

Chapter 10 Utilities, Health & Social Services

CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

The following Corporate Objectives are relevant to the delivery of the planning objectives related to utilities, education, health & social services explained in this chapter of the Local Plan:

- 1. To provide quality cost effective services;**
- 2. To work towards a safer and more caring community;**
- 3. To promote a green and sustainable environment;**
- 4. To encourage a thriving community;**
- 5. To improve the quality of life for people in the District; and**
- 6. To maintain and enhance local heritage and culture.**

PLANNING OBJECTIVES

- U1 To ensure that public utility provision can meet the needs of residents without causing harm to the environment.**
- U2 To assess the needs of public utility providers and to ensure that appropriate allocations are made through the local plan.**
- U3 To ensure that foul water disposal is appropriate and that new development follows the guidance laid out in Circular 3/99.**
- U4 To meet the needs of renewable energy generators that are appropriate to the needs of residents and the character of the district.**
- U5 To ensure services and education and healthcare facilities are accessible to all and that appropriate allocations are made in the local plan.**

INTRODUCTION

- 10.1 The local plan sets out the strategy for the development of the District until the year 2011 and the policies and proposals are designed to achieve the objectives of the plan. The Council's liaison with other local authorities and the public sector will impact upon the provision of infrastructure and services. Many utility providers have permitted development rights afforded to them by the General Permitted Development Order¹, whilst other development proposals will enter the mainstream development control system.

WATER - SUPPLY

- 10.2 In general, the Essex and Suffolk Water Company foresees no major problems concerning the provision of supply to the new sites included in the Local Plan for housing and industrial development, as these are located in existing developed areas. However, there may need to be reinforcement of the network to ensure that there is no adverse effect on existing customers.

¹ *Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order)* - Her Majesty's Government (1995)

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- 10.3 At the time of the First Review there were problems with reservoir levels due to low rainfall resulting in restrictions on water usage. However, changing weather patterns since the mid-1990s have led to the recharging of groundwater supplies and reservoirs and this, coupled to less water wastage have alleviated the need for restrictions. Consideration will be given to all measures that would ensure a continuous and plentiful water supply. The Essex and Suffolk Water Company foresees no requirements for new or extended sites or land during the plan period.

WATER - DRAINAGE

- 10.4 The Environment Agency will require adequate arrangements to be made for surface water drainage in all cases, which may require improvements to off-site watercourses in some instances. In all cases, surface water discharges from newly developed sites should be attenuated to current run-off rates. In some cases it may be possible to overcome the need for surface water attenuation by the use of soakaway systems, provided that ground conditions are suitable.
- 10.5 The publication of Planning Policy Guidance Note 25 (Development and Flood Risk) has strengthened the consideration of flooding and drainage issues. There is now considerable emphasis placed on such issues as flood risk assessment and sustainable urban drainage. The local planning authority will determine applications in floodplains on the basis of policies in Chapter 8 - Natural Resources and PPG25. The local planning authority will also require developers to show that they have considered sustainable urban drainage schemes in their design proposals as a move towards sustainable development.
- 10.6 As a general rule, the Environment Agency requires a strip of land 9 metres in width adjacent to all *main river watercourses* to give clear, unobstructed access for heavy plant and machinery required for maintenance or improvement purposes.

WATER - SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE

- 10.7 Anglian Water will require adequate arrangements to be made for the drainage of surface water by a separate system in all cases. If discharge into a watercourse is involved, off-site improvement works may be required in some instances following liaison with the Environment Agency. Depending on the scale of development, some form of attenuation of flows may be necessary. The Environment Agency can provide help with this if necessary.

WATER - FOUL WATER DRAINAGE

- 10.8 Anglian Water will require adequate arrangements to be made for foul water drainage by a separate system in all cases. If a development proposal would lead to the overloading of the sewerage system, Anglian Water will require developers to enter into an agreement phasing development over some mutually acceptable time-scale to allow time for improvements to be implemented.

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WATER - SEWAGE DISPOSAL

- 10.9 The major settlements in the District are connected to the mains drainage system, although in the plotlands and outlying parts of the District, this facility is not available. In order to ensure compliance with Consent Standards issued by the Environment Agency, Anglian Water may request development to be phased if a proposal would lead to overloading of their sewage treatment facilities.
- 10.10 It is recommended that developers contact Anglian Water at the first available opportunity to discuss the implications of development proposals on the foul and surface water sewerage systems and sewerage treatment facilities. Anglian Water foresees no requirements for new or extended sites or land during the plan period.

POLICY UT1 - FOUL & SURFACE WATER REQUIREMENTS

When considering proposals for new development or changes of use, the local planning authority will take account of the availability and capacity of foul and surface water sewers and sewage treatment works. In some instances it may be necessary for developers to enter into agreements with Anglian Water to phase development.

- 10.11 The local planning authority, together with the Environment Agency, has a responsibility to ensure that foul water from new development, which cannot be connected to the mains sewerage system, is disposed of in accordance with the hierarchy laid out in Circular 3/99: Non-mains Sewerage Systems². The Circular states that non-compliance with its guidance will be a material ground for the refusal of planning permission. Developers who propose to use septic tanks will need to submit details covering parts (a) to (k) of Annex A to the Circular. Developers are advised to seek advice from the Environment Agency, including that contained within Pollution Prevention Guidance Note 4.
- 10.12 Such an approach will also be adopted where proposals are received for the replacement of existing septic tanks.

POLICY UT2 - NON-MAINS DISPOSAL OF FOUL WATER & SEWAGE

The local planning authority will refuse development that will not connect to mains sewerage, if it is not consistent with the guidance provided by Circular 3/99. Developers should provide evidence covering points (a) to (k) of Annex A to Circular 3/99 at the time of applying for permission.

ELECTRICITY

- 10.13 No significant land requirements are anticipated by National Grid (e.g. for major transformer sites), but land for sub-stations (3m x 3m) will be required in new

² Circular 3/99 Planning requirement in respect of the use of non-mains sewerage incorporating septic tanks in new development - Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (1999)

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building projects, details of which should be established at an early stage by individual developers. Cable routes must also be allowed for and arrangements must be made with National Grid to move or divert any existing apparatus that is affected by new development.

- 10.14 Environmental improvements are to be encouraged, especially in the Conservation Areas, town and village centres, Nature Conservation Zones, Special Landscape Areas and Landscape Improvement Areas. The Local Planning Authority will seek the co-operation of National Grid in providing for the undergrounding of electricity cables wherever possible. National Grid will be encouraged to dismantle all disused overhead line systems and their associated supporting structures.

GAS

- 10.15 Transco have indicated that there are no major problems in providing a supply to any of the sites proposed in the plan, whether for domestic, commercial or industrial use. In some cases however, dependent upon gas load, reinforcement of the system may be needed with a potential cost implication for the developer concerned. This will certainly apply to the land proposed for employment uses west of Aviation Way. Transco has no large scale requirements for additional land during the plan period.

RENEWABLE ENGERGY

- 10.16 Energy conservation and the efficient use of energy are the principal themes in the drive to sustainable development. In February 2000, the Government published its initial conclusions on its new policy for renewable energy in the UK. In February 2003, the Government published its White Paper on Energy - *Our energy future - creating a low carbon economy*³. The Government's policy focus is the need for energy efficiency and the increased use of renewable energy.
- 10.17 The Government has an initial 10 year strategy⁴, in collaboration with industry, to help meet its aims. Specifically, it is proposing that 5% of UK electricity needs should be met from renewables by the end of 2003 and 10% by 2010, as long as the cost to consumers is acceptable. These targets are intended to act as a stimulus to industry and provide milestones for progress monitoring.
- 10.18 Since renewable energy sources can usually only be exploited where they occur the most likely proposals coming forward in and around the district relate to wind energy, tidal or wave action and solar power. Significant issues may be raised by offshore wind energy proposals which would be outside local planning authority control, but which potentially could have an impact over a much wider area.
- 10.19 Whilst recognising the contribution made by renewable energy, such forms of generation as wind turbines can have significant visual impacts, as well as other impacts on the natural environment. The location of such developments therefore needs to be carefully considered. The location of visually intrusive structures within the Coastal Protection Belt, Special Landscape Areas or Areas of Ancient Landscape will be inappropriate.

³ *Our energy future - creating a low carbon economy* - Her Majesty's Government (2003)

⁴ *New and Renewable Energy - Prospects for the 21st Century*, Department of Trade & Industry (2000)

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POLICY UT3 - RENEWABLE ENERGY

Proposals for the development of renewable sources of energy will be encouraged, particularly where there are benefits to the local community. Renewable energy proposals will be permitted provided that the proposed development would not adversely affect:

- i. The special character of the Coastal Protection Belt, Special Landscape Areas, Areas of Ancient Landscape or sites of nature conservation or heritage conservation interest; and
- ii. The amenity of nearby dwellings or residential areas;

The development must not result in a significant level of visual impact and particular regard will be had to the cumulative impact of existing, planned or proposed renewable energy developments.

Proposals for development must be accompanied by adequate information to indicate the extent of possible environmental effects and how they can be satisfactorily mitigated.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

10.20 As far as British Telecom is concerned, the proposed phasing and intended uses of the sites identified for development do not pose any significant problems in respect of the provision of their services. The Company will however require as much notice as possible to provide services, particularly for those sites that are situated in remoter areas.

10.21 British Telecom will not require any additional land during the plan period apart from the usual requirements for underground service ducts, public call boxes and similar needs.

10.22 Where environmental improvements are to be encouraged, especially in the Conservation Areas and town and village centres, the Local Planning Authority will seek the co-operation of telecommunication providers in providing wherever possible for the undergrounding of telephone cables, and the sensitive design and siting of call boxes, particularly in Conservation Areas. Elsewhere providers will be encouraged to dismantle all disused overhead lines.

MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATIONS - HEALTH

10.23 The Report of the Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones⁵ (IEGMP) set up by the government to research the possible health effects of the use of mobile phones has been considered by government. Its response was to agree that base stations should meet the International Commission for Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines for public exposure as expressed in the EU Council Recommendation of 12th July 1999.

⁵ *Mobile Phones and Health* - IEGMP (2000)

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10.24 These guidelines state that clear exclusion zones should be in place around all base stations and parents and schools should be reassured that base stations near schools operate within the guidelines. All new base stations are expected to meet ICNIRP guidelines and providing applications are accompanied by a certificate to that effect, it is the government's view that the planning system has no need to further consider the health implications of any proposal (PPG8).

MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATIONS - TELECOMMUNICATION MASTS

10.25 The siting of these substantial masts, which are essential to the operations of the various mobile phone companies, must be carried out with great care to ensure that sensitive areas do not suffer a loss of residential or visual amenity. Regard must be had however, to the limitations imposed by the nature of the telecommunications network and the technology that can constrain operators' choice of sites.

10.26 Where the erection of a mast requires the grant of a planning consent, the Local Planning Authority considers that it is important to indicate those areas where the siting of masts should normally be avoided if at all possible. These areas would include SSSI's, the Coastal Protection Belt, Conservation Areas and Special Landscape Areas. There is also a need to assess whether masts will affect any avian flyways and consultation will be undertaken with English Nature to assess this risk.

10.27 Furthermore, there is a clear need to ensure communication between the different companies to avoid the need for the erection of duplicate masts. Careful consideration needs to be given to the potential for the mast sharing and also the placing of masts on existing buildings where their overall impact can be less than for a freestanding structure.

POLICY UT4 - TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEVELOPMENT

Telecommunications development requiring an application for prior approval of siting and appearance will only be permitted where the equipment is sited, is of a design, material and colour, and where appropriate is screened, so as to minimise visual intrusion, taking account of the following:

- i. The need for the facility to blend more easily with its surroundings;**
- ii. Whether the design is suited to the local environment;**
- iii. The height in relation to surrounding land;**
- iv. The impact on the topography and natural vegetation;**
- v. The impact on the skyline or horizon;**
- vi. Views into the site;**
- vii. The site's scenic or conservation value;**
- viii. Relationship with other existing masts, structures or buildings; and**
- ix. Relationship to residential property, educational and healthcare facilities, employment and recreational sites; and**

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- x. **Arrangements put in place to ensure that, if such development falls into disuse, any structures are removed and the land restored to its condition before development took place or other agreed beneficial use.**

ROYAL MAIL

- 10.28 The Royal Mail foresees no requirements for new or extended sites or land during the plan period. However, some limited development may be necessary within the boundaries of the existing site in Rochford.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

AMBULANCE

- 10.29 There is currently no base for the ambulance service within the district. However, there are bases for ambulances at Rayleigh Weir (on the district boundary) and at Southend General Hospital. The Ambulance Service foresees no requirements for new sites or land during the plan period.

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

- 10.30 There are fire stations in Hawkwell, Rochford and Rayleigh. Rochford fire station is an integral part of the provision of fire cover in the whole of the Southend area. There may be a need for a replacement fire station for the Rochford area during the period of the plan, but the identification of a specific site will need to be the subject of further discussion and investigation.

POLICE

- 10.31 There is a police station in Rochford and a Divisional Headquarters in Rayleigh. Essex Police foresee no requirements for new or extended sites or land during the plan period.

HEALTHCARE

- 10.32 A single NHS Trust covers both Rochford and Southend General Hospitals and all acute services are now located in Southend. The major purchaser of the Trust's services will be the Southend Health Authority. This centralisation freed part of the northern section of the Rochford Hospital site for residential development, which is now complete.
- 10.33 Currently plans are being determined by the local planning authority for the comprehensive redevelopment of Rochford Hospital, within Rochford town centre. This will enable the long-term continuance of services to be provided.
- 10.34 Site selection for community care buildings is primarily a matter for healthcare providers, but any opportunities arising from land and premises previously used for health service purposes but becoming available as surplus should be fully examined. Proposals will not normally qualify for acceptance in the Green Belt, except on accessible, brownfield sites.

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10.35 An approach has also been made to the local planning authority seeking a further site for the provision of healthcare services. A brownfield site is identified for this to the west of Rochford. The sites allocated for healthcare provision are identified on the proposals maps and are covered by the following policy:

POLICY UT5 - HEALTHCARE PROVISION

Land zoned for healthcare purposes on the proposals maps will be safeguarded for such uses. No alternative uses will be considered acceptable by the local planning authority.

EDUCATION

10.36 Essex County Council have proposed to erect a new primary school on part of the Park School site, but no need is foreseen for other new sites during the plan period. However, the expansion of existing schools is likely as housing numbers increase. As development proposals come forward, the local planning authority will seek the replacement of temporary classrooms - many of which provide poor quality learning environments - with permanent facilities, by the imposition of appropriate conditions.

LIBRARIES

10.37 No new static service points are proposed, but the expansion of the well-sited Rochford Market Square Library into larger premises will be necessary. This should take place in the supermarket or other appropriate nearby redevelopment scheme. It will be required towards the end of the plan period, in view of the population in the substantial catchment area.

10.38 The library in the High Street, Great Wakering is inadequate for the existing catchment area population, and a new site for a library of about 200m² will need to be found to serve this small community more effectively.

PLACES OF WORSHIP AND OTHER COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

10.39 The selection of sites for these purposes will normally be a matter for the proponents of the schemes and applications for such proposals will be judged against material considerations similar to those set out in Policy UT6. These forms of development will not normally be considered appropriate in the Green Belt.

POLICY UT6 - PLACES OF WORSHIP AND COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

In considering proposals for community buildings or for the use of existing buildings for community purposes regard will be had for:

- i. The accessibility of sites to public transport;**
- ii. The availability of suitable access and parking space;**
- iii. The avoidance of undue disturbance affecting residential areas; and**
- iv. Other policies in this plan.**

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READING LIST AND USEFUL LINKS

10.40 In preparing the policies and proposals in this chapter of the local plan account has been taken of the advice and guidance in a wide range of documents and publications. A list of these is provided below together with details of links to organisations that provide useful information about employment development on the web.

DOCUMENTS

PPG7 (The Countryside - Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development)
Essex and Southend-on-Sea Replacement Structure Plan (2001)

Pollution Prevention Guidance Note 4 - Disposal of Sewage Where No Mains Drainage is Available - Environment Agency (2000)

PPG9 – Telecommunications (2001)

Mobile Phones and Health [the Stewart Report] - Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones (2000)

WEBSITES

Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) - <http://www.dti.gov.uk>

DTI - Renewables - http://www.dti.gov.uk/renewable/ed_pack/

Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs - <http://www.defra.gov.uk/>

Environment Agency - <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk>

Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones - <http://www.iegmp.org.uk>

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister - <http://www.odpm.gov.uk>

Royal Town Planning Institute - <http://rtpi.org.uk>