommendations
Wakering and Hullbridge - extensive consultation should be undertaken to ensure community concerns are addressed.	Allocations Development Plan Document. The Core Strategy also encourages input into the design process at a very local level by, for example, encouraging the development of village design statements and requiring developers to have regard to these in formulating their proposals.
Further encouragement could be given to establishing green industries, and the greening of existing industries, in order to minimise the effects of increased economic growth.	<p>The Core Strategy seeks to facilitate the delivery of the Economic Development Strategy, which seeks to promote industries involved in the development of environmental technologies.</p> <p>The Core Strategy also recognises that projects that will engender environmental benefits will also have employment benefits, and supports the development of Wallasea Island Wild Coast project and the Cherry Orchard Jubilee County Park.</p> <p>Core Strategy Policy GB2 promotes green tourism as a form of rural diversification and policy ENV10 requires new non-residential buildings, as a minimum, to meet the BREEAM rating of 'Very Good'.</p>
The proposed eco-enterprise centre should be located in a highly accessible location. A town centre location would maximise synergies in terms of making connections with existing businesses and services, in addition to having environmental benefits.	The eco-enterprise centre is proposed for location within the Joint Area Action Plan area. Whilst this is not a town centre location, it is an area where an eco-enterprise centre is most likely to be successful due to the focus of economic activity and agglomeration of businesses proposed there. In addition, the Joint Area Action Plan area is the focus of public transport improvements, including South Essex Rapid Transit, meaning that it will be one of the employment areas best served by public transport in the District.
Council may wish to set further	Core Strategy Policy ENV10 requires

Table 5: Recommendations for mitigation and enhancement and how these have been incorporated into the Submission Document

Recommendations for Mitigation & Enhancement	How the Plan has incorporated the recommendations
specific targets/requirements for non-residential buildings for water efficiency.	new non-residential buildings, as a minimum, to meet the BREEAM rating of 'Very Good'. BREEAM standards include targets relating to water efficiency and BREEAM credits are awarded where the following measures are in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Water efficient appliances _ Water metering _ Leak detection systems _ Water butts
Sustainable Drainage Systems can have a range of wider benefits, including providing spaces for recreation and contributing to biodiversity. This could be further recognised in the submission policy wording.	The Core Strategy Submission Document promotes sustainable drainage systems and detail regarding their implementation is being examined in the Allocations Development Plan Document and, where applicable, Area Action Plans.
A more supportive approach to the development of renewable energy is recommended for the submission document, which encourages the development of renewables whilst considering environmental and aesthetic constraints. The provision of a secure, clean future supply of energy for the District could be served by a stronger co-ordinated policy approach to energy.	The Core Strategy is now more supportive of the development of renewable energy, through the addition of Submission Policy ENV8 ENV8 - On-site Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation.
There are opportunities for synergistic positive effects with biodiversity and cultural heritage, incorporating walking/cycling routes and local heritage into the wider green infrastructure strategy and Greenways.	The Council identified that this is one of the aims of the Greenways set out in the Thames Gateway Green Grid Strategy and supported by Policy T7 of the Core Strategy.
There are particular linkages and synergies between the provision of green infrastructure, leisure facilities, open space, walking and cycling facilities with meeting SA objectives on biodiversity, health and culture. The submission document could further explore opportunities for healthy lifestyles (for examples links with green grid, active facilities,	The Council does not consider it appropriate for the Core Strategy to be overly prescriptive with regard to the nature of such facilities; however, the specifics of youth facilities will be determined at a local level having regard to specific needs of young people.

Table 5: Recommendations for mitigation and enhancement and how these have been incorporated into the Submission Document

Recommendations for Mitigation & Enhancement	How the Plan has incorporated the recommendations
outdoor gyms), biodiversity enhancement and incorporating cultural heritage into the green grid concept.	
The plan could encourage appropriate design and landscape selection to minimise water consumption and maximise natural filtration, for example, when designing open space and play spaces.	The Council advised that the development of new play spaces will be required to comply with other policies within the Core Strategy (as well as national policy), including those that relate to sustainable construction.

In addition to the key recommendations above, the SA of the Revised Preferred Options also identified a number of areas that could be given further attention in the submission document. The table below sets out how these have been incorporated into the Submission Document.

Table 6: Recommended issues for further consideration and how these have been considered in the development of the Submission Document

Recommended issues for further consideration	How have these been considered?
Further consideration could be given in the plan to the effects of climate change and possible outcomes for the District (e.g. habitat fragmentation, coastal squeeze, accelerated sea-level rise).	The Council has advised that Core Strategy Policy ENV1 supports the implementation of the Crouch and Roach Management Plan, which seeks to address such issues. In addition, policy ENV3 states that the Council will continue to work with the Environment Agency to manage flood risk in a sustainable manner through capitalising on opportunities to make space for water wherever possible and through the continued provision of flood defences where necessary. This will include working with the Environment Agency on the Shoreline Management Plan for Essex, which will address issues such as habitat fragmentation, coastal squeeze and potential accelerated sea-level rise.
The plan could have a stronger focus on heritage and culture- for example through committing to the Rochford/ Southend 'cultural hub' described in the East of England Plan. There could also be stronger recognition of the	Core Strategy Policy ENV1 has been amended to include, "the Council will also protect landscapes of historical and archaeological interest".

Table 6: Recommended issues for further consideration and how these have been considered in the development of the Submission Document

Recommended issues for further consideration	How have these been considered?
District's maritime and industrial heritage, and the architecture of rural towns and villages and agricultural buildings. Further policy guidance should be provided for the protection of listed buildings and archaeology.	
Further consideration could be given to the need to protect and enhance landscape character, including a specific policy on this.	See above.
Further consideration could be given to meeting skills and training needs for the wider community, including higher education and education for an ageing population.	This matter should be further considered by council in further iterations of the Community Strategy.

It is clear from the above table that the recommendations arising from the SA of the Revised Preferred Options Document have informed the development of the Submission Document and improved the sustainability of the DPD.

Submission

The Core Strategy Submission Document was developed early during 2009 and subject to SA in August of the same year. A review of the Draft Core Strategy Submission Document was undertaken in June 2009 to establish how the changes made to the Core Strategy since the Revised Preferred Options Document affected the findings of the SA Technical Report (consulted on in November 2008).

It was determined that the findings of the detailed SA undertaken for the Revised Preferred Options Document would not be significantly affected. Therefore further detailed SA work was only undertaken for two new Submission policies (Policy ENV8 and T2). This is in accordance with Government guidance on Sustainability Appraisal¹⁰. However, a number of changes were made to existing policies within the Revised Preferred Options Document, and these have also been considered in the preparation of the Core Strategy Submission SA Report. Where relevant, additional commentary was added as addendum text in italics (see Chapter 5 of the Core Strategy Submission SA Report) to consider the significance of those changes.

The vision and objectives were also re-appraised due to changes made since Revised Preferred Options. The compatibility analysis and commentary for the

¹⁰ Core Strategy Submission SA Report available from http://www.rochford.gov.uk/PDF/planning_cs_sustainability_appraisal_core_strategy_submission_document.pdf (see paragraph 5.3)

individual themes (which is based on the structure of the Submission Document) against the SA Objectives can be found in Appendix V of the Core Strategy Submission SA Report (September 2009).

The Core Strategy Submission SA Report notes that “On the whole, the findings of the SA suggest that the Core Strategy will make significant contributions to the progression of SA Objectives.” (paragraph 5.9) The recommendations suggested through the SA of the Revised Preferred Options Document were considered by the Council and, where appropriate, incorporated into the Submission Document, as summarised in Table 5 and 6. A progression table was included on the appendices (Appendix VIII of the Core Strategy Submission SA Report) showing how the SA recommendations have been incorporated throughout plan-making.

SA Review

During the examination into the soundness of the Rochford District Core Strategy, new case law in the form of the Forest Heath case¹¹ on 25 March 2011 provided an additional interpretation of the EU SEA Directive.

The Inspector examining the Rochford District Core Strategy accepted the Council’s request to delay the issuing of a decision on the soundness of the Plan to enable a review of the Core Strategy Submission SA Report in light of this case law development.

The review was drafted by specialist consultants, Enfusion, appraising in detail the preferred general locations, and the reasonable alternatives, for residential and employment development during the Plan period. The final addendum (Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Addendum 2011) was then consulted upon in June/July 2011. The results of this consultation were considered and a version of the Addendum finalised¹² accordingly and submitted to the Inspector for consideration as part of the examination. This addendum should be read in conjunction with the Core Strategy Submission SA Report produced in September 2009.

The SA Addendum 2011 provided a clear summary of the alternatives considered throughout the SA process and the reasons for selecting/rejecting those alternatives- refer to table 2 of this adoption statement. It also included a detailed appraisal of broad locations for housing and employment development within individual top and second tier settlements, building on the previous assessment of alternatives for the Issues and Options stage. This Sustainability Appraisal was subject to public consultation. The consultation responses and appraisal were considered as part of the Inspector’s determinations, and in the Council’s decision to adopt the Core Strategy. Table 7 and 8 below set out the reasons for selecting / rejecting the broad locations for housing and employment development, respectively, including consideration of sustainability recommendations.

¹¹ *Save Historic Newmarket v. Forest Heath District Council*

¹² Core Strategy SA Addendum 2011 available from http://www.rochford.gov.uk/PDF/pla_policy_corestrat_sa_appraisal2011.pdf

Table 7
Housing development options for Rochford District
Housing development options for Rochford/Ashingdon: <u>Location 1: West Rochford</u> Location 2: South Rochford Location 3: East Rochford Location 4: North Ashingdon <u>Location 5: South East Ashingdon</u> <u>Location 6: East Ashingdon</u>
<p>Reasoning for Progressing or Rejecting the Options in Plan Making :</p> <p>Location 1 (West Rochford) was selected it is a sustainable location, particularly in terms of accessibility, economy and employment, and balanced communities. In addition, the location relates well to London Southend Airport and proposed employment growth there, is not subject to significant environmental constraints which would inhibit development, and is of a scale capable of accommodating other infrastructure, including a new primary school which would have wider community benefits. The location performs well to the proposed balanced strategy, and, due to its location in relation to Southend and the highway network, would avoid generating traffic on local networks for non-local reasons. The location is unlikely to enable infrastructure improvements to King Edmund School, but is nevertheless selected for the aforementioned reasons.</p> <p>Location 5 (South East Ashingdon) and Location 6 (East Ashingdon) were selected as they are well located in relation to King Edmund Secondary School, which amongst accessibility benefits also means that there are opportunities for important, required improvements to the school to accompany additional development in these locations to the benefit of the wider community. Location 5 would also allow for a significant amount of development to be accommodated in a manner which does not entail development projecting out into the open countryside.</p> <p>Location 2 was not selected as it has the potential to engender coalescence with Southend, performed less well in sustainability terms compared with West Rochford and would be less likely to deliver community benefits than development in South East and East Ashingdon.</p> <p>Location 3 was not selected as it was not considered as sustainable a location as West Rochford. There are greater environmental constraints to the east of Rochford, including Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites. Development to the east of Rochford has the potential to be affected by noise from London Southend Airport, given its relationship to the existing runway. Whilst a small quantum of development may be accommodated within this general location avoiding land subject to physical constraints, such an approach is less likely to deliver community benefits, and would necessitate the identification of additional land, diluting the concentration of development and thus reducing the sustainability benefits of focussing development on larger sites. Location 3 is also unlikely to aid the delivery of improvements to King Edmund School. Furthermore, it would generate traffic on local networks for non-local reasons, i.e. traffic to Southend would be likely to be</p>

directed through the centre of Rochford, including through the Conservation Area.

Location 4 was not selected due to its poor accessibility and distance from service and facilities, particularly when compared to alternatives. It was less likely to engender improvements to King Edmund School than Locations 5 and 6.

Housing development options for Rayleigh:

Location 7: West Rayleigh (North of London Road, Rayleigh)

Location 8: East Rayleigh

Location 9: South West Rayleigh

Location 10 : North Rayleigh

Location 11: South/ South East Rayleigh

Location 12: Rawreth village

Reasoning for Progressing or Rejecting the Options in Plan Making :

Location 7 was selected as the preferred location for housing development in Rayleigh, as the location provides opportunities for the co-location of development with the adjacent proposed employment area. 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. It corresponds well to the proposed balanced strategy in the Core Strategy, and relates well to Chelmsford and Basildon, avoiding generating traffic on local networks for non-local reasons. Location 8, 11, and 9 are all likely to have more of an impact on air pollution and transport in the town centre; locations 10 and 11 could lead to coalescence with Hullbridge and Southend-on-Sea Borough respectively. Locations 8, 10, and 11 perform less well in terms of the proposed balanced strategy, in that they either relate better to Southend than Chelmsford / Basildon, and traffic to the latter centres would be drawn through local networks and town centre. Location 8 was also likely to have negative effects on landscape, being located close to the Upper Roach Valley and Hockley woods. The Sustainability Appraisal found that the West Rayleigh location would have the most positive effects of all the locations, and it performed particularly well on the objectives relating to balanced communities, economy and employment.

Location 12 is detached from Rayleigh, and whilst it relates well to Basildon and Chelmsford centre, it would lead to isolated development poorly served by services and facilities and performs poorly in terms of its sustainability.

Housing development options for Hockley/Hawkwell:

Location 13: West Hockley

Location 14: South Hawkwell

Location 15: Northeast Hockley (incl North Hockley)

Reasoning for Progressing or Rejecting the Options in Plan Making :

Location 13 (West Hockley) was selected as this general location benefits from good access to the centre of Hockley and the local services and facilities located there including education, health and public transport hubs, as opposed to Location 15 where these local services and facilities may be less accessible. There is also a proposed Sustrans route in proximity to this general location. It is well related to recreational opportunities within Hockley Woods and the wider Upper Roach Valley.

Development in this location would therefore have a positive impact on sustainability in terms of accessibility and healthy and safe communities. This location also has the potential to utilise existing previously developed land in the locality (although this will be dependent on the allocation of land within this location, if this location were to be included in an adopted Core Strategy), as well as opportunities to create a defensible Green Belt boundary. It relates well in terms of the balanced strategy, as the west of the settlement has a strong relationship with Chelmsford and Basildon.

Location 14 (South Hawkwell) would positively contribute to the balanced strategy as it is well related to London Southend Airport, which is a key economic driver in the area, and the strategic highways network and Southend to the south. There are opportunities to identify sites in this general location which would not project into the open countryside, particularly given the proximity of the Upper Roach Valley (which is a Special Landscape Area), and the potential to create a defensible Green Belt boundary. Development may therefore have a positive impact on economy and employment, balanced communities and landscape. This general location is well related to recreational opportunities as there is a leisure centre situated in south Hawkwell, and areas of public open space are in proximity to it (such as Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park and Hockley Woods). A Sustrans route is also proposed in proximity to this general location.

Location 15 (North East Hockley including North Hockley) has a relationship with Chelmsford, Basildon and Southend, and would subsequently direct traffic either through Hockley centre to the south west / west, or along Ashingdon Road to the south, which in conjunction with other general locations identified (such as east Ashingdon and south east Ashingdon) would have a significant impact on the local highway network. In effect it would generate traffic on local networks for non-local reasons, and have a negative impact on the balanced strategy. It is not as well related to local recreational opportunities as west Hockley and south Hawkwell, or the proposed Sustrans route. Furthermore depending on the sites taken forward, this general location may not be well related to local services and facilities in Hockley centre, and as opposed to Locations 13 and 14, it has greater potential to project into the open countryside.

Housing development options for Hullbridge:

South West Hullbridge

Reasoning for Progressing or Rejecting the Options in Plan Making :

Hullbridge is recognised as a distinct settlement with its own community and therefore housing needs, and development at this settlement corresponds towards the balanced approach to housing distribution supported by sustainability appraisal. Hullbridge is subject to significant constraints to the North West and North East that inhibit development. Development to the South West would relate well to Rayleigh and to links towards Basildon and Chelmsford centre without encouraging the generation of additional traffic on local networks for non-local reasons. It also an opportunity for infrastructure improvements that would serve the wider community.

Housing development options for Canewdon:

South Canewdon

Reasoning for Progressing or Rejecting the Options in Plan Making :

Canewdon is recognised as a distinct settlement with its own community and therefore housing needs, and development at this settlement corresponds towards the balanced approach to housing distribution supported by sustainability appraisal. The location is not subject to significant environmental or physical constraints. In addition, the proposed location sets to provide good accessibility to Rochford town centre and would minimise the impact on traffic passing through the village centre.

Although Canewdon is defined as a tier 3 settlement, the proposed development performs well in relation to the balanced strategy, and would be able to retain the community cohesion of the village.

Housing development options for Great Wakering:

West Great Wakering

Reasoning for Progressing or Rejecting the Options in Plan Making :

Great Wakering is recognised as a distinct settlement with its own community and therefore housing needs, and development at this settlement corresponds towards the balanced approach to housing distribution supported by sustainability appraisal. The location is not subject to significant environmental constraints which would inhibit development, and is of a scale capable of accommodating other infrastructure, including youth and community facilities which would have wider community benefits.

The proposed development to the West relates well to Southend and would therefore minimise additional traffic on local networks for non-local reasons. The location is relatively close to the existing centre and associated services.

Table 8

Employment development options for Rochford District

London Southend Airport

West Rayleigh

South Rochford (east of Airport)

Reasoning for Progressing or Rejecting the Options in Plan Making :

London Southend Airport is recognised as having the potential to be a key economic catalyst within the sub-region. The approach of focussing additional employment development around London Southend Airport is supported by sustainability appraisal.

The allocation of current Green Belt land to the west of Rayleigh was recommended by the Employment Land Study and supported by Sustainability Appraisal.

South Rochford (east of Airport) could include the expansion of the existing industrial estate (Purdeys), but the release of additional Green Belt land in this location is not supported by the Employment Land Study. Whilst this location is in proximity to London Southend airport, the area to the east of the airport is disconnected from the airport itself by the existing railway line. Furthermore, there is limited amount of land to the east compared to the north and west of the airport. In addition, development to the south of Rochford has the potential to engender the coalescence of Rochford and Southend.

London Southend Airport and land west of Rayleigh were therefore selected as the preferred general locations for employment allocations and South Rochford was rejected.

Other options that were not considered realistic:

Wallasea Island
North Ashingdon

Reason for rejection:

Whilst there is a small amount of existing employment land in Wallasea Island, the area is subject to significant physical constraints and the Employment Land Study does not recommend Green Belt land be allocated for employment within this location.

There is no existing employment allocation to the north of Ashingdon, and the Employment Land Study does not recommend it as a location for the consideration of the release of Green Belt for employment.

The evidence outlined above demonstrates that the release of Green Belt land is justified in West Rayleigh and around London Southend Airport, but not elsewhere within the District. The only other location where existing Green Belt land is proposed to be allocated for employment land is in Great Wakering, but this is simply a direct replacement for existing employment land in this location being deallocated, as recommended by the Employment Land Study.

Schedule of Minor Amendments

A Schedule of Minor Amendments to the Core Strategy Submission Document (as originally submitted in January 2010) was produced in September 2011. This schedule proposed minor amendments to correct anachronisms etc. and included a commitment to an early review of the Plan.

The Inspector's Report confirms that the changes to the Core Strategy Submission Document proposed in the Schedule of Minor Amendments "do not materially alter the Strategy." (paragraph 11). The Report does go on to state that "However, I have taken the view that a limited number are significant for my determination of soundness and these are included in

Schedule A to my report.” (paragraph 11). In light of this the Council considered it to be appropriate to confirm, in the interests of sustainability, that the cumulative amendments proposed to the Rochford District Core Strategy both by the Council and the Inspector would not impinge on sustainability considerations.

As such, specialist consultants, Enfusion, considered the potential SA / SEA impacts of these changes. This can be found in Appendix 1 (as part of the assessment as to whether the Core Strategy has complied with the relevant SEA / SA legislation and regulations). In short, the changes to the plan arising from the examination process do not significantly alter the findings of the SA.

Adopted Rochford District Core Strategy

As detailed above, the Sustainability Appraisal has made numerous recommendations throughout the development of the Core Strategy. These recommendations and how they have influenced the development of the Core Strategy are summarised above (in Tables 5- 8) and detailed in Appendix VIII of The Core Strategy Submission report. The SA Review and SA consideration of changes and minor amendments have also been considered by the Inspector as further evidence in preparing the Inspectors report, and by the Council in making its decision to adopt the Core Strategy.

3. How the options and consultation responses received on the development plan document and sustainability appraisal reports have been taken into account

Each stage in the development of the Rochford District Core Strategy has been subject to community involvement. The Council has produced several reports outlining how comments received through public consultation have been taken into account. The Consultation Statement¹³ submitted in January 2010 alongside the Core Strategy Submission Document for consideration as part of the examination comprehensively details how comments received have influenced the development of the Rochford District Core Strategy. In particular, for example, the Preferred Options Document prepared in 2007 was significantly revised in 2008 following consideration of the results from community involvement, SA work and other key evidence base documents.

The SA reports produced at each stage have been available for comment alongside the different iterations of the Rochford District Core Strategy.

The key sustainability issues were identified through the SA scoping process and the Council consulted statutory consultees (Natural England, the Environment Agency and English Heritage) in November 2005.

¹³ Consultation Statement available from http://www.rochford.gov.uk/PDF/planning_cs_consultation_statement.pdf

The Issues and Options Document was published for consultation in September 2006. The SA and the consultation results helped to determine the preferred overall spatial strategy and the Preferred Options Document, which were published for public consultation in May 2007. A number of the comments received from the consultation expressed a desire to see greater detail in the Core Strategy. However, the issue that elicited the most responses related to the location and amount of new housing. As a result of these concerns the Council revised the Core Strategy Preferred Options Document, which was published for consultation in November 2008.

A revised SA framework was sent out to statutory consultees in September 2008. Comments received as a result of this consultation were reviewed and changes made where possible and relevant; responses are summarised and reported in Appendix II of the Core Strategy Submission SA Report.

The Preferred Options SA Report was published for public consultation with the Core Strategy Preferred Options Document in November 2008. Comments received on the SA were considered and where appropriate were addressed within the Core Strategy Submission SA Report and appendices. Appendix II of the Core Strategy Submission SA Report provides a summary of comments received and responses to those comments.

The SA review was also consulted upon and took comments into account in the finalisation of this addendum (see Appendix 3 of the Core Strategy SA Addendum 2011).

4. The reasons for choosing the development plan document in light of other reasonable alternatives

In developing a sustainable, deliverable and viable strategy for the future development of the District, a balance is needed to ensure the delivery of housing, employment, infrastructure and community facilities to meet needs whilst being mindful of the significant environment constraints. Due to the District's coastal location, there are numerous environmental designations such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), and Ramsar sites, in addition to the area being predominantly Green Belt. The Rochford District Core Strategy has sought, at a local level, to strike this balance whilst complying with national and regional objectives.

The SA of the Submission Document appraised the effects of individual policies, as well as the overall effect of the Plan, including cumulative and incremental effects. The SA found that the emerging Rochford LDF will make a significant contribution to sustainability in the District, with a particularly strong focus on meeting housing and community needs, enhancing accessibility and protecting the Districts natural environment. The key negative effects identified relate to increased housing and employment development and the expansion of London Southend Airport. Whilst the SA recognises that it is these actions which have been determined at a higher policy level (the East of England Plan), the SA has sought to make further

recommendations to assist the Council in mitigating the negative effects and enhancing the positive opportunities of this development for Rochford District

In preparing the Rochford District Core Strategy the recommendations made throughout the Sustainability Appraisal process have been considered, and, as detailed in the SA report have resulted in further amendments to the Core Strategy, further enhancing the sustainability of the Plan.

The Inspector examining the Core Strategy found the Sustainability Appraisal to be in accordance with Government guidance and to be adequate.

The SA of the Submission Document, which was noted in the Inspector's Report, states that "the actual locations for growth proposed are considered to be the most sustainable options available, within the overall high levels of population growth being proposed in the East of England Plan" (paragraph 5.17 of the Core Strategy Submission SA Report). The Inspector's Report also recognises that the decision making process in the development of the Rochford District Core Strategy must take into consideration and strike a balance between a range of evidence. Paragraph 30 of the Inspector's Report acknowledges that "The outcome of exercises such as the sustainability appraisal will depend to some extent on the weight the decision maker chooses to give to different objectives, but this does not necessarily indicate a flawed process."

The review of the Core Strategy Submission SA Report produced by independent specialist consultants provided further support for the spatial strategy within the Core Strategy Submission Document. Indeed, the Inspector's Report further states that:

"It is alleged that the Council failed to carry out a comparative assessment of alternative broad locations for growth against certain matters such as the relative contribution to the Green Belt. However, the SA is informed by a comprehensive scoping report and I find no reason to conclude that any significant effects have not been taken into account. The SA Addendum (July 2011) provides a more detailed appraisal of the alternative locations considered, and was subject to public consultation. I have taken into account criticisms that the Addendum was produced after the submission draft plan, but sustainability appraisal is an iterative process." (paragraph 31).

The Inspector's Report goes further to state, in relation to the rejection of reasonable alternatives and the robustness of the SA process undertaken throughout the development of the Rochford District Core Strategy, that:

"Overall, there is no compelling reason to question the integrity of the SA as a whole, and no convincing evidence to dispute the conclusion of the SA that the chosen locations are the most sustainable, and therefore the CS is sound in relation to this issue." (paragraph 32).

Given that the SA supports the policies within the Core Strategy, and the selection / rejection of alternatives, together with the fact that the SA has been

considered through examination and found to be adequate, the Core Strategy clearly represents a sustainable plan for Rochford District.

5. Monitoring measures

The Implementation, Delivery and Monitoring section of the Rochford District Core Strategy sets out how the policies will be monitored, primarily through the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), or other reporting mechanism as appropriate.

Furthermore it is confirmed within the Inspector's Report that:

"The implementation, delivery and monitoring chapter of the CS indicates the ways in which each policy will be monitored and includes national and core indicators which should enable the strategy to be adequately monitored and adjusted if necessary. The identification of risk mitigation measures is a commendable inclusion in this section of the CS, which gives confidence regarding the delivery of the strategy. The CS contains effective mechanisms to monitor delivery of the strategy." (paragraph 60).

6. Conclusion

The Rochford District Core Strategy sets out the most sustainable strategy for the District given the reasonable alternatives. It is a sound strategy, which has taken into account the findings of SA work, consultation responses and a wide range of other evidence throughout its development.

SA/SEA Compliance and Quality Assurance

- 1.1 Rochford Council has commissioned Enfusion Ltd to undertake a compliance review of the SA work undertaken on the Rochford Core Strategy. This review considers the SA work with regard to compliance with relevant UK and EU legislation, SA/SEA guidance, current good practice and the recent Forest Heath SEA case law.
- 1.2 This independent review considered the requirements for SA/SEA of LDFs as set out in the following legislation and guidance:
- European Directive 2001/42/EC (the *Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive*)
 - HMSO (2004) *The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations* (the *SEA Regulations*)
 - ODPM (2005) *A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive*
 - DCLG (2008) *Plan Making Manual*¹
 - DCLG (2008) *Planning Policy Statement 12* (PPS12)
- 1.3 The review drew upon professional experience, current good practice and the recommendations from the recent studies for DCLG (2010) into the effectiveness of SA/SEA in spatial planning². It also paid particular attention to the recent judgment³ on SEA in the High Court (March 2011) that now provides case law with regard to assessment of alternatives in SEA. The review is structured according to the SEA stages as set out in the SEA Guidance: Appendix 9 Quality Assurance (2005). This provides a checklist for considering compliance with the requirements of the EU SEA Directive. The review focused on procedures, aiming to identify any potential risks to soundness of the SA/SEA.
- 1.4 Having undertaken this review, it is our professional opinion that the SA/SEA of the Rochford Core Strategy (incorporating the Addendum reports of September 2010 and July 2011) is compliant with the SEA Directive and requirements and PPS 12 requirements for Sustainability Appraisal. It has also been prepared in accordance with relevant guidance and with good practice Sustainability Appraisal. However, as previously advised, we would recommend that the Council also seeks a legal opinion in relation to this matter.
- 1.5 Of particular note is the timing of the second SA Addendum report, which was prepared during a suspension of the Core Strategy Examination (but may be considered necessary to fully meet compliance requirements in relation to SEA alternatives). There is currently a lack of legal interpretation around the issue of seeking to clarify an SA/SEA report during a suspension of an examination, however in this instance we believe the work is justified and helps the Council to be prepared for any potential legal challenges. This view is supported by the Inspector who states that 'I have taken into account criticisms that the Addendum was produced after the submission draft plan but sustainability

¹ <http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pageld=109798> (accessed 7 June 2011)

² <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/15130101.pdf>

³ High Court of Justice (March 2011) EWHC 606 *Save Historic Newmarket Ltd v Secretary of State & Forest Heath District Council*

appraisal is an iterative process' (paragraph 31). Also that 'Overall, there is no compelling reason to question the integrity of the SA as a whole, and no convincing evidence to dispute the conclusion of the SA that the chosen locations are the most sustainable, and therefore the CS is sound in relation to this issue' (paragraph 32).

- 1.6 For a further summary of the issues surrounding a similar case, we would recommend reading the Inspector's Conclusion on Further Suspension of the West Berkshire Core Strategy:
<http://www.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=24036>

Table 1.1 SA/SEA Compliance and Good Practice Review

Note: The Sustainability Appraisal Technical Report- Rochford Core Strategy Submission Document (September 2009) is referred to below as 'the SA Report'.

		Requirements of SEA Directive	Compliance	Reference to: SA Scoping Report (December 2008) & Final (April 2009) Initial SA Report (July 2009) Interim SA Report (November 2010) Commentary
	Objectives and Context			
1	The plan's or programme's purpose and objectives are made clear.	Directive 2001/42/EC Article 5(1)a	Yes	Section 1 of the SA Report sets out the contents and main objectives of the Core Strategy. The relationship with other relevant plans is summarised in Section 3 and Appendix IV of the SA report.
2	Sustainability/environmental issues and constraints, including international and EC protection objectives, are considered in developing objectives and targets.	Directive 2001/42/EC Article 5(1)e	Yes	The SEA objectives have been derived from a review of the plans and programmes and a strategic analysis of the baseline information (Section 6 of the scoping report, Section 3.1 and Appendix IV of the SA Report)
3	SA/SEA objectives, where used, are clearly set out and linked to indicators and targets where appropriate.		Yes	Section 6 of the scoping report contains the SA objectives and indicators. This is repeated in tables 3.2 and 8.1 of the SA report.

4	Links with other related plans, programmes and policies are identified and explained.	Directive 2001/42/EC Article 5(1)a	Yes	Section 3.1 and appendix IV of the SA report illustrate these links and where relevant linkages are also made in the appraisals.
5	Conflicts that exist between SA/SEA objectives, between SA/SEA and plan objectives, and between SA/SEA and other plan objectives are identified and described.		Yes	Compatibility analysis is described in section 4.1 of the SA report and in Appendix 5.
Scoping				
6	Consultation bodies are consulted in appropriate ways and at appropriate times on the content and scope of the Environmental Report.	Directive 2001/42/EC Article 6.1 & 6.2	Yes	This is summarised in section 5 and in Appendix II of the Environmental Report. Further information is also available in the SA Scoping Report.
7	The assessment focuses on significant issues.		Yes	Section 5 and 6 of the SA Report detail the significant issues identified in the appraisal.
8	Technical, procedural and other difficulties encountered are discussed; assumptions and uncertainties are made explicit.		Yes	Identified where relevant throughout the SA report, and summarised in Section 0.16. Uncertainties recorded in appraisal tables in appendices.
9	Reasons are given for eliminating issues from further consideration.		N/A	No issues have been eliminated which is typical for SAs of spatial plans as all issues are generally considered to be relevant.
Alternatives				
10	Realistic alternatives are considered for key issues, and the reasons for choosing them are documented.	Directive 2001/42/EC Article 5(1)h	Yes ⁴	Also known as options (for plan-making purposes) the alternatives are described in Section 2: Appraisal methods, and Chapter 4 of the SA Report.

⁴ Refer Paragraphs 1.4-1.5 of this report in relation to timing of the addendum report. We also advise seeking legal counsel on this matter.

				In light of the recent High Court Ruling <i>Save Historic Newmarket v. Forest Heath District Council</i> , Enfusion advised the Council that it would be prudent to undertake a review of the Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal, ensuring compliance with the new case law on SEA arising from this ruling. In March 2011, a further addendum to the SA Report was produced that summarises the approach taken to the alternatives assessment, including reasoning for the selection/rejection of alternatives. It also includes consideration of more detailed housing and employment locations (than previously appraised). This report was made available for public consultation from 13 June to 11 July 2011.
11	Alternatives include 'do minimum' and/or 'business as usual' scenarios wherever relevant.		Yes	The 'do minimum' or 'business as usual' scenario (i.e. to not prepare the Core Strategy) is not considered relevant to the Core Strategy, as this would be against government requirements. Notwithstanding, the appraisal has been undertaken against the existing baseline conditions and trends, which effectively constitutes the business as usual approach.
12	The sustainability/ environmental effects (both adverse and beneficial) of each alternative are identified and compared.	Directive 2001/42/EC Article 5(1)b	Yes	This is detailed in Section 2: Appraisal methods, and Chapter 4 of the SA Report as well as throughout the SA Addendum report (July 2011).
13	Inconsistencies between the alternatives and other relevant plans, programmes or policies are identified and explained.		Yes	Where relevant, any inconsistencies are described in the appraisal matrices.
14	Reasons are given for selection or elimination of alternatives.	Directive 2001/42/EC Article 5(1)h	Yes ⁵	The sustainability performance of the options is described in the SA Report. The reasoning for selection and elimination of strategic alternatives considered throughout the SA process is provided in the text of the addendum report (July 2011).

⁵ Ibid

Baseline information				
15	Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment/sustainability and their likely evolution without the plan are described.	Directive 2001/42/EC Article 5(1)b	Yes	Section 3 of the SA Report summarises the relevant baseline conditions for sustainability (including the state of relevant environmental aspects) in the District. Appendix III (prepared by Essex County Council) sets out this information in more detail. The likely evolution of current conditions ('trends') is detailed in Appendix III where available.
16	Environmental/sustainability characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected are described, including areas wider than the physical boundary of the plan area where it is likely to be affected by the plan.	Directive 2001/42/EC Article 5(1)c & Article 5(1)d	Yes	Where relevant and available, information regarding particular areas has been included in Appendix III.
17	Difficulties such as deficiencies in information or methods are explained.		Yes	Relevant data gaps are identified in Section 4 of the scoping report, described in 0.16 of the SA report and acknowledged in the appraisal matrices, where applicable.
Prediction and evaluation of likely significant environmental effects				
18	Effects identified include the types listed in the Directive (biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climate factors, material assets, cultural heritage and landscape), as relevant; other likely environmental/sustainability effects are also covered, as appropriate.	Directive 2001/42/EC Article 5(1)f	Yes	Relevant sustainability topics addressed and clearly presented including correlation with SEA topics. This is included within section 5 and 6 of the SA Report (and summarised in the NTS), as well as detailed in the appraisal matrices.
19	Both positive and negative effects are considered, the duration of effects (short, medium or long-term), and temporary/permanent effects are addressed.	Directive 2001/42/EC Article 5(1)f	Yes	This is detailed in the Appraisal matrices (in the appendices) and also described in the NTS and Sections 5 and 6 of the SA Report.

20	Likely secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects are identified where practicable.	Directive 2001/42/EC Article 5(1)f	Yes	Section 6 summarises the cumulative effects arising from the plan, including synergistic and secondary effects; these are also outlined, where relevant in the appraisal matrices.
21	Inter-relationships between effects are considered where practicable.	Directive 2001/42/EC Article 5(1)f	Yes	Where relevant these are outlined in the appraisal matrices and summarised in sections 5 and 6 of the report.
22	The prediction and evaluation of effects makes use of relevant accepted standards, regulations, and thresholds.		Yes	Where practicable, these are referred to in the appraisal matrices, however due to the high level nature of a Core Strategy appraisal, this is not always appropriate.
23	Methods used to evaluate the effects are described.		Yes	The appraisal methods are described in section 2 of the SA Report.
Mitigation measures				
24	Measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the plan or programme are indicated.	Directive 2001/42/EC Article 5(1)g	Yes	Where significant adverse effects, including environmental effects, have been predicted, the SA has sought where possible to identify means of offsetting these effects. These are detailed in Appendix VIII and summarised in section 7 of the SA Report.
24	Issues to be taken into account in project consents are identified.		Yes	Yes, where appropriate through the appraisal matrices.
The Environmental Report				
25	Is clear and concise in its layout and presentation.		Yes	Yes.
26	Uses simple, clear language and avoids or explains technical terms.		Yes	Yes.
27	Uses maps and other illustrations where appropriate.		Yes	As appropriate, and located in the Baseline appendices. It is also noted that the SA report accompanies the Core Strategy document which includes detailed maps.
28	Explains the methodology used.		Yes	Section 2 of the SA report explains the method used.
29	Explains who was consulted and what methods of consultation were used.		Yes	Section 2 of the SA Report and throughout the report.

30	Identifies sources of information, including expert judgement and matters of opinion.	Directive 2001/42/EC Article 5.2	Yes	The evidence and reference column in the appraisal appendices includes this information.
31	Contains a non-technical summary (NTS) covering the overall approach to the SA/SEA, the objectives of the plan, the main options considered, and any changes to the plan resulting from the SEA.	Directive 2001/42/EC Article 5 (1) j	Yes	The SA Report includes an NTS addressing the necessary requirements.
Consultation				
32	The SA/SEA is consulted on as an integral part of the plan-making process.		Yes	The SA has been consulted on as an iterative and ongoing process – and integral to the plan-making process.
33	Consultation Bodies and the public likely to be affected by, or having an interest in, the plan or programme are consulted in ways and at times which give them an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinions on the draft plan and Environmental Report.	Directive 2001/42/EC Article 6.1 & 6.2	Yes	Statutory and public consultation has been undertaken according to statutory timeframes i.e. 5 weeks for SA scoping; at least 6 weeks at other key junctures in the Core Strategy's production (Issues and Options, Preferred Options and Submission).
Decision-making and information on the decision				
34	The environmental report and the opinions of those consulted are taken into account in finalising and adopting the plan or programme.	Directive 2001/42/EC Article 8	Yes	Refer to Appendix I of the SA report. Further consultation was also undertaken on the Addendum to the SA report in July 2011 and comments taken into account accordingly.
35	An explanation is given of how they have been taken into account.	Directive 2001/42/EC Article 9 (1) b	Yes	Refer to Appendix I of the SA report and Appendix III of the SA addendum (July 2011).
36	Reasons are given for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light	Directive 2001/42/EC	Yes	Reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted are provided in the SA report addendum (July 2011).

	of other reasonable alternatives considered.	Article 9 (1) b		
Monitoring measures				
37	Measures proposed for monitoring are clear, practicable and linked to the indicators and objectives used in the SEA.	Directive 2001/42/EC Article 5 (1) i	Yes	Refer to Section 8 Implementation and Monitoring of the SA Report.
38	Monitoring is used, where appropriate, during implementation of the plan or programme to make good deficiencies in baseline information in the SEA.	Directive 2001/42/EC Article 10	N/A	This will be an ongoing process after adoption of the plan through the Annual Monitoring Review.
39	Monitoring enables unforeseen adverse effects to be identified at an early stage. (These effects may include predictions which prove to be incorrect.)		N/A	As above.
40	Proposals are made for action in response to significant adverse effects.		N/A	As above.
Appraisal of Significant Changes & SEA Statement				
41	When adopted, the relevant authorities and public are informed and the following are made available: (a) the plan or programme as adopted, (b) a statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme and how the environmental report, the opinions expressed pursuant to Article 6 and the results of consultations entered into	Directive 2001/42/EC Article 9	Yes	A detailed and thorough SA Adoption statement has been prepared by the Council that meets all of the requirements listed.

	<p>have been taken into account and the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with.</p> <p>c) the measures decided concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10.</p>			
41	<p>An SEA is undertaken of changes likely to have a significant effect.</p> <p>Note: An environmental assessment need not be carried out for a minor modification to a plan or programme unless it is likely to have a significant effect.</p>	<p>Part 2 (6) The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004</p>	Yes	<p>The SA report documents changes to the plan throughout production and where applicable, appraises changes where a significant effect is likely. Subsequently, the following appraisal of changes has taken place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further Sustainability Appraisal of the Rochford Core Strategy Submission Document: Addendum. This considers the proposed changes to the Core Strategy Submission Document in light of the revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies and the issuing of a revised Planning Policy Statement 3 Housing (PPS3). - The Addendum report (July 2011) includes consideration and appraisal of more detailed housing and employment locations as a result of consultation responses received that queried the appraisal of alternatives outlined in the SA report. -Additional SA of changes has been undertaken in November 2011 and provided as an annex to the report recommending adoption of the plan. This includes consideration of significant changes proposed by the inspector and by the Council.

Sustainability Appraisal of further changes to the Rochford Core Strategy

- 1.1 The Council is proposing to make a number of further changes to the Rochford Core Strategy prior to its adoption. Three schedules are appended to the Inspectors Report (October 2011) as follows:
- **Schedule A:** Significant changes proposed by the Council.
 - **Schedule B:** Minor changes.
 - **Schedule C:** Changes recommended by the Inspector.
- 1.2 The Sustainability Appraisal is required to consider changes to the plan to determine if they are likely to have a significant effect. Changes that are not significant will not require further sustainability appraisal work¹.
- 1.3 As Schedule B contains only very minor changes, i.e. factual updates, corrections of minor errors or minor amendments in the interests of clarity, it is not considered necessary to subject this Schedule B to further sustainability appraisal as no significant effects are considered likely.
- 1.4 A screening assessment of the changes proposed in Schedule A and C was undertaken to determine if these changes were likely to result in significant effects. The appraisal found that none of the proposed changes are likely to result in significant effects nor materially alter the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal as provided in the Sustainability Appraisal Technical report accompanying the Core Strategy on submission.

¹ Planning Advisory Service: Plan-making Manual: Publication and submission of a development plan document: sustainability appraisal

Appendix A Schedule of significant changes proposed by the Council

The changes below are expressed either in the conventional form of strikethrough for deletions and underlining for additions of text, or by specifying the change in words in *italics*.

The below proposed changes relate to changes to the Core Strategy Submission Document (September 2009)

The page numbers and paragraph numbering below refer to the Core Strategy Submission Document September 2009, and do not take account of the deletion or addition of text.

Ref	Page	Policy / Paragraph	Amendment	Justification	Sustainability Appraisal Screening Commentary
A1	N/A	N/A	<i>Insertion of a statement about the position of the Core Strategy Submission Document and commitment to an early review of the plan. See Appendix CSSMA 1 for details.</i>	The Inspector requested the insertion of this text in her letter dated 11 August 2011.	This is a procedural amendment and will not have a significant effect on the results of the SA as predicted.
A2	21	1.25 (Third bullet point)	Provision of an additional 15 authorised pitches for Gypsy and Traveller caravans by 2014 8 , to achieve a total of 18 <u>22</u> pitches.	The single issue review (Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in the East of England) set a total allocation of 18 pitches to be achieved by 2011 through the provision of 15 additional pitches to those already authorised. Given the delays to the Core Strategy examination, this allocation cannot be achieved in the given timeframe. This figure, however, was based on a baseline position of three pitches, which were authorised by 2006. As at July 2010, there were seven private Gypsy and Traveller pitches in the District. The single issue review which set the requirement for pitch	This amendment to the Core Strategy reflects delays in the adoption of the Core Strategy and ensures the requirements for Gypsy and traveller sites outlined in the single issue review will still be met. Therefore the change to the Strategy is not considered significant and will not change the findings of the SA.

Ref	Page	Policy / Paragraph	Amendment	Justification	Sustainability Appraisal Screening Commentary
				provision by 2011 also set an annual 3% compound increase in pitch provision requirement beyond 2011. This equates to the provision of 15 pitches by 2018 in addition to the seven authorised pitches in order to achieve a compound increase in provision to 22 pitches to meet the requirements of the review.	
A3	37	3.1-3.3	<i>Insertion of additional text on the vision for Rochford District within the Vision chapter. See Appendix CSSMA 2 for details.</i>	The Inspector requested that the Council prepare additional text on the vision for the District following the hearings sessions in May 2010.	<p>The additional text added to the vision was previously dispersed through the Core Strategy document in themes that have individual visions and objectives that all contribute to the overall vision for the District.</p> <p>The SA provided a commentary for each individual theme to consider the compatibility of the themes vision and objectives against the SA Framework. The changes to the vision are not considered to significantly alter the SA findings.</p>
A4	49	4.46	The East of England Regional Assembly has prepared a single-issue review on Gypsy and Travellers accommodation that has resulted in equates to	The single issue review (Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in the East of England) set a total allocation of 18 pitches to be achieved by 2011 through the provision of 15	This amendment to the Core Strategy reflects the delay in the adoption of the Core Strategy and ensures the requirements for Gypsy

Ref	Page	Policy / Paragraph	Amendment	Justification	Sustainability Appraisal Screening Commentary
			the allocation within the East of England Plan of <u>an additional 15 pitches to be provided in Rochford District by 20148 to meet the 3% compound increase requirements beyond 2011.</u>	additional pitches to those already authorised. Given the delays to the Core Strategy examination, this allocation cannot be achieved in the given timeframe. This figure, however, was based on a baseline position of three pitches, which were authorised by 2006. As at July 2010, there were seven private Gypsy and Traveller pitches in the District. The single issue review which set the requirement for pitch provision by 2011 also set an annual 3% compound increase in pitch provision requirement beyond 2011. This equates to the provision of 15 pitches by 2018 in addition to the seven authorised pitches in order to achieve a compound increase in provision to 22 pitches to meet the requirements of the review.	and traveller sites outlined in the single issue review will still be met. Therefore the change to the Strategy is not considered significant and will not change the findings of the SA.
A5	49	4.47	Given the historically low demand within the District, provision for any additional pitches post 2014 8 will be subject to further review of need.	The date has been amended in line with the above.	Comments as above.
A6	50	Policy H7 (First sentence)	The Council will allocate 15 pitches by 2014 8 , as per the East of England Regional Assembly's single-issue review.	The policy text has been amended to reflect the accompanying text as above.	Comments as above.

Appendix C Schedule of significant changes proposed by the Inspector

Inspector Change No.	Policy/Paragraph/Page	Change	Sustainability Appraisal Screening Commentary
IC1	Policy H4	<p>Amend the first sentence of the third paragraph to read:</p> <p>The requirement for the provision of affordable housing may be relaxed, for example where constraints make on-site provision impossible or where the developer is able to demonstrate that 35% provision will be economically unviable, rendering the site undeliverable.</p>	<p>The change to wording in Policy H4 is not considered to have a significant sustainability effect. The text has changed from previously 'in exceptional circumstances' to take account of viability considerations on a site by site basis (i.e. that exceptions will be considered where a development is economically unviable). This change is considered unlikely to result in a significant sustainability effect, as the requirement for 35% affordable housing is still maintained in the policy.</p>
IC2	H1, H2, H3, ED4	<p>Add the following text to the reasoned justification for the policies:</p> <p>In line with the Habitats Regulations and in consultation with NE, EA and Essex and Suffolk Water, development proposals must ensure that the water supply necessary for the development can be supplied sustainably (and without</p>	<p>This change, which constitutes additional text to the reasoned justification, helps to draw attention to the problem of water supply in Rochford District. It is unlikely to have a significant sustainability effect as it is</p>

		adverse effects on European Sites).	<p>already a requirement through the EA consenting process (Any new licences for water abstraction granted by the EA are required to demonstrate that there will be no adverse effects on European sites through the undertaking of Habitats Regulations Assessment). Notwithstanding, the clarification is supported as it ensures Natural England's concerns are addressed in relation to the HRA.</p>
IC3	ENV6	<p>Amend the first bullet point to read: The development is not within, or adjacent to, an area designated.....</p>	<p>The policy has been amended to clarify that large scale renewable energy projects will not be permitted 'adjacent to' an area designated for ecological or landscape value. This change is likely to have further minor positive effects for biodiversity and landscape, however this will not change the appraisal results for this policy.</p>

IC4	Appendix	Include the list of superseded policies ² as an appendix to the Plan.	This change constitutes a clarification and is not likely to have significant sustainability effects.
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² SUBDOC10