



Rochford District Council Local Development Plan

Rayleigh Area Action Plan

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL/ STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF PRE- SUBMISSION AAP

December 2013

Rochford District Council Local Development Framework

Rayleigh Area Action Plan

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for and on behalf of Enfusion Ltd:

<i>date:</i>	December 2013	
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Rochford District Council Local Development Framework Rayleigh Area Action Plan

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL/STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRE-SUBMISSION REPORT

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

- 0.1 This is the summary of the Sustainability Appraisal Report for Rochford District Council's Rayleigh Area Action Plan (AAP) Development Planning Document (DPD): Pre-Submission Document. It describes how the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process was used to assist in the preparation of the Area Action Plan, as required by planning legislation and Government guidance.

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL & STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

- 0.2 The purpose of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is to promote sustainable development through the integration of environmental, social and economic considerations in the preparation of Local Development Documents (LDDs). This requirement is set out in Section 39 (2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004 and the National Planning Policy Framework. Sustainability Appraisal incorporates the requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment¹² (SEA), a requirement of European and UK Legislation. Government guidance advises a number of stages of SA work that need to be carried out as a Local Development Document is being prepared:

- Stage A: Setting Context & Scope
- Stage B: Developing Options & Assessing Effects
- Stage C: Preparing the SA Report
- Stage D: Consulting on the Plan & the SA
- Stage E: Monitoring Implementation of the Plan

- 0.3 The SA/SEA of the Rayleigh Area Action Plan has been prepared in accordance with these requirements for SA/SEA.

THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND RAYLEIGH AAP

- 0.4 The Council is in the process of preparing its Local Development Plan (LDP) (previously known as the Local Development Framework), which will set out how the District will develop in the future. The LDP will gradually replace the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan which was adopted in 2006. The Rochford Local Development Plan comprises the following Local Development Documents:

- Core Strategy DPD (also known as the Local Plan)
- Development Management DPD
- Site Allocations DPD
- Area Action Plans (DPDs) for Rochford Town Centre, Hockley Town Centre, Rayleigh Town Centre and London Southend Airport (with Southend-on-Sea Borough Council).

¹ EU Directive 2001/42/EC

² Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

- 0.5 The Rayleigh Area Action Plan (AAP) creates a policy framework for development of Rayleigh from which applications for planning permission will be determined against. The AAP sets out a vision for the future which declares that Rayleigh will continue to be recognised as Rochford District's main centre and that new development will help to enhance the centre's historic setting.
- 0.6 The AAP sets a vision for the settlement's future based on an understanding of the unique context that drives change and development in Rayleigh. It translates this vision into implementation objectives, policies and guidance that will act as a robust framework for delivery.

THE CHARACTER OF RAYLEIGH

- 0.7 Rayleigh town centre is situated in the south west of the District, approximately 32 miles from London and 4.9 miles from Southend-on-Sea. It is the largest retail centre in the District with a strong comparison and convenience offer, low vacancy rates and a range of unit sizes.
- 0.8 A large portion of the town centre is designated as a Conservation Area and includes a number of listed buildings as well as the Rayleigh Mount, which is designated as a Scheduled Monument.

SA SCOPING & ISSUES FOR SUSTAINABILITY

- 0.9 A SA scoping process was undertaken to help ensure that the SA covers the key sustainability issues that are relevant to Rayleigh. This included the development of an SA Framework of objectives to comprise the basis for appraisal. An SA Scoping Report was prepared to summarise the findings of the scoping process and was sent to statutory consultees for consultation in September 2012. As part of the scoping process plans and programmes were reviewed and information was collated relating to the current and predicted social, environmental and economic characteristics of Rayleigh.
- 0.10 From these studies, the key sustainability issues and opportunities for the AAP and the SA were identified, as follows:

Key Sustainability Issues for Rayleigh AAP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The provision of quality and affordable housing to meet housing needs in Rayleigh.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve the connectivity between the High Street, Rayleigh Mount, the Windmill and Mill Arts and Leisure Centre.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve the connectivity between the High Street and the main town centre parking facility on Websters Way.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce traffic along Websters Way and improve pedestrian movement.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taking account of environmental and physical constraints when accommodating new development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opportunity to improve the public realm and pedestrian movement.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The protection of the Rayleigh Conservation Area and listed

buildings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High levels of car ownership and travelling to work using a private vehicle.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Air quality concerns in Rayleigh High Street and Eastwood Road (an AQMA is being designated) which may restrict new traffic-generating development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to improve retail and provide a greater range of leisure service providers, comparison goods and mixed-use schemes incorporating floorspace.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change is a significant issue facing all communities and the AAP will need to consider issues around energy efficiency, renewables and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

SA FRAMEWORK

0.11 An SA Framework was compiled and included SA Objectives that aim to resolve the issues and problems identified; these are used to test the draft plan as it is being prepared. The SA Framework for Rayleigh AAP is based on that developed for the Rochford Core Strategy. A list of the SA objective headings follows:

SA Objective headings	
1. Balanced Communities	8. Landscape & Townscape
2. Healthy & Safe Communities	9. Climate Change & Energy
3. Housing	10. Water
4. Economy & Employment	11. Land & Soil
5. Accessibility	12. Air Quality
6. Biodiversity	13. Sustainable Design & Construction
7. Cultural Heritage	

SA OF THE RAYLEIGH AAP

0.12 Each stage of the preparation of the AAP was appraised using the SA Objectives. Where significant negative effects, including environmental effects, were predicted, the SA 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. The appraisal recognised 6 categories of predicted effects, as illustrated in the following key.

Categories of sustainability effects	
Colour	Impact
++	Major Positive
+	Positive
0	No Impact
?	Uncertain
-	Negative
--	Major Negative

CONSIDERATION AND APPRAISAL OF ALTERNATIVES

- 0.13 The SA of the options (alternatives) was undertaken in November 2012. The purpose and key objectives of the AAP have been set at a higher level; therefore it was considered that the alternatives available to the plan-maker in preparing the AAP were limited to the level and type of intervention/development that should be accommodated in the Town Centre.
- 0.14 The Issues and Options Document (2009) identified a number of areas within the town centre where opportunities may exist for redevelopment, as well as a range of opportunities related to transport and circulation and the public realm. A range of options were proposed in relation to each area and some involved a number of key aspects which included the redevelopment of existing buildings or vacant for mixed-uses, or the redevelopment of existing businesses to enlarge existing car parking facilities. Some options were devised using a number of interventions which would result in differing levels of change i.e. low, medium, high and/or higher.
- 0.15 The options which proposed interventions which sought to improve the quality and attractiveness of particular areas, supported mixed-use development and/ or improve pedestrian links were found to progress many of the SA objectives relating to communities, health, accessibility, the economy, heritage, townscape and sustainable design. The significance of effects was found to increase along with the level of intervention. However, with a higher level of intervention there is also some uncertainty and this was because the proposed development could have the potential for negative effects in the short-term on SA objectives through increased noise and congestion. The SA also found that options which recommended full pedestrianisation may have negative effects on communities and health as they could potentially shift existing traffic issues elsewhere within the AAP area creating another barrier to movement.
- 0.16 Furthermore, with reference to the spatial options, it was considered that composite option that sought the higher level of intervention proposed in option 4 with the shared space treatments proposed in option 3 (rather than the pedestrianisation of the High Street), would not require the diversion of traffic and would provide greater benefits to a wider area.
- 0.17 Alongside consultation responses, the Council considered the SA findings in its decision making. The reasons for the selection or rejection of options in plan-making are set out in Section 4 of the SA Report.

APPRAISAL OF THE AAP VISION AND POLICIES

- 0.18 A compatibility analysis of the Pre-Submission AAP Vision and Objectives was carried out using the SA framework in December 2013. Overall the vision and objectives were found to be compatible with the majority of SA objectives.
- 0.19 The Pre-Submission policies were subject to detailed SA in December 2013. On the whole, the findings of the SA suggest that the emerging AAP policies

will make significant contributions to the progression of SA objectives. Throughout the development of the AAP and the Sustainability Appraisal process, data gaps and uncertainties were uncovered and these have been acknowledged in the appraisal matrices, where applicable.

SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS IDENTIFIED

- 0.20 The majority of policies were found to have significant positive sustainability benefits. The following table summarises the key positive effects identified:

Significant positive effects of the emerging Rayleigh AAP	
Key relevant SA Objective:	Positive effects identified:
1.Balanced communities & 2.Healthy and Safe Communities	The AAP will have positive effects on communities through providing a mix of uses in the town centre, including retail, cultural, leisure facilities and new public spaces. New, improved and enhanced pedestrian links should encourage more people to get out and about and improve their fitness. Improving the quality of the area could help reduce the incidence of crime and the potential for new employment opportunities will have positive indirect effects on the health of the community. The combination of these effects is likely to lead to significant positive cumulative effects.
4.Economy and Employment	A significant positive effect on the local economy is likely through enhanced opportunities for retail, leisure and offices. It seeks to enhance consumer choice through encouraging opportunities for development in addition to the main focus on retail which should provide more employment opportunities (skilled and unskilled) for local residents. It also seeks to strengthen pedestrian links across Rayleigh which is likely to provide better access for consumers and workers to the centre of Rayleigh thereby boosting the local economy. Improvements to the public realm will also make the town centre a more attractive and enjoyable place for people to shop, visit and live. The combination of these effects is likely to lead to significant positive cumulative effects.
5. Accessibility	Significant positive cumulative effects for accessibility are likely through a range of improvements to the public realm, upgrades to bus facilities, access to the train station and increased accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.
6.Landscape and Townscape	The setting of key principles for development to contribute positively to the local townscape and character, focusing on the individual parts of the AAP area, is likely to lead to positive cumulative

	effects. In addition, the combined requirements for enhancing the public realm and the likely redevelopment of derelict, degraded or underused land will also contribute to an overall significant positive cumulative effect.
7. Cultural Heritage	The main thrust of the AAP is to ensure that the historic character of the centre is protected and where possible enhanced. It advocates new and improved pedestrian signage to key cultural heritage assets such as the Mount and the Windmill which will hopefully improve access to heritage. Furthermore, public realm interventions and regeneration are likely to help improve the aesthetic value of the AAP area which is likely to benefit the conservation area and the settings of the listed buildings. The combination of these effects is likely to lead to significant positive cumulative effects.

0.21 Alongside the many positive effects of the plan, potential negative sustainability effects were also identified, although the effect is uncertain at this stage of the assessment and it is considered likely that these effects can be mitigated at a more detailed planning stage. These are summarised below:

Potentially significant negative effects of the emerging Rayleigh AAP	
Key relevant SA Objective:	Negative Effects identified:
7. Cultural Heritage	Some temporary negative effects in the short-term during demolition/ construction as noise and vibration will be created but it is expected that this can be mitigated at the project level. Any other effects were considered to be mitigated by policies contained within the Core Strategy and Development Management DPDs.
2. Healthy and Safe Communities and 12. Air quality	There have been exceedences of the annual mean air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide at Eastwood Road/Rayleigh High Street and Eastwood Road. Any new development has the potential to increase nitrogen dioxide levels in the both the short-term and the long-term. Mitigation already in place through Core Strategy Polices. There may be some temporary negative effects in the short-term during demolition/ construction as waste, noise and dust nuisances may be created but it is expected that this can be mitigated at the project level.

MITIGATION, ENHANCEMENT AND MONITORING

- 0.22 An important role of the SA process is to provide recommendations for the mitigation of negative effects and enhancement of the positive effects identified in the appraisal process. In preparing the AAP, Rochford District Council has already sought to address many of the sustainability problems in Rayleigh, and consequently the majority of the SA findings were positive. A small number of recommendations have been made and these will be considered by the Council in finalising the plan.
- 0.23 Local planning authorities are required to produce Annual Monitoring Reports to monitor the progress of the Local Development Plan. There is also a requirement to monitor the predictions made in the SA. Rochford District Council prepares an Annual Monitoring report each year, and in preparing the report, considers any recommendations made through the SA process. The indicators and targets suggested for the SA monitoring of the Core Strategy are considered appropriate for the monitoring of the Rayleigh AAP, with additional specific suggestions made during the preparation of the Rayleigh AAP. This SA has also made further suggestions, which are detailed in the main SA report.

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

- 0.24 The SA of the Rayleigh Area Action Plan has appraised the effects of individual policies, as well as the overall effect of the plan, including cumulative and incremental effects. It has also considered and appraised reasonable alternatives to the plan itself; and this information has been made available to the Council to help in the selection of the preferred plan. Overall the SA has found that the AAP will help to resolve a number of key sustainability issues in Rayleigh Town Centre and will also play a role in improving sustainability in the wider Rochford District. Significant positive effects were identified for communities, economy and employment, accessibility, landscape and townscape and cultural heritage.
- 0.25 The sustainability appraisal did not identify any significant likely negative effects from the plan alone. However, possible significant cumulative negative effects were identified for cultural heritage, healthy and safe communities and air quality. It is expected that these can be mitigated and managed through further detailed planning, monitoring as well as by policies already in place which are contained within the Core Strategy and Development Management DPDs. To reduce short-term negative effects on cultural heritage and on health, it was also recommended that either a construction management plan could be developed or phasing could be introduced at the project level.
- 0.26 The Council has considered the recommendations made throughout the Sustainability Appraisal process, and amended the plan where appropriate. This has contributed to further enhancing the positive sustainability effects of the AAP.
- 0.27 This SA Report will accompany the AAP on Pre-Submission consultation for 6 weeks, during which time interested parties are invited to make

representations on the AAP or the SA. The SA will form part of the evidence base during the Examination of the AAP and if any further significant changes are made to the plan the SA Report will be updated accordingly. A finalised report will accompany the adopted DPD when it is published.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE SA AND THE SA REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is to promote sustainable development through the integration of environmental, social and economic considerations in the preparation of Local Development Documents (LDDs). This requirement is set out in Section 39 (2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004 and the National Planning Policy Framework. Local Development Documents must also be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment³⁴ (SEA) and Government advises⁵ that an integrated approach is adopted so that the SA process incorporates the SEA requirements.
- 1.2 This SA Report documents the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment processes for Rochford District Council's Rayleigh Area Action Plan (AAP) Development Planning Document (DPD): Pre-Submission Document. The Sustainability Appraisal Framework discussed in Section 3 of this SA Report indicates the relationship between the SA and the SEA; compliance with the SEA Regulations is signposted below in this section and detailed in Appendix I. This SA Report is being published for consultation with the Rayleigh AAP Pre-Submission Document in accordance with SEA Regulations and SA Guidance.

AREA ACTION PLAN: DPD CONTENTS AND OBJECTIVES

Local Development Plan

- 1.3 The Council is in the process of preparing the Local Development Plan (LDP) (previously known as the Local Development Framework), which will set out how the District will develop in the future. The LDP will gradually replace the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan which was adopted in 2006. The Rochford LDP comprises the following Local Development Documents:
- Core Strategy DPD (also known as the Local Plan)
 - Development Management DPD
 - Site Allocations DPD
 - Area Action Plans (DPDs) for Rochford Town Centre, Hockley Town Centre, Rayleigh Town Centre and London Southend Airport (with Southend-on-Sea Borough Council).

Core Strategy

- 1.4 The Core Strategy is the overarching strategic document of the Rochford District Council Local Development Plan, and sets out the key elements of the planning framework for the District; it is the spatial expression of the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Core Strategy was adopted in

³ EU Directive 2001/42/EC

⁴ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

⁵ DCLG (August 2013) National Planning Practice Guidance: Strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal.

December 2011 and contains a policy relating to the development of Rayleigh Town Centre, which is reproduced below:

Policy RTC4 - Rayleigh Town Centre

The Council will ensure that Rayleigh town centre's role as the District's principal town centre is retained through the production and implementation of an Area Action Plan which delivers the following:

- *Improved accessibility to and within the town centre*
- *A safe and high quality environment for residents and visitors*
- *A predominance of retail uses, including intensification of existing retail uses, which cater for a variety of needs*
- *A range of evening leisure uses*
- *Promotes provision of community facilities, including exploration of potential locations for a healthcare centre and, if appropriate delivery of such facility*

The Council will work with landowners and its partners to deliver the Area Action Plan.

Rayleigh Area Action Plan

- 1.5 The Rayleigh Area Action Plan (AAP) creates a policy framework for development of Rayleigh from which applications for planning permission will be determined against. The AAP sets out a vision for the future which declares that Rayleigh will continue to be recognised as Rochford District's main centre and that new development will help to enhance the centre's historic setting.
- 1.6 The AAP sets a vision for the settlement's future, based on an understanding of the unique context that drives change and development in Rayleigh. It translates this vision into implementation objectives, policies and guidance that will act as a robust framework for delivery.

Vision

'Rayleigh will continue to be recognised as the District's main centre. By 2025, the town centre's retail and leisure offer will be improved through the provision of additional retail floorspace, as well as accommodation for complementary uses, such as leisure facilities, offices and homes. Further environmental enhancements will create a high quality public realm, encourage investment and ensure that the town centre is highly accessible by foot, public transport and private motor vehicle. All new development will help to enhance the town centre's historic setting and respect its existing character, including that of nearby suburban, low-density neighbourhoods.'

- 1.7 The four key objectives that support this vision are set out below:
- 1) Strengthening Rayleigh's role as Rochford District's principal town centre.
 - 2) Improving accessibility for all
 - 3) Making the most of historic assets

4) Delivering public realm improvements

SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE SEA DIRECTIVE & REGULATIONS

- 1.8 The SEA Regulations set out certain requirements for reporting the SEA process, and specify that if an integrated appraisal is undertaken (i.e. SEA is subsumed within the SA process, as for the SA of the Rayleigh AAP), then the sections of the SA Report that meet the requirements set out for reporting the SEA process must be clearly signposted. The requirements for reporting the SEA process are set out in Appendix I.

2.0 APPRAISAL METHODS

SCOPING THE KEY SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

- 2.1 Enfusion Ltd was commissioned in July 2012 by Rochford District Council to progress the SA work. A SA scoping process was undertaken in September 2012 to help ensure that the SA covers the key sustainability issues that are relevant to Rayleigh. This included the development of an SA Framework of objectives (presented at the end of Section 3 of this SA Report) to comprise the basis for appraisal. An SA Scoping Report was prepared to summarise the findings of the Scoping process. This was sent to statutory consultees for consultation in September 2012. Responses to this scoping consultation, and how they were taken into account, are reported in this SA Report.

APPRAISING THE AREA ACTION PLAN OPTIONS

- 2.2 A number of options for future change in Rayleigh were initially identified through an Issues and Options Document published for consultation in September 2009. The options identified in this Report (Rayleigh Town Centre Issues and Options Report: A discussion and consultation report Sept 2009) were assessed against the full SA Framework of objectives with regard to the short, medium and long term effects of the options on the SA objectives. The findings helped to inform the development of the Pre-Submission AAP. The detailed SA of options is provided at Appendix IV with a summary of findings provided in Section 4.

SUMMARY OF SA METHOD

- 2.3 The method used for this Sustainability Appraisal of the Rayleigh AAP Pre-Submission DPD comprises the following elements:
- Identifying relevant baseline information and other plans or programmes that influence the AAP policies.
 - Using the Sustainability Appraisal Framework with professional expertise and drawing upon selected information in the Review of Plans and Programmes, and the Baseline Information.
 - Commenting on the areas where each element or policy of the AAP has specific potential impacts - highlighting where possible, positive/negative effects, short/long term effects, indirect/direct effects, cumulative effects, and the reversibility, scale and likelihood of effects with recommendations for proposed mitigation or enhancement where identified.

UNCERTAINTIES AND DATA GAPS

- 2.4 Throughout the development of the AAP and the Sustainability Appraisal process, data gaps and uncertainties were uncovered. It is not always possible to accurately predict sustainability effects when considering plans at this scale. Impacts on cultural heritage, for example, will depend on more detailed information and studies at a site-level. It is also difficult to predict air quality effects and future traffic levels based on interventions. These

uncertainties have been acknowledged in the appraisal matrices, where applicable.

CONSULTATION ON THE SA

- 2.5 The key sustainability issues were identified through the SA scoping process and described in the SA Scoping Report that was placed on consultation with statutory consultees in September 2012. The responses were used to inform the development of the SA Framework.
- 2.6 This SA Report is being published alongside the Rayleigh AAP Pre-Submission DPD. It will be published on the Council's website <http://www.rochford.gov.uk/> and sent to statutory consultees and other relevant stakeholders for consideration and comment.

3.0 SUSTAINABILITY CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

REVIEW OF RELEVANT PLANS AND PROGRAMMES

- 3.1 In order to establish a clear scope for the SA of the AAP it is necessary (and a requirement of SEA) to review and develop an understanding of the relationship of the plan with other plans or programmes and how their environmental objectives have been taken into account during its preparation⁶. This includes International, European, National, Regional and local level policies, plans and strategies. Summarising the aspirations of other relevant policies, plans, programmes and sustainability objectives (hereafter referred to as 'relevant plans') promotes systematic identification of the ways in which the Plan could help fulfill them.
- 3.2 A detailed plans and programmes review was undertaken for the SA Report (September 2009) of the Rochford District Core Strategy Submission Document. The full information is available to view on the Council's website⁷. To account for changes since the SA Report in September 2009, a list of new or updated key plans and programmes was provided in Appendix 1 of the SA Scoping Report (September 2012). This list of new or updated key plans and programmes is available in Appendix III to this Report.
- 3.3 Of most relevance is the adopted Rochford District Core Strategy DPD, which sets out the vision, new development and infrastructure requirements for Rayleigh. It includes Policy RTC 4 (Rayleigh Town Centre) which sets out the requirement for an Area Action Plan for Rayleigh.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BASELINE CONDITIONS

- 3.4 The SEA Directive requires the collation of baseline information to provide an evidence base for environmental problems, the prediction of effects, and monitoring; to help in the development of SEA objectives. This task was undertaken for the original LDF Core Strategy Draft SA Scoping report (2005), and is updated on an annual basis for RDC by Essex County Council. The latest version of the baseline (2010) will be available on the Council website in due course. The information in the baseline encompasses the environmental and socio-economic characteristics of Rochford District, providing a general context for the SA of the AAPs.
- 3.5 The characteristics and key baseline information for Rayleigh were set out in the SA Scoping Report published in September 2012. Further studies relating to the AAP area may be undertaken to support the plan-making processes. If further studies become available, they will be used to inform the SA.
- 3.6 The key relevant features of the AAP area have been summarised below:

⁶ DCLG (August 2013) National Planning Practice Guidance: Strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal.

⁷http://www.rochford.gov.uk/planning/policy/local_development_framework/core_strategy_submitted

- Rayleigh town centre is situated in the south west of the District, approximately 32 miles from London and 4.9 miles from Southend-on-Sea. It is the largest retail centre in the District with a strong comparison and convenience offer, low vacancy rates and a range of unit sizes.
- A large portion of the town centre is designated as a Conservation Area and includes a number of listed buildings as well as the Rayleigh Mount, which is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Table 3.1: Economic Baseline information (SEA Topics Material Assets, Population and Human Health)

- 74% of people in the Wheatley Ward⁸ are classed as being in employment with 2.9% unemployed.
- The percentage of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) in the Wheatley Ward is 2.5% (July 2012).
- Employment by occupation in the ward is as follows: manager & senior officials 19.6%; professional 10.4%; associate professional & technical 16.3%; administrative & secretarial 16.9%; skilled trades 10.8%; personal services 5.8%; sales & customer services 7.8%; process plant & machine operatives 4.5% and elementary occupations 7.7%.
- There are 14 convenience good units in Rayleigh, which equates to 7.0% of the total number of units in Rayleigh - slightly below the national average of 8.42%. In terms of floorspace however Rayleigh is just above the national average with 15.0% of total floorspace compared to the national average of 13.71%.
- There are 75 comparison units within Rayleigh Town Centre with a range of national multiples present including Boots, Dorothy Perkins and Woolworths, equating to 37.5% of the total number of units in Rayleigh. This compares to a national average of 35.71%. The retail offer is therefore slightly above the national average.
- The retail service sector and financial and business service sectors are well represented in Rayleigh, coming in above the national averages for unit numbers and proportion of floorspace, while the leisure service sector is below the national average in both cases.

⁸ The Wheatley Ward includes the majority of the AAP area.

Table 3.2: Environmental Baseline information (SEA topics: Biodiversity, Soil, Water, Air, Climatic Factors, Cultural Heritage, Landscape)

- Available information indicates that there are air quality concerns relating to the exceedance of annual mean nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) emissions in Rayleigh.⁹ A review¹⁰ undertaken in 2011 concluded that an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) will be required for the annual mean objective around the junction of Eastwood Road and the High Street.
- There is an existing Air Quality Management Area at Rawreth Industrial Estate, Rayleigh however this is outside of the AAP area and is caused by fine dust emissions from industry, therefore is unlikely to be influenced by the plan.
- There are no international, national or locally designated sites for biodiversity or geodiversity within or adjacent to the town centre.
- The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment identified that the Area Action Plan for Rayleigh is located within Flood Zone 1, associated with low probability of flooding from fluvial and tidal sources.
- A large portion of the AAP area is part of the Rayleigh Conservation Area, which includes 24 listed buildings.
- Included within the Conservation Area and adjacent to the AAP area is the Rayleigh Mount, which is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Table 3.3: Social Baseline information (SEA topics: Population & Human Health).

- The population in the Rochford 008¹¹ Middle Layer Super Output Area¹²
- The health of people in Rochford District is generally better than the England average. Deprivation is lower than average, however 1,795 children live in poverty. Life expectancy for both men and women is higher than the England average.
- Since 2003 the level of crime in the District has reduced significantly; however, the number of drug related offences has

⁹ AMEC (2012) Air Quality Updating and Screening Assessment for Rochford District Council. Rochford District Council. Online at <http://www.essexair.org.uk> [accessed November 2013]

¹⁰ Air Quality Consultants (2011) Detailed Assessment of Air Quality in Rayleigh. Online at <http://www.essexair.org.uk> [accessed November 2013]

¹¹ This Super Output Area includes the area covered by the AAP.

¹² Super Output Areas (SOAs) are a geography designed for the collection and publication of small area statistics. They are used by the Office for National Statistics.

- increased.
- Rayleigh's railway station is located five to ten minutes walking distance from the High Street. A mainline service operated by Anglia National Express runs between Southend-on-Sea and London Liverpool Street.
 - The town has frequent bus services to and from neighbouring towns in the district.
 - Traffic is limited to one lane along Websters Way, which coupled with the presence of the main town centre car park and retail servicing arrangements is causing congestion.
 - As with other centres in Rochford District, there does not appear to be any specific provision for cyclists or people with disabilities other than limited cycle parking at the Railway Station.

KEY SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES, PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- 3.7 It is important to distil the key sustainability issues, problems and objectives relevant to the District from the collated information and consideration of the particular character of the area. These issues are considered to be priorities for consideration through the Sustainability Appraisal, and the SA Framework of sustainability objectives (detailed later in this Section) seeks to attend to them.
- 3.8 The following key sustainability issues are considered to be priorities for sustainability, arising from the particular characteristics, pressures and opportunities currently affecting Rayleigh.

Table 3.4: Key Sustainability Issues for Rayleigh AAP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The provision of quality and affordable housing to meet housing needs in Rayleigh.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve the connectivity between the High Street, Rayleigh Mount, the Windmill and Mill Arts and Leisure Centre.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve the connectivity between the High Street and the main town centre parking facility on Websters Way.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce traffic along Websters Way and improve pedestrian movement.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taking account of environmental and physical constraints when accommodating new development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opportunity to improve the public realm and pedestrian movement.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The protection of the Rayleigh Conservation Area and listed buildings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High levels of car ownership and travelling to work using a private vehicle.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Air quality concerns in Rayleigh High Street and Eastwood Road which may restrict new traffic-generating development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opportunity to improve retail and provide a greater range of leisure service providers, comparison goods and mixed-use schemes incorporating floorspace.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Climate change is a significant issue facing all communities and the AAP will need to consider issues around energy efficiency, renewables and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

THE SA FRAMEWORK

3.9 The proposed SA Framework provides the basis by which the sustainability effects of emerging AAP will be described, analysed and compared. It includes a number of sustainability objectives, elaborated by 'decision-aiding questions'. The SA Framework developed for the Rochford Core Strategy is considered to be suitable for the appraisal of the Rayleigh AAP, however a number of amendments have been made to ensure the 'decision-aiding questions' address the specific concerns facing Rayleigh. The final SA Framework is provided in Table 3.5 below and has been informed by statutory consultee responses to the SA Scoping Report.

Table 3.5: SA Framework	
SA Objective	Decision-Aiding Question Will it (the Policy)...?
Balanced Communities	
1. 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 rural and urban communities? ▪ Will it ensure equal opportunities and that all sections of the community are catered for? ▪ Will it meet the needs of an ageing population in Rayleigh? ▪ 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?
Healthy & Safe Communities	
2. 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 in Rayleigh? ▪ Will it promote informal recreation and encourage healthy, active lifestyles? ▪ Will green infrastructure (non-vehicular infrastructure routes and links) and networks be promoted and/or enhanced?

Table 3.5: SA Framework	
SA Objective	Decision-Aiding Question Will it (the Policy)...?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Will it minimise noise pollution? ▪ Will it minimise light pollution?
Housing	
3. 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 in Rayleigh? ▪ 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 in Rayleigh? ▪ Does it meet the resident's needs in terms of sheltered and lifetime homes or those that can be easily adapted so?
Economy & Employment	
4. 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 in Rayleigh? ▪ 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? ▪ Will it aid the realisation of London Southend Airport's economic potential?
Accessibility	
5. To promote more sustainable transport 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 increase the availability of sustainable transport modes in Rayleigh? ▪ 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, the socially deprived, 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? ▪ Does it enable access to green infrastructure and the wider natural environment to all sections of the community?

Table 3.5: SA Framework	
SA Objective	Decision-Aiding Question Will it (the Policy)...?
Biodiversity	
6. 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? ▪ Does new development integrate within it opportunities for new habitat creation, particularly where they could facilitate species movement and colonisation in relation to climate change pressures on biodiversity and its distribution?
Cultural Heritage	
7. 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?
Landscape & Townscape	
8. 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 (as preservation is neither realistic or desirable) the landscape character areas of the plan area? ▪ Will it preserve and/or enhance townscape character and value?
Climate Change & Energy	
9. 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 in Rayleigh? ▪ Does it adapt to and provide for the consequences of climate change in a largely low-lying area?
Water	
10. 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 in Rayleigh? ▪ Will it provide for effective wastewater treatment?

Table 3.5: SA Framework	
SA Objective	Decision-Aiding Question Will it (the Policy)...?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Will it require the provision of sustainable drainage systems in new development? ▪ Will it reduce the risk of flooding? ▪ Will it integrate sustainable flood management which works with natural processes, presents habitat enhancement opportunities and is landscape character sensitive?
Land & Soil	
11. 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, as far as is practicable given the characteristics of the District? ▪ Will higher-density development be promoted where appropriate? ▪ Will soil quality be preserved? ▪ Will it promote the remediation of contaminated land in Rayleigh? ▪ Will the best and most versatile agricultural land be protected?
Air Quality	
12. To improve air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Will air quality be improved through reduced emissions (e.g. through reducing car travel)? ▪ Will it direct transport movements away from AQMAs and/or potentially significant junctions?
Sustainable Design & Construction	
13. 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 climate proofing design measures be incorporated? ▪ Will the local character/vernacular be preserved and enhanced through development? ▪ Will it require the re-use and recycling of construction materials? ▪ Will it encourage locally-sourced materials? ▪ Will it require best-practice sustainable construction methods, for example in energy and water efficiency?

4.0 SA OF AREA ACTION PLAN OPTIONS (ALTERNATIVES)

SA OF AREA ACTION PLAN OPTIONS

- 4.1 The SA of the options (alternatives) was undertaken in November 2012 using the SA Framework, with the predicted effects recorded in a matrix (Appendix IV) and detailed commentary and justification provided where necessary. The purpose and key objectives of the AAP have been set at a higher level; therefore it is considered that the alternatives available to the plan-maker in preparing the AAP were limited to the level and type of intervention/development that should be accommodated in the Town Centre. A do-nothing approach is not considered appropriate in this instance as it would not be in accordance with Policy RTC4 - Rayleigh Town Centre from the Adopted Core Strategy, which requires a certain level of intervention in Rayleigh to achieve regeneration objectives.
- 4.2 The options considered for the AAP fell under a number of different categories including: Issues; Components, Circulation and Spatial. The following provides a summary of the appraisal findings for the different options. The detailed appraisal of options is provided in Appendix IV. Full descriptions and details of each individual option are provided in Rochford District Council's 'Rayleigh Town Centre Issues and Options - A discussion and consultation report' (Urban Initiatives, 2009) which is available online at http://fs-drupal-rochford.s3.amazonaws.com/pdf/raap_issues_options.pdf

ISSUES

Issue 1. Quality and setting of conservation area/ listed buildings undermined by unsympathetic development and 'street clutter'.

- 4.3 For this issue, four options were considered which relate to differing levels of intervention or change: Low; Medium; High; and Higher.
- 4.4 The options propose varying levels of intervention to enhance the quality and setting of the conservation area. All of the options have the potential for positive effects on SA objectives relating to communities, health, the economy, heritage, townscape and sustainable design. The higher the level of intervention the more positive the effect is likely to be; however, the redevelopment of unsympathetic buildings, particularly in large blocks, also adds an element of uncertainty. The high and higher options have the potential for negative effects on a number of SA objectives in the short-term during construction; however, it is considered that suitable mitigation measures are available at the project level to address potential negative effects. The high option was assessed as having an uncertain effect on accessibility and health as a shared space scheme could make it difficult for blind members of the community to move through the town centre.
- 4.5 The higher option also has the potential for negative effects on communities and health as a result of the pedestrianisation of the High Street. This would result in the diversion of traffic along surrounding routes (Bellingham Lane,

Church Street, London Hill & Websters Way), which would require significant infrastructure improvements for these routes to be able to accommodate the additional traffic. It would potentially shift existing traffic issues elsewhere within the AAP area creating another barrier to movement. It could lead to the diversion of buses (depending on full or partial pedestrianisation) away from the High Street along alternative routes which could result in delays to journeys and little opportunity to provide priority measures.

Issue 2. Need to introduce a greater range of leisure service providers, further comparison goods floorspace and office space.

- 4.6 For this issue, four options were also considered which relate to differing levels of intervention or change: Low; Medium; High; and Higher.
- 4.7 All of the options have the potential for a positive effect on social and economic SA objectives as they seek to improve access to a greater mix of uses. The higher option has the potential for the greater positive effect as it proposes the development of a major mixed-use redevelopment at the southern end of the High Street and could potentially result in new residential development within the town centre. This would help to regenerate the existing community and improve access to employment, housing and retail with indirect positive effect on transport by reducing the need for people to travel. The assessment identified some uncertainty in relation to the medium, high and higher options given the development they propose and potential impacts on communities, townscape and transport during construction. However, it is considered that suitable mitigation measures are available at the project level to minimise potential impacts. There are a number of potential negative effects that could arise as a result of the pedestrianisation of the High Street, which are set out in the summary appraisal of the Issue 1 options.

Issue 3. Cluster of leisure and cultural uses around Rayleigh Mount are poorly integrated with the town centre core.

- 4.8 For this issue, three options were considered which relate to differing levels of intervention or change: Low; Medium; and High.
- 4.9 The options propose improvements to the pedestrian environment around Rayleigh Mount and improved access to the town centre core. This has the potential for a positive effect on SA objectives relating to the economy and communities. The low option will not have the same benefits as the other options in terms of accessibility as no new access routes are proposed. The medium and high option are likely to have similar effects; however, the assessment did identify uncertainty in relation to the shared space treatments proposed in the high option, which can have implications for blind members of the community.

Issue 4. Traffic dominated, service access nature of Websters Way represents a poor quality environment and arrival to the town centre.

- 4.10 For this issue, four options were considered which relate to differing levels of intervention or change: Low; Medium; High; and Higher.
- 4.11 The options were assessed as having the potential for a positive effect on communities, health and the economy through measures intended to improve the environment of Websters Way. Compared to the other options, the higher option was assessed as having the potential for greater a positive effect for communities and the economy through the creation of a multi-storey car park and the redevelopment of the block fronting Eastwood Road for mixed-uses. However, it was also assessed that the creation of a multi-storey car park on Websters Way could have a negative effect on townscape as well as the Rayleigh Conservation Area. Development would need to be carefully planned and designed.

Issue 5. Pedestrian movement hindered or uncatered for in some locations through a combination of vehicle dominated junction forms, street clutter and guardrailing, narrow or missing pavements, or poorly defined routes.

- 4.12 For this issue, four options were also considered which relate to differing levels of intervention or change: Low; Medium; High; and Higher.
- 4.13 The options seek to improve pedestrian movement in the AAP area through a variety of different interventions, including improved or new pedestrian routes and junctions, which have the potential for long-term positive effects on communities, health, the economy and accessibility. The low and medium options propose improving existing routes with the medium option having the added benefit of providing walking improvements at junctions which is an identified issue within the AAP area. The high option is likely to have the greatest positive effect on SA objectives as it proposes redevelopment at strategic locations to create new, direct walking routes as well as reconfiguring the taxi rank and bus stop on the High Street to provide high quality walking routes. The higher option is unlikely to have the same benefits as it will only result in improved pedestrian movement along the High Street, whereas the high option will improve connectivity throughout the AAP area. There are a number of potential negative effects that could arise as a result of the pedestrianisation of the High Street, which are set out in the summary appraisal of the Issue1 options.

Issue 6. Congestion along Websters Way and approaches into the town centre.

- 4.14 For this issue, four options were considered which relate to differing levels of intervention or change: Low; Medium; High; and Higher.
- 4.15 The low option was assessed as having the potential for a positive effect on communities, health and accessibility as it seeks to improve conditions for walking and cycling within the town centre. It was also assessed as having a positive effect on climate change and air quality as it will help to encourage people to use alternative modes of transportation other than the private car, therefore reducing emissions from vehicles. The medium, high and higher options all propose measures to try and reduce the level of traffic within the

town centre, which will have a positive effect on SA objectives relating to communities, health, accessibility, townscape, climate change and air quality. A composite option that sought to not only reduce traffic in the town centre but also improve walking and cycling conditions would have a greater positive effect against SA objectives than any of the proposed options.

COMPONENTS

Area around the Police Station and Somerfield Store

- 4.16 For this component, three options were considered which focus on key aspects for bringing about change: Option 1; Option 2; and Option 3.
- 4.17 All of the options were assessed as having a positive effect on SA objectives relating to communities, health, heritage and townscape as they seek to improve the south of the High Street, which is a gateway to the town centre. Option 3 has the potential to provide the greatest benefits, particularly for the economy, as it proposes the highest level of intervention, which includes a new town centre food store and mixed-use developments. With a higher level of intervention comes a degree of uncertainty as development has the potential for negative effects in the short-term during construction (noise & traffic); however, it is considered that suitable mitigation measures are available at the project level to minimise impacts and address any significant effects.

The High Street taxi rank ('Boots Lagoon')

- 4.18 For this component, two options were considered which focus on key aspects for bringing about change: Option 1; and Option 2.
- 4.19 Option 2 was assessed as having the greatest positive effect on SA objectives relating to communities, health and the economy through public realm improvements and the creation of a new public space in the town centre.

Opportunities between the High Street and Mount

- 4.20 For this component, three options were considered which focus on key aspects for bringing about change: Option 1; Option 2; and Option 3.
- 4.21 Option 3 was assessed as having the greatest potential for sustainability benefits through the provision of a large mixed-use development, the creation of large central public space and wider public realm improvements along the High Street and Bellingham Lane. It has the potential for long-term positive effects on SA objectives relating to communities, health, housing, the economy and accessibility. The other options also have the potential for positive effects on SA objectives although not the same level of significance as option 3. However, given the higher level of intervention, option 3 has the potential for negative effects on heritage and townscape unless development is carefully planned and designed. There is also the potential for negative effects on communities and the economy in the short-term during construction.

Development opportunities along Websters Way

- 4.22 For this component, three options were considered which focus on key aspects for bringing about change: Option 1; Option 2; and Option 3.
- 4.23 All of the options will help to progress sustainability objectives relating to communities, health, the economy and accessibility as they seek to improve the quality and attractiveness of Websters Way as well as the pedestrian routes along it and connecting to the High Street. Option 3 was assessed as having the greatest potential for positive effects as it proposes the redevelopment of the former Tesco store for mixed-uses and the strengthening of pedestrian links between Websters Way and the High Street by formalising routes between the two. Option 3 was also identified as having the potential for a positive effect on housing as there is the potential for providing housing as part of the mixed-use development. The assessment considered that option 3 also has the potential for a long-term positive effect on the quality and setting of the Conservation Area as it proposes the redevelopment of the former Tesco store, which is rated by the Rayleigh Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)¹³ as having a very negative impact. As noted in the option, any redevelopment of the former Tesco store would need to be sensitively designed to respond to the Conservation Area.

Development opportunities at Rayleigh Lanes

- 4.24 For this component, two options were considered which focus on key aspects for bringing about change: Option 1; and Option 2.
- 4.25 The options consider development opportunities at Rayleigh Lanes and for potential to improve the quality and attractiveness of the area as well as pedestrian links. Both options have the potential for positive effects on SA objectives relating to communities, health, the economy and accessibility. Option 3 was assessed as have the potential for the greatest sustainability benefits as it proposes the redevelopment of an infill site for a mix of uses including retail, commercial and residential.

Car parking provision on Websters Way

- 4.26 For this component, two options were considered which focus on key aspects for bringing about change: Option 1; and Option 2.
- 4.27 The options seek to address the loss of car parking on Websters Way potentially lost as a result of changes proposed in other options. Both options have the potential for a positive effect against SA objectives relating to communities, health, sustainable design and the economy through improvements to the pedestrian crossing conditions at the junction of Eastwood Road and Websters Way. Option 2 is likely to have further enhanced benefits through signal controlled junction improvements and the provision of new links to and development addressing King Georges Fields. The positive effect on the local economy is likely to be greater for Option 2 through the provision of a multi-storey car park wrapped with commercial

¹³ Rochford Council (2007) Rayleigh Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

activities to create an active street front. The assessment also identified the potential for uncertainty as proposed development has the potential negative effects in the short-term for communities, health and the economy; however, it is considered that suitable mitigation is available at the project level to minimise any negative effects.

CIRCULATION

- 4.28 The town centre circulation and public realm options included the following:
1. Working with the existing network
 2. Partial pedestrianisation
 3. Partial or full pedestrianisation
 4. Two way working on the High Street
- 4.29 Option 1 seeks to work within the existing network and provide improvements to pedestrian crossings at roundabouts, a shared space along the High Street and capacity improvements to the junctions at either end of Websters Way. This has the potential for long-term positive effects on SA objectives relating to communities, health and safety, accessibility and the economy. This option has the potential for the greatest benefits compared to the others as it will not shift transport issues elsewhere in the area and will not increase the levels of traffic along the High Street.
- 4.30 The partial or full pedestrianisation of the High Street, or sections of the High Street, proposed in Options 2 and 3 would mean the diversion of traffic along surrounding routes (Bellingham Lane, Church Street, London Hill & Websters Way). This would require significant infrastructure improvements for these routes to be able to accommodate the additional traffic. It would potentially shift existing traffic issues elsewhere within the AAP area creating another barrier to movement. Options 2 could also lead to the diversion of buses (depending on full or partial pedestrianisation) away from the High Street along Websters Way which could result in delays to journeys and little opportunity to provide priority measures. While Options 2 and 3 have the potential for positive effects through improvements to the public realm the diversion of traffic has the potential to have negative effects in other areas that have not been pedestrianised.
- 4.31 Option 4 will not result in the public realm improvements as proposed in the other options as it proposes two-way traffic on the High Street. This has the potential to double the amount of traffic using the High Street. Crossing would be regulated at controlled crossing points to allow the movement of pedestrians. The option would remove the need to divert traffic along Websters Way and help to relieve congestion through the town centre by adding a second lane for eastbound traffic. This has the potential for a positive effect, particularly through the provision of two-way buses, which would improve on the efficiency of the bus network. This option would not help to encourage walking within the town centre and has the potential for negative effects on climate change and air quality.

SPATIAL

- 4.32 A total of four spatial options were considered:
- Option Level 1: Low
 - Option Level 2: Medium
 - Option Level 3: High
 - Option Level 4: Higher
- 4.33 All of the options have the potential for long-term positive effects on communities, health and safety, accessibility, the economy and heritage through improvements to the public realm and amenity of the plan area as well as enhanced movement for pedestrians. The significance of this effect increases along with the level of intervention. The higher levels of intervention proposed in options 3 & 4 will have a greater positive effect on communities and the economy through the provision of mixed-use developments and more dramatic changes to pedestrian movement along the High Street. However, with a higher level of intervention there is also some uncertainty as proposed development has the potential for negative effects in the short-term on SA objectives through increased noise and congestion.
- 4.34 Option 4 has the potential for negative effects on a number of SA objectives as a result of the pedestrianisation of the High Street. This would result in the diversion of traffic along surrounding routes (Bellingham Lane, Church Street, London Hill & Websters Way), which would require significant infrastructure improvements for these routes to be able to accommodate the additional traffic. It would potentially shift existing traffic issues elsewhere within the AAP area creating another barrier to movement. It could lead to the diversion of buses (depending on full or partial pedestrianisation) away from the High Street along alternative routes which could result in delays to journeys and little opportunity to provide priority measures.
- 4.35 A composite option that sought the higher level of intervention proposed in option 4 with the shared space treatments proposed in option 3 (rather than the pedestrianisation of the High Street) would not require the diversion of traffic and would provide greater benefits to a wider area.

REASONS FOR PROGRESSING/ REJECTING OPTIONS

- 4.36 Table 4.1 below summarises the options/alternatives considered for the AAP, with an outline of the reasons for rejection where relevant. It should be noted that whilst the SA findings are considered by the Council in its selection of options and form part of the evidence supporting the Rayleigh AAP, the SA findings are not the sole basis for a decision; planning and feasibility factors play a key role in the decision-making process.

Table 4.1 Summary of Approach to Alternatives Assessment and Selection

Options Considered and Appraised	Reasons for Progressing or Rejecting the Option in Plan Making
Issues	
Issue 1. Quality and setting of conservation area/ listed buildings undermined by unsympathetic development and 'street clutter'.	
Low Medium High Higher	The high and higher level of intervention options were assessed as generally having the most positive effects. However, there were a number of negative effects identified in respect of full pedestrianisation of Rayleigh High Street, including in respect of accessibility and potential for traffic issues to occur elsewhere within the AAP area. Consequently, this option was not progressed.
Issue 2. Need to introduce a greater range of leisure service providers, further comparison goods floorspace and office space.	
Low Medium High Higher	Higher level intervention options were assessed as generally having the most positive effects. However, some of the aspects of the highest level intervention options were not progressed to the next iteration of the Plan due to viability and deliverability issues. For example, since the Issues and Options report was published the economic climate has changed; and, in addition, a number of organisations, including Essex Police, have reviewed their property portfolios and informed the Council that land previously believed to be available for redevelopment is now included in their future plans.
Issue 3. Cluster of leisure and cultural uses around Rayleigh Mount are poorly integrated with the town centre core.	
Low Medium High	The options propose improvements to the pedestrian environment around Rayleigh Mount and improved access to the town centre core. This has the potential for a positive effect on SA objectives relating to the economy and communities. The low option would not have the same benefits as the other options in terms of accessibility as no new access routes are proposed. In progressing options, the Council has also been mindful of consultation responses regarding the feasibility of additional pedestrian routes on Rayleigh Mount, including concerns expressed by Rayleigh National Trust Local Committee.
Issue 4. Traffic dominated, service access nature of Websters Way represents a poor quality environment and arrival to the town centre.	
Low Medium High Higher	Compared to the other options, the higher option was assessed as having the potential for greater a positive effects for communities and the economy through the creation of a multi-storey car park and the redevelopment of the block fronting Eastwood Road for mixed-uses. However, it was also assessed that the creation of a multi-storey car park on Websters Way could have a negative effect on townscape as well as the Rayleigh Conservation Area. In progressing options, the Council was mindful of the results of community involvement, which indicated opposition to a retail-led development of Websters Way car park: retail-led redevelopment of Websters Way car park and the construction of a multi-storey car park was

	considered likely to cause visual harm, have a negative impact on openness and cause security problems. There were also concerns that such a development would have a detrimental impact on the town centre's vitality. Consequently, this option was not progressed.
Issue 5. Pedestrian movement hindered or uncatered for in some locations through a combination of vehicle dominated junction forms, street clutter and guardrailling, narrow or missing pavements, or poorly defined routes.	
Low Medium High Higher	The option of full pedestrianisation of the High Street, whilst assessed as having a number of positive effects, gave rise to a number of concerns including in respect of accessibility and potential for traffic issues to occur elsewhere within the AAP area. Consequently, this option was not progressed. Other options for improved pedestrian movement have been progressed and included in the Submission Document, but the Council's approach has had to have regard to viability and deliverability – as such, some of the higher level intervention options that entailed significant redevelopment have not been progressed. Options to improve the layout of the High Street, including alterations to the layout of the taxi rank and improved pedestrian crossings, have however been progressed to the Submission Document.
Issue 6. Congestion along Websters Way and approaches into the town centre.	
Low Medium High Higher	Improvements to Websters Way were assessed as having a number of positive effects and have been progressed to the Submission Document.
The Component Options	
Area around the Police Station and Somerfield Store	
Option 1 Option 2 Option 3	All of the options were assessed as having a positive effect on SA objectives relating to communities, health, heritage and townscape as they seek to improve the south of the High Street, which is a gateway to the town centre. Option 3 was assessed as having the potential to provide the greatest benefits, particularly for the economy, as it proposes the highest level of intervention, which includes a new town centre food store and mixed-use developments. In determining how to progress options, the Council were mindful of viability issues in respect of any major redevelopment; and concerns expressed through community involvement in respect of a new food store
The High Street taxi rank ('Boots Lagoon')	
Option 1 Option 2	Alterations to the pedestrian environment and taxi rank were assessed as having positive effects and progressed to the Submission Document.
Opportunities between the High Street and Mount	
Option 1 Option 2 Option 3	Option 3 was assessed as having the greatest potential for sustainability benefits through the provision of a large mixed-use development, the creation of large central public space and wider public realm improvements along the High Street and Bellingham Lane. It has the potential for long-term positive effects on SA objectives relating to communities, health, housing, the economy and accessibility. The other options also have the potential for positive effects on SA objectives although not the same level of significance as option 3. However, given the higher level of intervention, option 3 has the potential for negative effects on heritage and townscape unless development is

	carefully planned and designed. Given the above issues in addition to those in respect of deliverability, a less interventionist approach is proposed in the Submission Document which sets out a criteria based policy which seeks to enhance the character of the area and the town centre's retail offer.
Development opportunities along Websters Way	
Option 1 Option 2 Option 3	All of the options assessed were considered to progress sustainability objectives relating to communities, health, the economy and accessibility as they sought to improve the quality and attractiveness of Websters Way as well as the pedestrian routes along it and connecting to the High Street. The Submission Document proposes a criteria based policy which seeks to increase provision of uses appropriate for the town centre, deliver environmental improvements, improve pedestrian links, and ensure that car parking provision is retained.
Development opportunities at Rayleigh Lanes	
Option 1 Option 2	Both options considered at Issues and Options were found to have the potential for positive effects on SA objectives relating to communities, health, the economy and accessibility. The Submission Document proposes a criteria based policy which seeks to enhance the retail provision within the town centre. The Submission Document acknowledges that Rayleigh Lanes manages to present an active address to both the High Street and Websters Way
Car parking provision on Websters Way	
Option 1 Option 2	Both options were assessed as having the potential for a positive effect against SA objectives relating to communities, health, sustainable design and the economy through improvements to the pedestrian crossing conditions at the junction of Eastwood Road and Websters Way. Option 2 is likely to have further enhanced benefits through signal controlled junction improvements and the provision of new links to and development addressing King Georges Fields. The positive effect on the local economy is likely to be greater for Option 2 through the provision of a multi-storey car park wrapped with commercial activities to create an active street front. The assessment also identified the potential for uncertainty as proposed development has the potential negative effects in the short-term for communities, health and the economy. In progressing the options to the Submission Document the Council were mindful of concerns expressed through community involvement that a multi-storey car park would cause visual harm, have a negative impact on openness and cause security problems. Consequently, a multi-storey car park is not proposed in the Submission Document.
Circulation Options	
Town centre circulation and public realm options	
1. Working with the existing network 2. Partial pedestrianisation 3. Partial or full pedestrianisation 4. Two way	Option1 sought to work within the existing network and provide improvements to pedestrian crossings at roundabouts, a shared space along the High Street and capacity improvements to the junctions at either end of Websters Way. This was assessed as having the potential for long-term positive effects on SA objectives relating to communities, health and safety, accessibility and the economy. This option was found to have the potential for the greatest benefits compared to the others as it would not shift transport issues elsewhere in the area and will not increase the levels of traffic along the High Street.

<p>working on the High Street</p>	<p>The partial or full pedestrianisation of the High Street, or sections of the High Street, proposed in Options 2 and 3 would mean the diversion of traffic along surrounding routes (Bellingham Lane, Church Street, London Hill & Websters Way). This would require significant infrastructure improvements for these routes to be able to accommodate the additional traffic. It would potentially shift existing traffic issues elsewhere within the AAP area creating another barrier to movement. Options 2 could also lead to the diversion of buses (depending on full or partial pedestrianisation) away from the High Street along Websters Way which could result in delays to journeys and little opportunity to provide priority measures. While Options 2 and 3 have the potential for positive effects through improvements to the public realm the diversion of traffic has the potential to have negative effects in other areas that have not been pedestrianised.</p> <p>Having regard to all of the above, and especially concerns with altering the existing highway network, the Submission Document includes a movement framework that does not alter the existing traffic regime, but does seek to give pedestrians greater priority.</p>
<p>Spatial Options</p>	
<p>Option Level 1: Low Option Level 2: Medium Option Level 3: High Option Level 4: Higher</p>	<p>All of the options were assessed as having the potential for long-term positive effects on communities, health and safety, accessibility, the economy and heritage through improvements to the public realm and amenity of the plan area as well as enhanced movement for pedestrians. The significance of this effect was found to increase along with the level of intervention. The higher levels of intervention proposed in options 3 and 4 would have a greater positive effect on communities and the economy through the provision of mixed-use developments and more dramatic changes to pedestrian movement along the High Street. However, with a higher level of intervention there would also be some uncertainty as proposed development has the potential for negative effects in the short-term on SA objectives through increased noise and congestion.</p> <p>Option 4 has was found to have the potential for negative effects on a number of SA objectives as a result of the pedestrianisation of the High Street. This would result in the diversion of traffic along surrounding routes (Bellingham Lane, Church Street, London Hill & Websters Way), which would require significant infrastructure improvements for these routes to be able to accommodate the additional traffic. It would potentially shift existing traffic issues elsewhere within the AAP area creating another barrier to movement. It could lead to the diversion of buses (depending on full or partial pedestrianisation) away from the High Street along alternative routes which could result in delays to journeys and little opportunity to provide priority measures.</p> <p>In progressing the options to the Submission Document, the Council was mindful of changes in circumstances since the Issues and Options document was published. In particular, the current economic climate is significantly more challenging than it was at the beginning of the AAP process. In addition, a</p>

	<p>number of organisations, including Essex Police, have reviewed their property portfolios and informed the Council that land previously believed to be available for redevelopment is now included in their future plans. As such, deliverability and viability – particular for major redevelopment projects – is more difficult. Furthermore, community involvement has not indicated there is a desire to see a significant degree of change in the town centre. Consequently, the more dramatic and higher level intervention suggestions in the Issues and Options document have generally not been progressed.</p>
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5.0 SA OF AREA ACTION PLAN PRE-SUBMISSION POLICIES

SA OF AREA ACTION PLAN VISION AND OBJECTIVES

- 5.1 A compatibility analysis of the Pre-Submission AAP Vision and Objectives was carried out using the SA framework in December 2013.
- 5.2 The Vision was found to be very compatible with a number of SA Objectives including the ones relating to Balanced Communities; Healthy and Safe Communities; Economy and Employment; Accessibility; Biodiversity and Cultural Heritage. The vision is also considered to be compatible with SA Objectives 2, 3, 6, 8, 10 and 11 as it seeks to provide new homes which if of good quality can have indirect positive effects on health and also enhance and respect the town center's character which will have positive effects on the quality of its townscape. In addition, environmental enhancements could lead to positive effects on biological diversity, land, water and soil quality and health. The uncertainties identified within the compatibility analysis relate to the overarching nature of the vision, which cannot be expected to cover all aspects of sustainability in detail. The certainty of compatibility with SA Objectives 9 and 12 could be improved if greater emphasis was placed on improving access in the AAP area by more sustainable modes of transport, by foot and public transport, rather than by private motor vehicles.
- 5.3 The AAP Objectives were found to be compatible with the majority of SA Objectives. The uncertainty that has been identified can largely be mitigated with higher level policies in the Rochford District Council Core Strategy, for example, Policy ENV10 –BRAM and Policy ENV9 – Code for Sustainable Homes would support the AAP Objectives to ensure the certainty of compatibility with SA Objective 13. However, it would be recommend that reference is made to 'environmental enhancements' within the Objectives to ensure they fully support the Vision and to further reduce uncertainty identified for SA Objectives 6 and 9 to 13.

SUMMARY OF SA OF PRE-SUBMISSION POLICIES

- 5.4 The Pre-Submission policies were subject to detailed SA in December 2013. A summary of the results of this appraisal is provided below, with the detailed working matrices provided in Appendix VI. On the whole, the findings of the SA suggest that the emerging AAP policies will make significant contributions to the progression of SA objectives.
- 5.5 There are a number of negative effects which were found to be common to all the AAP policies which supported new development. Firstly, it was considered that there could be potential negative effects on health and air quality, as new development has the potential to increase NO₂ levels in the short-term during construction through an increase in heavy goods vehicles and in the long-term through increases in light good vehicles and cars. Secondly, negative effects were also identified in the short-term with reference to health/ safety and sensitive heritage assets as a result of waste, noise, vibration and noise nuisances being created during demolition/ construction. It was considered that in most cases suitable mitigation is

available either in the policy wording itself or in Core Strategy and Development Management DPDs to reduce these identified negative effects. To reduce short-term negative effects on cultural heritage and on health it was recommended that either a construction management plan could be developed or phasing could be introduced at the project level.

- 5.6 In addition, it was considered that for all policies, greater positive effects on sustainable design and construction and also biodiversity could be achieved if the design of any development was required to maximise opportunities for biodiversity by taking account of 'Biodiversity by Design' (Town and Country Planning Association, 2004).

POLICY 1 – RAYLEIGH AREA ACTION PLAN FRAMEWORK

- 5.7 This policy requires development to be in accordance with the spatial development framework, which aims to create new opportunities for development, in particular, retail and to require new development to contribute to appropriate town centre environmental improvements. All of these aims are consistent with the SA objectives developed for the Rayleigh AAP, and the predicted effect is one that is positive for sustainability in the long-term. The policy has the potential for major positive long-term effects on communities, health, the economy and accessibility. It was considered that in most cases suitable mitigation is available either in the policy wording itself or in Core Strategy and Development Management DPDs to reduce the negative effects. To reduce short-term negative effects on cultural heritage and on health it was recommended that either a construction management plan could be developed or phasing could be introduced at the project level.
- 5.8 It was considered that this policy could be strengthened with regard to biodiversity, if more detail was inserted with regard to biodiversity improvements including other forms of green infrastructure e.g. creation of greenway linkages. It was also recommended that account should be taken of the written guidance/ reports provided by Natural England with reference to green infrastructure.

POLICY 2 – RETAIL DEVELOPMENT IN RAYLEIGH

- 5.9 This policy was designed to encourage new retail-led development within the town centre in order to strengthen Rayleigh's position in the local retail hierarchy. The policy has the potential for major positive long-term effects on communities and the economy and minor positive effects for health/safety, accessibility, land and soil, landscape/townscape, cultural heritage and sustainable design/construction.
- 5.10 It was considered that this policy could be strengthened with regard to accessibility if the emphasis of improving key public routes was placed on the promotion of walking and cycling over the use of cars.

POLICY 3 – RAYLEIGH'S SHOPPING FRONTAGES

- 5.11 This policy aims to protect existing retail uses but also where appropriate and subject to a number of conditions, it will support non-retail uses. It is concerned with change of use rather than development of new buildings. The policy has the potential for major positive long-term effects on communities and the economy and minor positive effects for housing, landscape/townscape, land/soil, cultural heritage and sustainable design/construction. Potential for negative effects were only identified against SA objectives relating to health/safety and air quality through permitting A3 and A4 uses which may have an impact on odour and smoke on adjoining uses. It was considered that the nature of effects will depend on the type of use adjacent, for example, residential establishments will be more sensitive than office uses. Also, it was found that mitigation is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (paragraph 109) and also by Policy ENV 5 –Air Quality and therefore the potential residual effects are not considered to be significant.

POLICY 4 – RAYLEIGH'S CHARACTER AREAS

- 5.12 This policy identifies a number of important principles for any development proposed in the four character areas. Specifically it supports public realm interventions to be incorporated where possible for new development, enhanced cycling facilities, improved bus facilities and new and improved pedestrian signage. All of these principles are consistent with the SA objectives developed for the Rochford AAP, and the predicted overall result is one that is positive for sustainability. It also emphasises the importance of the historic character of the centre and requires that it is protected and where possible, enhanced. The policy has the potential for major long-term positive effects on SA objectives relating to communities, health/safety, accessibility and cultural heritage and minor positive effects for a number of other objectives, including, the economy, landscape/ townscape, climate change/energy, sustainable design/construction and biodiversity.

POLICY 5 – CHARACTER AREA A: CENTRAL HIGH STREET

- 5.13 This policy identifies a number of important principles for any development proposed in the Central High Street character area, which includes the requirement for development to respond positively to the local townscape character. Specific proposals within the policy include the potential public realm improvements focusing on the creation of new public space. The regeneration of the Central High Street Area, will help to strengthen the retail function and create a stronger sense of place as well as improve accessibility, which has the potential for long-term positive effects against a number of SA objectives, including accessibility, health, landscape/townscape, land and soil and biodiversity, and in particular communities and the economy.
- 5.14 It was considered that the certainty of positive effects resulting from the implementation of this policy on biodiversity could be increased if a requirement was introduced to create a potential greenway, focused on pedestrians, which would link the centre and the Mount (an important

cultural heritage asset). It was considered that this could also lead to additional positive effects for many other SA Objectives, in particular, for cultural heritage and health. It was also recommended that account should be taken of the written guidance provided by Natural England.

POLICY 6 – CHARACTER AREA B: HIGH STREET NORTH AND BELLINGHAM LANE

- 5.15 This policy identifies a number of important principles for any development proposed in the High Street (north) and Bellingham Lane Character Area B. This includes the requirement for development to respond positively to the local townscape character with regard to several key elements one of which refers to the high quality of the historic townscape. The regeneration of Area B will help support the main retail function of the central high street covered by the previous policy primarily through the provision of complementary uses. All of the principles are consistent with the SA objectives developed for the Rayleigh AAP, and the predicted effect is one that is positive for sustainability in the long-term. The policy was considered likely to lead to major positive effects on the SA objectives of communities and the economy.
- 5.16 Uncertain effects were identified for biodiversity and it was considered that the certainty of positive effects on biodiversity could be enhanced if there was a requirement to protect and retain existing trees and shrubbery. It was also suggested that wording could be inserted into the supporting text which specified that the public space outside of the Mill Arts and Events Centre and the Mill itself could be turned into a communal greenspace to incorporate fine grain habitats to boost biodiversity and aesthetic value. In addition, it was suggested that creating a potential greenway focused on pedestrians linking Area B, with the Mount, the Mill and the main centre could also provide additional positive effects for biodiversity as well as many other SA Objectives, in particular for cultural heritage. It was also recommended that account should be taken of the written guidance/ reports provided by Natural England with reference to green infrastructure.

POLICY 7 – CHARACTER AREA C: HIGH STREET SOUTH AND EASTWOOD ROAD

- 5.17 This policy identifies a number of important principles for any development proposed in the High Street (south) and Eastwood Road Character Area C. This includes the requirement for development to respond positively to the local townscape character with regard to several key elements which mainly concern design aspects (development grain and building heights). The regeneration of Area C will help support the main retail function of the central high street covered by policy 5, primarily through the provision of secondary retailing and complementary uses as well as maintaining existing car parking. Major positive effects were identified for SA objectives relating to communities and the economy, with minor positive effects identified for health, housing, landscape/townscape, land and soil, accessibility and sustainable design and construction.
- 5.18 Uncertain effects were identified for biodiversity and it was considered that the certainty of positive effects on biodiversity could be increased if there was a requirement to protect and retain existing trees and shrubbery. It was also

suggested that new development could be encouraged to contribute to creating a potential continuous street tree canopy which would link High street and Eastwood Road to King George's Park. This could also provide additional positive effects for many other SA Objectives, in particular for landscape and townscape. It was also recommended that account should be taken of the written guidance/ reports provided by Natural England with reference to green infrastructure.

POLICY 8 – CHARACTER AREA D: WEBSTERS WAY

- 5.19 This policy identifies a number of important principles for any development proposed in Websters Way Character Area D. The policy seeks to protect the area's role as providing the main car parking and servicing areas for the main high street. All of the principles are consistent with the SA Framework objectives developed for the Rayleigh AAP, and the predicted effect is one that is positive for sustainability in the long-term. The policy was considered likely to lead to major positive effects on the SA objectives of communities and the economy. One of the policy's successes in terms of realising positive effects regards cultural heritage, as it advocates development which will improve the area with a degree of flexibility to allow for creative ideas and as a result it was considered that this should help address the issues identified by the Rayleigh Conservation Area Appraisal (Rochford District Council, 2007) for this area.
- 5.20 As for a number of the other policies, uncertain effects were identified for biodiversity and it was considered that the certainty of positive effects on biodiversity could be increased if there was a requirement to protect and retain existing trees and shrubbery. It was also suggested that in the supporting text a way to improve the environment could be inserted such as encouraging new development to contribute to creating a potential continuous street tree canopy which would link High street, Eastwood Road, Bull Lane and Webster's Way to King George's Park. This could also provide additional positive effects for many other SA Objectives, in particular for landscape and townscape. It was also recommended that account should be taken of the written guidance/ reports provided by Natural England with reference to green infrastructure.

6.0 SUMMARY AND CUMULATIVE EFFECTS ANALYSIS

- 6.1 In addition to the appraisal of individual policies undertaken in SA/SEA, the SEA Directive requires consideration of the overall effects of the plan, including the secondary, synergistic and cumulative effects of plan policies. This may include incremental effects that can have a small effect individually, but can accrue to have significant environmental effects.
- 6.2 In good practice SA/SEA, the analysis of cumulative effects should also consider the significant effects of the plan in combination with the effects of other plans, policies and proposals.
- 6.3 This section summarises the key effects, including the cumulative effects of the plan policies (known as the intra-plan effects) and the combined effects with other relevant plans and projects (known as the inter-plan effects).

CUMULATIVE EFFECT OF PLAN POLICIES (INTRA-PLAN EFFECTS)

- 6.4 To assist in considering the overall effects of policies within the plan when assessed against the SA Framework, a summary has been prepared, illustrating how each policy has performed against each SA Objective. This is provided in the following table:

Table 6.1: Intra-plan effects: Cumulative summary of Pre-Submission Policies

Appraisal key - Categories of sustainability effects	
Colour	Impact
++	Major Positive
+	Positive
0	No Impact
?	Uncertain
-	Negative
--	Major Negative

Policy	SA Objectives														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
Policy 1 – Rayleigh Area Action Plan Framework	++	+ +	?	+	++	++	+	+	?	+	+	0	+	?	+
Policy 2 – Retail Development In Rayleigh	++	+	?	0	++	+	0	+	?	+	0	0	+	?	+
Policy 3 – Rayleigh’s Shopping Frontages	++	?	+	++	0	0	+	?	+	0	0	+	?	+	
Policy 4 – Rayleigh’s Character Areas	++	+ +	?	0	+	++	+	+	?	+	+	0	0	?	+
Policy 5 – Character Area A: Central High Street	++	+	?	0	++	+	+	+	?	+	+	0	+	?	+
Policy 6 – Character Area B: High Street North And Bellingham Lane	++	+	?	+	++	+	?	+	?	+	0	0	+	?	+
Policy 7 – Character Area C: High Street South And Eastwood Road	++	+	?	+	++	+	?	+	?	+	0	0	+	?	+
Policy 8 – Character Area D: Websters Way	++	+	?	+	++	+	?	+	?	+	0	0	+	?	+

SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE CUMULATIVE EFFECTS OF PLAN POLICIES (INTRA-PLAN EFFECTS)

- 6.5 The SA found that the majority of policies could have significant positive sustainability benefits for Rayleigh Town Centre and the wider area. The following table summarises the significant positive effects identified.

Table 6.2: Significant positive effects of the emerging Rayleigh AAP

Significant positive effects of the emerging Rayleigh AAP	
Key relevant SA Objective:	Positive effects identified:
1.Balanced communities & 2.Healthy and Safe Communities	The combined individual requirements of the AAP will lead to: a mix of uses in the town centre, including retail, cultural, leisure facilities and new public spaces; more people to get out and about and improve their fitness; reduce the incidence of crime; and the potential for new employment opportunities. The combination of these effects is likely to lead to significant positive cumulative effects.
4.Economy and Employment	Potential for positive effects on the local economy identified for individual policies result from enhanced opportunities for retail, leisure and offices and improvements to the public realm. The combining of the resulting benefits of greater consumer choice, potential provision of employment opportunities (skilled and unskilled), greater access to the centre, a high quality public space, is likely to lead to significant positive cumulative effects.
5. Accessibility	Significant positive cumulative effects for accessibility are likely through a range of improvements to the public realm, upgrades to bus facilities, access to the train station and increased accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.
6.Landscape and Townscape	The setting of key principles for development will contribute positively to the local townscape and character, focusing on the individual parts of the AAP area, is likely to lead to positive cumulative effects. In addition, the combined requirements for enhancing the public realm and the likely redevelopment of derelict, degraded or underused land will also contribute to an overall significant positive cumulative effect.
7. Cultural Heritage	The main thrust of the AAP is to ensure that the historic character of the centre is protected and where possible enhanced. It advocates new and improved pedestrian signage to key cultural heritage assets such as the Mount and the Windmill which will hopefully improve access to heritage.

	Furthermore, public realm interventions and regeneration are likely to help improve the aesthetic value of the AAP area which is likely to benefit the conservation area and the settings of the listed buildings. The combination of these effects is likely to lead to significant positive cumulative effects.
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SIGNIFICANT NEGATIVE OR UNCERTAIN CUMULATIVE EFFECTS OF PLAN POLICIES (INTRA-PLAN EFFECTS)

6.6 Alongside the many positive effects of the plan, potential negative sustainability effects were also identified, although their effect is uncertain at this stage of the assessment and it is considered likely that these effects can be mitigated at a more detailed planning stage. These are summarised in Table 6.3 below.

Table 6.3: Potentially significant negative effects of the emerging Rayleigh AAP

Potentially significant negative effects of the emerging Rayleigh AAP	
Key relevant SA Objective:	Negative Effects identified:
7. Cultural Heritage	Some temporary negative effects in the short-term during demolition/ construction as noise and vibration will be created but it is expected that this can be mitigated at the project level. Any other effects were considered to be mitigated by policies contained within the Core Strategy and Development Management DPDs.
2. Healthy and Safe Communities and 12. Air quality	There have been exceedences of the annual mean air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide at Eastwood Road/Rayleigh High Street and Eastwood Road. Any new development has the potential to increase nitrogen dioxide levels in the both the short-term and the long-term. Mitigation already in place through Core Strategy Policies. There may be some temporary negative effects in the short-term during demolition/ construction as waste, noise and dust nuisances may be created but it is expected that this can be mitigated at the project level.

INTERACTIONS WITH OTHER RELEVANT PLANS AND PROJECTS (INTER-PLAN EFFECTS)

6.7 In considering the effects of AAP with other plans and projects, priority has been given to key documents that affect planning and development in

Rochford District, in particular the Rochford Core Strategy and the Area Action Plans for Hockley and Rochford (also in preparation). The aim of the analysis of inter-plan effects was to identify how other plans and key projects may affect the sustainability of Rayleigh.

Table 6.4: Inter-Plan Cumulative Effects

SA Objective	Significant combined effects of Rayleigh AAP with other plans, projects or policies
1. Balanced communities & 2. Healthy & Safe Communities	Increased access to employment, leisure and community facilities and services as well as improved connections will combine with effects from the Core Strategy overall and other AAPs, to create a better and healthier environment for local residents across the District.
4. Economy & Employment	An increase in mixed-use development and new shops, services and a higher quality environment will, when combined with the development outlined in the Rochford Core Strategy and AAPs, contribute to an improved local economy and increased employment opportunities.
5. Accessibility	Enhancements to accessibility proposed in the AAP will add to similar improvements in the other 2 AAPs for Rochford and Hockley as well as the Core Strategy and help to improve overall use of public transport, encourage cycling and walking in the District. This should help the District to achieve a higher level of containment, reducing out-commuting to other areas and hopefully reduce traffic congestion.
7. Cultural heritage & 8. Landscape and Townscape	Firm proposals and measures have been put in place to ensure that the local townscape, the historic environment and the character of the AAP area. Overall, the regeneration of the town centre has the potential for positive effects on heritage although given the sensitivity of the historic environment of the area and the wider District, new development will need to be carefully considered and designed and planned sensitively.
10. Water	Alone the AAP is unlikely to have significant impacts on the water environment; however, it could add to the pressures on water resources and water quality identified in the Rochford Core Strategy.
12. Air Quality	Alone the AAP is unlikely to have significant impacts on air quality although an element of uncertainty remains as the High Street/ Eastwood Road given the exceedances in NO ₂ levels. However, it is likely still to contribute to increased atmospheric pollution as a result of development proposed across the District through the Core Strategy and other AAPs.

7.0 IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

INTRODUCTION

- 7.1 This section discusses indicators and targets to help monitor the sustainability effects of the AAP. Monitoring arrangements should be designed to:
- highlight significant effects;
 - highlight effects which differ from those that were predicted; and
 - provide a useful source of baseline information for the future.
- 7.2 Local planning authorities are required to produce Annual Monitoring Reports including indicators and targets against which the progress of the Local Development Plan can be measured. There is also a requirement to monitor the predictions made in the SA and Government advises Councils to prepare a Monitoring Strategy that incorporates the needs of the Local Development Plan and the SA. Rochford District Council prepares an Annual Monitoring report each year, and in preparing the report, considers any recommendations made through the SA process, which have also been subject to consultation. The indicators and targets suggested for the SA monitoring of the Core Strategy in Table 7.1 are considered appropriate for the monitoring of the Rayleigh AAP, with additional specific suggestions underlined and in red text.

SA MONITORING PROPOSALS FOR THE RAYLEIGH AAP

Table 7.1: Potential Indicators

Potential Indicators
<p>1. Balanced Communities To ensure the delivery of high quality sustainable communities where people want to live and work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Changing educational attainment at GCSE Level ■ Proportion of persons in the local population with a degree level qualification. ■ Parishes with a GP, post office, play area, pub, village hall ■ Percentage of completed retail, office and leisure development in town centre ■ Mix of housing tenure within settlements ■ Provision of new community facilities secured through new developments, <u>including a break-down by settlement</u>
<p>2. Healthy & Safe Communities Create healthy and safe environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Monitor the number of domestic burglaries, violent offences, vehicle crimes, vandalism and all crime per 1,000 population. ■ Percentage of residents surveyed who feel 'fairly safe' or 'very safe' during the day whilst outside in their Local Authority, <u>including in key settlements</u> ■ Indexes of Multiple Deprivation throughout the District.

Potential Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Monitor the type and number of applications permitted in the greenbelt. ■ Life expectancy ■ Hectares of new greenspace created, including location of greenspace ■ Percentage of eligible open spaces managed to green flag award standard ■ Death rates from circulatory disease, cancer, accidents and suicide ■ Residents description of Health ■ Obesity levels
<p>3. Housing To provide everybody with the opportunity to live in a decent home</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Number of unfit homes per 1,000 dwellings. ■ Indices of Multiple Deprivation – Housing and Services Domain ■ Percentage of households rented from the Council or in Housing Association/Registered Social Landlords properties ■ Percentage of new housing which is affordable, including in key settlements ■ Average house price compared with average earnings ■ Number of housing Completions
<p>4. Economy & Employment To achieve sustainable levels of economic growth/prosperity and promote town centre vitality/viability</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The changing diversity of main town centre uses (by number, type and amount of floorspace), including a breakdown for the 3 town centres. ■ The changing density of development ■ Percentage change in the total number of VAT registered businesses in the area ■ Percentage of employees commuting out of the District to work ■ Amount of land developed for employment (by type) ■ Retail health checks/economic prosperity of smaller towns and villages and key settlements
<p>5. Accessibility To promote more sustainable transport choices both for people and moving freight ensuring access to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Changes in the travel to work mode of transport ■ Indices of Multiple Deprivation most notably the Housing and Services Domain ■ Car ownership ■ Percentage of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of a GP, hospital, primary and secondary school, employment and a major health centre ■ Kilometres of cycle routes and facilities for cyclists ■ Kilometres of new walking routes provided ■ Number of houses within a specified radius of services/facilities ■ Pedestrian and cycle counts in the 3 town centres of Hockley, Rochford and Rayleigh
<p>6. Biodiversity To conserve and enhance the biological and geological diversity of the</p>

Potential Indicators
environment as an integral part of social, environmental and economic development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Net change in natural/ semi natural habitats ■ Change in areas and populations of biodiversity importance ■ Condition of designated sites ■ Change in area of woodland ■ Proportion of new developments delivering habitat creation or restoration
7. Cultural Heritage To maintain and enhance the cultural heritage and assets of the District
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Buildings of Grade I and II at risk of decay ■ Condition of Conservation Areas ■ Number of historic parks and gardens
8. Landscape & Townscape To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes and townscapes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To monitor the number of parks awarded Green Flag Status ■ To monitor the number of landscape or built environment designations ■ Hectares of new development outside settlement boundaries ■ Hedgerow and/or veteran tree loss ■ Area of /change in landscape designations ■ % of development on previously developed land
9. Climate Change & Energy To reduce contributions to climate change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Changes in the travel to work mode of transport ■ Greenhouse gas emissions ■ Renewable energy capacity installed by type ■ Percentage of new development including renewable energy generation ■ Energy consumption
10. Water To improve water quality and reduce the risk of flooding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Changing water quality ■ Groundwater levels ■ Percentage of new development incorporating water efficiency measures ■ Water consumption per household ■ Number of homes built against Environment Agency advice on flooding
11. Land & Soil To maintain and improve the quality of the District's land and soil
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use of previously developed land ■ Density of new residential development ■ Number of sites/hectares decontaminated as a result of new development
12. Air Quality To improve air quality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ AQMA designations or threshold designations ■ Growth in cars per household ■ Growth in car trip generation ■ Type of travel mode to work ■ % change in public transport patronage

Potential Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Number of days in the year when air quality is recorded as moderate or high for NO₂, SO₂, PM₁₀, CO and Ozone on average per site.■ Monitoring of air quality in Rayleigh Town Centre, particularly on Eastwood Road and High Street.
13. Sustainable Design & Construction To promote sustainable design and construction
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Percentage of new development incorporating energy and water efficiency measures, and sustainable drainage systems■ Percentage of new development meeting BREEAM very good/excellent standards■ Percentage use of aggregates from secondary and recycled sources

8.0 CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 The SA of the Rayleigh Area Action Plan has appraised the effects of individual policies, as well as the overall effect of the plan, including cumulative and incremental effects. It has also considered and appraised reasonable alternatives to the plan itself; information which has been made available to the Council to help in the selection of the preferred plan. Overall the SA has found that the AAP will help to resolve a number of key sustainability issues in Rayleigh Town Centre and will also play a role in improving sustainability in the wider Rochford District.
- 8.2 Significant positive effects were identified for communities, economy and employment, accessibility, landscape and townscape and cultural heritage. These effects mainly resulted from: enhanced opportunities for retail, leisure and other mixed used development; public realm enhancements; greater pedestrianisation; the improvement of more pedestrian and cycle links; upgraded bus facilities; design-led principles for the individual character areas; and specified protection/ enhancement suggestions for historic assets and character. The AAP seeks to enhance consumer choice and should provide more employment opportunities (skilled and unskilled) for local residents. It also seeks to strengthen pedestrian links across Rayleigh which is likely to provide better and safer access for all the community. The AAP overall is likely to create a more attractive and enjoyable place with a strong local character and a firm sense of place for people to shop, visit and live.
- 8.3 The SA did not identify any significant likely negative effects from the plan alone. However, possible significant cumulative negative effects were identified for cultural heritage, healthy and safe communities and air quality. It is expected that these can be mitigated and managed through further detailed planning, monitoring as well as by policies already in place which are contained within the Core Strategy and Development Management DPDs. To reduce short-term negative effects on cultural heritage and on health, it was also recommended that either a construction management plan could be developed or phasing could be introduced at the project level.
- 8.4 In preparing the AAP and deciding on its preferred option for Rayleigh Town Centre the Council has considered the recommendations made throughout the Sustainability Appraisal process, and amended the plan accordingly. This has contributed to further enhancing the positive sustainability effects of the plan.
- 8.5 This SA Report will accompany the AAP on Pre-Submission consultation for 6 weeks, during which time interested parties are invited to make representations on the AAP or the SA. The SA will form part of the evidence base during the Examination of the AAP and if any further significant changes are made to the plan the SA Report will be updated accordingly. A finalised report will accompany the adopted DPD when it is published.