

ADOPTION OF THE ROCHFORD DISTRICT REPLACEMENT LOCAL PLAN

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Rochford District Replacement Local Plan has been progressed through all of its statutory stages and now requires adoption by the Council so that it may become part of the Development Plan for the District. The Local Plan will form the basis for development control decisions made throughout the District.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Council has completed all of the statutory stages necessary to gain a resolution to adopt the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan. The final opportunity for consultation finished on 31 March 2006, where only four responses were received. These are dealt with below.
- 2.2 On 22 December 2005 the Council resolved to allow a statutory notice to be published indicating that it would adopt the Plan at the end of the consultation period, if no responses were received. Following publication of the notice, representations were received from CPREssex, National Grid, Mrs Hitchcock and GO-East.

3 CONSIDERATION OF THE REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

- 3.1 CPREssex made objections to policies LT20 – *Touring Caravans and Tents* and LT21 – *Sports Causing Noise or Disturbance*. The Inspector amended both these policies and the Council accepted his recommendation. It is recommended that no further action be taken in respect of these objections.
- 3.2 National Grid made an objection to paragraph 10.16. It is not considered that their proposal would materially affect the content of the plan and it is therefore recommended to make the proposed change. This would amend paragraph 10.16 to read:
- ~~“No significant land requirements are anticipated by National Grid (e.g. for major transformer sites), but~~ Land for sub-stations (3m x 3m) will be required in new building projects, details of which should be established at an early stage by individual developers. Effective siting of new development can yield amenity benefits to potential occupiers and the local community. Existing apparatus must therefore be taken into account when planning new development.”
- 3.3 Mrs Hitchcock continued to object to the omission of her land in Greensward Lane, Hockley. She proposes one house on her land, although it currently lies in the green belt. The Inspector examined this site and considered it unsuitable for residential development. In his consideration of the site he stated:

“The site may once have been thought suitable for housing, but the location is of doubtful sustainability and the immediate area one in which the intensification of development would be harmful to the rural character and damaging to the clear separation of Hockley from Ashingdon. There is no need to allocate further land for housing for the Plan period, while the site is important to the integrity of the Green Belt in this location.”

- 3.4 It is recommended that no action be taken in respect of this objection.
- 3.5 GO-East made three objections relating to paragraph 6.28 (which relates to children’s play facilities), Policy LT19 – *New Hotel & Guesthouse Accommodation* and to Policy TP10 – *London Southend Airport*. It is not considered that their amended wording for paragraph 6.28 would materially affect the content of the plan and it is therefore recommended to make the proposed change. This would amend paragraph 6.28 to read:

“Where large new housing developments take place in areas where existing provision is deficient new or improved play space will be sought on the site or in the vicinity, or, failing that, contributions to the provision of play space for both younger and older children.”

- 3.4 With regard to the other two amendments proposed to Policies LT19 and TP10, the Inspector considered both these policies and put forward his recommendations, which the Council then adopted. It is not therefore considered appropriate to make any further changes to Policies LT19 or TP10, as these would materially affect the content of the plan.

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The local plan is now ready for adoption. If Council agrees to adopt, then the plan will be published. The remaining stages to complete the process are to publish a final statutory notice, to deliver four copies of the plan to GO-East and to inform all engaged with the local plan of adoption and their rights to challenge through the courts. It is envisaged these final stages will be completed by Friday 12 May 2006.

5 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The failure to implement recommended changes or to suggest additional changes will leave the Authority open to legal challenge. Further delays to the process will mean that the plan will not be able to be adopted without compliance with the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations. This would inevitably require changes to the plan and probably a further public inquiry.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Adopting the plan will enable the publishing of the document in paper and CD-ROM formats, as well as the preparation of an inter-active website. The paper versions will be priced at £100 and the CD-ROM versions at £25, to help recoup some of the costs involved. Significant costs have been experienced in the preparation of the plan since 2002.

7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Any changes made above further to what is recommended must not materially affect the plan. Such changes would leave the Authority open to legal challenges by objectors.

8 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 It is proposed that the Council **RESOLVES** to adopt the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan.

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