

Rochford District SCI

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Regulation 26 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, Rochford District Council have undertaken a consultation exercise to seek the views of 'stakeholders' – those who may have an interest in the development of the district – on the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

The results of this consultation exercise, together with the Local Planning Authority's (LPA) views on the comments received and recommendations for alterations to the SCI, are outlined in this document.

The LPA consulted a number of groups, organisations and individuals who had been identified as having an interest in the earlier consultation exercise or had asked to be kept updated with the progress of the LDF, or were required to be consulted under regulations. These included the following groups / organisations:

- Althorne Parish Council
- Ashingdon Parish Council
- Barling Magna Parish Council
- Basildon District Council
- Burnham on Crouch Town Council
- Canewdon Parish Council
- Castle Point Borough Council
- Chelmsford Borough Council
- Devplan UK
- East of England Regional Assembly
- East of England Regional Development Agency
- Essex County Council
- Essex Race Equality Council (REC)
- Essex Youth Service
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Foulness Parish Council
- GO East
- Great Wakering Parish Council
- Gypsy Council for Education Welfare & Civil Rights
- Hawkwell Parish Council
- Highways Agency
- Hockley Chamber of Trade
- Hockley Parish Council
- Hullbridge Parish Council
- Inspire East
- Little Burstead Parish Council
- Maldon District Council
- Noak Bridge Parish Council
- North Fambridge Parish Council
- Paglesham Parish Council
- Purleigh Parish Council
- Ramsden Bellhouse Parish Council

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- Ramsden Crays Parish Council
- Rawreth Parish Council
- Rayleigh Chamber of Trade
- Rayleigh Town Council
- Rettendon Parish Council
- Rochford & District Chamber of Trade & Commerce
- Rochford District Access Committee
- Rochford Parish Council
- Runwell Parish Council
- Rural Community Council of Essex
- South East Essex Chamber of Commerce
- South Woodham Ferrers Town Council
- Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
- Southminster Parish Council
- Stambridge Parish Council
- Stow Maries Parish Council
- Sutton Parish Council
- The Housing Corporation

Further to those listed above, a number of additional groups, organisations and individuals were also directly consulted.

The above were sent a letter explaining the purposes of the SCI, LDF and this particular consultation exercise (see Appendix A).

The initial draft of the SCI was publicised through articles on the Council's website and by issuing a press release to the following local newspapers.

- Chronicle
- Echo
- Enquirer
- Rayleigh Times
- Southend Standard
- Yellow Advertiser

The initial draft SCI and questionnaire were also available to download from the Council's website. Paper copies were available from the Council Offices and were sent out free of charge to those who requested one.

When members of the public requested a copy of the draft SCI they were sent the document along with a questionnaire

A response was sent to all those who had submitted representation in respect of the draft SCI. Those that had submitted a response via the on-line forms received an automated response.

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In addition to comments made on the draft Statement of Community Involvement, the consultation exercise prompted the following groups to come forward who have now been added to the Local Development Framework consultation list:

- Essex Flood Forum
- Hockley Parish Plan Group

As detailed below, it is recommended that a number of alterations be made to the next draft of the SCI to be submitted. The next draft that the LPA will produce will be subject to a formal six week consultation period during which parties may challenge the plan if they believe it fails to meet any of the tests of soundness. If it is deemed to be sound by the Planning Inspectorate the Council can then proceed to adopt the Statement of Community Involvement.

As part of the consultation exercise, respondents were asked to score a number of statements in relation to the SCI out of 10, with 1 indicating 'strongly disagree' and 10 indicating 'strongly agree'.

The average scores for each statement are shown in the summary tables below, noting of course that general comments received from respondents are not scored.

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CONSULTATION RESPONSE

QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTION		AVERAGE MEAN)*	AVERAGE (MODE)**
		1 = Strongly disagree 10 = Strongly agree	1 = Strongly disagree 10 = Strongly agree
		N/A	N/A
N/A –General comments			
RESPONDENT	COMMENTS		
Mr Claydon	It is evident from this document that no thought has been put into preventing higher levels of inconvenience & nuisance to existing residents. Ad hoc conversion of 1 house - block of flats 1 bungalow - 4/5 houses with nothing done to prevent pollution which is increased chemical, light, noise, loss of ground water and vegetation. Also infrastructure is not being addressed first water, potable and foul the High Rd sewer is already overloaded and electrical supplies the next will be gas. The B1013 is frequently at a stand still and difficult to cross also the A1015 the A127 is a moving traffic jam when not at a stand still. Rawreth Lane is frequently at a stand still & with all the increase in properties & hence council tax I fail to see how some 20% price increase is justified over the last 3/4 years with no additional services at all. Regarding water, I do not see anything regarding making it mandatory for this area - (Wakering is driest area in the UK) that full water reclamation / grey water use is built into all new properties / conversions and is a condition of planning. It is recently been hinted as top cope with the water supply to this area a desalination plant may well be required. We do not have adequate solar energy in this area to run one. So who is going to pay. Are we going to 'levy' all new developments, or is everyone else going to have their water charges put up? You need to sort out the whole infrastructure before any more building in this area. If the rest of the MOD land at Shoebury is built on & the 1500 in Rawreth area that could tip the scales.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">These comments appear to be in relation to policies, as opposed to community involvement.		
CPR Essex	We note that the dates on page 7 are now out of date		
Officer comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Comment noted. The LPA (Local Planning Authority) now believe that the inclusion of the timetable for consultation in the SCI is not appropriate as this is stated separately in the Local Development Scheme (LDS)		
English Nature	English Nature welcomes the opportunity to provide input into the Local Development Framework for Rochford District Council.		

*sum of all scores submitted divided by the total number of responses

** most frequent score submitted

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	<p>We note the inclusion within the SCI text of consultation with other non-statutory local bodies and welcome reference to Essex Wildlife Trust and RSPB. In addition to this, English Nature has contact details of many local nature conservation organisations and can provide a list, if desirable.</p> <p>English Nature is committed to the principles of sustainable development and to working with a range of partners to make these principles a reality. In line with national Government policy, we see biodiversity as a key test of sustainable development because it contributes not only to environmental objectives but also to social and economic objectives: an essential element of 'quality of life' for local people and a key economic asset in its own right.</p> <p>English Nature considers that the Local Development Framework (LDF) represents an opportunity to contribute to the delivery of the targets set out in the Rochford Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and believes that every opportunity should be taken to embody these BAP targets as objectives within the LDF.</p>
Officer comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments noted. LPA to contact English Nature with regards to suggestion of additional groups to be added to the LDF consultation list.
Essex Wildlife Trust	A well designed & clear SCI. Please continue to consult Essex Wildlife Trust on all further stages of the process (via Phil Sturges, Conservation Officer).
Officer comments	The LPA will continue to consult Essex Wildlife Trust at the appropriate stages in the LDF.
Essex Wildlife Trust Southend and Rochford Branch	<p>Section 4 The Local Development Framework</p> <p>This section contains a largely inaccurate timetable in Table 1 which we believe may lead people to consider that it is not worth participating in a process when the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is predated by the initial predraft participation period for Core Strategy and the Consultation on draft of the Supplementary Planning Documents. Having spoken to you regarding the slippage of this timetable we would make the following suggestion:</p> <p><u>That no Participation period be it predraft or draft ie Section 25 or Section 26 consultation is closed before the Rochford District SCI is published and publicised.</u></p>

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	<p>The raison d'etre of this suggestion is that until you have made people aware of the means of community involvement via the SCI and ascertained that these methods are adequate via the process of consultation, (including providing the public with the correct dates of periods of consultation), it would be unreasonable for the Council to decide on matters of fact relating to Core strategy , allocations and Supplementary Planning Document issues.</p> <p>The Council should it subsequently change consultation methods between draft and the Final SCI will be in fact admitting it carried out the other consultations without having in place a mandated SCI by means of which " people will have the opportunity to put forward their views on the various documents that will comprise the Local Development Framework" (Page 7 Draft Version SCI). This is undoubtedly the reason that in the original timetable (see Table 1 sect.4) the consultations on the SCI were intended to be completed before the Draft stages of all the other documents. We would also draw your attention to the statement 6.2 in your Local Development Scheme supporting statement (April06) which states</p> <p>6.2 The SCI will be prepared at the start of the process and monitored and kept up to date via the AMR. Its relationship with the LDDs/SPDs is that it identifies the processes by which the community will be engaged in consultation on each type of document and at every stage of its preparation.</p> <p>The fact that these preparation periods have slipped so badly already indicates to us that the timetables for these sections are not statutory and there is thus room for manoeuvre.</p> <p>We are also concerned that a concertina effect on the public consultation stage of many items in the June -July period of 2006 as envisaged in the timetable in the April 06 Local Development Framework document will disenfranchise many since they will not have enough time to read comprehend and respond to the multiple areas being considered in the time span at present allocated. Particularly we note since this STILL overlaps the public consultation period indicated for the local SCI (p10 RDCLDS (2005-2008)</p> <p>Section 5 Public Engagement Techniques</p> <p>Public Exhibitions</p> <p>It has been the experience of some of our members that issues raised at and comments made to staff at Public Exhibitions were</p>
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	<p>never passed on in a form that was apparent in the formal Planning Process. Consideration should be made to providing official feedback forms at all Planning Displays including those using the Councils Mobile Exhibition Unit. These would then be automatically submitted to the planning officers concerned with the particular application by the staff at an exhibition, or via a mailbox at the exhibition site, and become a part of the planning consultation process.</p> <p>The increased ease of use of such a system would undoubtedly lead to better feedback from a wider cross section of the public and promote a feeling of inclusion in the planning process by those submitting forms.</p> <p>Electronic Media</p> <p>It has been our experience that there is no formal system for acknowledging the receipt of email by the planning department. This has lead in some cases to emails becoming "lost" In the system with subsequent unnecessary delay and dissatisfaction to us and also a lack of ability for us and other members of the public to "prove " receipt of a particular communication by yourselves. As the importance of electronic communication increases we would suggest a formal (probably automated) system of acknowledgment for e-mail comments/objection etc from members of the public on planning matters is put in place. This would also help you identify internal problems in forwarding/dealing with email communications.</p> <p>Section 6.1 Feedback</p> <p>Feedback section indicates that the Local Planning Authority will produce a compilation of all comments received and state <u>how</u> it has reacted to each comment, it does not however state that the Local Planning authority will state <u>why</u> they have responded to each comment in a particular way. This may have been "taken as read" by the drafters but we consider that final SCI should state <u>"how and why the Local Planning Authority has reacted to each comment"</u> .</p> <p>Section 7.2 Getting information on a planning application.</p> <p>"plans of all applications will be able to be viewed through Public Access on the Councils Website from 2006 " (p12) .</p> <p>This is as yet an aspiration (April 2006), whilst written notes are available on line under individual application "plans" are not</p>
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	<p>certainly in our experience. A more realistic target date should be placed on this section. We would also point out that using Public access for planning still requires some knowledge of how the planning system works and the interface is not intuitive and could be improved.</p> <p>Section 8.1 Feedback</p> <p>A point of some concern to us is the alteration of plans mid application and also post initial planning decisions, we feel the statement that "contributors <u>may</u> be written to informing them that proposal has been revised and inviting further comment" (line 14 p 14) should be strengthened and read "<u>will normally be written to</u>". This will shift the presumption to consultation with contributors rather than the present statement which would seem to indicate a presumption not to consult.</p> <p>Section 9.1 Pre Application on RDC Applications</p> <p>We strongly advocate that Rochford District Council introduces a note of impartiality over applications where the Council either has an interest in or is the applicant. This could be done either by asking a neighbouring planning authority to handle the application or by having all such applications reviewed and reported on by a Planning Officer independent of Rochford District Council before decision. This would markedly increase transparency of such applications and improve public trust in the District Council.</p>
Officers comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments regarding the LDF timetable are noted. It is now considered that the SCI is not an appropriate document in which to state the timetable for the LDF. The timetable is outlined in the LDS. • The SCI is due to be completed prior to consultation on the other LDF documents. • It is the LPA's intention that public exhibitions will include facilities to enable formal comments to be submitted. This should be stated in the SCI for the purposes of clarity. • The LPA will acknowledge emails. For the purposes of the LDF, acknowledgements will be tailored to the relevant part of the LDF and stage of the process. • Comments on mid-application consultation are noted. It is the case that in the event of an applicant making mid-application changes to a proposal that would have an

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	<p>impact on interested parties, the LPA will reconsult. The SCI can be reworded to better reflect this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comments regarding the overlapping of consultation periods are noted. The LPA has attempted to stagger the production of documents but there is still some overlap of consultation phases, although the overlap is primarily between preferred options and consultation on draft stages.• Comments on feedback noted. The LPA will explain how and why comments have been taken into account in the production of the LDF. This should be made more explicit in the SCI.• Public Access is, at the time of writing, working and plans are available to view on-line. The LPA will not rely solely on Public Access, and officers are available to discuss plans.• Comment on contributions submitted via email are noted. The Council has recently implemented a system of logging correspondence electronically.• RDC determine planning applications in accordance with the pertinent regulations. As such, where RDC is the applicant and the proposal is significant GO East will determine the application. Smaller scale proposals are still determined by the Council, but always via committee so that the decision making process can be viewed by the public.
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GO East	<p>We commend you for the overall presentation of the document and we consider that this draft includes most of the elements prescribed by policy and guidance. However, we have some additional comments to make that we feel will help to improve the draft to ensure that you are in the best position to submit a “sound” SCI for examination.</p> <p>Consultation Methods and Programme</p> <p>We recognise that much consideration has already been given to the consultation programme for LDDs including the principles that underlie the authority’s approach to involvement. We note the inclusion, on page 7, of a table setting out the methods of consultation which will be used for different types of LDD. However, we feel that although this draft contains textually many of the required elements, in the submission document you will need to draw this information together in a clear and comprehensive way, particularly in relation to tests of soundness 4 & 5.</p> <p>In particular, we consider that the SCI needs to go further than it currently does in being explicit about <u>who</u> (i.e. which types of bodies and the different elements of the community, including hard to reach groups) will be consulted/engaged at <u>each</u> of the different stages of LDD production (including whether arrangements will be different for different types of DPDs) and by <u>which</u> consultation/engagement method and <u>why</u> that method was chosen at that particular stage for that particular group. As it currently stands, the SCI addresses this in only a general way. We would expect to see at submission stage, for each generic type of DPD, SPDs and the SCI itself, a clear statement showing the stages at which consultation will take place, who will be consulted, the methods of consultation to be used for differing groups, and why those methods are appropriate for each group. Having looked at many SCIs in preparation we have found the clearest way of presenting this information is through a series of cross-referenced tables and you may wish to consider this approach.</p> <p>We are pleased to see mention in the SCI of the additional consideration the authority has given to engaging those groups which the authority considers to be hard-to-reach, especially utilizing your District Youth assembly to raise participation of young people in the planning process. However, we have concerns about the lack of detail in the document about how the authority intends to engage with these and other hard-to-reach groups. To satisfy our concerns we would expect to see</p>
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	<p>information on the particular techniques you intend to use, tailored to the needs of these different groups, to help overcome barriers to their involvement in plan-making that existed in the past and secure their involvement in the preparation of LDDs. In particular there should be a distinction between the methods used to engage the general public and those that are considered “hard-to-reach”.</p> <p>We note the useful inclusion of the diagram in table format on page 7 setting out the stages of Development Plan Preparation and a series of dates of when these consultation stages are expected. Whilst we appreciate that doing so at consultation stages may aid in informing the public of the documents the Authority has committed to produce and the intended timetable for their preparation, we would not expect to see such an inclusion in the final published document, as any changes to the timetable would necessitate making changes to the SCI. Therefore, the SCI should highlight the statutory stage of DPD preparation and then cross-refer the reader to the chart in the LDS and give details of its availability. A similar approach would also be helpful with regard to SPD preparation.</p> <p>Links to other strategies</p> <p>We are pleased to see the SCI include references to other strategies including the Community Strategy. However, the SCI should also set out opportunities to double up consultation of LDDs with other strategies. The authority may wish to consider including a stronger commitment to parallel consultations and identify stages that such consultation could be undertaken e.g. whether consultation on the Community Strategy is best suited to running parallel with the informal Regulation 25 consultation stage as opposed to the wider formal Regulation 26 participation stage or vice versa. Conversely, where parallel consultation is not possible, the SCI should indicate this, briefly setting out the reasoning for this being the case.</p> <p>Consultees</p> <p>Checklist 7A in Creating LDFs states that the local bodies and community groups that will be consulted should be identified in general terms. Currently however, Section 13 - Consultees refers in some instances to the names of those bodies or groups rather than the general type of the body or group. This very specific approach may lead to a continual need to review the SCI as new groups are formed or existing groups are changed. You also run the risk of being challenged for not including a particular group</p>
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	<p>where a similar named one is included in the SCI consultee list. Furthermore, the risk of this approach is that subsequent DPDs could be rendered unsound simply because not all the local groups on the list were consulted perhaps because of a change of address/contact details that has not been picked up at the time of consultation. We suggest therefore, that a more general identification of community groups and local bodies by type is included in the SCI. The SCI could refer to a separate database containing a comprehensive list of groups and bodies with their contact details. This would be easier to maintain than reviewing the SCI. In this case the SCI should also clearly indicate how any bodies or organisations can get their details included on the database.</p> <p>Resources</p> <p>The SCI needs to show that the programme for community involvement is realistic, by demonstrating that the necessary resourcing is available (refer to <i>Creating Local Development Frameworks</i>, paragraph 7.6, Step 3). It will also need to demonstrate that the authority has considered how it can make the most effective use of resources, for instance and relation to our comment above, by combining DPD preparation consultation with the Community Strategy or other council initiatives, where appropriate.</p> <p>Compact</p> <p>We are aware that a 'Compact' for Rochford District Council is underway, which provides a framework for partnership working between Local Government and the voluntary and community sector. The SCI could make reference to the Compact and explain how the 'Compact' would help to engage the voluntary and community sector in the planning process.</p> <p>Minor Points</p> <p>Throughout the Draft SCI terms such as "may be.." and "council would consider.." are used and offer little certainty to the reader. We would expect the submitted version to use terms which offer more certainty and clarity of the Council's intentions.</p> <p>In Section 7 on page 11 the second paragraph refers to <i>Flowchart 1</i> when the reference appears to be directed at <i>Appendix A</i>.</p> <p>Regulatory Requirements</p>
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	<p>We take this opportunity to draw your attention to the requirements of Regulations 28(c) and (d) to produce statements at submission stage of the SCI, demonstrating how the authority has met Regulation 25 and addressed representations received at Regulation 27 stage (in response to Regulation 26 pre-submission public participation). In line with recent guidance from PINS, when preparing these statements, please make certain that all the information needed to ascertain whether the Regulations have been followed is included. Templates that provide a framework for the preparation of these statements have been sent to your authority recently. With regard to Regulation 28, the submission stage, both the Government Office and the Planning Inspectorate are expecting to receive two hard copies and one electronic copy of the SCI and submission statements.</p>
Officer comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments on table 7 and engagement techniques noted. Amendments to the SCI will ensure that the submission version outlines which consultation techniques will be used, with whom and when. • The Council believes there are numerous circumstances in which an individual or group may find themselves excluded from the decision making process, and that there are varying forms and degrees of exclusion. The SCI avoids attempting to divide the public into 'general public' and 'hard-to-reach' as this would be overly simplistic. Notwithstanding this, the comments regarding the need to specify which techniques will be used to overcome which barriers to participation is noted. • The LPA notes the comments regarding stating the dates of public consultation / participation and excepts that their inclusion in the SCI is not appropriate. The dates are stated in the Local Development Scheme. • Regarding parallel consultation, other responses to the draft SCI have indicated that there is some confusion between the LDF and the Community Strategy. In addition, concern has been expressed over consultation for different documents occurring at the same time and thereby not affording interested parties adequate time to digest issues and respond. • The LPA notes the suggestion with regards to the naming of specific consultation groups. The SCI includes a mixture of general groups and specific, named groups where it is considered appropriate, e.g. where the group is representative of a section of the community that may be

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	<p>'hard-to-reach'. The SCI states that the list is not exclusive and that groups will be added to the list as the LPA is made aware of them. Additional text can be added to the SCI to make clear that not all groups will necessarily be consulted on all aspects of the LDF.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has the resources available to carry out the exercises outlined in the SCI. The SCI should clarify this. • Comments in respect of using more definitive language are noted. • Comments regarding the requirements of Regulations are noted.
Grove Park Residents Association	<p>I see no cause for concern about the Statement for members of Grove Park Residents Association.</p> <p>However, the presentation on the Council web site leaves a very great deal to be desired.</p> <p>First of all, it's extremely difficult to find the draft Statement. The search engine, as is usual with text-based engines, returns many wholly irrelevant references but not the one searched for. It will not find either the draft Statement or the Questionnaire, and the only relevant item it does find (repeatedly and frustratingly) is the on-line version of the letter sent out by Andrew Meddle. This on-line version carries a subtle clue that is not in the letter; that the documents sought are in 'Local Government Framework'.</p> <p>Now, please consider the format of the Questionnaire. It is a five page PDF document, so to respond by e-mail requires it to be printed out, the responses added and the document scanned. This is ridiculously impracticable, and might have been designed specially to discourage responses.</p> <p>The questions could easily have been put in plain text (not with fancy boxes etc.) on a single sheet PDF or even a plain text document.</p>
Officer comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The comments in respect of the website have been passed to I.T. services, who have confirmed they are reviewing the website's search engine. • I.T. services were, following the comments, asked to put a questionnaire on the website in word format as well as pdf format to make it easier for people to submit responses. This was done. In addition, a facility allowing people to complete and submit a questionnaire online was implemented. • The need to keep the questionnaire as short and concise as possible. However, it was also required to leave room for the

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	responder to submit comments.
Highways Agency	The Highways Agency has no comments to make on the draft
Officer comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noted
Historic Environment Branch (Essex County Council)	<p>The Historic Environment Branch has taken the opportunity of viewing the consultation draft of Rochford District Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), and our comments are set out below. The draft SCI clearly sets out the Council's policy and will provide a firm foundation for closer community involvement in the planning process. Essex County Council's Historic Environment Branch acts as Rochford's advisors on the historic environment and looks forward to working in partnership with Rochford Council in implementing the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.</p> <p>The historic Environment Branch and are keen to be involved via consultation on the SCP core strategy. The Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by Essex County Council provides the most complete computerised database of the archaeological and built heritage in Essex. The HER provides the best starting point for anyone wishing to learn more about the historic environment of Rochford. Similarly with regard to the historic environment implications of planning matters in Rochford, whether individual applications or more strategic issues, the first point of contact on the historic environment in this office is Richard Havis (01245 437632).</p> <p>The Historic Environment Branch would welcome the opportunity to comment on the Historic environment content of all phases of the production of the LDFs. The Historic Environment Characterisation project undertaken in Rochford could form an important part of the production of the LDFs and will hopefully help to protect the significant surviving historic environment assets in the District and provide the planning and policy departments with a useful GIS tool. In the context of community involvement historic environment characterisation provides a potentially very useful method to engage local communities with the management of their local historic environment. Accordingly the historic environment characterisation project commissioned by Rochford District may assist you in engaging local communities in the understanding and management of the historic environment of their locality. The Historic Environment Branch are keen to work with Rochford in protection and understanding of their historic environment.</p>

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	The Historic Environment Branch are very keen to be involved in pre-application consultation (section 9.1) as this will both identify likely impacts at an early stage, or identify potential management or enhancement opportunities within development schemes which could benefit both the local community and the historic environment of Rochford.
Officer comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments noted. Additional text added to Section 9.1 stating The Historic Environment Branch's desire to be involved in pre-application consultation would alert applicants to this particular opportunity.
Hockley Parish Council	On page 6 black text on dark blue is difficult to read in artificial light. White out lettering would be clearer. Given that well presented Parish Plans are evidence based with good levels of public consultation it is difficult to understand why they should not be accepted as supplementary planning documents. They are perceived as reflecting the principle of public participation in community involvement. P12, 7.2 Plans are available for public inspection at Hockley Parish Council. Planning Committee meetings advertised locally.
Officer comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SCI is intended to be as easy to read as possible. Text in Figure 1 can be amended to be user-friendlier. With regards to the Parish Plans, the SCI reflects Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) advice that Parish Plans are unlikely to be able to be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents, but nevertheless have a part to play in the planning process. Comments on the availability of plans for inspection at Hockley Parish Council. This information would make a useful addition to the SCI.
Hockley Parish Plan Group	<p>As a stand-alone document and statement of intent, we consider it to be extremely well produced and presented. We do appreciate the extent of the hard work that has gone into its production.</p> <p>We are pleased to learn from the local press that residents will be able to speak in future at the Council's planning committee meetings all be it for only two minutes, on each application. It is to be hoped that such communications and announcements will in future be made by Rochford Council and will be covered in accord by the SCI Document.</p> <p>In putting forward the foregoing comments it is hoped it will be appreciated that these are made objectively in the interests of the community we serve. It is with acknowledgment of the general</p>

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	<p>apathy and the “Them and Us” attitude of the public at large, of which you must be well aware, we wish to be constructive and in some small way make a better understanding of the reasons for malcontent.</p>
Officer comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has not yet reached a decision regarding whether to allow members of the public to speak at Planning Services Committee or, if so, in what format. • The input on the SCI is appreciated.
Mr James	<p>Documents are hard to read on a screen and if you don't own a working printer, you need to get a printed copy. I tried to get one from the library but they only had the one and they would not let me take it away. In the end I managed to get one from the clerk of Hawkwell Parish Council. If you really want to consult the residents of RDC you need to make the process much easier. One way would be to supply a simplified version to all residents maybe with (not as part of) the Rochford Matters, although sometimes I don't get one.</p>
Officer comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LPA appreciate that electronic media is not ideal for everyone and endeavour to make copies of documents available in a variety of formats. • Rochford District Matters is one of the media through which the LPA will consult the public.
Rayleigh Civic Society	<p>The proposes are good but ambitious on view of the number of consultees (93) in total.</p>
Officer comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the Local Plan process, the LPA is confident it has the resources to consult the number of consultees on its database. The LPA is also increasing the amount of electronic consultation it carries out, which aids consulting large numbers.
Schools Service (Essex County Council)	<p>Thanks for your letter dated 23/02/06 regarding the above. May I offer my support to what I consider an excellent document that should provide a sound basis for consulting both 'Bodies', such as Essex County Council (ECC), and the public.</p> <p>In particular, I welcome the inclusion of the Schools Service in table 4. May I also suggest the addition of the Early Years & Childcare Service who are responsible for pre-school age education provision.</p> <p>With regard to developer contributions, it is the pre application stage that is crucial in ensuring that the developer factors in the appropriate costs to deliver a sustainable proposal that fully mitigates its impacts. May I thus suggest that section 9.1 of the</p>

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	<p>document outlines the advantages to the developer of early contact with infrastructure providers such as The Schools Service.</p> <p>All the best and I look forward to working with you on subsequent LDF documents.</p>
Officers comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comments noted. An addition to Section 9.1 to explain the advantages of contacting relevant infrastructure providers regarding possible developer contribution requirements may aid applicants and potentially avoid unnecessarily delays in processing applications.

*sum of all scores submitted divided by the total number of responses

** most frequent score submitted

<p>Mr Skinner</p>	<p>Sites notices (page 12) - These are effective because of their bright colour. I think they should be used for all planning applications, including householder applications, as one of the most direct ways of alerting the public to the existence of an application. However, vandals often remove site notices within a day or two of their being put up. The Council should fix them securely and / or keep a check to see they remain in place, replacing them if necessary. The council should also ensure site notices are removed once an application has been determined - after that they serve no useful purpose and just become an eyesore (one on the gates of King George's playing field in Rayleigh has been there for months).</p> <p>Notification of neighbours - Notification letters are often sent to too few people. For instance, a letter about windows to be put in the roof of an existing dwelling may be sent to neighbours on either side of the road, but not to someone on the other side of the road - even though they may be directly opposite and their outlook could be affected. If they don't get a letter, and there is no site notices the first they may know about the application is when the building work starts! It would be useful to include a booklet or leaflet with the neighbour notification explaining about "material planning considerations", etc. This could also contain information about other actions a consultee could take besides writing a letter to the planning department (e.g. contacting the district councillor for their ward and the parish / town councillor for the ward).</p> <p>Public Representation at Planning Meetings - When people come to a planning meeting and read the agenda and see their comments have been compressed into a tiny little paragraph about a neighbour consultation, they may well feel that their carefully written letter has not been taken much notice of ! Even for controversial applications where there has been considerable public comment, the paragraph is still a tiny one. It is difficult to see how members of the planning committee can glean much information about the merits or otherwise of comments from consultees / members of the public when so little detail is provided. There should certainly be provision for the public to speak at planning meetings. I have known folk come away from a planning committee meeting seething with anger at having to remain silent. Only a very small number of copies of the agenda for a planning meeting are provided for the public - even when the gallery is packed with people. Surely, when the council knows there is an item on the agenda that is likely to be contentious, some additional copies could be provided (or at least copies of the report for the contentious item)? Sitting at the back, it is difficult to follow what on earth is going on in a meeting without an agenda to refer to or at least a report for a particular</p>
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*sum of all scores submitted divided by the total number of responses

** most frequent score submitted

Rochford District SCI

	<p>item you are interested in. Small things like this would do more to persuade the public that the council is not ignoring them than all the fancy Statement of Community Involvement documents in the world!</p> <p>Parish / Town Council Representation at Planning Meetings - These councils take a great deal of trouble to provide comments on planning applications in their area, only to find that their contribution has been squashed down into the same tiny paragraph as the comments from the public. It is even more important that a representative from the parish / town council should be able to speak at a planning meeting than that the public should have the right to speak. At present, the district council appears to treat the parish council with something close to contempt. It is a change in the council's attitude to the public that will get people more involved in the planning process, rather than the production of "community involvement" documents - that very few members of the public ever read.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site notices are displayed for certain types of application, as stated in the SCI. The Case Officer, at their discretion, may display a site notice in other cases where there is felt to be a need for one. Community consultation has to be a balance between maximising the potential for people to become involved and the resources available to the Council. As such, it is unlikely that a site notice will be displayed for every application. • Comments regarding how securely site notices are affixed are noted and will be passed onto Development Control. • Case Officers visit the application site and if it is apparent that a neighbour should be consulted but was not identified immediately a notification letter is usually sent. • Case Officers usually summarise comments to avoid repetition and to highlight those comments that can be considered as material to the determination of the application. The size of the comments section on the report is not indicative of the weight attached to the comments. • The suggestion of the inclusion of a booklet explaining what material planning considerations are is noted. The LPA has produced a guide booklet on material planning considerations. The SCI can highlight the existence of such a guide. The LPA currently issues a flowchart explaining the planning process, but does not have the resources to issue the guidance leaflet with every neighbour notification letter sent out. • Comments regarding the availability of agendas at

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** most frequent score submitted

Rochford District SCI

	<p>committee meetings are noted and have been passed to the Committee Section.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The input from Parish Councils is greatly valued by the Council.
Mrs Taylor	As a non-resident of the area, I feel a number of issues do not apply to me, however I would like to continue to get information as I have in the past
Officers comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LPA recognises that it is not simply residents of the district who have an interest in its development. Those who express an interest can be added to the LDF database and kept up to date on the LDF's progress.
RECOMMENDATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future consultation exercises should include on-line response forms where possible Modifications be made to the SCI to make clearer what measures are being put in place to engage with 'hard-to-reach groups', specifying which techniques will be used to overcome which barriers to participation is noted. SCI be altered with words such as 'may' be replaced with word such as 'will', where appropriate, to make the SCI more definite. Additional text to Section 13 to make clear that not all groups listed will necessarily be consulted on all aspects of the SCI, and that the Council will endeavour to consult them when relevant. Additions to Section 9.1 to include promoting the possibility of obtaining pre-application advice from Historic Environment Branch when pertinent, and advising contacting relevant infrastructure providers when developer contributions may be required. Add Early Years & Childcare Services to list of consultees in Table 5. Add text to SCI to clarify resources available to Council to meet the requirements for consultation prescribed in the SCI. Remove dates of participation / consultation. Insert text into Table 1 referring reader to LDS for timetable of participation opportunities. Alter text in Section 8.1 from: <p>"Alterations: When alterations have been made to a proposal mid-application, depending on the scale of such alterations, contributors may be written to informing them that the proposal has been revised and inviting further comment"</p> <p>to:</p> <p>"Alterations: When an applicant makes changes to a proposal mid-application, depending on the scale of such changes, the LPA will usually write to those that have contributed inviting further comment"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 7.2 of the SCI be amended to reflect the possibility of viewing plans at Hockley Parish Council. 	

*sum of all scores submitted divided by the total number of responses

** most frequent score submitted

Rochford District SCI

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QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTION	AVERAGE (MEAN)* 1 = Strongly disagree 10 = Strongly agree	AVERAGE (MODE)** 1 = Strongly disagree 10 = Strongly agree
1. The level of community involvement proposed is suitable	7.05	8
RESPONDENT	(SCORE) COMMENTS	
Charles Planning Associates on behalf of Swan Hill Homes Ltd	(8)	
Chelmsford Borough Council	(8)	
Mr Claydon	(10) Stop favouring developers and treat residents with respect and RDC not to adopt the attitude you will have to put up with it. Also RDC to respect ancient caveats.	
CPR Essex	(8) We think that it is suitable	
English Nature	(9)	
Essex Wildlife Trust	(9)	
Essex Wildlife Trust Southend And Rochford Branch	(5) The level of community involvement does not seem substantial more than at present.	
Mrs Feather	(6)	
Mrs Headley	(3/5)	
Hockley Parish Council	(7) The local member surgeries available for consultation	
Hockley Parish Plan Group	(2)	
Mr James	(8)	
Peacock and Smith (on behalf of Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc)	(10)	
Rayleigh Civic Society	(6)	
RCCE	(7)	
Rochford Parish Council	(6)	
Sustrans	(8)	
Mrs Taylor	(9)	

*sum of all scores submitted divided by the total number of responses

** most frequent score submitted

Rochford District SCI

Ms Yeadell	<p>Problem with making Rochford the place of choice in Essex for residence is firstly it boasts 9 tenths Green Belt, which means all development in remaining 1 tenth; secondly it is invitation to endless outsiders, not accommodation for existing population. This generates more money for the Council, but do we need local government that has this effect? It certainly won't improve life for people of the District.</p> <p>Maintenance of local heritage has benefited Rochford, central Rayleigh, Paglesham, at expense of e.g. peripheral Rayleigh, Hockley, Hawkwell, and Ashingdon. On borders of Hockley/Hawkwell and central Hockley, no less than 10 heritage items have been destroyed, replaced in some instances with things not very marketable. I don't envisage much change.</p>
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OFFICER'S COMMENTS

- The SCI does not favour developers over the general public, nor does it propose that one groups views on any planning matters should be favoured over any others.
- In the view of the LPA, the level and nature of community involvement in the Local Development Framework differs from that carried out under the Local Plan system. The LPA is confident that the new system will lead to greater public participation in the planning process.
- Some comments submitted appear to relate more to policy rather than the community involvement in the formation of policy.

RECOMMENDATION

- No modifications be made to the SCI with regard to comments specifically submitted for this question on the questionnaire.

QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTION	AVERAGE (MEAN)* 1 = Strongly disagree 10 = Strongly agree	AVERAGE (MODE)** 1 = Strongly disagree 10 = Strongly agree
2. The techniques and methods outlined in the Statement of Community Involvement will provide all, from all communities, an opportunity to become involved in the preparation of the Local Development Framework.	7.17	8

*sum of all scores submitted divided by the total number of responses

** most frequent score submitted

Rochford District SCI

RESPONDENT	(SCORE) COMMENTS
Charles Planning Associates on behalf of Swan Hill Homes Ltd	(9)
Chelmsford Borough Council	(8)
Mr Claydon	(10) Council to give residents adequate time at least 21 days & time to object to any reports going before planning meetings. The council to furnish the report to interested parties. Not have to raise hell & high water to find out what is in a report. Only hours or at the most a day or two before a meeting also reports that are technically wrong & pointed out to S Scrutton still being issued & not corrected
CPR Essex	(7) Goes along way to do just that!
English Nature	(9)
Essex Wildlife Trust	(8) Despite best efforts there will always be hard-to-reach groups omitted
Essex Wildlife Trust Southend And Rochford Branch	(6)
Mrs Feather	(5)
Mrs Headley	(3)
Hockley Parish Council	(7)
Hockley Parish Plan Group	(3)
Mr James	(7) If you give organizations sufficient information and the time to discuss, come to a consensus and respond.
Peacock and Smith (on behalf of Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc)	(10)
Rayleigh Civic Society	(8)
RCCE	(7) Planning Aid (p9) is not a technique but an organisation
RSPB	The RSPB is pleased to see that representative groups and bodies will be consulted on all documents produced as part of the Local Development Framework
Rochford Parish Council	(6)
Sustrans	(8)
Mrs Taylor	(8)
Ms Yeadell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is too late for people to influence how land is used and what development takes place. Too much has been removed in face of protests, replaced by

*sum of all scores submitted divided by the total number of responses

** most frequent score submitted

	<p>edifices that have jeopardised remaining homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more democratic form of planning would be too late. Anyway, whilst certain longstanding Councillors insist, against even Government advice, that public may not speak at planning meetings – not even 1 or 2 persons to give a presentation – you will continue to get the heckling from the public bench area that Councillors hate so much. • Greater sense of ownership for local people. We don't own our own homes when developers encouraged by planners have designs on same • Some developments, even marketed as 'exclusive homes' have increased the sense of exclusion. • Understanding of people's concerns leaves one with little confidence judging by results so far. Re Heritage above, CPRE March issue of Fieldwork encouraged retention of LA 'local lists', citing dismissal on appeal of 16 apartments to replace 'local list' house. Inspector felt house and its façade made notable contribution to area character, which apartments would not. Property was not in conservation area and English Heritage decided house did not warrant listing. Council took steps to prevent demolition and designated a conservation area with other old buildings, mature trees, and open spaces. Hockley had exactly one such, adjacent to woodlands, mature trees and formerly other historic homes. RDC took care to abolish its 'local list' and made sure house vanished before any appeal, as other houses vanished before it. An official referred to 'just politics, local interest, nothing of character in area'.
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*sum of all scores submitted divided by the total number of responses

** most frequent score submitted

Rochford District SCI

OFFICER'S COMMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The LPA will endeavour to give groups and individuals sufficient time to respond to consultation. The time given to respond at the various stages of LDF documents is prescribed in Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations.• Reports are publicly available, are on-line and hard copies can be requested.• Comments noted.• The LPA will endeavour to engage with groups who may have in the past been excluded ('hard-to-reach groups').• The LPA is aware that Planning Aid is an organisation. Planning Aid provides independent and free advice to the public on planning matters. Therefore, it is considered appropriate for the LPA to promote this organisation as a mechanism through which the public can become involved in planning.• The LPA does not except that it is too late too late for people to influence how land is used and what development takes place.• The LPA does not except that a more democratic form of planning is too late.• The issue of the public being able to speak at Planning Services Committee is raised in Section 8 of the SCI. At the time of writing, it has not been determined whether or not the public will be able to speak during the Committee and it would therefore not be appropriate to state anything definitive in the SCI.• The LPA believes that greater community participation in the planning process can help create a sense of ownership of the district for local people, as the views of local people shape how the district develops.• Some comments appear to relate more to particular developments rather than the SCI.
RECOMMENDATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modifications to the SCI in relation to community involvement techniques, particularly in relation to 'hard-to-reach groups, to be made as noted earlier.

*sum of all scores submitted divided by the total number of responses

** most frequent score submitted

Rochford District SCI

QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTION	AVERAGE (MEAN) 1 = Strongly disagree 10 = Strongly agree	AVERAGE (MODE) 1 = Strongly disagree 10 = Strongly agree
3. The Statement of Community Involvement outlines how people can become involved in the preparation of the Local Development Framework.	7	10
RESPONDENT	(SCORE) COMMENTS	
Charles Planning Associates on behalf of Swan Hill Homes Ltd	(8)	
Chelmsford Borough Council	(8)	
Mr Claydon	(6) Also take full 'heed' of what objectors say and not pander to developers overloading of utilities / infrastructure.	
CPR Essex	(3) We found the explanation on pages 6 and 7 muddled. Page 18 introduces the idea that the Local Development Framework is part of the community strategy, but it is not obvious how the documents relate to each other.	
English Nature	(9)	
Essex Wildlife Trust	(10) Very clear use of colours, boxes & tables	
Essex Wildlife Trust Southend And Rochford Branch	(7)	
Mrs Feather	(8)	
Mrs Headley	(3)	
Hockley Parish Council	(7)	
Hockley Parish Plan Group	(3) The SCI Document and the questionnaire do not appear to deal with the decision making process, the weightings given to local public opinion and representation to/from other Councils, Agencies, Utility Companies and Bodies concerned with the infrastructure is either inadequate or failing dismally, there appears to be no reference or referral to the current moves towards expansion. It may well be that the community is to be consulted upon this aspect via other means or documentation.	
Mr James	(7) This is good in theory but I doubt if this will happen in practice.	
Peacock and Smith (on behalf of Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc)	(10)	
Rayleigh Civic Society	(7)	
RCCE	(7)	

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Rochford District SCI

Rochford Parish Council	(5)
Sustrans	(8)
Mrs Taylor	(10)
Ms Yeadell	One is welcome to comment on proposals in planning terms, but anything pleasing to planners, developers is a done deal, comments dismissed as 'emotions' As in 2.1, public are ordered silent at meetings, so heckle instead. If one finds by accident about a future proposal, any advance comments are ignored. Planners cover themselves by saying comments are "taken into account". Planners hide comfortably behind "limitations imposed by government". But government policy is not law.

OFFICER'S COMMENTS

- The SCI states that the LPA will make clear how comments submitted in respect of the LDF have been considered and how they have influenced the preparation of documents. It will therefore be transparent that the LPA is not pandering to developers.
- Comments regarding the use of colours, boxes and tables are noted.
- It is not the case that any one group / individual's opinion has any more weight than another's in the decision making process.
- Comments regarding pages 6 and 7. Figure 1 requires modification to make it user-friendlier and assist in explaining the LDF process.
- Confusion regarding the position of the Community Strategy is noted. The Community Strategy is not part of the LDF.
- The SCI does not make any reference towards future patterns of development as the document outlines how people can be involved in the planning process rather than setting out planning policies or strategies.
- The community will be consulted on any future development patterns via the strategies for community involvement that are set out in the adopted version of the SCI.
- The techniques outlined in the SCI will have to be implemented in practice by the LPA. Documents prepared that were not subject to the consultation and participation exercises as described in the SCI will be considered 'unsound' and could not be adopted by the Council.
- The LPA does not except that comments are dismissed.

RECOMMENDATION

- Modifications be made to the SCI to clarify that the Community Strategy is not part of the LDF.
- Alterations be made to Figure 1 to make it easier to read.

*sum of all scores submitted divided by the total number of responses

** most frequent score submitted

Rochford District SCI

QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTION		AVERAGE (MEAN) 1 = Strongly disagree 10 = Strongly agree	AVERAGE (MODE) 1 = Strongly disagree 10 = Strongly agree
4. The Statement of Community Involvement outlines how people can put forward their views on individual planning applications.		6.61	8
RESPONDENT	(SCORE) COMMENTS		
Charles Planning Associates on behalf of Swan Hill Homes Ltd	(8)		
Chelmsford Borough Council	(8)		
Mr Claydon	(1) I see nothing in this that attempts to address the general infrastructure and utilities to the area before building more properties, the b1013 carries over twice the traffic / day over the first 50 miles of the M1 carriage way road was designed for. Also noise and pollution figures are excessive on this road. What are your monitoring figures?		
CPR Essex	(8)		
English Nature	(9)		
Essex Wildlife Trust	(8)		
Essex Wildlife Trust Southend And Rochford Branch	(6)		
Mrs Feather	(1) This needs reforming to enable the public to speak at planning meetings. The planning officers do not take the publics views into account sufficiently. The planning officer should recite the six principal aims before he/she writes their report.		
Mrs Headley	(5)		
Hockley Parish Council	(7)		
Hockley Parish Plan Group	(3) The SCI Document and the questionnaire do not appear to deal with the decision making process, the weightings given to local public opinion and representation to/from other Councils, Agencies, Utility Companies and Bodies concerned with the infrastructure is either inadequate or failing dismally, there appears to be no reference or referral to the current moves towards expansion. It may well be that the community is to be consulted upon this aspect via other means or documentation.		
Mr James	(8)		

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** most frequent score submitted

Rochford District SCI

Peacock and Smith (on behalf of Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc)	(10)
Rayleigh Civic Society	(7)
RCCE	(8)
Rochford Parish Council	(7)
Sustrans	(8)
Mrs Taylor	(7)
Ms Yeadell	Regional Spatial Strategy makes it clear that policies are already imposed. Region will 'listen', then do as it decides
OFFICER'S COMMENTS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The issue of the public being able to speak at Planning Services Committee is raised in Section 8 of the SCI. At the time of writing, it has not been determined whether or not the public will be able to speak during the Committee and it would therefore not be appropriate to state anything definitive in the SCI. Some comments made relate more to actual policies, rather than to community involvement in the formation of such policies. Whilst the LDF will be required to conform to the Regional Spatial Strategy, the LPA does not except that policies are 'imposed' 	
RECOMMENDATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alteration to Appendix A to make diagram clearer to read. Text in Section 8 stating that the Council is currently examining the possibility of giving members of the public the opportunity to speak at Planning Services Committee to remain unchanged. 	

*sum of all scores submitted divided by the total number of responses

** most frequent score submitted

Rochford District SCI

QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTION	AVERAGE (MEAN) 1 = Strongly disagree 10 = Strongly agree	AVERAGE (MODE) 1 = Strongly disagree 10 = Strongly agree
5. The methods of consulting and informing people on planning applications outlined in the Statement of Community Involvement allow people from all communities the opportunity to respond.	6.83	8
RESPONDENT	(SCORE) COMMENTS	
Charles Planning Associates on behalf of Swan Hill Homes Ltd	(5)	
Chelmsford Borough Council	(8)	
CPR Essex	(8)	
Mr Claydon	(3) It is not clear on the amount of notice of meetings will the quarterly newsletter list all planning and from publication allow time for objections,? If not why not!	
English Nature	(9)	
Essex Wildlife Trust	(8)	
Essex Wildlife Trust Southend And Rochford Branch	(5)	
Mrs Feather	(2) I feel that if people take the trouble to reply with their views when notified of a planning application then they should be informed when it is going before the planning committee, not finding out the result after it has happened. It is not easy to keep chasing the planning department to find out when it is on the agenda. Also it should not be put on the agenda if it is not going to be discussed!!	
Mrs Headley	(5)	
Hockley Parish Council	(6)	
Hockley Parish Plan Group	(7) In respect of the foregoing, and taking the SCI in its broadest sense, together with other issues, documentation and current legislation, we consider it completely fails to connect or reconnect with the views and concerns of our Local Community. This is comprehensively expressed by the community in the wide-ranging survey we recently conducted in Hockley Parish.	
Mr James	(8) Box 3. Will this really happen?	
Peacock and Smith (on behalf of Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc)	(10)	

*sum of all scores submitted divided by the total number of responses

** most frequent score submitted

Rochford District SCI

Rayleigh Civic Society	(8) Fully support the statements made about public meetings and exhibitions
RCCE	(7)
RSPB	The RSPB recommends that the Council consult non-statutory bodies on planning applications which may affect their interests. We suggest an additional category be added to Table 3: Public involvement techniques for planning applications titled 'non-statutory consultees' or 'local interest groups'
Rochford Parish Council	(6)
Sustrans	(8)
Mrs Taylor	(10)
OFFICER'S COMMENTS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the timescales involved in the processing of planning applications, the quarterly newsletter would not be a suitable vehicle for the advertisement of applications. • Comments regarding keeping interested parties informed of committee dates are noted. Section 8.1 of the SCI states that members of the public who have commented on an application will be written to and advised when the application is going to committee, in the event that it does. • The commitments outlined in Box 3 will have to be met. Documents prepared that were not subject to the consultation and participation exercises as described in the SCI will be considered 'unsound' and could not be adopted by the Council. • Support of comments on public exhibitions and meetings noted. • Local interest groups and non-statutory consultees are recognised as an important element of the participation process within the SCI. However, it is at the Officer's discretion as to when to consult such groups. 	
RECOMMENDATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add text to Table 3 stating that other non-statutory groups may be consulted, at the Case Officer's discretion, on planning applications 	

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** most frequent score submitted

Rochford District SCI

QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTION		AVERAGE (MEAN) 1 = Strongly disagree 10 = Strongly agree	AVERAGE (MODE) 1 = Strongly disagree 10 = Strongly agree
6. The Statement of Community Involvement explained what the Local Development Framework is.		7	7
RESPONDENT	(SCORE) COMMENTS		
Charles Planning Associates on behalf of Swan Hill Homes Ltd	(9)		
Chelmsford Borough Council	(10)		
Mr Claydon	(5)		
CPR Essex	(2) We at the CPR Essex are used to dealing with this type of document, but felt that a layman would find it incomprehensible.		
English Nature	(9)		
Essex Wildlife Trust	(9)		
Essex Wildlife Trust Southend And Rochford Branch	(7)		
Mrs Feather	(8)		
Mrs Headley	(3)		
Hockley Parish Council	(7)		
Hockley Parish Plan Group	(7) Again the SCI Document in terms of its references to other supportive documentation and legislation shows little policy or other pro-active support for the views of local residents and Council Tax Payers. To a layperson the document might appear to be insular, rather static and inflexible in terms of consideration for the future development of the District.		
Mr James	(6) Too complicated for Mr and Mrs Average		
Peacock and Smith (on behalf of Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc)	(10)		
Rayleigh Civic Society	(7)		
RCCE	(7)		
Rochford Parish Council	(5)		
Sustrans	(8)		

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** most frequent score submitted

Rochford District SCI

- The LPA has endeavoured to simplify the planning process as much as possible in the SCI. It is noted from the responses to the consultation exercise that the general public may still find the LDF process too complicated to understand. Responses to other sections of the SCI indicated that the explanatory diagram was difficult to read due to the colour scheme. This can be altered to make it user-friendlier. In addition to the diagram, the addition of text informing people how to contact the planning policy team at the Council if they have any questions on how the LDF works can be included.
- The SCI sets out how public participation will occur, but not how the district will develop. This is dealt with in other documents in the LDF, documents which will be subject to community involvement as specified in the SCI the Council will adopt.

RECOMMENDATION

- Alter Figure 1 to make it easier to read, as stated earlier
- Add text to Section 4 explaining how to contact the LPA to ask about the LDF.

*sum of all scores submitted divided by the total number of responses

** most frequent score submitted

Rochford District SCI

QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTION		AVERAGE (MEAN) 1 = Strongly disagree 10 = Strongly agree	AVERAGE (MODE) 1 = Strongly disagree 10 = Strongly agree
7. The Statement of Community Involvement makes clear how the results of public participation and consultation will be used.		6.61	7
RESPONDENT	(SCORE) COMMENTS		
Charles Planning Associates on behalf of Swan Hill Homes Ltd	(8)		
Chelmsford Borough Council	(10)		
Mr Claydon	(2) Letters are often not posted until several days have lapsed from dating by RDC. So allowing post, 6 days of 21 are gone by time read by a neighbour. How are you sorting this out? Also why do you post a yellow notice for minor work a small porch - 3 houses nothing?		
CPR Essex	(8)		
English Nature	(9)		
Essex Wildlife Trust	(7) Only a short section in SCI (6.1) - could be improved to include post-consultation stage(s) in greater detail		
Essex Wildlife Trust Southend And Rochford Branch	(3)		
Mrs Feather	(8)		
Mrs Headley	(3)		
Hockley Parish Council	(8)		
Hockley Parish Plan Group	(3)		
Mr James	(8)		
Peacock and Smith (on behalf of Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc)	(7)		
Rayleigh Civic Society	(6) We (Civic Society) often find the 21 days is insufficient time to investigate a large planning application in order to give useful comments		
RCCE	(7) This could be made clearer		
Rochford Parish Council	(7)		
Sustrans	(8)		
Mrs Taylor	(7)		

*sum of all scores submitted divided by the total number of responses

** most frequent score submitted

Rochford District SCI

OFFICER'S COMMENTS

- Comments on the posting of letters have been passed to Planning Administration
- The circumstances in which site notices are used are explained in Section 8, Table 3.
- Comments on Section 6.1 are noted. This section can be added to by explaining the feedback at the different stages of consultation on the LDF.
- Comments on the issue of responding within 21 days are noted. Such timescales are determined by regulations and the requirement to determine an application within a prescribed time period. One of the ways in which the SCI has attempted to address the issue is through the promotion of pre-application consultation.

RECOMMENDATION

- Add text to Section 6.1 to explain how feedback will be issued at the various stages of LDF consultation.

*sum of all scores submitted divided by the total number of responses

** most frequent score submitted

Rochford District SCI

QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTION	AVERAGE (MEAN) 1 = Strongly disagree 10 = Strongly agree	AVERAGE (MODE) 1 = Strongly disagree 10 = Strongly agree
8. The Statement of Community Involvement explains how the Council will deliver feedback on comments and views submitted in respect of planning matters.	6.88	8
RESPONDENT	(SCORE) COMMENTS	
Charles Planning Associates on behalf of Swan Hill Homes Ltd	(8)	
Chelmsford Borough Council	(10)	
Mr Claydon	(2) Are RDC going to reply to letters not requiring numerous prompts. What's the time scale? I do not see any scale in the papers. Yet an objector has only 21 days from your letter date.	
CPR Essex	(8)	
English Nature	(9)	
Essex Wildlife Trust	(8) Clearer feedback in section 8.1	
Essex Wildlife Trust Southend And Rochford Branch	(4)	
Mrs Feather	(2) I hope this will happen in the future, it certainly does not happen at present.	
Mrs Headley	(3)	
Hockley Parish Council	(8) If practical parish councils and resident organisations should be informed directly or advised as to when information is available electronically	
Hockley Parish Plan Group	(8) Although a direct response to the Public is well covered there is little or no indication of how the follow up of outcomes will be championed, considered, or dealt with, mindful of the necessity to enhance the environment and protect our natural heritage and culture. Little or no attention seems to have been paid to lessons that may have been learned from past experience. We consider that benefits as well as errors and failures should be taken into account. We are deeply concerned that the statement on page 20 relating to Parish Plans states that it is unlikely that they will be adopted. If this is to be the case we would like to know the purpose of our involvement in this exercise.	
Mr James	(8) I hope they do.	

*sum of all scores submitted divided by the total number of responses

** most frequent score submitted

Rochford District SCI

Peacock and Smith (on behalf of Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc)	(10)
Rayleigh Civic Society	(7) We question whether the Council will be able to reply in reasonably good time to those making comments in view of the large numbers of consultees involved.
RCCE	(7)
Rochford Parish Council	(7)
Sustrans	(8)
OFFICER'S COMMENTS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback to those who have commented on a planning application is normally issued at the same time the decision notice is sent to the applicant. Comments on feedback in the past noted. Contributors will be informed when the Council has prepared feedback on their comments, and where to obtain the documents that outline how and why their comments have influenced the process. The LPA acknowledge that the level of response will influence the amount of time taken to deliver feedback but are confident that the timetable in the adopted Local Development Scheme allows for this. 	
RECOMMENDATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No modifications be made to the SCI with regard to comments specifically submitted for this question on the questionnaire. 	

*sum of all scores submitted divided by the total number of responses

** most frequent score submitted

Rochford District SCI

QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTION		AVERAGE (MEAN) 1 = Strongly disagree 10 = Strongly agree	AVERAGE (MODE) 1 = Strongly disagree 10 = Strongly agree
9. The methods of pre-application advocated in the Statement of Community Involvement are suitable.		6.81	7
RESPONDENT	(SCORE) COMMENTS		
Charles Planning Associates on behalf of Swan Hill Homes Ltd	(4) It is considered that the SCI should include the ODPM's definition of major developments that "may have significant impact on local communities" could include any application as the degree of "significant impact" is open to interpretation. It is therefore considered that the opening text to section 9 should be amended to read as follows: "When an applicant proposes to build a major development, as defined by the ODPM, the applicant will be encouraged to engage in public participation and consult with affected communities prior to submitting a planning application".		
Chelmsford Borough Council	(9)		
Mr Claydon	(3) What action are you going to take when things are changed . I.e. no trees lopped, felled and stated on application - then all chopped down? Or fences are stated to be a certain height and are not? Doors moved without approval. I see nothing that commits you to sorting it out!		
CPR Essex	(8)		
English Nature	(9)		
Essex Wildlife Trust	(9) Benefits of pre-application are clear		
Essex Wildlife Trust Southend And Rochford Branch	(4)		
Mrs Feather	(7)		
Mrs Headley	(3)		
Hockley Parish Council	(6) Large developments and those likely to increase traffic should advise to schools and those likely to be directly affected by increased traffic or highways problems.		
Hockley Parish Plan Group	(6)		
Mr James	(8)		
Peacock and Smith (on behalf of Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc)	(10)		
Rayleigh Civic Society	(8) Good idea		
RCCE			
Rochford Parish Council	(7)		

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** most frequent score submitted

Rochford District SCI

RSPB	The RSPB encourages pre-application consultation for proposals that are likely to have significant local impact or generate controversy. Early consultation enables issues and concerns to be identified at an early stage and resolved prior to application, saving time and resources.
Sustrans	(8)
Ms Yeadell	<p>I'm surprised results of pre-application consultation are "likely to be material to determination". At an adjacent property, there was no such consultation until accidentally found out before formal notification. Complaint to relevant consultees was ignored. It was noted later on the planning file that inheritors at part of the site had insisted on confidentiality, though planners did point out there were democratic rights.</p> <p>Further, found on file some years later: District Valuer had made enquiry regarding any proposal or approval on a neighbour's property next to the site, following a bereavement – nowadays a normal enquiry no doubt, for which there is presumably a standard file. However, the enquiry and response by case officer dealing with the site in last paragraph were found on the proposer's file, not a standard Inheritance Tax file. One can draw one's own conclusions. (However papers had been removed when a solicitor consulted the file).</p>
OFFICER'S COMMENTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not the case that only major developments as defined by the ODPM will be those developments for which pre-application consultation is appropriate, but it is acknowledged that these are the types of development for which pre-application consultation is likely to be most suitable. Suggestions of who applicants should consult pre-application are noted. The LPA considers that the SCI shouldn't specify particular groups that should be consulted pre-application, as this will vary depending on the nature and scale of the proposal. Some comments raised appear to relate to the enforcement of planning issues, which is discussed in the SCI. RSPB's encouragement of pre-application consultation is noted. The SCI states that the LPA cannot force an applicant to undertake their own pre-application consultation. Other comments do not appear to relate to the SCI. 	

*sum of all scores submitted divided by the total number of responses

** most frequent score submitted

RECOMMENDATION

- Alter text in Section 9 adding “,in particular development that is defined as major development by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM),” after “When an applicant proposes a development that may have a significant impact on local communities...”

*sum of all scores submitted divided by the total number of responses

** most frequent score submitted

Rochford District SCI

QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTION		AVERAGE (MEAN) 1 = Strongly disagree 10 = Strongly agree	AVERAGE (MODE) 1 = Strongly disagree 10 = Strongly agree
10. The language used in the Statement of Community Involvement was easy to understand.		6.63	8
RESPONDENT	(SCORE) COMMENTS		
Charles Planning Associates on behalf of Swan Hill Homes Ltd	(9)		
Chelmsford Borough Council	(8)		
Mr Claydon	(7)		
CPR Essex	(5)		
English Nature	(9)		
Essex Wildlife Trust	(8)		
Essex Wildlife Trust Southend And Rochford Branch	(5)		
Mrs Feather	(5)		
Mrs Headley	(1)		
Hockley Parish Council	(6) The commitment to plain language is appreciated though expressions such as "engagement techniques" smack of "council speak". Some sections seemed to be repetitious.		
Hockley Parish Plan Group	(7) We have found great difficulty in relating the items of the Questionnaire to the specific sections of the document. The questionnaire is framed in a manner that precludes a rating or judgment being given to the specific headings in the opening pages of the SCI. This perhaps has made us rather more critical in our response to the complete document rather than to specific sections. Had more attention been paid to giving the questionnaire a more direct relationship and analogy to the various sections of the SCI Document it would have enabled us to be less critical in our response.		
Mr James	(6) I believe this document could have been simplified for the general public.		
Peacock and Smith (on behalf of Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc)	(10)		
Rayleigh Civic Society	(9) The sentence above does not seem to tie up with 10. Enforcement page 17 of SCI		
RCCE	(8)		
Rochford Parish Council	(8)		
RSPB			

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** most frequent score submitted

Rochford District SCI

Mr Skinner	(2) Some of the passages are rather stiff and stodgy, using a lot of words to say very little (e.g. first paragraph, page 8) - too much jargon e.g. what does "long term spatial vision" mean? (page 18) - it sounds like something to do with astronomy. Use of abbreviations such as LDF not helpful, as you have to keep checking what they stand for. The diagram on page 6 is unreadable because the colours are too dark (not that this matters, because it doesn't convey any useful information anyway - it would be best omitted completely).
Sustrans	(8)
Mrs Taylor	(5)
OFFICER'S COMMENTS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of abbreviations were removed for this draft of the document following consultation on the initial draft. It appears that there are still abbreviations in the document which are making the document less readable. The Council has attempted to avoid jargon but where terms such as 'engagement techniques' are used their meaning is explained. The question numbers on the questionnaire do not refer to the different sections of the SCI as the questionnaire does not seek views on individual sections of the SCI, unless stated, but the document as a whole. This should be made clearer when designing future questionnaires The colours used on the diagram on page 6 can be altered to make it user-friendlier. The diagram on page 6 (Figure) explains how the LDF is structured. The LPA consider this an important element in attempting to explain how the LDF works to those who may have an interest. 	
RECOMMENDATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remaining planning abbreviations, such as 'SCI', 'LDF' etc, be replaced with the full text where appropriate. Alteration to Figure 1, as stated earlier. 	

QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTION	AVERAGE (MEAN) 1 = Strongly disagree 10 = Strongly agree	AVERAGE (MODE) 1 = Strongly disagree 10 = Strongly agree
11. The relevant groups and organisations to consult on planning matters have been identified and listed in Table 5 of the Statement of Community Involvement.	6.54	9

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** most frequent score submitted

Rochford District SCI

RESPONDENT	(SCORE) COMMENTS
Charles Planning Associates on behalf of Swan Hill Homes Ltd	(1) Table 4 fails to recognise Developers / Landowners / Agents as a relevant group. It is considered that consultation with the development industry is essential throughout the LDF process especially given the role of such groups in the delivery of development. The development industry can provide the LDF process with up-to-date information regarding the market along with extensive knowledge and expertise. It is therefore considered essential that a group entitled Developers/Landowners/Agents is included in Table 4, and that Charles Planning Associates Limited acting on behalf of Swan Hill Homes Limited is included in your LDF database.
Chelmsford Borough Council	(10)
CPR Essex	(8)
Mr Claydon	(1) Anglia Water are principally foul water processors in the area & Essex & Suffolk Water provide potable water. They do not appear to be on the list or anything to do with electrical supplies apart from wind energy which is a minute provider. Without proper provision of potable water and electricity everyone existing will suffer. Restrictions on water use, power loss etc. There is no mention of pollution monitoring from increased vehicle no's - more buildings - less vegetation - more pollution - less water.
English Nature	(9) Welcome the inclusion of nature conservation organisations RSPB and Essex Wildlife Trust
Essex Wildlife Trust	(9)
Essex Wildlife Trust Southend And Rochford Branch	(7)
Mrs Feather	I cannot comment, but expect the list will get longer.
Mrs Headley	I cannot find Table 5
Hockley Parish Council	(8) Shown as table 4

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Rochford District SCI

Hockley Parish Plan Group	<p>(1) Whilst we note the inclusion of Hockley in Table 4, page 23, we do not understand why other Parishes such as Ashingdon, Hawkwell etc within the Rochford District have been omitted. This may have been an oversight but in any case requires some clarification.</p> <p>Table 5 appears to have lost its heading, but not withstanding this minor omission, we are amazed that out of only four contacts listed three are RTPi. This surely is unduly restrictive and should include other Professional Bodies such as the RIBA, RICS, CIOB and Universities as an example.</p>
Mr James	(6)
Peacock and Smith (on behalf of Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc)	(9)
Rayleigh Civic Society	(8)
Rochford Parish Council	(8)
Ms Yeadell	<p>"Rochford is recognised as an area for developing leisure, recreation and tourism activities and ... expansion of the green grid". That is why Rochford, central Rayleigh, Paglesham etc are protected, and the 9 tenths green belt, whilst all development goes eg into Hockley, Hawkwell, Ashingdon, peripheral Rayleigh. It is time officials realised Rochford etc is never going to be a major tourist area.</p> <p>Doubtless all the above will be dismissed as sour grapes, but one has become very cynical about these 'democratic' initiatives over time.</p> <p>Disquieting that some Councillors omit strategic items for their recommendations to committee, e.g. demolition, or height, bulk, scale, while including things even a case officer says could be sorted by condition – eg a wall.</p>

*sum of all scores submitted divided by the total number of responses

** most frequent score submitted

OFFICER'S COMMENTS

- There are a number of developers, agents and private landowners who have requested to be kept up to date with the development of the LDF. The SCI can make this clear by stating this in Section 13, rather than listing them all separately.
- Charles Planning Associates are on the LPA's LDF database.
- Anglian Water are listed in Table 5. Essex and Suffolk Water are on the Council's LDF database and will continue to be consulted on planning matters.
- The LPA envisage that the list of consultees will grow and have stated in the SCI that the list in Table 5 is not exclusive.
- The four contacts listed in Section 14 have been singled out as they are bodies that provide planning advice specifically. The LPA is aware that there are a number of bodies that are able to provide assistance and advice on matters relating to planning but highlighted Planning Aid in particular as it is free, independent, and provides and deals specifically with planning.
- Comments appear to relate more to policies and strategies for development, rather than community involvement.
- There was a typing error that saw Table 5 labelled as Table 4. This has understandably caused some confusion and will require correction in the production of the submission draft.

RECOMMENDATION

- Correct typing error so that the table listing consultees is labelled 'Table 5'
- Include text in Section 13 explaining that as well as the groups listed in Table 5, a number of private landowners, agents and developers will also be consulted on the LDF and that anyone can request to be put on the LDF database.
- Add Essex and Suffolk Water to Table 5.
- Add Hockley Parish Plan Group and Essex Flood Forum to list of consultees in Table 5.

*sum of all scores submitted divided by the total number of responses

** most frequent score submitted