

**Draft Pre-Submission Hockley Area Action Plan to
be considered by LDF Sub-Committee**



Allies and Morrison
Urban Practitioners

HOCKLEY AREA ACTION PLAN

DRAFT PRE SUBMISSION VERSION

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Foreword



1 • Introduction

1.1 The big picture

Rochford District Council is committed to preparing Area Action Plans (AAP) for its three main centres of Rayleigh, Rochford and Hockley. The AAPs will form part of the statutory development plan for Rochford District. This document focuses on guiding the development of Hockley centre, as well as adjoining light industrial areas and the rail station, during the current plan period to 2026.

The Rochford Core Strategy identifies Hockley as an area for change and improvement, and it is envisaged that the settlement will benefit from a higher quality environment and public spaces, with improved landscaping, an enhanced retail offer and better connectivity. It is also planned that Hockley will experience housing growth, in part through a mixed-use redevelopment of its existing light industrial areas.

Balancing the need to protect the Hockley's village character against the need to attract

new investment is critical to its economic success. It is also central to this AAP.

The AAP will, if adopted, form a part of Rochford District's Development Plan. Alongside the adopted Rochford Core Strategy and other key planning documents, the AAP will eventually replace the existing Replacement Local Plan (2006).

The next step is for this submission version of the AAP to be published and placed on deposit for a six-week period, during which interested parties will be invited to make representations. It will then be submitted, alongside any representations received and other supporting documents, to the Secretary of State who will make arrangements for an Examination in Public by an Independent Planning Inspector. The AAP will be measured against the established tests of soundness and the Inspectorate will then issue a report with findings and decision. If it is found sound – with or without modifications – the AAP will then be adopted.

Once adopted, the AAP will be used as a framework for the development of Hockley and in the determination of planning applications. It will be subject to the normal processes of monitoring and review.

Any representations on this pre-submission version of the Hockley AAP should be sent to Rochford District Council.

1.2 Working with our community

In recent years a number of community engagement and consultation exercises have been undertaken in relation to Hockley. These have been in support of the production of the Hockley Parish Plan, the Hockley AAP and the Rochford Core Strategy. The AAP has been informed through its various stages by the responses received to these exercises, which were:

- The Hockley Parish Plan residents' questionnaire.
- The Placecheck undertaken in support of the Hockley AAP Issues and Options Document.
- A drop-in consultation session for around 60 local residents on 2 August 2010 that was carried out to help develop the alternatives presented in the Options Report.
- Consultations on the Hockley AAP Issues and Options Document and Options Report.
- A consultation on the Rochford Core Strategy Submission Document that yielded feedback specifically related to Hockley.

Most recently a further stage of consultation was held on the planning policy framework for Hockley that had emerged following the Options Report. This was a public exhibition, which was held between 14 and 24 August 2012. A range of responses was received as a result of the consultation and the key messages were that:

- Hockley is a village and its character should be maintained.
- There is a great deal of concern about the current traffic situation and the impact that any development would have on congestion in Hockley.
- Highways and other infrastructure should be improved in line with any new development.
- The Spa Road mini-roundabout, the junction at the railway bridge and the pedestrian crossings on Spa Road and Southend Road should all be improved.
- There is a distinct need for additional parking provision in the centre.
- Additional public transport is required, as well as new and improved pedestrian and cycle routes, given that all of these measures would serve to reduce the congestion levels in the centre.

- Affordable housing should be a priority, provided that a high standard of architecture and design would be delivered.
- There is a need to retain existing shops and services within the area.
- Retail development in Hockley should be of an appropriate scale.
- A range of views have been expressed regarding proposals for the redevelopment of the Hockley Trading Centre. In particular, whilst there is support for the use of previously developed land for housing, there are concerns over the loss of employment and leisure uses.

1.3 Working with our partners

Rochford District Council is working closely with its partners to ensure that the strategic and cross-boundary implications of the Hockley AAP are being fully explored and that any discussions will feed into its positive preparation. The Localism Act 2011 sets out a 'duty to co-operate', which requires such a process.

The main partner in relation to the AAP is Essex County Council (ECC), in relation to

its role as Highways Authority for Rochford District and much of the wider area. In particular, conversations with ECC officers have allowed for the project team to identify new or proposed developments with a significant highways impact.

1.4 The AAP area

The core area for the Hockley AAP covers the rail station and its surrounds, the Hockley Trading Centre and Foundry Business Park, Spa Road, and the central sections of Main Road and Southend Road. This area is broadly considered to be Hockley's centre.

The retail offer in the AAP area is relatively limited in comparison with other nearby towns, with few high-street multiples but a reasonable selection of independent comparison shops. A collection of community uses, comprising a library, Health Surgery, a number of places of worship and the Parish Council can currently be found at the southern end of the area.

Between the central retail area and rail station there is a relatively recent, mixed use housing and office development. . Notwithstanding the location of the offices next to the established Foundry Business

Park, demand for office space in the area is weak. The Hockley Trading Centre has seen some approvals for the conversion of employment units to leisure uses in recent years. These are currently located amongst the remaining light industrial uses. These have proved popular with local people and are a valued local amenity.

Established suburban neighbourhoods encircle the Hockley AAP area. The relationship between the central area and these successful suburbs is an important consideration for the AAP.



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Figure 1 Hockley AAP area

Hockley in context

2.1 The Hockley Context

This chapter sets out the planning and policy context within which the Hockley AAP will operate, including a review of key sections of the local planning evidence base.

2.2 Place profile

Strategic location and local setting

Hockley is located approximately five miles to the north west of Southend-on-Sea, on a peninsula bound by the River Thames to the south, the River Crouch to the north and the North Sea to the east. This gives the settlement a unique landscape setting. This is further enhanced by the ancient Hockley Woods immediately to its south, which forms part of the Upper Roach Valley special and historic landscape areas. Hockley is also surrounded by Metropolitan Green Belt, which has helped to conserve the area's rural feel.

Within Rochford District, Hockley sits between the larger town centres of Rochford, to the south east, and Rayleigh to the south west. It is located on the Great

Eastern rail connection between Southend-on-Sea and London Liverpool Street, which supports commuting into London.

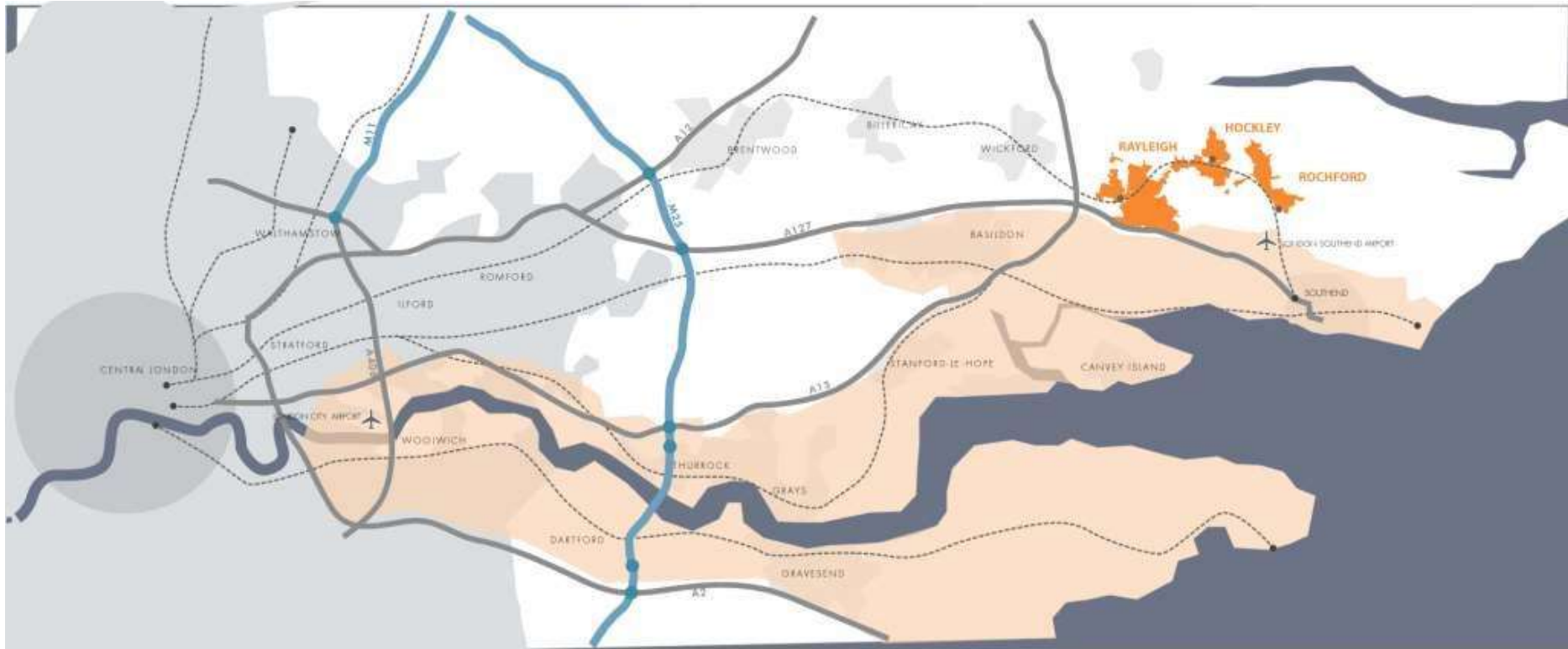
Hockley is located centrally between Rochford and Rayleigh, and is connected to both by the B1013. The strategic road network is a few minute's drive away, west of Rayleigh, where the A127, A13 and A130 meet. Local attractors for car journeys are Southend-on-Sea to the south east, Basildon to the west and Chelmsford to the north-west.

Historical evolution

Hockley has a long history, with evidence of Roman activity at Plumberow Mount, as well as a strong early Saxon presence. The settlement was mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086. Parts of the current Church of St Peter and St Paul building dates from the twelfth century, though earlier church buildings are believed to have existed prior to this on the site.

Hockley Spa, established in 1843, represented a high point in the popularity and profile of the settlement, though this was short-lived as visitors to the Spa soon opted to head to coastal resorts instead.

The rail line from Liverpool Street, London, was extended and in 1889 began stopping at Hockley on its way to Southend-on-Sea. This had a significant impact on Hockley and stimulated the residential expansion of the town, though Hockley did not experience the scale of expansion seen in some other parts of the country around the same period.



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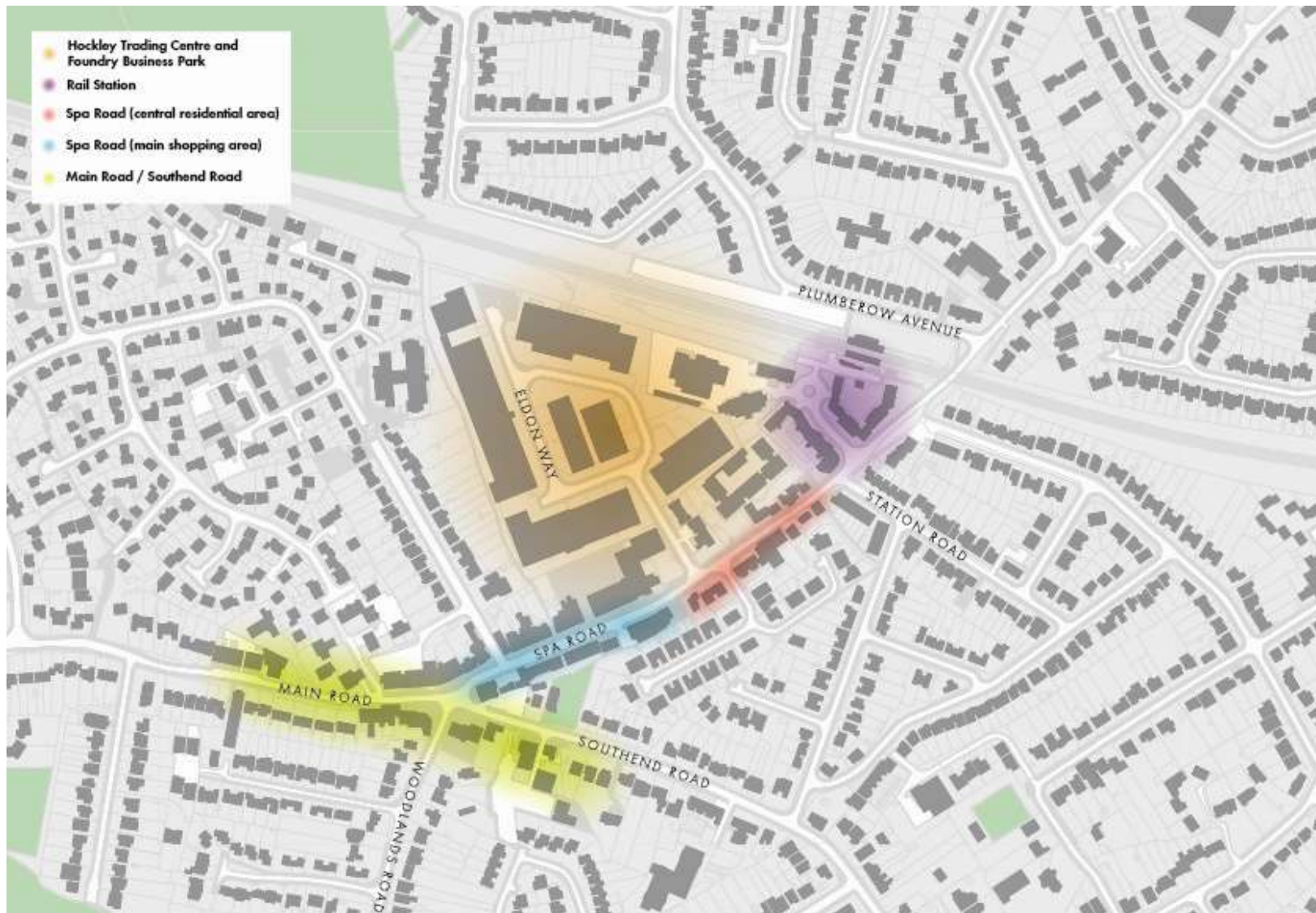
Figure 2 Hockley's regional context



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Figure 3 Hockley's district context



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Figure 4 Character areas in Hockley

Character areas

The Hockley AAP area has five discernible character areas, each with its own distinctive qualities. The differences between these areas relate to their prevailing patterns of land use, their built form and other factors such as landscaping and the movement network for pedestrians and vehicles.

1) Hockley Trading Centre and Foundry Business Park

This part of Hockley is defined largely by the area's light industrial uses together with the office and commercial leisure uses that are also present. The buildings here are commercial in character, mainly taking the form of bulky, two to three storey industrial sheds. The public realm and building frontages are dominated by parking and service areas. There is poor connectivity through and within the area, with two access points off Spa Road and no direct link between the two separate industrial estates.

2) Rail station

The station building and line dominate this area. Spa Road, over which the rail line passes, is the principal axis through the town. The public realm in this area is dominated by surface car parking and a

roundabout, which also provides access to the Foundry Business Park and is congested at peak times due to pressure resulting from dropping off and picking up rail passengers. The area is well vegetated around Spa Road and there are some areas of open land that provide potential for the reorganisation of car parking arrangements and the road layout. The buildings to the south of the rail line include the station and some recent residential developments. To the north of the rail line there is a row of bungalows.

3) Spa Road (central residential area)

The uses along this part of Spa Road are mainly residential, including some sheltered housing, and it shares the same low-rise, suburban character that dominates Hockley. The varied building line and wide range of building types contribute to an informal urban character in this area. However, a number of the buildings contribute strongly to Hockley's character and have an intrinsic historic value. In particular, the former Hockley Spa building is a Grade II Listed Building and a local landmark.

4) Spa Road (main shopping area)

Most of the settlement's retail offer can be found within the shopping parades along

this section of Spa Road. The majority of buildings located in this area are single or two storey, though there is a prominent three storey development of shops with maisonettes above. With the exception of one or two buildings, including The Spa public house, the buildings make little positive contribution to Hockley's character, beyond their important role in anchoring the centre with active commercial uses at ground floor level. Although the footway along this part of Spa Road is relatively wide, a long retaining wall and metal railings act as a significant barrier to pedestrian movement. There is also a concentration of on-street car parking in this area.



Figure 5 Hockley Trading Centre and Foundry Business Park character area



Figure 6 Railway Station character area



Figure 7 Spa Road (central residential area) character area



Figure 8 Spa Road (main shopping area) character area



Figure 9 Spa Road service and community area

5) Main Road / Southend Road

This area is focused around the Spa Road mini-roundabout at the junction of Main, Spa, Southend and Woodlands Roads. These roads are busy due to their role in carrying vehicular traffic from the surrounding area to Southend, Chelmsford and Basildon and this causes congestion at Hockley's core. With the notable exception of The Spa Public House, the buildings that front this roundabout fail to respond positively to their prominent corner locations and the position of the roundabout as a gateway to Hockley's main retailing area along Spa Road. The uses in this area are more diverse than elsewhere in the settlement and, as well as shops, include services and community facilities, such as a library, Hockley Parish Council's offices, places of worship, a dental surgery, a pharmacy, banks, estate agents and solicitors.

2.3 Policy context

The Hockley AAP has been produced taking into account national, regional and local planning policy, in addition to the various studies that supplement and inform this framework. This is to ensure that the AAP

provides a robust policy framework for the future development of Hockley.

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

The Coalition Government replaced previous national planning policy documents and guidance notes with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012. The NPPF was intended to help streamline the planning system and, at its core, has a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This is expanded upon by a number of core planning principles and more detailed policies.

In particular it is noted that the NPPF (Section 2) emphasises the importance of ensuring that local planning policies support the vitality and viability of town centres, and their role at the heart of communities. Practically this means that local planning authorities should promote a diverse retail offer and adopt a town centres first approach, which requires retail, leisure and entertainment, office, and arts, culture and tourism uses to locate in centres ahead of other alternatives.

East of England Plan

Although the Coalition Government has announced that the revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies is imminent, the East of England Plan remains part of Rochford District Council's Development Plan. As such, other planning documents must be in 'general conformity' with the Plan, and it continues to provide a policy context for the Hockley AAP.

The Plan allocates a 4,600 new homes target to Rochford District, with a policy steer supporting mixed-use economies in which centres help to attract investment and avoid the need for Green Belt land to be developed, where at all possible.

Rochford Core Strategy (2011)

Rochford District Council adopted a Core Strategy document in December 2011. This document seeks to prioritise new development on brownfield land, with some limited urban extensions to accommodate new housing. In particular, Policy H1 seeks the redevelopment of the Hockley Trading Centre and Foundry Business Park, which should also include a mix of employment uses appropriate to the sites' central location.

The Core Strategy’s approach to centres and retail development is set out in policies RTC1 and RTC2. Respectively, these seek to strengthen and improve the retail offer of the District’s main centres, including Hockley, and direct new retail development and other main town centre uses towards these locations through a sequential, town centres first approach.

The key Core Strategy policy in relation to the AAP is Policy RTC6. This states that Rochford District Council, with partner organisations and landowners, will produce an AAP for Hockley’s centre, to deliver the following:

- A safe and high quality environment for residents.
- An enhanced retail offer.
- The redevelopment of Hockley Trading Centre and Foundry Business Park, and its existing light industrial uses, for a variety of uses more appropriate for a centre location, including retail, residential, commercial, employment and leisure.
- A public space within a defined centre.
- Improved connectivity between the retail focus and rail station.

- Green landscaping along Main Road, Spa road and Southend Road to enhance the visual amenity.

Hockley Area Action Plan Issues and Options Document (2009) & Options Report (2010)

A Hockley AAP Issues and Options document was produced in 2009. This provides a baseline urban design analysis and describes Hockley’s strengths and weaknesses. A number of options for future change in Hockley are considered.

A subsequent Options Report built on the work that had already been undertaken by the earlier 2009 document and presents a revised range of alternatives for improvement. The document proposes a series of general principles to guide land uses, the design of buildings and the public realm, and pedestrian movement, transport and car parking.

In addition, three spatial options that provide different responses to the overarching general principles are presented. Each of these represented a different level of intervention aimed at identifying the particular areas that require

either change and investment or protection. The three options were:

1. A series of minimal interventions, with a focus on improving pedestrian links, car parking, the public realm and shop fronts, as well as the replacement of some poor quality buildings with new shops.
2. A programme of higher level interventions, which would involve the replacement of poor quality buildings, including some existing light industrial uses, consolidation and expansion of leisure uses on the Hockley Trading Estate, redevelopment of retail uses on Main Road, and a strong pedestrian link between the rail station and the Hockley Trading Estate.
3. The highest level of interventions, including substantial redevelopment of the Hockley Trading Estate and adjoining buildings fronting Spa Road to create a new leisure and retail space, the relocation of the existing health centre to form a community hub on Southend Road, and new housing north of the rail line.

A number of alternatives for transport are also set out by the Options Report. These

centre on proposed junction improvements to alleviate traffic congestion at the Spa Road mini-roundabout and along Spa Road, which could include increasing capacity or creating a shared surface; the provision of improved on-street car parking, in either a parallel or echelon arrangement; and, better drop-off and pick up arrangements at the rail station through the removal of the existing roundabout and its replacement with a straightforward junction and circulation area.

Emerging Allocations (2010) & Development Management documents (2011)

The Council is in the process of preparing its Allocations and Development Management documents. The Allocations document was last published as an issues and options document in February 2010 and the Development Management document was last published as a preferred options document in December 2011.

The Allocations document includes a range of options for Hockley centre and explores various possibilities for retaining, enlarging or shrinking the current centre designation.

The Development Management document includes draft policies that deal with the

development of centres. These include policies that seek to control the mix of uses, as well as the conversion of upper floors to residential accommodation.

Hockley Parish Plan (2007)

The Hockley Parish Plan was developed in 2007, following detailed consultation with local residents. The Plan promotes a greening of Hockley's centre, with more planting and trees and enhancement of the public realm, with shop front improvements and additional seating and lighting.

The plan emphasises the importance of avoiding coalescence between Hockley and neighbouring urban areas by protecting Green Belt land from development. The local community stressed during consultation that they would prefer to see any new development on previously developed land, and would like to limit the overall level of new housing in the area, and ensure that affordable starter homes are provided as a part of any new development.

2.4 Retail issues

A Retail & Leisure Study for Rochford District was produced in August 2008 to form part

of the local planning policy evidence base. This study found Hockley to be the smallest of the District's three main centres and did not consider it to meet the definition of a town centre as set out in PPS6. It should be noted that PPS6 has since been replaced by the NPPF. Notwithstanding this, Hockley's centre was considered to benefit from a strong comparison goods sector and a mix of independent shops.

The report highlighted that Hockley retains just 8.1% of its food expenditure, as a result of the limited range of convenience goods on offer within the centre, but is used for top-up food spending. The report also drew attention to the lack of larger retail unit sizes in Hockley to attract national retailers, and the lack of leisure service operators in the centre.

The report identified potential to enhance the frontages in Hockley to create a high quality centre and advised the encouragement of specialist businesses to create a 'boutique' retail centre, whilst acknowledging economic challenges presented by this approach. The report also recommended the extension and improvement of the existing retail offer through the development of new, larger scale retail units, and the reclassification of

Hockley to District Centre status, which could be reviewed at a later date.

2.5 Employment issues

An Employment Land Study was produced for Rochford District in September 2008. This considered the current supply and quality of, and future need and demand for, employment space within the District. It forms part of the evidence base for Rochford District Council's local planning policies.

The report considered the Hockley Trading Centre to be strategically well placed with adequate vehicular access, very good public transport access and good proximity to the centre. The report recommended that the land use here only change if office space is provided as part of a replacement mixed-use scheme, to ensure that jobs are not lost in the centre of Hockley. The buildings on the Hockley Trading Centre were generally considered to be in good condition. Approximately 25% were identified as being in poor condition, though the exact identity of these buildings was not specified.

2.6 Land ownership context

Freehold land ownership within the AAP area is relatively fragmented, though it is noted that the Hockley Trading Estate is largely controlled by a single landowner. Even here however, there are a range of occupiers with varied lease terms.

The implication of this is that Rochford District Council may have to assist in land assembly to fully realise the vision set out within the AAP. In the shorter-term there may also be the complication of occupiers having to be relocated to other premises whilst development takes place.

2.7 Property market overview

Despite general market uncertainty since the 2007 "credit crunch", more recently there have been some encouraging signs, especially in London and the South-east, where developers and investors are beginning to re-enter the market place. Progress does, however, remain slow in the context of limited growth and continued restricted bank lending, and investment is currently being focussed on lower-risk locations.

The headline findings from a comprehensive review of Hockley's property market were that:

- The Eldon Way Opportunity Site offers a good opportunity for residential development.
- There is little demand for flats, but that residential schemes comprising predominately family housing are likely to be viable.
- Office development would only be viable with a cross-subsidy from higher value uses or public sector funding.
- Demand to locate in the centre from national multiple retailers, including those in the food and beverage sector, is very weak.
- There is steady demand from independent retailers for accommodation within the centre.
- There may be demand from operators for a food store of between 2,000 and 3,000m² (net) within the centre. If the market were unconstrained by land availability and planning policy, then there is a possibility that there might be demand for a larger store.

- Hockley centre's catchment is too small to attract development interest from most key leisure sectors, such as cinemas.

2.8 Movement issues

Hockley centre is located largely along Spa Road, between the junction with the B1013 (Main Road / Southend Road) and the rail line. The centre is relatively well-served by public transport, with the rail station giving access to regular services terminating at either Southend Victoria or London Liverpool Street, and with four regular bus services stopping along Spa Road and the B1013. However, there is potential for improvements, including the provision of more frequent services, real-time bus information, shelters at some stops, and improved walking routes between the rail station, bus stops and key destinations.

The B1013 acts as the principal vehicular route through the district, particularly for commuters from the area travelling to and from Southend, Chelmsford and Basildon, as well as forming a strategic route between Rochford and Rayleigh. Congestion in the village centre is a particular concern of local residents, and is focused on the busy Spa Road mini-roundabout, which experiences

queuing back towards Rayleigh in the evening peak hours, possibly due to a high proportion of right-turning traffic from Southend Road into Spa Road. Further north along Spa Road, the signalised junction with Plumberow Avenue has been flagged as having some safety issues due to poor sightlines around the adjacent rail underpass.

Hockley centre has a fair amount of parking available to the public. However, much of this is scattered in private back-of-property lots along Spa Road. These appear to be well-used, but there is anecdotal evidence that cars circulating to find spaces here cause some of the congestion in the centre. The main public car park is south of Southend Road, behind the library. It is a pay and display facility, but is not ideally located for short shopping trips. Formal on-street parking in the centre is concentrated along the south side of Spa Road. It is free, but limited to short stays of 1 hour (or 3 hours for disabled bays). There is a large amount of free off-street and informal on-street parking space available in Eldon Way, which is also well-used and is likely to be a preference for many longer-stay visitors. Commuter parking at the rail station is also well-used. It is a pay and display facility, run by NCP.

There is limited provision of cycling facilities, apart from at the station. The lack of permeability across the settlement, due to the railway lines and a number of cul-de-sac streets, forces cyclists onto busy traffic routes and does not help to encourage cycling for short journeys.

Pedestrian facilities, whilst not in a poor state, could certainly be improved. In particular, enhanced crossing facilities could be provided along Spa Road at the roundabout, at the entrance to Eldon Way and at Station Approach. There could be some street clutter and guardrail removal along Spa Road at key locations, and secondary walking routes could be improved or new links created across the centre to improve permeability.

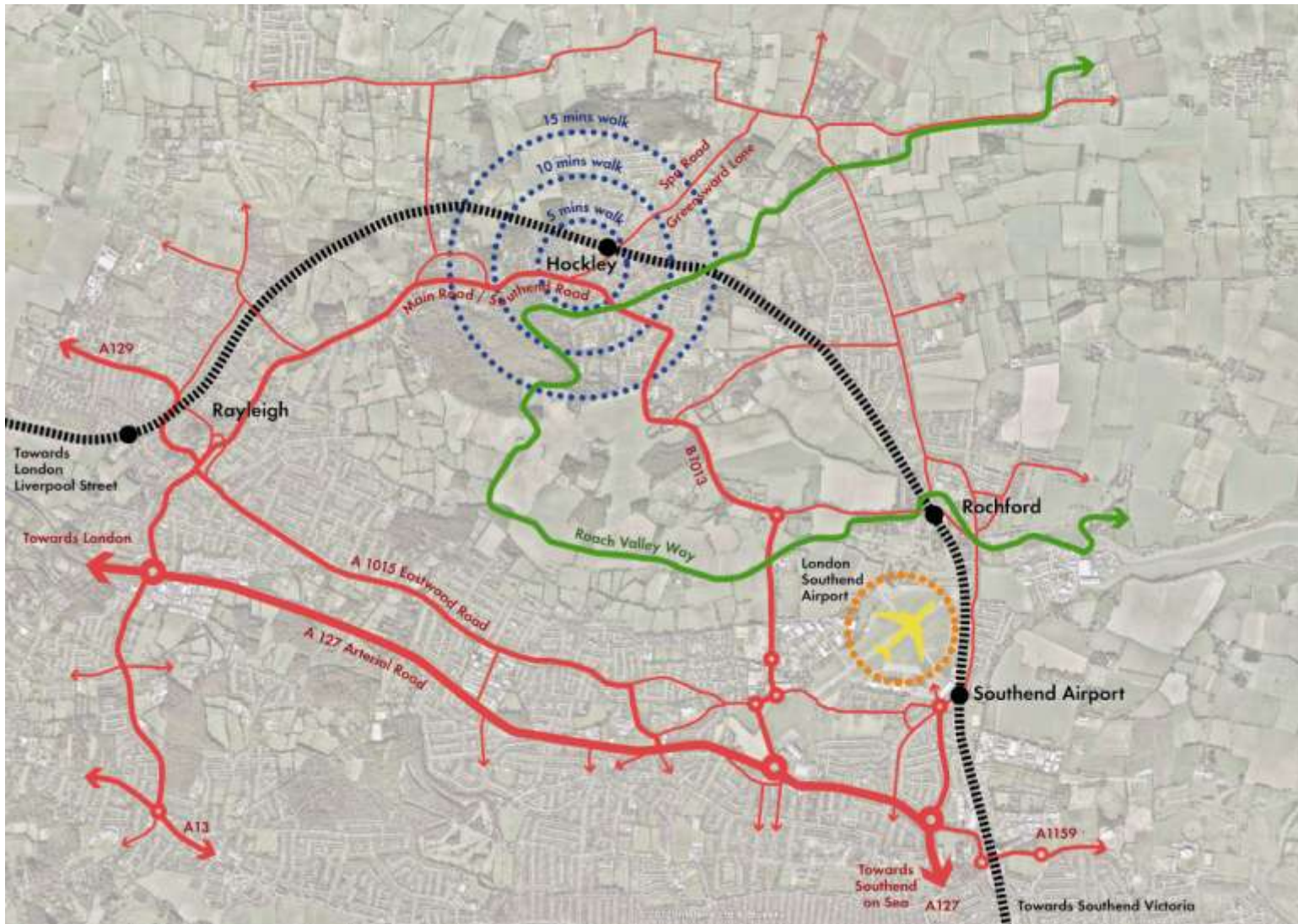


Figure 10 Movement context



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Figure 11 Movement issues

2.9 The Sustainability Appraisal

The Hockley AAP has been subject to the Sustainability Appraisal process, as required by the European SEA Directive. A report was published in August 2012 documenting this process and assessing the alternatives set out within the 2010 Options Report in relation to their impact on the environmental, social and economic strands of sustainability. A scoping report was prepared prior to this, in July 2012.

The August 2012 report acknowledges that a ‘do nothing’ option is not appropriate, given the regeneration aims of Core Strategy Policy RTC6 and the need to ensure positive outcomes through the creation of a sustainable community with good access to housing and jobs. Of the three spatial alternatives proposed in the Options Report, it was found that all would have a number of positive impacts. However, the medium and higher levels of intervention were considered preferable from a regeneration and economy perspective, provided that phasing and other mitigation measures could be built-in to minimise disruption through noise and traffic congestion during the construction of new any developments.

The transport and movement options are also considered and it is recommended that further traffic modelling is carried out to assess the impact of making changes to the roundabout at the junction of Main, Spa, Southend and Woodlands Roads. In relation to the potential of increased on-street car parking, it is advised that negative effects on the environmental and social aspects of sustainability could be off-set through good design and landscaping, and simultaneous investment in facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

The outputs of the Sustainability Appraisal have helped to shape the policy options selected. The Council will continue to assess the AAP through the Sustainability Appraisal process and will document this process.

3. A framework for a better Hockley

3.1 What makes for a sustainable Hockley?

Hockley is an established settlement within the Essex countryside, and a sustainable location for homes, shops, jobs, leisure and other services. The AAP seeks to ensure that a positive planning policy framework that protects this function is put in place. It recognises that sustainable development must be delivered in a joined-up fashion, with economic, social and environmental benefits being sought concurrently. In this context, the following factors are considered important:

Provision to meet local shopping need

– Hockley’s centre provides opportunities for local residents and those employed within the area to easily and sustainably access goods and services. The retail offer should be retained and enhanced to make Hockley centre the first choice for its residents when doing their shopping.

Excellent public realm – There are a number of attractive places and buildings within Hockley. The character of the settlement should be further enhanced, and the arrival of new commercial and residential development should be used to deliver new and improved public spaces.

A high quality natural environment – Hockley benefits from being surrounded by the Metropolitan Green Belt, which prevents urban sprawl, but also allows local people access to significant areas of high quality, open space. This open space should be safeguarded through the efficient use of previously developed sites within the settlement’s existing boundaries.

Housing for local people – Hockley provides choice in terms of living accommodation, with a large number of family houses. There should be an emphasis on the provision of homes for local people throughout all stages of life.

Local employment opportunities – the Hockley Trading Centre and Foundry Business Park provide a range of premises for small, local businesses. The accommodation needs of such businesses should be met, and balanced against the

competing requirements for other uses within Hockley’s existing boundaries.

The AAP is a planning policy document that, primarily, seeks to assist in the management of planned changes and developments in the centre of Hockley. Therefore, whilst its remit is limited, its reach is wide. Alongside the Core Strategy and other key policy documents, the AAP will help to attract and encourage new investment and co-ordinate change.

3.2 Vision & objectives

The future development of Hockley provides an opportunity for change that will deliver a high quality of life for local residents, who will have an improved environment, as well as better access to homes, shops, jobs, leisure and other services.

The AAP sets a vision for the settlement’s future based on an understanding of the unique context that drives change and development in Hockley. It translates this vision into implementation objectives, policies and guidance that will act as a robust framework for delivery.

The vision for Hockley is:

By 2026, Hockley will have a centre that is defined by the high quality of its public realm and the opportunities on offer for local people to access homes, shops, jobs, leisure and other services without having to travel far afield. These changes will be delivered in a manner that makes the most of land that has been previously developed, and all new development will respect and enhance the existing suburban, low-density character of the settlement.

The four key objectives that support this vision and are vital in its delivery are to:

1) Provide greater shopping choice for local people.

Most food shopping undertaken by Hockley's residents involves a drive to another town centre or location. Improving the range of shops in Hockley will help to encourage more local people to do their shopping closer to home. This should help existing businesses in the centre, benefit the environment and help to build stronger communities.

2) Identify and deliver environmental improvements.

The redevelopment of light industrial uses and existing buildings presents a major opportunity to help deliver a range of environmental improvements to the centre, including improvements at key road junctions and the creation of a new public space in the heart of the Hockley.

3) Recycle previously developed land for housing.

There is a pressing need for new housing across Rochford District. The District is required to provide 250 new dwellings per year. Making efficient use of brownfield land for housing means that less greenfield land in and around Hockley will have to be used for housing development. Hockley is a sustainable residential location and provides opportunities for affordable and market housing to improve housing choice and address local housing need.

4) Protect local employment.

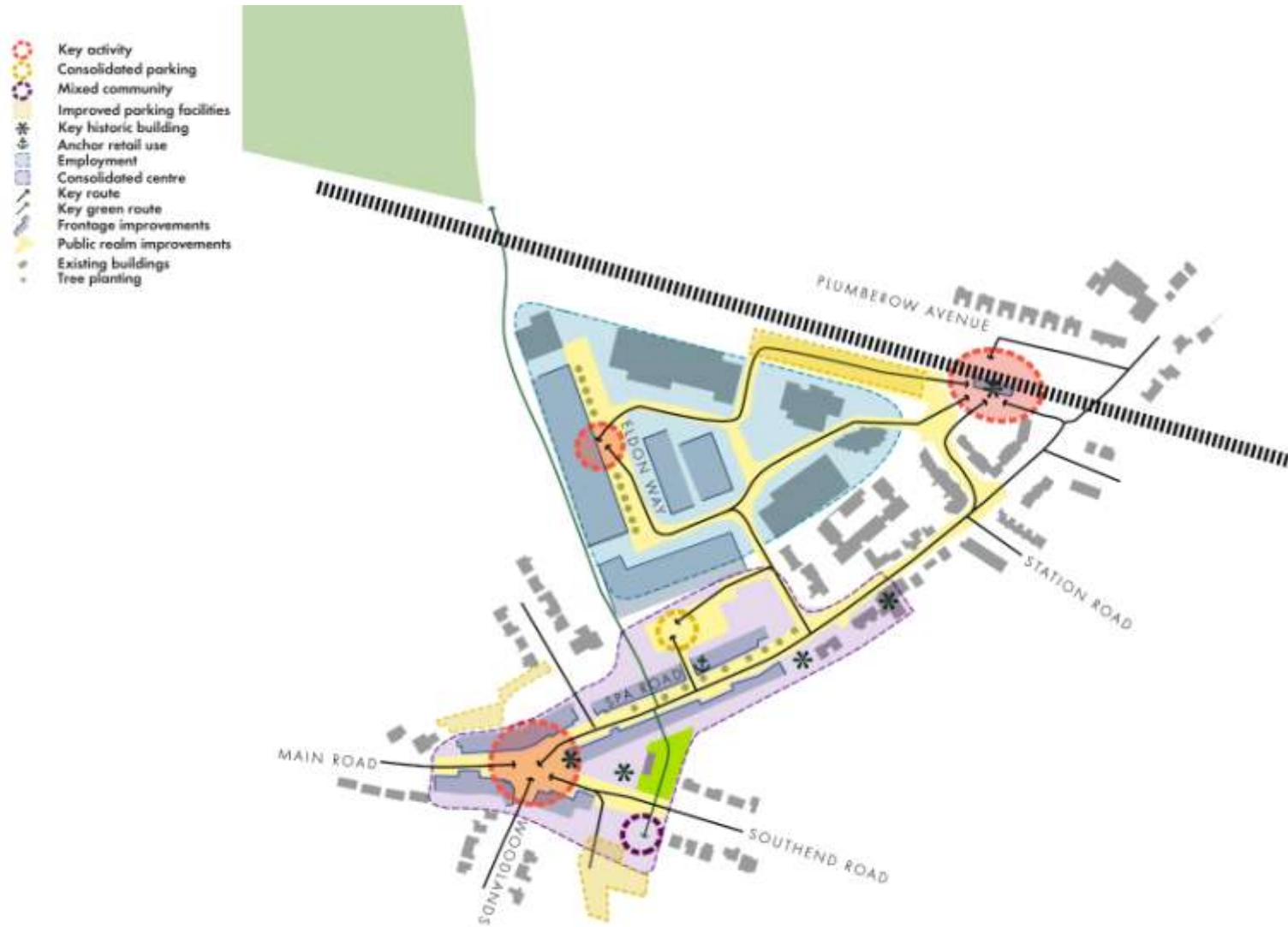
The strategy for Hockley needs to balance the importance of protecting local jobs with attracting new investment to strengthen the vitality of the centre. In particular, some of the employment uses on the Hockley Trading Centre and Foundry Business Park

should be retained, alongside some of the leisure uses on these sites that also provide employment and recreational opportunities.

3.3 Arriving at a framework

Hockley's form and structure was analysed in detail as part of the 2009 Issues & Options Document that was prepared to inform the AAP. This process resulted in clear ideas about the types of change that would help move the town forward, as well as a preferred spatial framework, which was produced as part of the 2010 Options Report and set out a direction of travel in terms of the main proposed interventions.

The 2010 framework included general areas for focusing main town centre and employment uses; a site for a new retail anchor; a range of public realm improvements, including the creation of prominent public spaces throughout the town centre; the introduction of clear linkages between important sites; and, improved car parking facilities. Figure 12 is the 2010 framework plan.



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Figure 12 2010 Hockley framework plan

Since 2010 a number of important changes have taken place, and in response the framework has been updated. The key changes are that:

- Today's economic climate is significantly more challenging than when the AAP process first commenced.
- There would need to be a greater focus on food retail as the anchor investment opportunity, to help ensure that a greater proportion of future shopping would take place within Hockley, and thereby protect the centre from further out of town retail expansion. At the same time, it is important that any food store would be of an appropriate size, such that it would complement other retail uses in the centre, and not dominate Hockley centre.
- The Foundry Business Park has recently benefitted from upgrades and the development of new modern accommodation, whilst the older accommodation is still occupied by a range of small enterprises. This would, therefore, represent a strong location for employment uses.
- Housing provision needs to be balanced with other uses to help meet pressing local housing needs, including

that proposed for Hockley centre. Hockley is generally considered to be a sustainable location for new housing development, and the use of previously development land here would help protect Green Belt land around Hockley. Housing on previously developed land would also enhance the vitality of Hockley centre. At the same time, it is important that a range of other uses would be provided within Hockley centre, including commercial, retail and leisure. As such, fewer dwellings are now proposed than in some of the previous options considered.

The AAP sets out a framework that responds to these changes and takes into account previous stages of analysis and consultation.

Policy 1 – Hockley Area Action Plan framework

Hockley will have an enhanced public realm and its residents will have improved access to nearby homes, shops, jobs, leisure facilities and other services. Development will take place in a manner that makes efficient use of previously developed land and that will respect the settlement's character.

The Eldon Way Opportunity Site will deliver a mixed-use development, which will include homes, shops, leisure facilities, offices, car parking and new public spaces.

All new development within the Hockley AAP area should contribute towards the delivery of the spatial framework. The key elements of this framework are:

- a. New and improved public spaces throughout the centre, in accordance with Policy 2, including a public open space associated with the redevelopment of the Eldon Way Opportunity Site and improvements to Spa Road mini-roundabout.**

- b. New and enhanced routes linking the centre with the rail station and the surrounding area.**
- c. Enhanced car parking that will serve the centre as a whole.**
- d. Opportunities for new housing as part of the Eldon Way Opportunity Site redevelopment.**
- e. The focus of retail uses in the centre, with an opportunity for a new retail development within the Eldon Way Opportunity Site, in accordance with Policy 6.**
- f. The protection of some existing employment and leisure uses within the Eldon Way Opportunity Site and on the Foundry Business Park.**

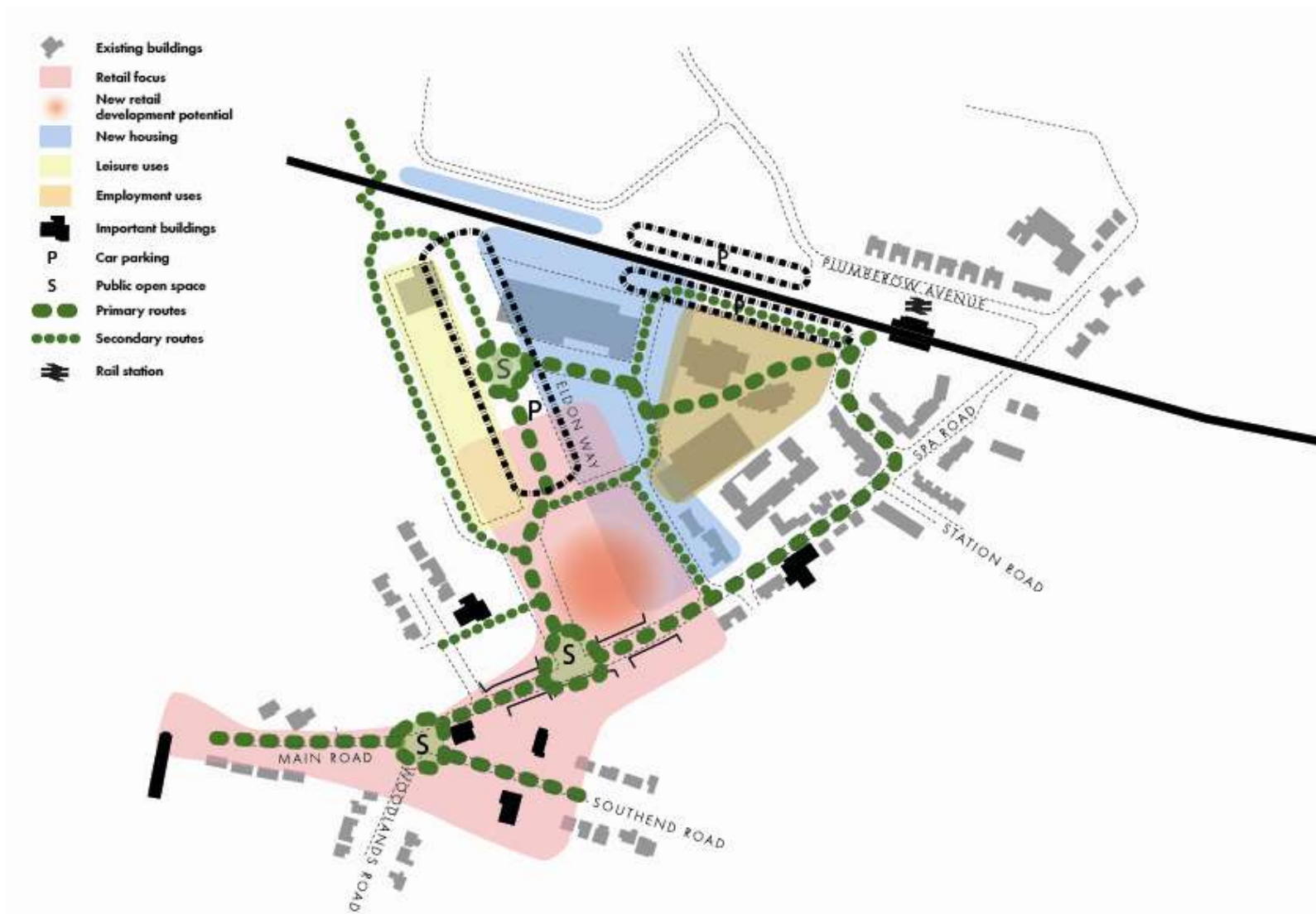
Eldon Way Opportunity Site. This site would help to deliver new homes and shops, improved car parking facilities for the whole centre, an enhanced public realm and opportunities for better connectivity.

The creation of a sustainable Hockley with enhanced access for local residents to homes, shops, jobs, leisure and other services is dependent on the quality of the development proposals that come forward. The AAP sets out further policies that are intended to deliver high quality development that is in accordance with its vision, objectives and framework.

The council does not own or control the majority of the land within the Eldon Way opportunity area. Its redevelopment is therefore largely dependent on private land owners and developers bringing the land forward.

Figure 13 presents an overview of the framework and provides a broad indication of where development should take place.

The delivery of many of the elements set out within the framework is contingent on the successful mixed-use redevelopment of the



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Figure 13 Hockley AAP framework plan

plan is relevant to policies contained within the Council’s other planning policy documents.

4. Proposals plan & area-wide policies

Figure 14 is a proposals plan for Hockley town centre. It relates directly to the AAP’s policies and shows the locations in which these policies will apply to development proposals. It also relates to certain policies set out within the Council’s Core Strategy and emerging Development Management documents.

Specifically, the proposals plan shows:

- A revised town centre boundary.
- Shopping frontages.
- A revised Hockley Employment Area.
- The Eldon Way Opportunity Site.

The reasoned justification for these location boundaries will be explained in the text following the AAP policies that deal with retail, employment and the other various elements of the mixed-use scheme proposed for the Eldon Way Opportunity Site. This text will also flag up where the proposals



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Figure 14 Hockley AAP Proposals Map

Policy 2 – Delivering environmental improvements

The Council will seek to deliver environmental improvements to Hockley centre and the wider AAP area. All development proposals should either incorporate or contribute towards the schemes identified in the AAP, which are:

- a. A new public space as part of the mixed-use redevelopment of the Eldon Way Opportunity Site, which should be fully integrated with Spa Road and any new retail floorspace delivered as part of this scheme.**
- b. Raised entry treatments on the Woodlands Road arm of the Spa Road mini-roundabout and the side roads along Spa Road.**
- c. New and improved pedestrian signage for key destinations and attractors, including the rail station, the centre’s primary shopping frontage, the library, the health centre and Hockley Woods.**

- d. Other physical interventions, including the replacement of poor quality paving, the removal of street clutter, the improvement of the lighting for pedestrian routes, and the planting of native street trees.**

New development within the Hockley AAP area would bring opportunities for the delivery of environmental improvements, which could be integrated within new development or funded through it. Core Strategy Policy RTC6 states that the AAP should secure a safe and high quality environment for Hockley’s residents and a new public space within the centre.

The requirements of Policy 2 are explained in more detail as follows:

A new public space

A new public space is one of the key elements of the proposed redevelopment of the Eldon Way Opportunity Site. This would provide a focal point for the centre, and would also help to link Spa Road and the centre with new homes, shops, jobs, leisure opportunities and other services delivered through regeneration.

There will be other opportunities to create new areas of public space throughout the AAP area. In particular, there may be scope to facilitate the creation of small areas of inviting public space, through improved soft landscaping and seating. Elsewhere, there may be the potential to soften new development at the Eldon Way Opportunity Site through the introduction of areas of public space.

Raised entry treatments on the Woodlands Road

The busy Spa Road mini-roundabout and numerous side roads along Spa Road currently act as barriers to pedestrian movement around Hockley centre. Raised entry treatments would help to prioritise pedestrian movements and enhance the centre’s public realm.

The introduction of raised entry treatments to these roads would not have a significant negative impact on vehicular traffic flows through Hockley centre. Most of the vehicles that pass through Hockley use the B1013 (Main Road / Southend Road) and would not use the routes that would be affected, which mainly accommodate local traffic.

The experience of pedestrians at the Spa Road mini-roundabout could be further improved through other relatively minor alterations to the surrounding areas of pavement, which could be incorporated as part of a scheme that would increase the roundabout's capacity and raise the Woodlands Road arm. Notably, it may be possible to widen the pavement around the Spa public house by undertaking a slight build-out on the north side of Southend Road.

New and improved pedestrian signage

Improved signage would help people to easily and safely find their way around Hockley. This would encourage those visiting the centre to leave their cars at home or in the centre's car parks and to walk between its main destinations.

Other physical interventions

It is important that the overall quality of the public realm within the centre is improved to attract visitors and encourage people to walk. Poor quality paving and street clutter act as barriers to safe and effective pedestrian movement.

Improved lighting for pedestrian routes would help improve safety and reduce the fear of crime; it would also encourage more people to visit the centre during the evening and at night, and so encourage a safe and attractive evening economy. The planting of native tree species would generally help to make the public realm more inviting and improve visual amenity.



Figure 15 Opportunities for environmental improvements in Hockley

Policy 3 – Promoting better movement

The Council will seek to deliver transport improvements that promote improved movement through and within the AAP area and enhanced linkages with other parts of Hockley and its surrounds. All development proposals should either incorporate or contribute towards the schemes identified in the AAP, which are:

- a. **Strengthening pedestrian links within the AAP area, particularly between the rail station and the Eldon Way Opportunity Site; the rail station and the centre; and Spa Road and the Eldon Way Opportunity Site.**
- b. **Creating new and enhancing existing pedestrian links across Hockley, including the existing route linking Spa Road to the surrounding countryside, which runs adjacent to Eldon Way; and potential routes from the centre to Hockley Woods.**
- c. **Improving the profile and accessibility of Hockley train**

station through enhancements to make the rail station entrance more legible.

- d. **The provision of enhanced cycle parking facilities at the rail station and suitable locations throughout the centre and the Eldon Way Opportunity Site.**
- e. **Improvements to bus facilities, including improved shelters and seating provision at key locations, such as the rail station and at stops in the centre; and real-time bus information.**
- f. **Consolidated car parking located on the Eldon Way Opportunity Site, which should serve the centre; new mixed-use development, including residential, retail, leisure and office uses; and the rail station.**
- g. **Increasing the capacity of the Spa Road mini-roundabout junction, without detriment to existing pedestrian amenity or local character.**

Planning applications for new development should be supported by

a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan, in accordance with the Department for Transport's (DfT) Guidance on Transport Assessment (2007). Travel Plans should encourage residents and businesses to live and operate in a more sustainable way, reducing the number and length of car trips generated in the area, whilst promoting more sustainable modes of travel, such as public transport, walking and cycling.

New development brings with it opportunities to increase investment in movement infrastructure such as highways, foot and cycle ways, car and cycle parking spaces, and public transport services. However, managing the impacts of increased movement that comes with new development is critical to ensuring that places work successfully.

Core Strategy Policy RTC6 sets out improved connectivity as a priority. Policies T3 and T6 of the same document support this priority and emphasise the importance of new development contributing towards improved public transport, and cycling and walking, respectively.

Figure 17 is a more detailed movement framework plan. The requirements of Policy 2 are explained in more detail as follows:

Strengthening pedestrian links:

Redevelopment provides the opportunity to open up previously closed potential pedestrian routes within Hockley centre. In particular, the comprehensive redevelopment of the Eldon Way Opportunity Site could help to create new links from the rail station to Spa Road.

Direct, legible and safe connections are crucial to improving travel choice, reducing reliance on the car and promoting more sustainable modes of travel. This is especially the case given that there are opportunities to increase the accessibility of the rail station. Good pedestrian links can also help to create more successful places that people can easily find their way around.

There are also opportunities to improve existing links between the centre, rail station and Eldon Way Opportunity Site and the rest of Hockley and its surrounding countryside.

Again, it is considered that better access into the centre will help to encourage visitors and residents to use other more sustainable modes of travel. Moreover, the links proposed would also allow those living in the centre to easily access the surrounding countryside and make use of this valuable resource.

Improving Hockley train station

The entrances to the rail station currently lack prominence. More legible entrances would improve its profile and appearance and help encourage people to become less reliant on their cars and to use rail as an alternative. Such enhancements would also complement the new links proposed in and around the centre of Hockley.

The provision of enhanced cycle parking

Improvements to cycle parking facilities would help to encourage people to cycle for local journeys and as part of longer rail journeys. Further, cyclists would be encouraged to use new links within the centre, across the town and with the surrounding countryside.

Improvements to bus facilities

The improvement of bus facilities, such as improved shelters and seating, would help to encourage the use of more sustainable modes of transport and reduce reliance on cars. In particular, real-time bus information would provide more certainty about service performance and help people to plan journeys. ECC made a commitment to the delivery of real-time bus information technology in its Bus Information Strategy (2006-2011) and the AAP supports this commitment.

Consolidated car parking located on the Eldon Way Opportunity Site

The comprehensive redevelopment of the Eldon Way Opportunity Site would create the opportunity for the provision of new and improved public parking facilities in the centre. Parking facilities are currently scattered around the centre and a reasonable amount of informal car parking takes place to the rear of properties and on Eldon Way.



Figure 16 Transport issues in Hockley

New consolidated car parking facilities could serve the existing centre and rail station, as well as development delivered as part of the proposals for the Eldon Way Opportunity Site. This would encourage visitors into the centre and the use of rail for longer journeys. A central car parking facility close to a variety of facilities and services may also help to promote linked trips.

The Parking Standards Design and Good Practice Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2010) sets out the level of car parking space provision that the Council would expect alongside development proposals. Within the AAP area car parking should be provided in line with the standards set out by this document. However, it should be noted that a lower level of provision may be appropriate in urban locations, such as Hockley centre.

Improvements to Spa Road mini-roundabout junction

Core Strategy Policy T1 states that the Council will require contributions from developments towards highways improvements to help mitigate any impact on local roads, and Policy T2 of the same document identifies the Spa Road mini-roundabout as a priority location.

It is considered that the incorporation of two-lane approaches on the three principle arms (Spa Road, Southend Road and Main Road) of this mini-roundabout would achieve improvements to traffic flows through the centre without having significant negative impacts on the pedestrian environment. Indeed, this approach would allow for the incorporation of public realm improvements, as proposed in Policy 2.

The improvement of traffic flows through the centre is necessary, given queuing that takes place on account of the Spa Road mini-roundabout at peak times. It is considered that this has a negative impact on the character of the centre.

It should be noted that the implementation of such a scheme should not take place prior to more detailed design and testing.

Transport Assessments and Travel Plans

Core Strategy Policy T6 generally requires the submission of Travel Plans in support of development proposals. This requirement is increased, in accordance with Draft Policy DM28, to also include the submission of a Transport Assessment, which would be necessary to assess the impact of proposed large developments – in particular, those

that might come forward as part of the mixed-use redevelopment of the Eldon Way Opportunity Site – and ensure that adequate mitigation measures would be put in place. This approach would help to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel and reduce the impact of new development on Hockley's roads and transport network.

Appendix B of the DfT's 2007 Guidance on Transport Assessment sets out detailed development thresholds, above which a Transport Assessment and / or Travel Plan should be submitted in support of a planning application. The Council will expect that developers have regard to these thresholds when preparing an application for submission.



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Figure 17 Hockley Movement Framework



Figure 18 Housing environments in Hockley

Policy 4 – Increasing the availability of housing

The Council will support development proposals for additional homes on previously developed land within the AAP area.

Residential (C3) development will be permitted within the Eldon Way Opportunity Site where it would:

- a. Not lead to the development of more than 50% of the total area of the Eldon Way Opportunity Site for new dwellings.**
- b. Achieve a density of approximately 50 dwellings per hectare.**
- c. Contribute positively towards the redevelopment of the Eldon Way Opportunity Site for a mix of uses, including residential, retail, leisure and office.**

Hockley is identified as a tier one settlement in Rochford District's Core Strategy, and should, therefore, play a critical role in the provision of the Council's housing target of 250 new dwellings per year. Core Strategy Policy H1 identifies the Hockley Trading

Centre and Foundry Business Park sites as presenting a redevelopment opportunity that will allow for the delivery of some of this new housing on a previously developed site.

A capacity study for the Eldon Way Opportunity Site has been carried out to examine how the full mix of uses envisaged for this site within the AAP could be accommodated. It demonstrates that approximately 100 new dwellings could be delivered on site.

It is likely that a mix of housing unit sizes could come forward, which might include a proportion of smaller, one-bedroom units, given the nature of housing need within the Borough. Draft Policy DM2 does not prescribe densities for new residential development, but encourages proposals for schemes that make efficient use of land and respond to their context. The Eldon Way Opportunity Site is suitable for medium density development due to its accessible location between the centre and rail station, as well as the prevailing character of the surrounding area.

There are also other opportunities for housing within and adjoining the AAP area. In terms of potential sites, the development

of a new rail station car park as part of the Eldon Way Opportunity Site would allow for some or all of the existing rail station car park north of the rail line to be redeveloped for housing. Other areas of land immediately to the north of the rail line may also be suitable for residential development, provided that viability would not be adversely affected by site shape and topography.

The land opposite Plumberow Avenue and Mount Crescent may have the potential for residential development. New development in this location would need to consider carefully the impact on the amenity of existing residents. However, in principle, the location is suitable and sustainable for housing development if an appropriate layout, design and parking arrangement can be found.



Figure 19 Employment land in Hockley

Draft Policy DM32 allows for the conversion of upper floors within centres, such as Hockley, to be converted for residential purposes. This is on the proviso that such development would not result in a net loss of leisure or commercial uses within the centre and seeks to protect the residential amenity of future occupiers, in particular by requiring that any new residential accommodation is self-contained and has separate access from the street.

All housing proposals within the AAP area should also meet planning policy requirements as set out within the Council's Core Strategy and emerging Development Management documents; the Housing Design SDP; the Parking Standards Design and Good Practice SPD (2010); the Essex Design Guide (2005) and Urban Place Supplement (2005); and any other relevant policy documents.

Policy 5 – Protecting jobs

The Council will support the development of office (B1a) uses within the Eldon Way Opportunity Site, provided that such uses contribute positively towards its redevelopment for a mix of uses, including residential, retail, leisure and office.

The Core Strategy includes the relocation of some employment sites – and their subsequent redevelopment for other uses – within its vision and objectives for economic development. The Hockley Trading Centre and Foundry Business Park site is included as one of these locations.

The Eldon Way Opportunity Site currently includes a mix of employment uses. The 2008 Employment Land Study recognised these uses as strategically well-placed and, therefore, recommended that the redevelopment of the site for other uses only be allowed on the basis that the redevelopment would include provision for office uses within the overall mix.

The capacity study that was undertaken to inform the AAP allows space for up to 1,200 square metres (gross) of offices as

part of the redeveloped Eldon Way Opportunity Site.

Offices are classified by the NPPF as a main town centre use. As such, offices should normally be located within a centre or at an edge of centre location. It is considered that the Eldon Way Opportunity Site is an appropriate, sustainable centre / edge of centre site for an office use, given its accessible position between Spa Road and the rail station.

As shown on the proposals plan, the Hockley employment site has been rationalised to allow for the designation of the Eldon Way Opportunity Site for mixed-use development. The extent of the employment site has been reduced and now greater focus is placed on the Foundry Business Park. Given that the Foundry Business Park has recently benefited from upgrades and new accommodation, it should be retained as an employment site. Development proposals for land within this site would be subject to Core Strategy Policy ED4 and Draft Policy DM29, which both seek to protect employment sites for employment generating uses, in particular those within classes B1 and B2.



Figure 20 Shopping environments in Hockley

Policy 6 – Improving retail choice for local people

The Council will support development proposals that seek to improve Hockley’s retail offer and strengthen the role of its centre as a shopping destination for local residents.

New retail (A1) development within the Eldon Way Opportunity Site will be permitted where it would:

- a. Provide a range of unit sizes, including smaller units.**
- b. In relation to a new food store on the site, be of a size that would not exceed 3,000m² (gross) of new floorspace.**
- c. Fully integrate with Spa Road, and allow for direct pedestrian links through the site to the redeveloped Eldon Way Opportunity Site, rail station and other areas of Hockley.**
- d. Contribute positively towards the redevelopment of the Eldon Way Opportunity Site for a mix of uses, including residential, retail, leisure and office.**

Hockley centre is one of Rochford District’s three main centres. Core Strategy Policies RTC1 and RTC2 require that retail development is first directed towards these centres, in accordance with a sequential approach to retail development, which prioritises such locations ahead of edge of centre and then out of centre locations.

The proposals plan shows an expanded Hockley centre, which includes an area of the Eldon Way Opportunity Site. This expanded area is primarily intended to guide any new retail development that takes place as a part of the mixed-use redevelopment of the Site, so that it is located in a way that would fully integrate with Spa Road. This would ensure that Hockley’s additional convenience floorspace capacity can be absorbed in a manner that strengthens its centre and increases footfall along Spa Road’s existing primary shopping frontage.

The 2008 Retail & Leisure Study recommends that Hockley’s retail offer should be strengthened. It also highlights that there is capacity for up to 890m² (net) of convenience floorspace to 2026. This is within the context of an overall convenience floorspace capacity for up to 3,000m² (net) to 2026 across the whole of the District.

Within this context, then, the Council would allow a new food store with up to 3,000m² (gross) of new floorspace within Hockley centre, as part of the mixed-use redevelopment of the Eldon Way Opportunity Site. This is reasonable on account of the overall level of convenience capacity and the desire to strengthen Hockley centre and the need to claw back local trade currently lost to other locations.

Furthermore, the capacity study that has been undertaken in relation to the Eldon Way Opportunity Site establishes that a food store with up to 3,000m² (gross) of new floorspace would be the largest that could be accommodated. A larger food store would threaten the delivery of the mix of other uses that would be needed to help deliver the Council’s vision for Hockley Centre.

The development of a new food store on the Eldon Way Opportunity Site could also help to facilitate a new public space. This should provide new linkages between Spa Road and the mixed-used development proposed for the Site.

The Retail & Leisure Study also recognises that Hockley has a good mix of small, but high quality independent traders. It

recommends that this offer is enhanced and the centre promoted as a boutique shopping destination. The Eldon Way Opportunity Site offers the potential for a range of different sized retail units alongside any food store, including smaller units suitable for independent traders. As such, it is considered that new development could build on Hockley's existing strengths and character.

Policy 7 – Ensuring a healthy centre

The Council will encourage appropriate development within Hockley centre that supports its vitality and viability

Within the centre's primary and secondary shopping frontages, as defined on the Hockley APP Proposals Map, a proposed change of use for non-retail (non-A1) purposes will be permitted where it would:

- a. Not have a detrimental impact on, or undermine, the predominance of A1 uses within the centre.**
- b. Not create a cluster of similar non-A1 uses within a locality that undermines the retail character of the centre.**
- c. Positively contribute to the overall offer and encourage people into the centre**

The proposals plan shows primary and secondary shopping frontages within Hockley centre. These have been retained

as existing, with the only changes from the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan (2006) proposals map being the infilling of gaps between areas of designated frontage. This would allow the Council to deal appropriately with all proposals for the development of centre ground-floor units with a street frontage.

An appropriate balance of uses is necessary to support the health of Hockley centre, and it is essential that retail uses are supported by non-retail uses such as cafés, pubs and banks.

The 2008 Retail & Leisure Study assessed the vitality and viability of Hockley centre and no changes to retail frontages were put forward. As such, the Council will continue to assess proposals that relate to either primary or secondary shopping frontages on a similar basis to that set out within the Local Plan.

The Council recognises the dynamic nature of centres and the need for flexibility. However, as a guide and whilst wishing to avoid being overly prescriptive, the Council will generally seek to retain 75% of Hockley's primary shopping frontage and 50% of its secondary shopping frontage in retail (A1) use.

Policy 8 – Encouraging leisure opportunities

The Council will support the location of leisure (D2) uses within the Eldon Way Opportunity Site, provided that such uses contribute positively towards its redevelopment for a mix of uses, including residential, retail, leisure and office.

It is noted that a bowling facility is currently located within the Eldon Way Opportunity Site. The 2008 Retail & Leisure Study identified this as the most popular ten pin bowling facility amongst Rochford District's residents. The Site also currently includes a children's adventure play facility and a gym. The Council will support the retention of these uses and recognises the important role that they play in providing leisure opportunities for the District's residents.

Although the Retail & Leisure Study did not identify a strong need for additional leisure facilities within the District, and especially Hockley, there may also be some potential for new leisure uses to locate within the Eldon Way Opportunity Site. The presence of existing uses could provide an

opportunity for the sustainable location of other complimentary facilities.

The capacity study undertaken in respect of the Eldon Way Opportunity Site builds in sufficient space for the retention of existing leisure uses and the possible development of new leisure uses.

The AAP proposals plan shows that the Hockley centre designation has been expanded to include land within the Eldon Way Opportunity Site and, specifically, capture CJ's Bowling within this designation.

The NPPF states that leisure facilities are main town centre uses, which should normally be located within centres. It is considered that the Eldon Way Opportunity Site represents an appropriate centre / edge of centre location for existing and new leisure uses, given that it is sustainably located between the Spa Road, which is the heart of the centre, and the rail station. The introduction of new linkages, as proposed by the AAP, will further enhance the suitability and sustainability of this location.



Figure 21 Leisure uses in Hockley

5. Delivering a better Hockley

5.1 Working in partnership

The Council will continue to work closely with partners, landowners and other stakeholders to realise the implementation of the policies in the AAP.

The key landowners will ultimately be responsible for delivering the envisaged changes. The Eldon Way Opportunity Site is largely controlled by a single landowner. The AAP provides certainty with regards to the Council's vision for this land and also sets out a basis for the Council to aid the development process through assisting with any necessary land assembly.

The Council will also continue to engage with the community. Future planning applications and the development management process will determine the details of individual development schemes that come forward as a result of the AAP. The community will be given the opportunity to have further input into the design of developments.

Working with ECC

A further key partner is ECC, the Highways Authority. In its role as highway network manager, ECC will consider the movement framework identified in this AAP and will take this forward as part of its strategic planning process. In doing so, they will take into consideration the policies set out above.

ECC will also be responsible for reviewing and approving Transport Assessments and Travel Plans submitted as part of any future planning applications for significant development in the AAP area. They will need to be satisfied that any transport impacts identified have been appropriately mitigated and that the movement-related elements of any scheme are in accordance with the AAP policies.

The Council will continue to be proactive in its engagement with ECC through the Local Highways Panel, which is made up of members and officers from both authorities and decides on which highway and public realm improvements monies will be spent.

5.2 Financial viability

The Council has taken into account information regarding national and local trends in the property market, as well as high-level viability advice in respect of individual development schemes. This is to ensure that the proposals set out within this AAP are robust and based in commercial realism.

Eldon Way Opportunity Site

A site-specific viability analysis has been undertaken for the Eldon Way Opportunity Site development scenario generated through the capacity study, which was carried out to test the proposed scheme's layout and design. This analysis adopts realistic and robust assumptions, including construction costs based on standard building indices and the project team's knowledge of comparable schemes, and takes into account the potential cost of land assembly. It also relates to a scheme that would help to meet the Council's aspirations for the AAP area.

Broadly speaking, the viability analysis demonstrates that the proposed redevelopment of the Eldon Way Opportunity Site is currently financially viable. Clearly, financial viability is sensitive

and can be easily impacted on over time by fluctuations in prices and land assembly costs and, crucially, variations in planning policy requirements.

Affordable housing

Given the likely importance of housing as part of the proposed mixed-use redevelopment of the Eldon Way Opportunity site, the provision of affordable housing would impact significantly on any scheme’s overall financial viability. Core Strategy Policy H4 states that ‘at least 35% of dwellings on all developments of 15 or more units, or on sites greater than 0.5 hectares, shall be affordable’. It goes on to highlight that the Council will aim for 80% of this provision to be social housing, and 20% percent to be intermediate housing.

However, the Policy goes on to say that the Council will continually review the affordable housing needs of the District and that developers should consult with the Council’s Housing Strategy Team to ensure that their proposals meet the Council’s needs before submitting planning applications. It also states that the requirements for the provision of affordable housing might be relaxed in exceptional circumstances; for example, where constraints would make on-site provision

impossible, or where a developer could demonstrate that 35% provision would be economically unviable. In such cases the Council will negotiate the proportion of affordable dwellings based on evidence regarding financial viability.

5.3 Community infrastructure

The Council, in line with Core Strategy Policy CLT1, requires that developers provide on-site infrastructure to mitigate specific issues relating to their development scheme. Developers will also be required to contribute towards off-site, strategic infrastructure, which would help to mitigate the cumulative impact of new development.

The Core Strategy sets out the types of strategic infrastructure that should be funded by contributions arising from new development. These include highway and public transport improvements, alongside a number of other important types of infrastructure.

The AAP sets out priorities for delivering environmental improvements and highways schemes. The Council will expect that new development within the AAP area contributes towards these identified

priorities, in accordance with the Core Strategy.

Table 1 gives further detail in relation to major improvements and schemes. It should be noted that this is not exhaustive and development may be required to contribute towards other enhancements as identified in the AAP or through the development management process.

Table 1 – Major environmental improvements and highways schemes					
Environmental improvement / highways scheme	Lead partner	Other partners	Estimated cost	Potential funding stream(s)	Comments
Spa Road public realm enhancements	ECC	Rochford District Council / developers	£1,200,000 - £1,500,000	Pooled financial contributions / ECC budget	These improvements should be funded from pooled contributions
Eldon Way Opportunity Site public realm enhancements	ECC	Rochford District Council / developers	£400,000 - £500,000	Section 106 agreement(s), made in relation to the redevelopment of Eldon Way Opportunity Site	These improvements should be delivered as part of the redevelopment of the Eldon Way Opportunity Site
New and enhanced pedestrian links	ECC	Rochford District Council / developers	£150,000 - £200,000	Pooled financial contributions / ECC budget	Any of these proposed new or improved links directly associated with the Eldon Way Opportunity Site should be delivered alongside its redevelopment. Other new or improved links should be funded from pooled contributions.
Spa Road mini-roundabout upgrade	ECC	Rochford District Council / developers	£200,000 - £300,000	Section 106 agreement(s), made in relation to the redevelopment of Eldon Way Opportunity Site	This improvement should be delivered alongside the redevelopment of the Eldon Way Opportunity Site and / or, if it is delivered separately, any new food store

5.4 Monitoring change

The importance of monitoring is recognised in both legislation and local policy. The Localism Act 2011 requires that the Council produces regular monitoring reports to assess the delivery of its planning documents and implementation of its policies. The Core Strategy sets out the Council’s commitment to the production of monitoring reports and explains how each of its policies will be monitored.

Whilst the AAP’s progress can be tracked to some extent against the Core Strategy’s monitoring framework, there are several instances where a monitoring framework specific to the Hockley AAP is required. Table 2 sets out how the AAP will be monitored.

The Council’s monitoring report will document whether or not the AAP’s objectives are being met and will set out the necessary actions to aid the delivery of the AAP.

Table 2 – Implementation, delivery and monitoring				
Policy	Implementation and delivery	Potential risk	Risk mitigation	Monitoring
Policy 1 – Hockley Area Action Plan area framework	Development within the Hockley AAP area will be guided by the framework.	The development set out within the Hockley AAP area framework is not delivered or does not meet the needs of Hockley and its residents.	<p>The Council has engaged with landowners and developers and carried out a robust financial appraisal of the Eldon Way Opportunity Site scheme.</p> <p>The Council has also worked with its partners, such as ECC, to ensure that the scheme has the full backing of these organisations.</p> <p>The Council has also carried out thorough public engagement and baseline analysis to ensure that the framework addresses the appropriate issues.</p>	The Council will record development through monitoring reports, keeping track of commitments and completions.
Policy 2 – Delivering environmental improvements	<p>Environmental improvements that come forward as a result of developments within the AAP area will be guided by this Policy.</p> <p>The spending of contributions towards environmental improvements received as a result of centre schemes will also be guided by this Policy.</p>	Economic viability consideration may threaten the delivery of environmental improvements.	The viability of development on the Eldon Way Opportunity Site has been subjected to a robust financial appraisal, which has included robust and reasonable assumptions about contributions towards environmental improvements.	The Council will record the receipt and spending of contributions through monitoring reports.

<p>Policy 3 – Promoting better movement</p>	<p>Highways and transport improvements that come forward as a result of developments within the AAP area will be guided by this Policy.</p> <p>The spending of contributions towards Highways and transport improvements received as a result of centre schemes will also be guided by this Policy.</p>	<p>Economic viability consideration may threaten the delivery of highways and transport improvements.</p> <p>ECC and other transport service providers may change their spending priorities and decide not to deliver the identified schemes.</p>	<p>The viability of development on the Eldon Way Opportunity Site has been subjected to a robust financial appraisal, which has included robust and reasonable assumptions about contributions towards highways and transport improvements.</p> <p>The Council has also worked with ECC to ensure that the scheme has the full backing of this organisation.</p>	<p>The Council will record the receipt and spending of contributions through monitoring reports.</p>
<p>Policy 4 – Increasing the availability of housing</p>	<p>The Council will prioritise the development of previously developed land for housing within Hockley, in particular the Eldon Way Opportunity Site. The Council will continue to work proactively with developers and landowners.</p>	<p>Residential development on previously developed land, in particular the Eldon Way Opportunity Site, is not delivered.</p>	<p>Previously developed sites for housing development have been identified in consultation with landowners and developers. Engagement on this basis will continue throughout the plan-period.</p> <p>The viability of residential development on the Eldon Way Opportunity Site has been subjected to a robust financial appraisal.</p>	<p>The Council will record housing commitments and completions within Hockley and the Eldon Way Opportunity Site through monitoring reports. The number of commitments and completions on previously developed land will be recorded.</p>

<p>Policy 5 – Protecting jobs</p>	<p>The Council will encourage office uses</p>	<p>Offices may not be delivered as part of the mixed uses redevelopment of the Eldon Way Opportunity Site</p>	<p>The Council will use the development management process to steer development towards sequentially preferable sites, including centre and edge of centre sites within the Eldon Way Opportunity Site.</p> <p>The Council has engaged with landowners and developers and carried out a robust financial appraisal of the Eldon Way Opportunity Site scheme.</p>	<p>Office commitments and completions will be recorded as part of the monitoring report.</p>
<p>Policy 6 – Improving retail choice for local people</p>	<p>New retail development will be directed towards sequentially preferable sites within Hockley centre, including those on the Eldon Way Opportunity Site.</p>	<p>The role of Hockley’s centre is not strengthened and an improved retail offer is not delivered.</p>	<p>The Council will use the development management process to steer development towards sequentially preferable sites, including those on the Eldon Way Opportunity Site.</p> <p>The Council has engaged with landowners and developers and carried out a robust financial appraisal of the Eldon Way Opportunity Site scheme.</p>	<p>Hockley centre’s uses will be recorded as part of the monitoring report, as will retail commitments and completions.</p>
<p>Policy 7 – Ensuring an healthy centre</p>	<p>A healthy mix of retail (A1) and non-retail (non-A1) uses will be maintained within the centre’s shopping frontages.</p>	<p>The health of the centre declines.</p>	<p>The Council will use the development management process to steer development to appropriate sites within the centre.</p>	<p>Uses within the centre’s shopping frontages will be recorded as part of the monitoring report.</p>

<p>Policy 8 – Encouraging leisure opportunities</p>	<p>Leisure uses will be encouraged within the Eldon Way Opportunity Site.</p>	<p>Leisure uses may not be delivered as part of the mixed uses redevelopment of the Eldon Way Opportunity Site and / or existing uses may not remain in this location.</p>	<p>The Council will use the development management process to steer development towards sequentially preferable sites, including centre and edge of centre sites within the Eldon Way Opportunity Site.</p> <p>The Council has engaged with landowners and developers and carried out a robust financial appraisal of the Eldon Way Opportunity Site scheme.</p>	<p>Leisure commitments and completions will be recorded as part of the monitoring report.</p>
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