

REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE PREPARATION OF THE ROCHFORD CORE STRATEGY

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines the proposed housing distributions to be incorporated in the next published version of the Rochford Core Strategy.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The East of England Plan, the spatial strategy for the region, was approved in May 2008 and sets out the requirements for housing provision in each district in the period to 2021 and beyond.
- 2.2 The Rochford Core Strategy is intended to explain the local arrangements for delivery of the housing numbers allocated to the District by the East of England Plan, and this report sets out the Council's proposals, taking account of the requirements of the East of England Plan and the representations received from the last round of consultation in mid-2007.
- 2.3 This report is intended to explain the Council's proposals for the identification of the general locations for future housing in the District, but full details of the housing strategy will be included in the next version of the Core Strategy to be published soon.

3 NATIONAL POLICY BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3), published in November 2006, sets out the Government's position on the delivery of housing as follows:-

"Regional Spatial Strategies should set out the level of overall housing provision for the region, broadly illustrated in a housing delivery trajectory, for a sufficient period to enable Local Planning Authorities to plan for housing over a period of at least 15 years."

- 3.2 At the local level, PPS3 requires local planning authorities to set out the criteria to be used for identifying broad locations and specific sites for housing, taking account of:-
- The spatial vision for the area;
 - Evidence of current and future levels of need and demand for housing as well as the availability of suitable, viable sites for housing development;
 - The need to cut carbon emissions;
 - Physical, environmental, land ownership, land-use, investment constraints or risks associated with the broad locations or specific sites;
 - Options for re-development, re-use of land, etc.;

- Accessibility to existing local community facilities, infrastructure and services;
- The need to provide housing in rural areas; and
- The need to provide mixed sustainable communities.

4 EAST OF ENGLAND PLAN – HOUSING PROVISION

4.1 Policy H1 of the East of England Plan sets out the Government's approach to the delivery of housing within the plan period and beyond. For Rochford, the plan envisages a **minimum** figure of 4600 houses being delivered within the plan period and, taking account of completions to March 2006, that means a minimum provision of 3790 units at a rate of 250 units per annum in the period 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2021.

4.2 In accordance with PPS3, Policy H1 also requires that:-

'Local planning authorities should plan for delivery of housing for at least 15 years from the date of adoption of the relevant development plan documents. In doing so they should assume that the average annual rate of provision after 2021 will be the same as the rates in this policy for 2006 to 2021 or 2001 to 2021, whichever is the higher.'

5 HOUSING PROVISION IN ROCHFORD

5.1 The East of England Plan requires a minimum of 3790 dwellings to be provided in the district by 2021, at a rate of 250 dwellings per annum, taking account of completions in the period 2001-2006.

5.2 An Urban Capacity Study prepared by the Council and published in 2007 sought to identify the potential for further housing development within the existing urban areas (including extant consents), and concluded that a reasonable estimate of capacity was 1301 dwellings, at the same base date as the East of England Plan, that is 1 April 2006.

5.3 On the basis that 1301 additional dwellings can be provided in the urban areas of the district, the minimum requirement for green field release of land for housing in the plan period to 2021 will be 2500 units ($3790 - 1301 = 2489$ – note figures have been rounded).

5.4 Table 1 seeks to identify the land required to deliver this quantum of housing as part of a balanced housing strategy divided into two phases to ensure there is an even spread of delivery and taking account of the requirement to demonstrate a five year rolling supply of housing land.

Table 1 Housing Provision to 2021

Area	No. of units by 2015	No. units 2015- 2021
Rayleigh - North of London Road	450	200
Rayleigh – South West	100	0
Rochford – West	300	100
Hockley – West	50	0
Hawkevell – South	100	100
Ashingdon – North East	120	0
Ashingdon – South East	120	0
Hullbridge – South West	0	450
Great Wakering – South West	100	100
Great Wakering – West	50	100
Canewdon – South	60	0
Total	1450	1050

- 5.5 However, as explained above, the East of England Plan, reflecting the requirements of PPS3, envisages the identification of a 15 year supply of housing land. Assuming the Rochford Core Strategy is adopted in 2010, the housing allocation must therefore take into account provision in the four year period 2021-2025 at the same rate of 250 units per annum expected throughout the plan period. That being the case, the adopted Rochford Core Strategy must plan for the delivery of a further 1000 dwellings in addition to the 3790 total prescribed in Policy H1. The proposed locations for housing development post 2021 are set out in Table 2.

Table 2 Housing Provision Post 2021

Area	No. of units 2021-2025
Rochford – West	150
Hawkevell – South	130
Ashingdon – South East	380
Hullbridge – South West	90
Great Wakering – South West	160
Canewdon – South	90
Total	1000

- 5.6 In reaching a conclusion about the locations for future housing, the following factors have been taken into account:-
- Existing infrastructure;
 - Opportunities to deliver new and/or improved infrastructure provision;

- Housing demand and need;
- Deliverability;
- The need to reduce car dependency;
- Opportunities to utilise brown field land;
- Community needs and education provision; and
- Physical constraints, including flood zones and protected sites.

5.7 The District's settlements can be divided into four tiers, with the settlements in the higher tiers being in general more suitable to accommodate additional housing development, taking account of the reasons described above. The settlement hierarchy is as follows:-

Tier	Settlements
1	Rayleigh; Rochford / Ashingdon; Hockley / Hawkwell
2	Hullbridge; Great Wakering
3	Canewdon
4	All other settlements

5.8 The proposed strategy for the location of housing development also has regard to an extensive and detailed evidence base, and the results and feedback from community involvement. It constitutes a balance between focusing development on the higher tier settlements, whilst allocating a proportion of the housing development to the lower tier settlements (with the exception of the fourth tier, where additional development is considered unsustainable), to ensure these established communities can be sustained and that rural services continue to be supported.

5.9 The aim of the housing strategy, taking account of these factors, is to demonstrate a balanced approach to the delivery of the housing required to cater for the needs of the district's population. Further information to explain the strategy will be provided in the Rochford Core Strategy to be published soon.

6 RISK IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Government has indicated through the recent publication of revised Planning Policy Statement 12 that it is essential for districts to make rapid progress in the preparation of their Core Strategies. Furthermore, Planning Policy Statement 3 on Housing explains very clearly that: 'Where Local Planning Authorities cannot demonstrate an up-to-date five year supply of deliverable sites, for example, where Local Development Documents have not

been reviewed to take into account policies in this PPS or there is less than five years' supply of deliverable sites, they should consider favourably planning applications for housing, having regard to the policies in this PPS including the considerations in paragraph 69'. Furthermore, PPS3 also points out that local planning authorities should not refuse planning applications solely on the grounds of prematurity.

- 6.2 Without an adopted Core Strategy and a five year supply of housing land, the District will be vulnerable to speculative applications for housing development, which may not be in accordance with the Council's vision for the area. Ad hoc applications for housing development will also put at risk proposals for the delivery of new infrastructure.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 It is accepted that the arrangements for the delivery of the housing allocation will have an impact on the Green Belt, but proposed locations for housing have been carefully selected taking account of flood zones, protected areas, including woodlands and wildlife sites.

8 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RECOMMENDS** acceptance of the locations and quantum of housing development as set out in Tables 1 and 2 for inclusion in the Rochford Core Strategy.

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Background Papers:-

East of England Plan – May 2008

Planning Policy Statement 3 Housing – November 2006

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