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## **SOUTHEND REPLACEMENT BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN ISSUES REPORT**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report brings to Members' attention the contents of an Issues Paper published by Southend on Sea Borough Council as a precursor to the replacement Borough Local Plan.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 In parallel with the work on the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan, Southend Council must provide an up to date planning framework for the Borough in the period to 2011, the end date of the latest version County Structure Plan.
- 2.2 As the first stage in the process, Southend has now published an Issues Paper seeking views on the policies and proposals to be included in the Local Plan. A copy of the Issues Paper has been placed in the Members Room.
- 2.3 The Issues Paper does not provide a clear indication of the policies that might be developed in the next Borough Local Plan, but there are some indications about the direction the Plan is likely to take.

### **3 KEY ISSUES**

#### **Housing**

- 3.1 The Structure Plan requires the Borough to provide 2,250 dwellings between 1996 and 2011. The Issues Paper suggests that about 1,900 of these units have either been completed, have planning consent, or have been identified for development. Therefore, with an allowance for intensification, the Borough Council is confident that the Structure Plan housing allocation can be met. For the avoidance of doubt, there is no suggestion that, given the pressure on space for housing land in the Borough, a contribution should be made to their needs by utilising land in adjacent Districts.
- 3.2 With regard to affordable housing, the Issues Paper points out that an annual programme of 150 affordable homes is likely to be required. However, the needs study on which this information is based, is out of date and, given the importance of up to date information in Local Plans, it is considered that the Borough Council should commission a new study to ensure the affordable housing requirement is properly analysed and understood.

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**Economy**

- 3.3 Understandably, the Borough Council is keen to use the Local Plan to assist the process of economic regeneration. The Issues Paper identifies four 'flagship' sites for priority action. These are:-
- Prince Avenue - 3 hectare site to be developed as a Business Park
  - Shoebury Garrison (Old Ranges) - potential for 7.5 hectares of employment land
  - New Ranges - 74 hectare site - no indication given of area to be developed, but suggestions for a high-tech, research orientated Business Park
  - Fossetts Farm, Eastern Avenue - 29 hectares - no specific uses identified - the Issues Paper simply highlights the need for a comprehensive scheme which contributes positively to economic regeneration.
- 3.4 The Issues Paper indicates that very substantial areas of land are potentially available for economic development. However, whilst the Prince Avenue site (next to Tesco) is well located in relation to the road network, there must be some concern about the wider implications for traffic movements in South East Essex for substantial development at Fossetts Farm and Shoeburyness. The Issues Paper provides comments about improvements to transport infrastructure through the Borough's Local Transport Plan, but development should not proceed until these issues have been worked through to a solution.

**General Comment**

- 3.5 Other than the specific comments in respect of housing and the economy, the Issues Paper highlights the importance and value of the Thames Gateway to future economic prosperity, considers the importance of promoting the town centre for shopping development and reflects on the important protective designations along the river. The airport, largely within Rochford District, is mentioned as a key transport node.

**4 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Local Plans must balance the protection of the environment against the needs of an area for development.

**5 RECOMMENDATION**

It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That, subject to comments from Members, the Borough Council be informed that Rochford Council's key concerns are:-

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- the need for an up to date Housing Needs Survey to inform affordable housing provision; and
  - the impact of major employment land at Fossets Farm and Shoeburyness on traffic in South East Essex (HOPS).

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**Background Papers:**

Southend-on-Sea Replacement Local Plan Issues Paper 2001

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