
RAYLEIGH AREA ACTION PLAN – DRAFT SUBMISSION DOCUMENT

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks Members' approval of the Draft Rayleigh Area Action Plan Submission Document (RayAAP) for pre-submission consultation and subsequently for submission. Appendix 1, a copy of the Plan, will be circulated to Members under separate cover.
- 1.2 The pre-submission consultation period will last for a period of six weeks and consultees will be invited to submit representations in respect of the document's soundness and legal compliance. Following this consultation the RayAAP, together with the results of the pre-submission consultation, appraisals and other evidence base documents (including summaries of the results of previous community involvement), will be submitted to the Secretary of State for public examination.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 The RayAAP focuses on guiding the development of Rayleigh town centre during the current plan period to 2025.
- 2.3 The Rochford Core Strategy states that the RayAAP will deliver the following:-
- Improved accessibility to and within the town centre;
 - A safe and high quality environment for residents and visitors;
 - A predominance of retail uses, including intensification of existing retail uses, which cater for a variety of needs;
 - A range of evening leisure uses; and
 - Promotes provision of community facilities, including exploration of potential locations for a health care centre and, if appropriate, delivery of such facilities.
- 2.4 Once adopted, the RayAAP will be used as a framework for the future development of Rayleigh town centre and in the determination of planning applications. It will be subject to the normal processes of monitoring and review.
- 2.5 This version of the plan will, once agreed by Council, be subject to a period of public consultation lasting six weeks 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 RayAAP 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 RayAAP can then be adopted.

3 PREPARATION OF THE RAYLEIGH AREA ACTION PLAN

- 3.1 The development of the RayAAP is an iterative process involving several stages of production.
- 3.2 A Placecheck event was held in July 2009, with members of the Citizens Panel invited. Feedback from this event, alongside relevant aspects of the Council's Local Development Framework evidence base, was used to help generate issues and options. These were subsequently subject to wider public consultation between 5 November 2009 and 30 January 2010.
- 3.3 Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners, a specialist planning and regeneration consultancy practice, were commissioned to produce the draft pre-submission version of the Plan, having regard to the results of community involvement and appraisal of the previous iteration of the Plan.
- 3.4 Given the time delay since the publication of the Issues and Options Document, a further consultation exercise was carried out in January 2013 which sought feedback on the proposed planning policy framework for Rayleigh town centre, and possible specific proposals. One such suggestion which was consulted upon included a retail-led development of Websters Way car park and the construction of a multi-storey car park.
- 3.5 Following this additional consultation exercise, an additional consultation iteration of the document – the Proposed Submission Document - was produced and subject to public participation between 13 June and 8 August 2013. Following concerns expressed during the previous consultation stage that a retail-led redevelopment of Websters Way car park and construction of a multi-storey car park would cause visual harm, have a negative impact on openness and the potential to undermine the vitality of Rayleigh town centre, this proposal was not carried forward to this iteration of the plan.
- 3.6 Results of this consultation were fed into the final document. Appendix 2 to this report sets out a numerical breakdown of the results of this consultation and will be circulated to Members under separate cover.
- 3.7 The table below summaries the stages the Rayleigh Area Action Plan has been through to date.

Rayleigh Placecheck event	July 2009
Issues and Options Document published for consultation	November 2009 – January 2010
Exhibition on proposed framework	January 2013
Proposed Submission Document published for informal consultation	June – August 2013

4 ROLE OF THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

- 4.1 Sustainability Appraisal is an important part of the plan making process. It assesses the environmental, economic and social implications of policies and options in the production of plans. The Sustainability Appraisal forms part of the evidence base for the RayAAP and, alongside other evidence, is issued to aid decision-making.
- 4.2 Appendix 3, the Sustainability Appraisal of the Submission Document, will be circulated to Members under separate cover, together with appendix 4, a non-technical summary of this appraisal.
- 4.3 Overall the Sustainability Appraisal has found that the Plan will help to resolve a number of key sustainability issues in Rayleigh Town Centre and will also play a role in improving sustainability in the wider Rochford District. Significant positive effects were identified for communities, economy and employment, accessibility, landscape and townscape and cultural heritage.

5 NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 If accepted by Full Council, it is proposed the RayAAP will then be subject to a further round of public consultation for a period of no less than six weeks. This is a formal consultation stage where respondents are invited to comment on soundness and legal compliance.
- 5.2 Following the completion of the consultation, the plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate, together with the results of the pre-submission consultation, appraisals and other evidence base documents (including summaries of the results of previous community involvement).

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Preparation, consultation, professional printing and examination of the RayAAP will all have varying resource implications and, for the moment, these can be met through existing budgets.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The RayAAP will have an impact on the District's environment, and the centre of Rayleigh in particular.

8 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 It is proposed that Council **RESOLVES**

- (1) That the Draft Rayleigh Area Action Submission Document be accepted for pre-submission consultation to take place in early 2014, followed by formal submission to the Secretary of State.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Transportation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Heritage, to make minor amendments to the document prior to submission to the Secretary of State, excluding those that would materially alter policy, having regard to the results of pre-submission consultation, in order to ensure soundness of the submission document. (HPT)

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Background Papers:-

None.

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