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## DRAFT ROCHFORD CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL & MANAGEMENT PLAN

### 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council commissioned Essex County Council to prepare a conservation area appraisal and management plan. A draft of this document was submitted to the Planning Policy & Transportation Committee on 11 July 2006. The Committee agreed that public consultation should be undertaken with a view to preparing a ‘final’ version of the document. This document will be used as part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework (LDF). A copy of the draft appraisal and management plan was circulated under separate cover to all Members last summer. Given the minor nature of the changes proposed as a result of consultation, an updated version of the document has not been circulated with this report, although copies can be obtained from the office of the Head of Planning and Transportation.
- 1.2 The preparation of an LDF is a statutory responsibility for the authority. An up to date and accurate evidence base is a key indicator of best practice for the authority in the preparation of the LDF.
- 1.3 S.71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that “It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas.”

### 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Council carried out public consultation from the beginning of January until 23 February 2007. Publicity included press releases, information on display at the Council offices in Rayleigh and Rochford, as well as headline information on the Council’s website.
- 2.2 This period of consultation resulted in 1 respondent making comments on the draft. The only respondent was on behalf of Rochford Regeneration Group. Their comprehensive response was quite supportive of the document and made some very interesting suggestions to help improve the final document.

### 3 PROPOSED CHANGES

- 3.1 The response made comments on a number of sections within the management plan and conservation area appraisal and these are detailed below:-
  1. **Introduction** – none
  5. **Origins & development** – none
  7. **Use of buildings & space** – none
  8. **Character zones & spatial relationships** – reservations about the use of the phrase “undeveloped western part”.

9. **Area analysis** – paragraph 1 refers to the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when it should refer to the first. Also disputes the rural nature of the road, given the amount of traffic using it. No mention is made that the golf club is looking to re-locate.

**Other general matters**

- The report pays undue respect for the needs of taxi drivers to use Market Square. There is a need for pedestrianisation of Market Square and West Street [*presumably as far as Back Lane*].
- Need for civic pride and an improvement of shopfronts.
- Too many road signs.

**4 OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 With regard to section 8 (paragraph 8.2), no change should be made. This is because this section is factual and not a statement as to what should happen in the future.
- 4.2 With regard to section 9, the reference in paragraph 9.1 to the “*second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century*” should be revised to “*first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century*”. With regard to the rural nature of the road and the golf club’s possible re-location, there is no need to include these sentences.
- 4.3 With regard to the more general matters, in section 4, paragraph 4.7, the final sentence should be amended by the removal of “*taxis and*” and the addition of “*and West Street to its junction with Back Lane*”. It would read “Cars queuing for short stay parking in the Market Square back up into South Street and are a hazard to other motorists and pedestrians. The old objective of the 1973 Town Centre Plan of pedestrianising West Street and the Market Square may have proved unattainable, but this situation could be improved by denying Market Square and West Street to its junction with Back Lane to all but disabled drivers.”
- 4.4 No changes are recommended with regard to the need for civic pride and an improvement to shopfronts, although the Council may pursue this matter through other mechanisms.
- 4.5 With regard to the issue of signage, the Council should pursue a policy to seek the reduction of the number and dominance of signs in the town with Essex County Council and other partners, as appropriate.

**5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The preservation and enhancement of conservation areas is a statutory duty for the authority under S.71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This document, if implemented and used appropriately, could significantly enhance the conservation area.

**6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The preparation of a final version will be completed using existing resources.

**7 RECOMMENDATION**

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

- (1) That, subject to comments from Members, the changes outlined in the report be agreed and the Rochford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be adopted and included as part of the evidence base for the Rochford District Local Development Framework.
- (2) 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 Rochford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan to ensure consistency and correctness. Any such amendments, if required, will be reported to the Planning Policy & Transportation Committee.

Shaun Scrutton

Head of Planning & Transportation

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**Background Papers:-**

Draft Rochford District Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

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