

Draft Allocations Pre-Submission Document

**Interim Report on the Sustainability of Suggested Sites
and Policies**

October 2012

Rochford District Council – Allocations Submission Document: Interim Report on the Sustainability of Suggested Sites and Policies

Introduction

This interim report summarises the sustainability of the options under consideration. The final Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Allocations Submission Document will be published alongside the consultation document in due course.

Table 1 – The SA Framework

	SA Objective	Decision-Aiding Question Will it (the Policy)...?
	Balanced Communities (SEA topic: Population & Human Health, Material Assets)	
1	To ensure the delivery of high quality sustainable communities where people want to live and work	<p>Will it ensure the phasing of infrastructure, including community facilities to meet ongoing and future needs?</p> <p>Will it ensure the regeneration and enhancement of existing rural and urban communities?</p> <p>Will it ensure equal opportunities and that all sections of the community are catered for?</p> <p>Will it meet the needs of an ageing population?</p> <p>Will the policies and options proposed seek to enhance the qualifications and skills of the local community?</p> <p>Will income and quality-of-life disparities be reduced?</p>
	Healthy & Safe Communities (SEA topic: Population & Human Health)	
2	Create healthy and safe environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion	<p>Will it ensure the delivery of high quality, safe and inclusive design?</p> <p>Will it improve health and reduce health inequalities?</p> <p>Will it promote informal recreation and encourage healthy, active lifestyles?</p> <p>Will green infrastructure (non-vehicular infrastructure routes and links) and networks be promoted and/or enhanced?</p> <p>Will it minimise noise pollution?</p> <p>Will it minimise light pollution?</p>
	Housing (SEA topic: Population & Human Health)	
3	To provide everybody with the opportunity to live in a decent home	<p>Will it increase the range and affordability of housing for all social groups?</p> <p>Will a mix of housing types and tenures be promoted?</p> <p>Will it reduce the number of unfit homes?</p> <p>Does it promote high quality design?</p> <p>Is there sustainable access to key services?</p> <p>Does it meet the resident's needs in terms of sheltered and lifetime homes or those that can be easily adapted so?</p>
	Economy & Employment (SEA topic: Population & Human Health, Material Assets)	
4	To achieve sustainable levels of economic growth/prosperity and	Does it promote and enhance existing centres by focusing development in such centres?

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	SA Objective	Decision-Aiding Question Will it (the Policy)...?
	promote town centre vitality/viability	<p>Will it improve business development?</p> <p>Does it enhance consumer choice through the provision of a range of shopping, leisure, and local services to meet the needs of the entire community?</p> <p>Does it promote mixed use and high density development in urban centres?</p> <p>Does it promote a wide variety of jobs across all sectors?</p> <p>Does it secure more opportunities for residents to work in the District?</p> <p>Will it aid the realisation of London Southend Airport's economic potential?</p>
Accessibility (SEA topic: Population & Human Health, Air, Climatic Factors)		
5	To promote more sustainable transport choices both for people and moving freight ensuring access to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling	<p>Will it increase the availability of sustainable transport modes?</p> <p>Will it seek to encourage people to use alternative modes of transportation other than the private car, including walking and cycling?</p> <p>Will it contribute positively to reducing social exclusion by ensuring access to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services?</p> <p>Will it reduce the need to travel?</p> <p>Does it seek to encourage development where large volumes of people and/or transport movements are located in sustainable accessible locations?</p> <p>Does it enable access for all sections of the community, including the young, the socially deprived, those with disabilities and the elderly?</p> <p>Does it secure more opportunities for residents to work in the District, and for out-commuting to be reduced?</p> <p>Does it enable access to green infrastructure and the wider natural environment to all sections of the community?</p>
Biodiversity (SEA topic: Fauna & Flora)		
6	To conserve and enhance the biological and geological diversity of the environment as an integral part of social, environmental and economic development	<p>Will it conserve and enhance natural/semi natural habitats, including the District's distinctive estuaries and salt marshes?</p> <p>Will it conserve and enhance species diversity, and in particular avoid harm to protected species and priority species?</p> <p>Will it maintain and enhance sites designated for their nature conservation interest?</p> <p>Will it conserve and enhance sites of geological significance?</p> <p>Does land use allocation reflect the scope of using brownfield land for significant wildlife interest where viable and realistic?</p>

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	SA Objective	Decision-Aiding Question Will it (the Policy)...?
		Does new development integrate within it opportunities for new habitat creation, particularly where they could facilitate species movement and colonisation in relation to climate change pressures on biodiversity and its distribution?
	Cultural Heritage (SEA topic: Cultural Heritage, Landscape)	
7	To maintain and enhance the cultural heritage and assets of the District	Will it protect and enhance sites, features and areas of historical, archaeological and cultural value in both urban and rural areas? Will it support locally-based cultural resources and activities?
	Landscape & Townscape (SEA topic: Landscape, Cultural Heritage)	
8	To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes and townscapes	Does it seek to enhance the range and quality of the public realm and open spaces? Will it contribute to the delivery of the enhancement, effective management and appropriate use of land in the urban fringe? Will it reduce the amount of derelict, degraded and underused land? Will it preserve and/or improve the quality of the landscape? Will it conserve (as preservation is neither realistic or desirable) the landscape character areas of the plan area? Will it preserve and/or enhance townscape character and value?
	Climate Change & Energy (SEA topic: Climatic Factors)	
9	To reduce contributions to climate change	Will it reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by reducing energy consumption? Will it lead to an increased proportion of energy needs being met from renewable sources? Does it adapt to and provide for the consequences of climate change in a largely low-lying area?
	Water (SEA topic: Water, Fauna & Flora)	
10	To improve water quality and reduce the risk of flooding	Will it improve the quality of inland water? Will it improve the quality of coastal waters? Will it provide for an efficient water conservation and supply regime? Will it provide for effective wastewater treatment? Will it require the provision of sustainable drainage systems in new development? Will it reduce the risk of flooding and promote sustainable flood management? Will it reduce the risk of flooding? Will it integrate sustainable flood management which works with natural processes, presents habitat enhancement opportunities and is landscape character sensitive?

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	SA Objective	Decision-Aiding Question Will it (the Policy)...?
	Land & Soil (SEA topic: Soils)	
11	To maintain and improve the quality of the District's land and soil	<p>Does it ensure the re-use of previously-developed land and urban areas in preference to Greenfield sites, as far as is practicable given the characteristics of the District?</p> <p>Will higher-density development be promoted where appropriate?</p> <p>Will soil quality be preserved?</p> <p>Will it promote the remediation of contaminated land?</p> <p>Will the best and most versatile agricultural land be protected?</p>
	Air Quality (SEA topic: Air, Climatic Factors)	
12	To improve air quality	<p>Will air quality be improved through reduced emissions (e.g. through reducing car travel)?</p> <p>Will it direct transport movements away from AQMAs and/or potentially significant junctions?</p>
	Sustainable Design & Construction (SEA topic: Human Health, Material Assets, Climatic Factors, Fauna & Flora, Water, Air)	
13	To promote sustainable design and construction	<p>Will it ensure the use of sustainable design principles, e.g. encouraging a mix of uses?</p> <p>Will climate proofing design measures be incorporated?</p> <p>Will the local character/vernacular be preserved and enhanced through development?</p> <p>Will it require the re-use and recycling of construction materials?</p> <p>Will it encourage locally-sourced materials?</p> <p>Will it require best-practice sustainable construction methods, for example in energy and water efficiency?</p>

Brownfield Residential Land Allocations

Policy BFR1 – Star Lane Industrial Estate, Great Wakering

The policy to reallocate Star Lane Industrial Estate for residential use performs well against the sustainability objectives. It promotes the utilisation of brownfield land in proximity to the existing residential area of Great Wakering, and in particular it would make use of disused brownfield land (the brickworks site which comprises the southern end of the industrial estate), which would negate the need to identify additional greenfield Green Belt land.

Although the allocation of this site would result in the loss of employment land in proximity to Great Wakering, an alternative site has been identified elsewhere (Policy NEL3) to compensate for this.

The site adjoins a Local Wildlife Site (Star Lane Pits) along its eastern boundary, however, the Concept Statement proposes mitigation measures in the form of a green buffer along the

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eastern edge of the site to minimise disturbance. It also proposes that a management plan is prepared for the Local Wildlife Site, which would have a positive impact on sustainability.

The Concept Statement also accounts for the future integration of the site with the adjacent proposed residential development (Policy SER9b).

Policy BFR2 – Eldon Way/Foundry Industrial Estate, Hockley

The detailed policies for this site will be refined within the Hockley Area Action Plan. However, the principle of reallocating the site has been assessed in the Core Strategy SA, and as such the policy has not been assessed further at this stage.

Policy BFR3 – Stambridge Mills, Rochford

The allocation of this existing brownfield site for residential use has significant sustainability benefits as it would entail redevelopment of derelict, brownfield land. The policy would facilitate the redevelopment of a site which currently has a significant impact on the landscape due to the scale and mass of the existing buildings and structures. It would also reduce the need to develop on greenfield and Green Belt land elsewhere in the District.

However, there are some concerns in respect of sustainability for this site. The site is detached from the existing settlement of Rochford, but the Concept Statement requires that links and enhancements are made to non-vehicular routes to enable integration with the existing neighbouring settlement.

The site is located within an area at risk of flooding, which has an impact on its sustainability benefits, however, the provision of flood defences and the preparation of a Flood Evacuation Plan are required within the Concept Statement, which would have a positive contribution towards sustainability.

A Listed Building is located adjacent to the site, which would need to be considered during the planning application process.

The site is also adjacent to an area that is subject to a number of nature conservation designations. Development of the site should avoid harm to these designations. This issue is addressed through the Concept Statement.

The allocation of this site would result in the loss of employment land in this location, however, compensatory employment land is proposed elsewhere in the District as per the Core Strategy.

Policy BFR4 – Rawreth Industrial Estate, Rayleigh

The policy promotes the reallocation of this site for residential use, which performs well against the sustainability objectives in terms of utilising brownfield land which would avoid the need to allocate additional greenfield Green Belt land elsewhere. The site is an existing 'bad neighbour' to the surrounding residential areas to the south and east, and as such, relocating the uses on this site to an alternative location would positively impact on residential amenity and air quality in the location (as the site is designated an Air Quality Management Area).

Whilst the allocation of this site for residential use would result in the loss of employment land to the west of Rayleigh, compensatory employment land elsewhere (Policy NEL1 and NEL2) is proposed to accommodate the range of uses on site.

The site is adjacent to proposed residential development to the north of London Road (Policy SER1). However, the Concept Statement within the policy takes into account the future integration of the site with the adjacent proposed residential development.

A small area at risk of flooding to the south west of the site is proposed to accommodate public open space in the Concept Statement.

Settlement Extension Residential Land Allocations

Housing Allocations

Policy SER1 – North of London Road, Rayleigh

The allocation of land to the north of London Road performs well against the sustainability criteria in several ways. The site is within close proximity to facilities including local shops and services, a school, leisure and health facilities.

SER1 is well related to the Districts transport network. It has the potential to provide good access to Rawreth Lane and London Road, which allow access to shops, services and community facilities. There is also access to existing public transport, in the form of bus links to areas including Rayleigh town centre. SER1 has the potential to link to one of the District's proposed Greenways as well as a proposed Sustrans cycle route located further to the north/north east of the site.

The Concept Statement sets out proposals to introduce a bus only route through the centre of the site, running from Rawreth Lane to London Road.

SER1 is not located in proximity to any areas of special ecological significance.

SER1 performs well against the sustainability criteria in relation to the existing residential area, and regarding the integrity of the Green Belt in particular. SER1 extends westward along London Road, which forms the major western approach to Rayleigh. The gradient of the land increases to its highest point in the north/north east of the site. The Concept Statement for SER1 incorporates several features which ensure that the site performs well against the sustainability objectives, including creating a strong green buffer in the form of park land to provide a barrier between the A1245 and the site. This will have the added benefit of strengthen the Green Belt boundary in this location and reducing the visual impact of the development on traffic entering the district from the west. Additionally the west of the site has the capacity to include landmark buildings which can improve the visual character of the site along the western approach into Rayleigh.

There is a playing field to the south of the site, which should be relocated. The Concept Statement requires that the site should be relocated within the green buffer to the west of the site, where it can be well connected to the pedestrian and cycling network.

Development of SER1 will require the loss of grade 3 agricultural land. Although this does not perform well against the sustainability criteria it does ensure that other areas of higher grade agricultural land are protected.

The site includes an area of flood zone 2 and 3 running through the centre of the site. The Concept Statement states that this area should be set aside as public open space. The

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Concept Statement also sets out a requirement for the inclusion of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS).

Pylons running along the south western boundary of the site mean that development must be kept at a reasonable safe distance of 60 metres.

SER1 is in close proximity to Rawreth Industrial Estate (Policy BFR4). The estate has been reallocated for residential use under Policy BFR4. The Concept Statement points out that consideration should be given to the phasing of the two sites (SER1 and BFR4). In particular if SER1 is developed first then provision of a buffer between the residential development and industrial uses is encouraged. This buffer would also need to allow for the future integration of the two sites as development of BFR4 accelerates. Alternatively if Rawreth Industrial Estate is developed first then it will need to enable integration with the proposed new residential development to the west (SER1).

There is a Grade II listed building located close to the site. The Concept Statement requires that the development of the site should not cause any adverse impact on the setting of the building and that a green buffer might be useful in mitigating any negative impact.

Policy SER2 – West Rochford

The allocation of the site in West Rochford (SER2) performs well against the sustainability criteria. The site has the capacity to ensure balanced communities because it has strong access to shops, services and community facilities located within the main settlement of Rochford as well as accommodating a new primary school.

SER2 performs well in terms of accessibility. There is potential to improve on existing cycle and pedestrian routes. SER2 is in close proximity to the train station in Rochford, providing excellent access to the rest of the district and beyond. The site has the capacity to provide green links to Ironwell Lane and the proposed Sustrans cycle route, facilitating an increase in the use of pedestrian and cycle routes.

SER2 is sited on the northern border of Hall Road, the main gateway into Rochford. The Concept Statement establishes the requirements for high quality design in the site to ensure that there is no negative visual impact on the approach to the Conservation Area from the west. The Concept Statement addresses the need for a green buffer along the western approach along Hall Road. This green buffer located to the west of the site in the Green Belt would ensure the creation of a strong Green Belt boundary.

The development of SER1 will incur the loss of grade 1/2 agricultural land although there are no suitable alternatives in the general location which do not result in a similar loss.

There is a small area of flood risk to the north east of the site, which is addressed by the Concept Statement through requiring the creation of greenspace in this location.

Policy SER3 – West Hockley

SER3 is well related to the rest of Hockley and is largely enclosed by existing residential development, particularly to the north and east of the site. The site performs well against the sustainability criteria as it is primarily situated on brownfield land. The Concept Statement requires that the brownfield land on the site be subject to a contaminated land study.

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Some greenfield land would be allocated under SER3 however it's loss would be less significant than that caused by other alternative sites in the same general location.

The development of SER3 will result in the loss of grade 3 agricultural land, although not used as such. The greenfield land predominantly constitutes wooded areas/scrubland and some garden areas. The loss of this land will ensure that valuable agricultural land elsewhere is protected.

The site includes two extensions onto greenfield land, one to the east and one to the west. These serve the dual purpose of ensuring that there is adequate access to Folly Lane and Church Road. The Concept Statement requires that these two access/ egress points can connect to the proposed Sustrans cycle network.

The brownfield land identified in SER3 supports existing employment uses, which will be lost if the development of the site goes ahead. However, this part of the site is not allocated as employment land.

There is a large Tree Preservation Order area adjacent to the site to the west as well as a smaller Tree Preservation Order areas and trees subject to Preservation Orders to the west of the site. The Concept Statement sets the requirement that these trees should be retained unless retaining them renders the development unviable or undeliverable.

Policy SER4 – South Hawkwell

SER4 performs well against several of the sustainability criteria. Notably the site is situated between the existing residential development within the general location of South Hawkwell and as such it will have a significantly reduced impact on the openness of the Green Belt as well as being able to support the creation of a robust Green Belt boundary. The location of the site ensures that there will be no loss of agricultural land.

The Concept Statement requires that the semi- natural character of the site should be retained. There are a number of paddocks along Rectory Road which the Concept Statement states should be retained as open space. This will ensure that character of the area is not adversely affected by the development and that a strong green buffer is maintained.

The site is at risk of flooding to the north east corner. The Concept Statement addresses this, stating that the land should be designated as public open space.

The Concept Statement states that the site should be integrated with the proposed Sustrans cycle route and with the pedestrian and bridleway network.

There is a Woodland Tree Preservation Order area towards the central area of the site and other trees subject to Preservation Orders on site. The Concept Statement requires that these areas be retained.

Policy SER5 – East Ashingdon

SER5 performs well against several sustainability criteria. It is well related to King Edmund School and the Concept Statement requires that improvements be made in terms of access/egress from Brays Lane to further capitalise on this. As the site does not project northwards of Brays Lane it will ensure that there is no unnecessary loss of Green Belt land.

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The development of the site will result in the loss of grade 3 agricultural land although this land is not currently under cultivation.

The scale of SER5 means that it is unable to accommodate the required community facilities. As identified in the Concept Statement, these should be delivered elsewhere in the location of south east Ashingdon (Policy SER8).

Policy SER6 – South West Hullbridge

SER6 performs well against the sustainability criteria. In particular it ensures good access to local shops and services as it is located within the general pedestrian zone of Hullbridge. It is also well located in relation to the local pedestrian and cycle network.

The site will require improvements to the junction of Watery Lane/Hullbridge Road in order to ensure appropriate highway capacity.

The topography of the site increases in gradient towards the north and the Concept Statement states that there is a need to consider measures to reduce the visual impact of the site. There is also a need for a landscaped green buffer along the western boundary of the site to prevent a harsh contrast between the developed area and the Green Belt. This would also have a positive benefit of strengthening the green Belt boundary in this location

The site follows the existing boundaries of Hullbridge, ensuring that there is a minimum amount of extension into the Green Belt. The site is also not in proximity to any areas of ecological sensitivity. The site does extend slightly into the Coastal Protection Belt; however the area to the north and east of SER6 is already developed and as such the impact on the Coastal Protection Belt will be minimal.

The development of this site will result in the loss of grade 3 agricultural land although there are no suitable alternatives in the general location which do not result in a similar loss.

Policy SER7 – South Canewdon

The proposed site for SER7 performs well against the sustainability criteria. It is well related to the existing settlement of Canewdon following the natural boundaries along the approach to St Nicholas Church and not projecting northward of the existing development to the west of the site to the north of Lark Hill Road. The site does not project south of Anchor Lane, which ensures that SER7 is well integrated with the rest of the settlement.

The topography of SER7 will need to be carefully considered due to the increase in gradient of the land to the north of Anchor Lane and Lark Hill Road. Additionally a small section of SER7 is located within the Coastal Protection Belt. A green buffer should be established in the Green Belt to the north/north west of the site, taking the form of park land. This will reduce the visual impact of the site and will provide a strong Green Belt boundary.

Consideration should be given to the Canewdon Church Conservation Area to the north/north east of the site. Listed Buildings in proximity to the site, in particular the grade II* listed 'Church of St Nicholas, High Street, Canewdon' and grade II listed 'The Vicarage, High Street, Canewdon' located to the north/north east of the site, and the grade II listed 'White House Farmhouse, Lark Hill Road, Canewdon' would need to be taken into consideration at the planning application stage. Appropriate landscaping, including that of the green buffer

would need to be considered to ensure that there is no detrimental impact on their visual character and surroundings.

SER7 will result in the loss of grade 3 agricultural land although there are no suitable alternatives in the general location which do not result in a similar loss.

Policy SER8 – South East Ashingdon

SER8 performs well against a number of the sustainability criteria. It is well connected to the existing settlement and would have a strong green buffer to the east. It is also surrounded on the north, west and south by existing development. This site would promote a defensible Green Belt boundary.

The Concept Statement requires a greenway to be developed linking Oxford Road in the north to The Drive in the south. The greenway would enhance access/egress to King Edmund School in the north. This buffer is required to be developed outside of SER8 itself and would take the form of parkland which would have a positive impact on sustainability.

Links to the neighbouring Local Wildlife Site to the east/south east of the site should be explored.

The development of this site will result in the loss of grade 2 agricultural land although there are no suitable alternatives in the general location which do not result in a similar loss.

There is a pylon to the east of the site which should be removed prior to development, and repositioned further than 60 metres from any residential development or diverted underground. The presence of underground electricity cables running east to west through the site may need to be considered at the planning application stage.

SER8 is large enough to accommodate the community facilities which are required by SER5 as these cannot be accommodated on the site itself.

There is potential for the existing bus route along Ashingdon Road to be diverted onto the site to serve the development. This would provide better access to community facilities and local shops. Pedestrian and cycle routes should also be provided within the site to ensure that there is good connectivity between the residential areas of the site and the community facilities. Alternative modes of transport will be necessary in this site as vehicular routes are not considered to be acceptable in this location. The Concept Statement identifies the opportunity presented by this site to encourage a modal shift from private vehicle use to walking and cycling.

Policy SER9 – West Great Wakering

West Great Wakering is well related to the existing settlement with access to significant amounts of public open space, Greenway 20 and a Local Wildlife Site. It is also in close proximity to a primary school and shops and services within Great Wakering itself.

SER9 is split into two separate sites within the general location. This segregation of the sites will have a negative impact on the access to community facilities, and potentially the provision of other infrastructure.

Both sites have good access to the High Street and the local highways network. However, there is a need for improvements to the junction of Star Lane and Poynters Lane junction. The Concept Statement proposes that there should be improvements to the pedestrian and cycle links in the area.

SER9a is well related to the existing settlement and does not project west beyond the established boundary of Great Wakering. The Concept Statement requires that a strong green buffer should be included to the west of SER9a to ensure that a strong Green Belt boundary is created.

SER9b is also well related to the existing settlement. It is also in close proximity to a Local Wildlife Site. The Concept Statement requires that a green buffer be established between the development and the Local Wildlife Site to minimise disturbance. A Management Plan for the Local Wildlife Site is also required, which would have a positive impact on sustainability.

Part of the area to the east of the site between Alexandra Road has the potential to have ecological value because of its relationship with the Local Wildlife Site. The Concept Statement states that disturbance of this area should be avoided. The eastern boundary of the site might benefit from a green buffer. This would have positive implications for local biodiversity.

SER9b is adjacent to Star Lane Industrial Estate which is proposed to be allocated for residential development (Policy BFR4). The different land levels in the site mean that the High Street is low lying by comparison to Star Lane Industrial Estate to the west and adjacent residential development to the north. Appropriate landscaping will need to be considered at the planning application stage, particularly regarding access/ egress provision. Depending on the phasing of the residential development of Star Lane Industrial Estate a green buffer should be established between the two sites while still allowing integration once both of the sites are developed. The Concept Statement accounts for this.

The development of this site will result in the loss of grade1 agricultural land although there are no suitable alternatives in the general location which do not result in a similar loss.

Gypsy and Traveller Allocations

Policy GT1 – Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

Option GT1 for Gypsy and Traveller sites does not perform particularly well against the sustainability criteria however there are several key points on which it performs well. For example the site fully meets the Districts requirements for Gypsy and Traveller pitches up until 2018 and due to the size of the site there is flexibility to meet potential additional demand post 2018.

The site is described as degraded greenfield land and is not under any cultivation. As such it ensures that more valuable greenfield sites are left unharmed and that no usable agricultural land is lost. The negative aspect of this is that there is a potential that the land is contaminated. The Concept Statement requires that a Contaminated Land Study be carried out. If it is found to be contaminated the Concept Statement requires that the site undergo appropriate decontamination, which would have positive implications for the site.

The site is adjacent to a proposed employment land allocation (NEL2) which may include heavy industrial uses, likely to cause air pollution. GT1 is situated in such a way as to reduce the amount of air pollution on the site due to the prevailing wind conditions. The location of the site would have a positive impact on residential amenity in this regard.

The site is poorly located in relation to community services and facilities and although it has good access to the strategic highways network (A1245 and A127) it has little access to public transport. This is likely to reduce equal opportunities for residents without access to private vehicles.

Existing Employment Land Allocations

Policy EEL1 – Existing Employment Land around Rochford

The proposal to continue to protect the employment land around Rochford was assessed within the previous SA. Generally they performed strongly against the sustainability objectives particularly in terms of the retention of local employment opportunities and its accessibility to local communities.

Policy EEL2 – Existing Employment Land around Rayleigh

The proposal to continue to protect the employment land around Rayleigh was assessed within the previous SA. Generally they performed strongly against the sustainability objectives particularly in terms of the retention of local employment opportunities and its accessibility to local communities.

Policy EEL3 – Existing Employment Land on Wallasea Island

The proposal to protect the employment land at Baltic Wharf on Wallasea Island was assessed within the previous SA. Whilst the site is situated in a relatively inaccessible location and is located on the banks of the river Crouch (and may continue to impact on this area of ecological importance), it performed well against the balanced communities and economy & employment sustainability objectives in particular. This policy also seeks to protect the adjacent Essex Marina, which would perform similarly well in sustainability terms.

New Employment Land Allocations

Policy NEL1 – South of London Road, Rayleigh

Although detached from the existing residential area to the east by a green buffer, the site is well related to the existing settlement and the proposed residential development to the north of London Road (Policy SER1). It encompasses both brownfield land and greenfield land. Consequently the policy would result in the loss of grade 3 agricultural land.

The site does not follow natural boundaries along its western and southern boundaries, which would have negative sustainability implications in terms of the defensibility of the Green Belt boundary in this location. However, the Concept Statement proposes the creation of sizeable green buffers in the Green Belt to the west and south of the site to enhance this defensibility.

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The policy would retain, and formalise, existing employment on the brownfield land and provide compensatory employment land to accommodate office and light industrial uses displaced from the reallocation of Rawreth Industrial Estate (Policy BFR4), as well as additional office uses.

Policy NEL2 – West of the A1245, Rayleigh

The site generally performs well against the sustainability objectives, as it has good links to the highway network (A127 and A1245) and can accommodate a significant proportion of employment land without impacting on residential amenity or the local highway network.

The site is detached from existing residential areas and the policy proposes that it be allocated to accommodate heavy industrial uses relocated from Rawreth Industrial Estate (Policy BFR4) and a recycling centre. Relocating such uses away from the existing residential areas would have a positive impact in terms of air quality and amenity.

However, it is situated in a location that is less accessible, in terms of sustainable access, and would necessitate the use of private vehicles.

It is located on an area of degraded countryside which is not currently in agricultural use and the site, as acknowledged within the Concept Statement, has the potential to be contaminated. Decontamination of the site, however, would have a positive impact.

The site also has the potential to create a defensible Green Belt boundary and may preserve the character and openness of Green Belt in other locations. The Concept Statement promotes strengthening of the southern and western boundaries with trees and hedgerows. The site is adjacent to a proposed Gypsy and Traveller site (Policy GT1) and the Concept Statement requires the creation of a substantial green buffer to protect the amenity of residents.

Policy NEL3 – South of Great Wakering

The allocation of this site would compensate for the loss of employment land through the reallocation of Star Lane Industrial Estate (Policy BFR1). The site would enable the development of a new employment area to serve Great Wakering, whilst avoiding coalescence with Shoebury to the south/south east.

However, the allocation of this site would necessitate the loss of grade 1 agricultural land.

There is also a Local Wildlife Site to the north east of this site (Star Lane Pits) which requires consideration.

The detachment of the site and the fact that it does not follow natural boundaries along its northern, southern and eastern boundaries impacts on the defensibility of the Green Belt boundary, which would have negative sustainability implications. However, the separation of the site would ensure residential amenity for the neighbouring proposed residential development (Policy BFR1) and would have a positive effect through minimising the impact on the Local Wildlife Site.

A substantial green buffer to the north, east and south would positively impact on the defensibility of the Green Belt boundary, residential amenity and the Local Wildlife Site. This green area should positively contribute to local biodiversity through the creation of a wildlife corridor.

Policy NEL4 – North of London Southend Airport

The Sustainability Appraisal of the area to the including London Southend Airport and the surrounding area will be undertaken during the preparation of the London Southend Airport and Environs Joint Area Action Plan.

Ecological and Landscape Allocations

Policy ELA1 – Local Wildlife Sites

The proposal to allocate the Local Wildlife Sites identified in the 2007 Local Wildlife Sites Review was assessed within the previous SA. This performed very strongly against the sustainability objectives through encouraging the retention of local biodiversity which could have wider positive, long term implications.

Policy ELA2 – Coastal Protection Belt

The proposal to allocate the Coastal Protection Belt was assessed within the previous SA. This performed very strongly against the sustainability objectives through seeking to protect the character of the undeveloped coastline and limit development in sensitive areas.

Minor amendments have been made to the Coastal Protection Belt boundary in two locations to the south west of Hullbridge (Policy SER6) and to the south of Canewdon (Policy SER7). However, these are not considered to intrinsically impact on the purpose of this designation or to undermine the sustainability benefits of the allocation.

Policy ELA3 – Upper Roach Valley

The proposal to allocate the Upper Roach Valley was assessed within the previous SA. This performed very strongly against the sustainability objectives through protecting and potentially enhancing the landscape character, soil quality and biodiversity of this area.

Educational Land Allocations

Policy EDU1 – North of London Road, Rayleigh

A single-form entry primary school will be located within the site identified to the north of London Road, Rayleigh (Policy SER1).

Policy EDU2 – West Rochford

A new primary school will be located within the site identified to the west of Rochford (Policy SER2).

Policy EDU3 – King Edmund School

EDU3 performs well against the sustainability criteria. It is well placed to serve the needs of the community in terms of educational requirements as well as by providing recreational

facilities to the wider community. It is well related to the proposed residential developments in east Ashingdon (Policy SER5) and south east Ashingdon (SER8).

The location of this site would enable development in the general location of East Ashingdon to be contained within Policy SER5, as opposed to allocating land to the north of Brays Lane, which would have a positive impact on land and soil and townscape.

The Concept Statement states that the existing playing fields should retain this designation and will retain dual designation of Green Belt and education to prevent unnecessary encroachment into the Green Belt. Additional playing fields are proposed to be allocated to allow for the expansion of the school site without the loss of playing field capacity.

Policy EDU4 – Existing Primary and Secondary Schools

All of the educational options assessed in the previous SA were found to perform strongly against the sustainability objectives. However Options KES2 and KES3 for the expansion of King Edmund School were noted for having the potential to necessitate some residential development further to the north of Brays Lane. All of the sites perform similarly well in terms of their capacity to retain the existing proportion of playing fields and to ensure the fields will retain their Green Belt designation.

Given that these potential sites all performed well within the previous SA it is not necessary to reassess them as part of the Interim Report. However, it is worth noting that Plumberow Primary School and Rayleigh Primary School have been allocated separately within the Submission Document. Both these schools are located within the existing residential area and as such would not intrinsically differ from other assessments.

Instead the Interim Report focuses on assessing the sustainability of the newly proposed site extension for King Edmund School, which has been proposed in response to the findings of the previous SA.

Open Space and Leisure Facilities Allocations

Policy OSL1 – Existing Open Space

The allocation of areas of public open space has the potential to have a positive impact on existing communities through providing accessible and quality facilities for leisure and recreation in proximity to local communities, it would protect these existing facilities from other uses and ensure that local communities have adequate access to leisure and recreational activities.

The purpose of the allocation of open spaces is to ensure that local communities retain access to essential leisure and recreational areas; to protect those open spaces that harbour multi-function uses, which provide health benefits to local communities and also contribute to the biodiversity of the District by providing habitats for wildlife; ensuring that, where possible, members of the public adopt alternative and low carbon forms of travel, including walking and cycling; and to protect and enhance historical, archaeological and cultural value in urban and rural areas. Open spaces also have the potential to strongly contribute to the mitigation and adaptation measures targeted at dealing with the pressures imposed on the District by climate change.

The option to allocate existing areas of public open space assessed in the previous SA performed strongly against the SA objectives. Policy OSL1 proposes to allocate the areas of public open space identified in the Open Space Study 2009 as recommended in the previous SA.

Policy OS2 – New Open Space

The allocation of new open spaces can have a positive impact on local communities within the District by providing accessible facilities for leisure and recreation. The allocation of new open spaces will need to keep pace with the increasing population of the district to ensure that all members of the community have access to high quality leisure and recreational spaces.

The purpose of allocating open spaces is to ensure that local communities have access to leisure and recreational spaces. New open spaces can act as replacements for existing open spaces which are no longer viable or which have been re-allocated for other uses. They can encourage members of the public, where possible, to adopt alternative modes of transport and low carbon forms of travel. They can enhance the biodiversity of the District and provide habitats for wildlife. Open spaces also have the capacity to support mitigation and adaptation measures aimed at dealing with the causes and effects of climate change.

New open spaces are being promoted in conjunction with the other allocations set out in the concept statement.

Policy OSL3 – Existing Leisure Facilities

It is necessary to ensure that the District is well served by an adequate supply of leisure facilities both now and in the future. Rochford District benefits from having several potential sites (outlined below) with the capacity to meet this need.

Option LF1 (Rayleigh Leisure), LF2 (Clements Hall Leisure Centre) and LF3 (Great Wakering Leisure Centre) have all performed well against the sustainability criteria set out in the previous SA.

The previous SA has established that in LF1 the playing pitches adjacent to the site should be included as part of LF1. It found that LF2's adjacent playing field should retain dual designation as Green Belt and leisure use to prevent unnecessary encroachment. The SA also pointed out that LF3, Great Wakering Leisure Centre has the capacity to retain its open space designation despite having been closed, meaning that it should no longer be designated for leisure uses.

As these sites are already in existence and all perform well against the sustainability objectives they should be retained and protected from future unsympathetic development and from encroachment, as appropriate. Based on the assessment of the previous SA it is unnecessary to seek alternative sites to accommodate the need for additional leisure facilities.

Town Centre and Primary Shopping Area Boundary Allocations

Policy TCB1 – Rayleigh

The previous SA has reviewed several options for the amendment of the town centre boundary, and allocation of the primary shopping area for Rayleigh.

Option TC1 (the existing town centre boundary) performed more strongly against the sustainability objectives than smaller sites such as TC2 (town centre boundary around the primary shopping area). The town centre boundary is proposed to remain as existing.

The primary shopping area/primary shopping frontage area and secondary shopping area/secondary shopping frontage area are proposed to remain as existing. This was assessed in the previous SA under Option TC11, which performed strongly against the sustainability objectives.

The Rayleigh town centre boundary and shopping areas may be reviewed through the development of the Rayleigh Area Action Plan.

Policy TCB2 – Rochford

The options for the Rochford town centre boundary generally performed well against the sustainability objectives in the previous SAs. However Option TC5 (town centre boundary inclusive of residential areas) performed better in terms of promoting a mixed, high density residential development within Rochford and ensuring access to services without being too widely drawn, which is the case with TC3 and TC4, or not wide enough in the case of TC6.

Option TC5 encompasses much less residential development than the existing town centre boundary (Option TC3) and includes the new retail development to the north of the market Square. It does not include some potentially key opportunities for site redevelopment. The boundary identified in Policy TCB1 is similar to this option with the exception that it extends further along eastern and western side of North Street, the northern and southern section of West Street, the eastern section of South Street and the southern section of East Street to encompass more commercial/business premises.

This boundary performs well in terms of the potential to promote mixed, high density residential development within Rochford and ensuring access to services without being too widely drawn.

The primary shopping area/primary shopping frontage area and secondary shopping area/secondary shopping frontage area are proposed to remain as existing. This was assessed in the previous SA under Option TC13, which performed strongly against the sustainability objectives.

The Rochford town centre boundary and shopping areas may be reviewed through the development of the Rochford Area Action Plan.

Policy TCB3 – Hockley

The previous SA found that the reallocation of Hockley as a District Centre performed poorly in terms of providing opportunities for community facilities to meet ongoing and future needs in the centre of Hockley. Retail and other business opportunities may be directed to Rayleigh and Rochford town centres which would have a significant negative impact against a range of sustainability objectives.

Consequently the existing allocation for Hockley as a town centre is not proposed to change.

The document does not propose to alter the existing boundaries for the centre of Hockley. .

The town centre boundary and shopping areas may be reviewed through the development of the Hockley Area Action Plan.