
EAST OF ENGLAND PLAN EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC – SUBMISSION OF A STATEMENT ON THAMES GATEWAY SOUTH ESSEX

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks Members' views on Rochford's statement of evidence to the East of England Plan Examination in Public on the sub-regional section of the plan dealing with Thames Gateway South Essex.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Examination in Public for the East of England Plan is due to commence on 1 November 2005 and run until early March 2006.
- 2.2 Matter 8B Thames Gateway South Essex is due to be examined between 24 and 26 January 2006, and statements from participating Authorities and organisations must be submitted to the Panel by 9 December 2005.

3 MATTERS TO BE TESTED

- 3.1 The Panel has been very specific in identifying the matters to be tested in relation to the Thames Gateway/South Essex sub-region; these are as follows:-
- Vision and Strategy: Does the plan communicate a clear, sustainable and appropriate vision/strategy for the area as a whole and for its main constituent parts (Thurrock Riverside, Basildon/Castle Point and Greater Southend)? If not, how should the vision/strategy be modified?
 - Environment/culture: Does the plan adequately reflect the sub-region's environmental capacities and cultural assets and identify any potential sub-regional opportunities to secure more sustainable development through recognition of/linkage with those assets?
 - Employment/economy: Are the proposals for the sub-region based on appropriate assumptions and achievable proposals?
 - Does the strategy adequately reflect the importance of existing ports and what would be the implications if London Gateway does not proceed?
 - Does the sub-regional strategy provide a sufficient framework to guide the development of Southend Airport?
 - Does policy TG/SE1 overplay the role of Thurrock as a logistics hub and underplay other growth sectors?
 - What should be the long term role of the Lakeside Centre?

- Housing: Are the proposals for the sub-region, including the district level distributions and phasing, appropriate and achievable? Are they based on sound District-level assumptions about previously developed land and urban capacity? Do the identified broad locations cover those that are both appropriate and truly regionally strategic? Should the Plan identify any alternative or additional strategic locations? Are there exceptional circumstances for reviewing the Green Belt and, if so, is appropriate strategic guidance provided for taking land into or out of the Green Belt?
- Key infrastructure: Are the key items required to deliver the sub-regional strategy correctly identified? Are they achievable? Is it likely to be possible to reduce the level of net out-commuting to London, and is this compatible with giving priority to the proposed rail improvement schemes?
- Delivery arrangements: Does the plan provide adequate guidance on any special delivery arrangements that may be needed to implement the proposals for the sub-region, including any joint Local Development Documents and/or new delivery vehicles?

3.2 A draft statement from Rochford Council is attached to this report as appendix 1. In drafting the statement, the focus has been to reinforce the aims of the regeneration strategy for South Essex with emphasis on the provision of infrastructure and employment as a prerequisite to the development of housing.

4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The final version of the East of England Plan will provide the strategic context for the preparation of the Rochford Local Development Framework.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The scale of development allocations in the East of England Plan will influence the environmental character of the District over the next 15 to 20 years.

6 RECOMMENDATION

6.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

- (1) That, subject to Members' comments, the appended statement be submitted to the EIP Panel as this Council's views on Matter 8B.
- (2) That the Head of Planning Services be authorised to make minor changes to the statement prior to final submission to best reflect the Council's views on Matter 8B.

Shaun Scrutton
Head of Planning Services

Background Papers:-

East of England Plan, December 2004

For further information please contact Shaun Scrutton on:-

Tel:- 01702 318 100

E-Mail:- shaun.scrutton@rochford.gov.uk