

## Extraordinary Council – 15 October 2008

---

Minutes of the meeting of **Extraordinary Council** held on **15 October 2008** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr J E Grey

Vice Chairman: Cllr A Humphries

Cllr Mrs P Aves	Cllr J R F Mason
Cllr C I Black	Cllr D Merrick
Cllr Mrs L A Butcher	Cllr Mrs J A Mockford
Cllr P A Capon	Cllr R A Oatham
Cllr Mrs T J Capon	Cllr J M Pullen
Cllr M R Carter	Cllr C G Seagers
Cllr Mrs L M Cox	Cllr S P Smith
Cllr T G Cutmore	Cllr D G Stansby
Cllr Mrs J Dillnutt	Cllr M G B Starke
Cllr K A Gibbs	Cllr M J Steptoe
Cllr K J Gordon	Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr K H Hudson	Cllr P F A Webster
Cllr Mrs G A Lucas-Gill	Cllr Mrs C A Weston
Cllr M Maddocks	Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs R Brown, Mrs H L A Glynn, T E Goodwin, T Livings, C J Lumley, Mrs J R Lumley and J Thomass.

It was noted that Cllr J P Cottis had also tendered his apologies; his family held a number of land parcels within the District, although he himself didn't. He had, however, deemed it prudent to take no part in any discussions relating to the Core Strategy.

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

P Warren	- Chief Executive
R J Honey	- Corporate Director (Internal Services)
G Woolhouse	- Corporate Director (External Services)
S Scrutton	- Head of Planning and Transportation
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator

### **289 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr S P Smith declared a personal interest in item 3 of the agenda relating to the Rochford District Core Strategy, by virtue of the fact that the document contained a reference to his place of employment.

### **290 ROCHFORD DISTRICT CORE STRATEGY – PREFERRED OPTIONS**

**(Note:** Cllr T G Cutmore declared a personal interest in this item by virtue of membership of the East of England Regional Assembly.)  
Council considered the report of the Head of Planning and Transportation

seeking Members' approval to the content of the Rochford Core Strategy Preferred Options document and agreement that arrangements be made for the document to be subjected to community involvement and consultation.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation, in addressing Council, emphasised that the Core Strategy Preferred Options document was the vehicle by which this Council would consult residents, partners, stakeholders and businessmen to determine the future of the District. It was the precursor to further Local Development Framework publications that could not be produced until the Council had received the results of public consultation.

Rochford District has a higher proportion of older residents than the national or regional averages. The under 20 population will fall between 2008 and 2021, whilst the over 65 population will increase disproportionately.

With respect to local economy, Rochford District ranks in the lowest quartile nationally. It also has a higher than average proportion of the workforce employed in manufacturing, which has experienced a greater loss of jobs than any other employment sector.

Within the Thames Gateway, Rochford is recognised as an area for developing the leisure, recreation and tourism industries. The Council will, accordingly, seek to control the amount of non retail use to encourage an enticing range of shops, restaurants, pubs and other leisure outlets, within a pleasant environment.

The Council is focused on developing higher levels of employment and in seeking to realise the full potential of London Southend Airport. There is a great future here for significant economic growth, and not just aviation based industries.

Planning has a key role in the protection and enhancement of the District's natural resources and environment. In cases where an impact is unavoidable measures will be taken to mitigate any negative effects. Whilst recognising the contribution renewable energy can make, there are currently no plans for developing such projects within the District. The impact of such development on the character of the landscape would be of primary concern. The "Local List" will be reinstated in order to protect the District's heritage.

The need for new additional housing is driven, primarily by two factors: the District's population is an ageing one; and there are currently within the District broken families requiring two, rather than one, homes.

The East of England Plan initially required this Council to build 4600 between 2001 and 2021. This Plan has subsequently been extended to 2025; the Council is still, therefore, required to build 4790 new homes. The District's Urban Capacity Study has indicated that 1301 can be accommodated without encroaching on Green Belt land. That leaves a total of 3489 to locate by 2025, which equates to about 232 homes a year, District-wide.

The Council's independent housing needs study of 2004 and the Thames Gateway South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment Final Report, September 2008 have both concluded that the District does need all these new homes. The Plan from the Government Office for the East of England requires an average of at least 26,830 new homes every year. Rochford's contribution is expected to be about 250.

The Council will release Green Belt land very sparingly, only after first allocating every scrap of brown field land in order to comply with its legal duties and to meet the housing need of the District. The Council does not support building in people's back gardens or the intensification of housing densities within existing neighbourhoods. A block of flats to replace a single home will be strongly resisted. The burden of release of Green Belt land will be shared by the District as a whole and not concentrated in any one particular area.

The distribution of new housing that the Council recommends to be built between 2015 and 2021 is to be found within table H2 on page 28, and post 2021 within table H3 on page 31. These tables indicate locations only and are not site specific. That duty will fall to the "Site allocations" document, a document that will be produced following the expiration of the consultation period of the Core Strategy. Of the proposed new housing, 35% shall be affordable, that is to say housing that is wholly or partly owned by a registered social landlord. This is in accordance with the indicative aim of the East of England Plan.

Table H in Appendix 1 clearly identifies what is expected with regard to infrastructure improvements. The Council will look to its partners and stakeholders to help in bringing forward these identified needs, in a timely fashion, in order to match the progress of the developments.

In conclusion, the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation commended the Rochford District Core Strategy Preferred Options document as a document fit for its purpose, ie, consultation with residents.

The Leader of the Council emphasised that the East of England Regional Assembly had never endorsed the East of England Plan; the Council was, nevertheless, legally bound to comply with the housing targets contained within the Plan.

Particular reference was made of the excellent supporting information contained within the document, and the clear layout; Members concurred that this was a working document that any member of the public could pick up and understand.

During debate concern was raised that, given the likelihood of the over 65's outnumbering the under 21's by 2021, suitable, affordable housing for the elderly should be provided.

It was also vital that there were adequate public transport facilities available to meet the needs of the elderly, who could not be expected to walk or cycle; there were currently some areas of Rayleigh without a bus service.

In response to a concern raised that the Core Strategy document contained insufficient details relating to the infrastructure required for specific locations, officers advised that Appendix H provided a basic outline of what infrastructure would be required. The Site Allocations Development Plan Document would provide details of the specific sites for new housing developments, together with details of associated infrastructure. The current Core Strategy document would be the subject of public consultation; it was important that the Council gained the views of residents, employers and other partner agencies, with feedback on the infrastructure proposed within the document, including views on any omissions with respect to infrastructure. It was further observed that the Core Strategy would, in time, include the joint area action plan for the airport.

Responding to a supplementary concern relating to the possibility of standard charges levied on developers not always being sufficient to provide the necessary infrastructure, officers confirmed that it was likely that the Government would introduce a community infrastructure levy in April 2009 requiring developers to make a financial contribution towards the provision of essential infrastructure. Precise details on how the new system would operate were not yet available from the Government, but it would be necessary to prepare a development plan document to explain how the new system would be operated in the District.

One Member observed that the inclusion of parish details on pages 38 and 39 of the document helped to clarify the general locations for housing; there could be merit in also including parish details in the tables on pages 28 and 31 of the document, for the sake of clarity.

In response to an enquiry relating to the possibility of an early area action plan for Rayleigh town centre, the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation advised that this was a matter that would be considered as part of the budget planning process for next year.

Concern was expressed that a development of 200 houses in the vicinity of Rawreth Industrial Estate did not appear to be included in the overall housing totals for North of London Road within the Core Strategy document. The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation reiterated that specific sites had not yet been identified, just general locations.

## Extraordinary Council – 15 October 2008

---

### Resolved

That, subject to the amendments in the addendum to the report, the Rochford Core Strategy Preferred Options document be approved for consultation and community involvement. (HPT)

**(Note:** Cllr J R F Mason wished it to be recorded that he voted against the above decision).

The meeting closed at 8.05 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....

If you would like these minutes in large print, braille or another language please contact 01702 546366.