



# **Rochford District Council Local Development Plan**

## **Hockley Area Action Plan**

### **SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL/ STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF PRE-SUBMISSION AAP**

#### **NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY**

**November 2012**



# Rochford District Council Local Development Framework

## Hockley Area Action Plan

### SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL/ STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF PRE- SUBMISSION AAP

### NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

*for and on behalf of Enfusion Ltd:*

<i>date:</i>	November 2012	
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## NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

- 0.1 This is the summary of the Sustainability Appraisal Report for Rochford District Council's Hockley 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 Assessment<sup>12</sup> (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 Hockley Area Action Plan has been prepared in accordance with these requirements for SA/SEA.

### THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND HOCKLEY 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).

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<sup>1</sup> EU Directive 2001/42/EC

<sup>2</sup> Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

- 0.5 The Hockley Area Action Plan (AAP) creates the framework for development sites and planning policies in Hockley. It will act as the focal point for the coordination of other public policies and programmes and will guide public and private investment in the area. The AAP sets out a vision for how growth and change can be managed within Hockley and how regeneration of the area might be stimulated through this development.

### THE CHARACTER OF HOCKLEY

- 0.6 Hockley is a small town located in Rochford District; approximately 5 miles north-west of Southend-on-Sea, between the larger centres of Rochford, to the south-east and Rayleigh to the south west. The town does not have the same level of retail and services facilities as Rayleigh or Rochford and has been classified as a 'minor local centre'.
- 0.7 Hockley has a centrally-located train station, which is on the Liverpool Street line-providing easy access to London. The linear town centre stretches from the railway station to the junction of Spa Road and Southend / Main Roads. Community facilities, including the library, surgery and old fire station are located in the southern part of the AAP area. The town centre is relatively compact and well-connected to surrounding residential areas.

### SA SCOPING & ISSUES FOR SUSTAINABILITY

- 0.8 A SA scoping process was undertaken to help ensure that the SA covers the key sustainability issues that are relevant to Hockley. 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 July 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 Hockley.
- 0.9 From these studies, the key sustainability issues and opportunities for the AAP and the SA were identified, as follows:

<b>Key Sustainability Issues for Hockley AAP</b>	
▪	The provision of quality and affordable housing to meet housing needs in Hockley.
▪	Improving connectivity between the town centre and train station.
▪	Taking account of environmental and physical constraints when accommodating new development.
▪	Opportunity to improve the public realm by providing a more defined centre as well as through enhanced pedestrian crossing facilities and green landscaping.
▪	The protection of Hockley's biodiversity (Hockley Woods SSSI & LNR), heritage, landscape and character.
▪	High levels of car ownership and travelling to work using a private vehicle.
▪	High levels of out-commuting and difficulties in competing with economies in surrounding areas.
▪	Opportunity to improve retail and stimulate the local economy,

whilst recognising difficulties in competing with the retail pull of Southend, Basildon and Chelmsford.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>

### SA FRAMEWORK

- 0.10 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 Hockley 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 HOCKLEY AAP

- 0.11 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

- 0.12 The SA of the options (alternatives) was undertaken in July 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. Three spatial options were considered:
- Spatial Option 1: A low level of intervention
  - Spatial Option 2: A medium level of intervention, with increased housing, retail and office provision
  - Spatial Options 3: A high level of intervention, similar to Option 2, but with a higher level again of housing and office provision.
- 0.13 A further 3 options were considered around more detailed transport interventions; looking at Spa roundabout, on-street parking provision and drop-off provision at Hockley Railway station.
- 0.14 For social and economic reasons, the SA found that spatial options 2 and 3 would have the most sustainability benefits, but it also recognised that these 2 options were more likely to cause increased disruption (noise and congestion) and air pollution during the construction phase of development. The SA includes recommendations to mitigate any adverse impacts and also considered the various transport options in more detail. Alongside consultation responses, the Council considered the SA findings in its decision making and subsequently chose an amalgamation of spatial options 2 and 3.

## APPRAISAL OF THE AAP VISION AND POLICIES

- 0.15 A compatibility analysis of the Pre-Submission AAP Vision and Objectives was carried out using the SA framework in October 2012. Overall the vision and objectives were found to be compatible with the majority of SA objectives.
- 0.16 The Pre-Submission policies were subject to detailed SA in October 2012. 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

- 0.17 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 Hockley AAP	
Key relevant SA Objective:	Positive effects identified:
1.Balanced communities & 2.Healthy and	The AAP will have positive effects on communities through providing a mix of uses in the town centre, including housing, retail, leisure facilities

Safe Communities	and new public spaces. New areas for recreation and encouraging walking and cycling through enhanced networks and public realm will have positive benefits for health.
3.Housing	Positive effects for housing, including new affordable housing, through provision of housing as part of the Eldon Way Opportunity Site redevelopment.
4.Economy & Employment	A significant positive effect on the local economy is likely through enhanced opportunities for retail, leisure and offices. Increase housing will have positive indirect effects through increasing the use of local service and shops. New employment will be created in the short-term (construction) and longer term.
5. Accessibility	Significant cumulative effects for accessibility are likely through a range of improvements to the public realm, bus services, access to the train station and increased accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.
6.Landscape and Townscape	The overall effect on the local townscape will be positive due to increased public realm works and landscaping proposed in the plan.
9. Climate Change and Energy	The focus on improving local accessibility and access to public transport throughout the plan, combined with a focus on mixed-use development is likely to help mitigate greenhouse gas emissions caused by car travel.

- 0.18 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:

<b>Potentially significant effects of the emerging Hockley AAP</b>	
<b>Key relevant SA Objective:</b>	<b>Negative Effects identified:</b>
7. Cultural Heritage	Some potential for negative effects on cultural heritage was identified, with potential for historic buildings along Spa Road to be affected by development at the Eldon Way Opportunity Site. Adverse effects can be mitigated through sensitive design and development.
12. Air quality	Potential localised air quality pollution is possible during the construction stage of development, however this can be mitigated through development controls. The plan has sought to minimise congestion and air and noise pollution through having a strong focus on public

	transport, walking and cycling, however there remains some uncertainty about future air quality, and ongoing monitoring should be undertaken.
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## MITIGATION, ENHANCEMENT AND MONITORING

- 0.19 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 Hockley, 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.
- 0.20 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 Hockley AAP, with additional specific suggestions made during the preparation of the Hockley AAP. This SA has also made further suggestions, which are detailed in the main SA report.

## CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

- 0.21 The SA of the Hockley 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 Hockley Town Centre and will also play a role in improving sustainability in the wider Rochford District. Significant positive effects were identified for communities, the economy and employment, meeting housing needs, accessibility, landscape/townscape, and climate change. Possible adverse effects were identified for cultural heritage, water resources and air and noise pollution but these can be mitigated and managed through further detailed planning, development management policies and monitoring.
- 0.22 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.
- 0.23 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.