
ROCHFORD DISTRICT DRAFT REGULATION 26 CORE STRATEGY

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks approval from Members for the Regulation 26 draft of the Rochford District Core Strategy. This document has been produced to comply with the milestones set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme.
- 1.2 The Planning Policy Sub-Committee considered the Regulation 25 draft last year and this was then subject to public consultation. The results of this consultation were reported in summary form to the Planning Policy & Transportation Committee on 15 February 2007 and a full version of the responses was placed in the Members' Library.

2 THE CORE STRATEGY CONSULTATION

- 2.1 The Regulation 26 consultation will be undertaken in line with the requirements set out in the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement. As such, this document (appendix two) will be subject to widespread public consultation through a variety of means.
- 2.2 The results of the Regulation 26 consultation will be reported back to Members in the next municipal year, together with a submission draft for approval; the submission draft will incorporate the detailed policies proposed for inclusion in the plan that reflect the Council's preferred options for development.

3 CORE STRATEGY RATIONALE

- 3.1 The Core Strategy is an overarching document that must be in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) prepared by the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) and usually called the '*East of England Plan*'. Once adopted, the Core Strategy will be the senior document in the hierarchy of Development Plan Documents produced by the Council, as all others must be in general conformity with it.
- 3.2 The Core Strategy will not provide site specific detail of future development. It does not include a detailed proposals map; instead a Key Diagram is to be produced. The features for inclusion on the Key Diagram were shown in appendices 1 to 5 of the original document circulated to all Members. These 5 layers have been put into one map, together with indicative figures for housing and are now shown as a composite diagram.
- 3.3 The Council's preferred options, to be agreed by Members, are clearly identified throughout the document by using emboldened text in a box. Other possible alternatives are shown in a box without the text being emboldened.

These options are less preferable because they fail to meet sustainable development criteria or the Council's own standards.

- 3.4 There are few major changes from the Regulation 25 draft. This reflects a general satisfaction with the direction the planning process was taking. Adjustments have been made in some areas though reflecting changing regional or national guidance. Also some further work has been undertaken with regard to the general development locations for new housing.
- 3.5 For Members' convenience, a short summary of the key changes from the Regulation 25 version of the plan is provided in appendix one to this report.
- 3.6 In terms of the next steps, Members should bear in mind that Regulation 26 is yet another round of extensive public consultation and engagement that will be used to inform the final submission version of the Core Strategy and the specific policies that will be prepared to address the implementation of the preferred options for the individual policy areas. The submission version of the plan will therefore be informed by the outcome of this round of consultation and the conclusions Members reach as a result; Members will therefore have a further opportunity to refine their thinking about the policy framework provided in the Core Strategy.

4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There is an issue with Regulatory Risk if the Core Strategy fails to comply with the relevant sections of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 or secondary legislation.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Further slippage of the Core Strategy timetable laid out in the Local Development Scheme will significantly affect the award of Planning Delivery Grant (PDG).
- 5.2 Preparation, consultation and the professional printing of subsequent versions will all have varying resource implications, and for the moment these can be met through existing budgets and the PDG.

6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are legal implications if the Core Strategy fails to comply with the relevant sections of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 or secondary legislation.

7 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 It is proposed that the Sub-Committee **RECOMMENDS**

- (1) That the draft Regulation 26 Core Strategy be approved for consultation in line with the requirements of the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement.
- (2) That consultation be undertaken in line with the above and the results of this reported to Members.
- (3) That authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Transportation, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to carry out minor amendments to the draft Regulation 26 Core Strategy to ensure consistency and correctness following public consultation in line with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Shaun Scrutton

Head of Planning & Transportation

Background Papers:-

None

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APPENDIX 1

**KEY CHANGES BETWEEN REGULATION 25 AND 26
VERSIONS OF THE CORE STRATEGY**

Section 4

4.1 Inclusion of energy and water conservation as policy areas.

Green Belt and Strategic Gaps

4.2.6 New paragraph reflecting the results of the Reg 25 responses on the protection of the green belt.

4.2.7 Statement of the Council's preferred options for strategy gaps between settlements and the continuation of a restrictive policy framework for development in the green belt subject to relaxations for major developed sites, green tourism and renewable energy.

Upper Roach Valley

4.3.3 Information included regarding the Joint Acton Area Plan for the airport and land west of Rochford.

4.3.7 Consultation responses confirmed the importance attached to the protection of the Upper Roach Valley.

4.3.8 Preferred options for protecting the Upper Roach Valley, developing the Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park and the preparation of the Joint Action Area Plan.

Special Landscapes, Habitats and Species

4.4.19 Preferred options specified for protecting the undeveloped coastline, special landscape areas, historic landscape and ancient woodlands and the development of policies to support and enhance biodiversity.

Housing Numbers and Phasing

4.5.6 Comments on the relocation of bad neighbour sites and examination of the re-use of industrial sites for residential development.

4.5.9 Consultation responses concluded the housing allocation for the district is too high, but provision must be in accordance with the East of England Plan.

4.5.10 Respondents to the Reg 25 consultation were not happy about urban intensification continuing.

4.5.11 The preferred options for housing numbers and phasing are specified in this paragraph. An important element of housing provision is an analysis of the potential to use previously developed land in line with national guidance.

General Development Locations

4.6.10 The proportions of housing to be provided in the top tier settlements is specified with the details also being shown on the key diagram.

Affordable Housing

4.7 Taking account of new guidance in Planning Policy Statement No. 3 and the East of England Plan, it is proposed that the affordable housing target for the district be 30% of houses on sites of 10 units or greater.

4.7.8 These paragraphs recognise the requirements of Circular 1/2006, which

4.7.9 requires local authorities to make provision for Gypsies and Travellers where a need is identified.

4.7.11 This paragraph specifies the preferred options for affordable housing, rural exceptions sites and Gypsy and Traveller accommodation based on need.

Employment

4.8.8 The preferred options for employment are specified together with details of the Joint Action Area Plan.

Good Design and Design Statements

4.9.9 Specifies the Council's preferred options in relation to lifetime homes, sustainable homes and the requirement for health impact assessments.

Energy and Water Conservation

4.12.11 Preferred options for energy and water conservation now include reference to carbon neutral development.

Community, Leisure and Tourism Facilities

4.14.8 Preferred options now include reference to a policy for the provision of health care facilities.

Key diagram

The key diagram at the end of the document has been revised to include reference to the general locations and numbers for new housing development.

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