

Allocations Development Plan Document
Habitats Regulations Assessment Advice Note
February 2012

HRA Advice Note: Rochford Site Allocations DPD - Discussion and Consultation Document

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council is in the process of preparing its Site Allocations DPD. A Discussion and Consultation document was published in February 2010, which set out the site specific options for the general locations identified within the Core Strategy Submission Document. As a land use plan the Site Allocations DPD is required through the Habitats Regulations to be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to determine if it is likely to have any significant effects on European sites.
- 1.2 HRA criteria were incorporated into the site allocations assessment criteria used to assess the site allocations put forward during the call for sites, which includes the consideration of the proximity of SACs and SPAs.
- 1.3 This note seeks to provide an initial assessment of potential site allocations and their impacts on European sites. In particular, this note identifies if any of the options put forward in the Discussion and Consultation Document are preferred from an HRA perspective. This will help to inform the subsequent HRA stages and the selection of preferred options/ site allocations.

2.0 Site Allocations

Residential Sites

- 2.1 The majority of broad interest areas proposed in the Core Strategy are within or adjacent to existing settlements and are at a distance that is unlikely to result in significant effects on European sites alone. This along with the mitigation provided by Core Strategy policies means that the impacts of development at the different site specific options - outlined area in the Consultation and Discussion Document - are unlikely to vary from each other significantly. **The result is that from an HRA perspective there is no preferred site specific option for the following interest areas:**

- North of London Road, Rayleigh
- West Rochford
- West Hockley
- South Hawkwell
- East Ashingdon
- South Canewdon
- South East Ashingdon
- West Great Wakering

Residential Site at South West Hullbridge

- 2.2 The South West Hullbridge area of interest is in close proximity to the Essex Estuaries SAC and Crouch and Roach Estuaries SPA & Ramsar. The proposed area is considered suitable for up to 500 homes and is bounded by existing

development to the north and east, agricultural land to the west and a road to the south. In response to the Discussion and Consultation Document, NE stated that development at South West Hullbridge may require an HRA in relation to the potential increase in recreational pressure (particularly dog walkers), given its proximity to the Crouch and Roach Estuary SPA and Ramsar.

- 2.3 The Discussion and Consultation Document proposes four site specific options within this area.

Option SW1



Source: Google Maps

Residential, incorporating provision for public open space and play space

Option SW2




Source: Google Maps

Residential, incorporating provision for public open space and play space

Option SW3




Source: Google Maps

 Residential, incorporating provision for public open space and play space

Option SW4



Source: Google Maps




 Residential, incorporating provision for public open space and play space

2.4 The four options are at varying distances from Essex Estuaries SAC and the Crouch and Roach Estuaries SPA & Ramsar. These are as follows:

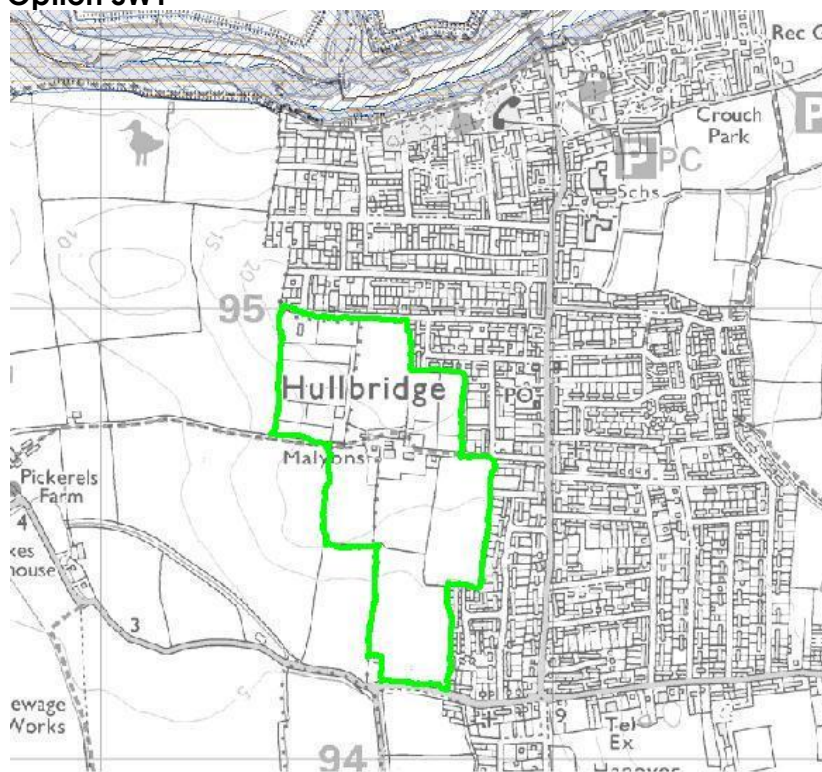
- Option 1 - 430m
- Option 2 - 440m
- Option 3 - 240m
- Option 4 - 650m

2.5 This is illustrated in the figures below.

Key:

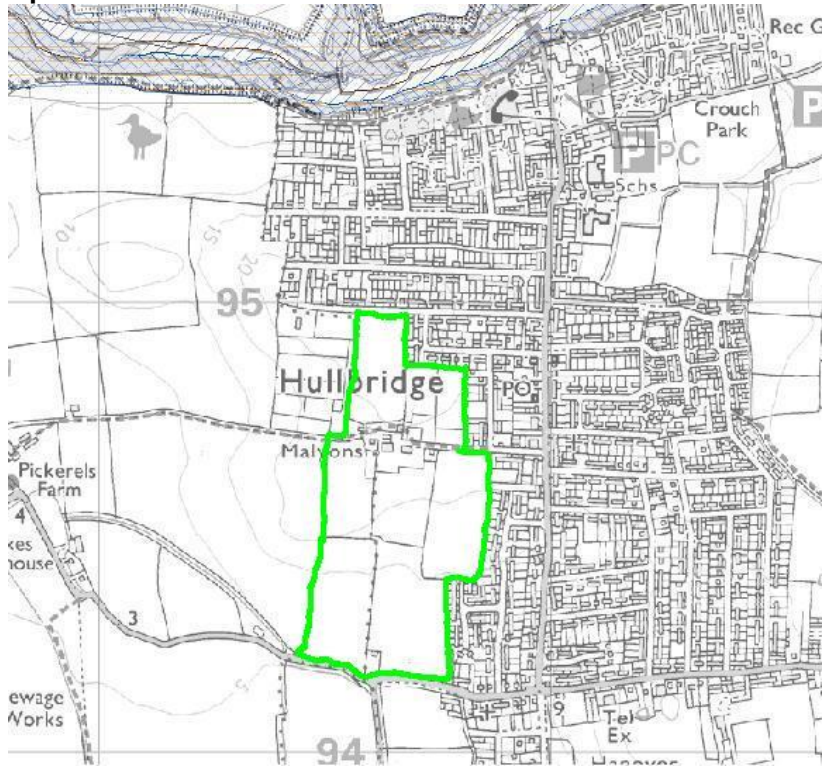
-  Ramsar Sites (England)
-  Special Protection Areas (England)
-  Special Areas of Conservation (England)

Option SW1



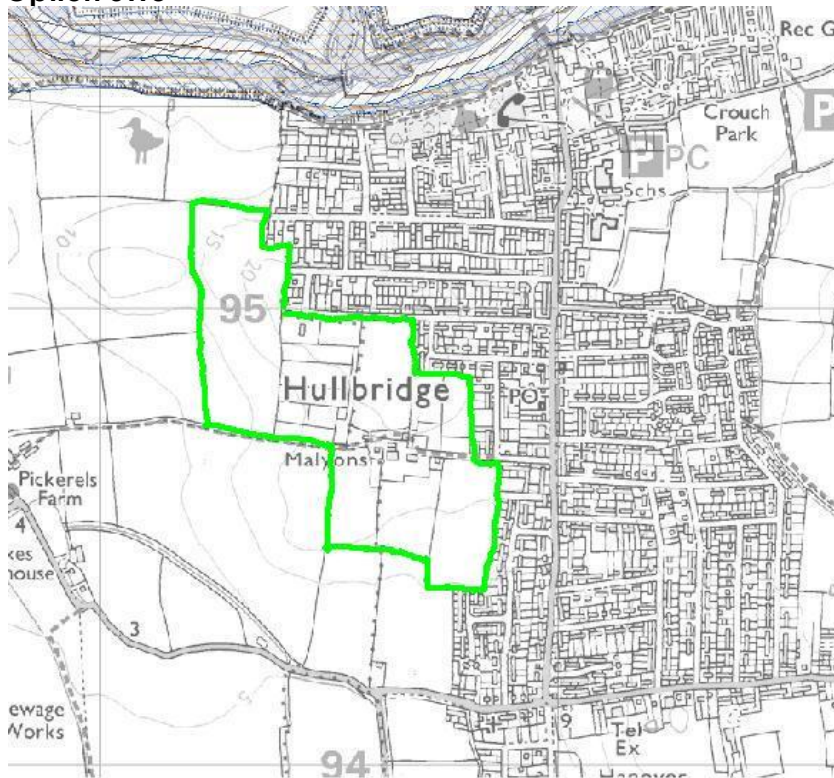
Source: Magic interactive map

Option SW2

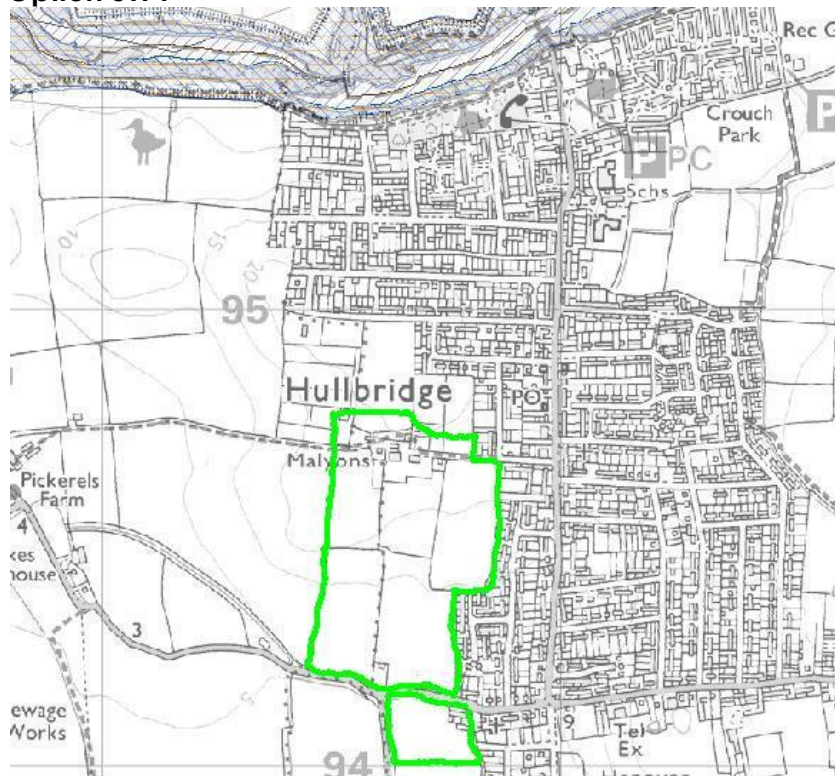


Source: Magic interactive map

Option SW3



Source: Magic interactive map

Option SW4

Source: Magic interactive map

- 2.6 As previously mentioned in para 2.2, NE identified that there is the potential for development in South West Hullbridge to increase levels of recreation at European sites, in particular dog walkers. Studies in North Kent and the Solent have shown that dog walking can be a particular issue for protected bird species. The closer the proposed development is to the European sites, the more likely that there will be an increase in the number of people walking their dogs at the sites. **It is therefore recommended that the Council do not select SW3 as the preferred option as this is closer to the European sites than the other three options and is also further outside the boundary of the settlement.**
- 2.7 **Once a preferred option has been selected, the HRA screening will consider the potential impacts of development in more detail, including the consideration of avoidance and mitigation measures, if necessary.**

Gypsy and Traveller Sites

- 2.8 The Discussion and Consultation Document identified six potential gypsy and traveller sites within the District. None of the options put forward are likely to have significant effects alone, given their size and distance from European sites. This along with the mitigation provided by Core Strategy policies means that the impacts of development at the different site specific options are unlikely to vary from each other significantly. **The result is that from an HRA perspective, there is no preferred site specific option for gypsy and traveller sites.**

Employment Sites

- 2.9 The Discussion and Consultation Document identified twelve existing employment areas within the District. It then outlined a number of potential new sites and options for additional employment land to be allocated. The identified areas for additional employment are west of Rayleigh, north of London Southend Airport and South of Great Wakering.
- 2.10 None of the site specific options put forward for additional employment are likely to have significant effects alone, given their distance from European sites. This along with the mitigation provided by Core Strategy policies means that the impacts of development at different site specific options are unlikely to vary from each other significantly. **The result is that from an HRA perspective, there is no preferred site specific option for the west of Rayleigh, north of London Southend Airport and Great Wakering additional employment areas.**