

New Local Plan: Issues and Options Document Executive Summary

This Executive Summary only provides a brief summary of the draft plan and should not be used to provide comment or representations on the main *Issues and Options Document*.

Introduction

- 1.1 Rochford District Council is preparing a new Local Plan. The Local Plan is a set of documents that will set out how Rochford should develop in the future to best meet the vision that the local community has for the district. This includes setting out how much development there should be and where it should go and what infrastructure is needed to support that growth. It will also help to guide future decisions on planning applications, including what should be allowed where, and what it should look like.
- 1.2 Each local planning authority is required by national government policy to prepare a Local Plan, in order to deliver sustainable development that reflects the vision and aspirations of local communities.
- 1.3 The *Issues and Options Document* is the first stage in preparing Rochford's new Local Plan and is an opportunity for local residents, businesses and other interested stakeholders to help shape the vision for the future development of Rochford at an early stage.

What plans do we have now?

- 1.4 We already have a number of adopted documents which will help to shape the district up to 2025; these include a *Core Strategy*, which sets out our current vision and overarching planning principles for the District, and an *Allocations Plan, Development Management Plan* and four *Area Action Plans* which provide specific details on how we will achieve this vision in those localities and apply these overarching planning principles. These documents together cover a range of topics including where new homes and jobs will be delivered, where children will go to school, and how our natural and historic environments will be protected. However, it is important to ensure that we continue to plan for the future beyond 2025, and take into account new national policy and the latest evidence. This will help to make sure that our plan is up-to-date, relevant and able to deliver the vision that our local communities and businesses have for Rochford.

What is the Issues and Options Document?

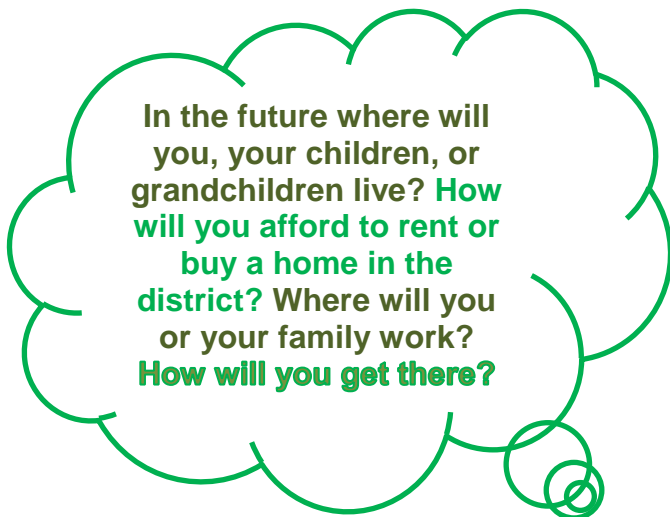
- 1.5 The *Issues and Options Document* forms the first part of our Local Plan review, and follows a programme of early community engagement that we rolled out in Summer/Autumn 2016 through parish-level workshops and a survey. The issues, challenges and opportunities raised by residents and businesses at these workshops and from the survey have helped to inform the issues and options identified within the *Issues and Options Document*.
- 1.6 The *Issues and Options Document* sets out a range of key issues that have been identified on a number of themes from housing and infrastructure to healthcare and community facilities. We have also included a number of options on how each of these issues could be addressed in the future.

What are we asking for comments on?

1.7 The *Issues and Options Document* includes questions to help us understand your thoughts on how we might plan for the future of the district, and in particular whether you think the issues and options we have identified are the correct ones. The document covers a range of topics, and asks questions about:

Our Vision and Strategic Objectives

We have tried to identify what the main issues and challenges are for the district, and what our environmental, economic and social ambitions should be for the district. We also need to consider our relationship to other areas in South Essex, and how they function, as well as further afield. What should be our vision?



Delivering Homes and Jobs

We have a responsibility to deliver new homes and jobs in the district to meet the needs of current and future residents through planning 20 years ahead. This is based on technical modelling work to identify what our need is, and how we can meet this need. We have to consider the types of homes that will be needed, how people can afford them (particularly for those unable to buy or rent private accommodation), where people want to live, and where they want to work. How can we do this?

Supporting Commercial Development

We need to consider where people will shop in the future, both for everyday goods such as food, and for consumables such as electronic items, cars etc., and accessing leisure activities. Although we have small, distinctive towns and villages in the district, we ensure their growth and survival, and encourage people to continue to visit them. How can we best maintain, grow and attract the best possible commercial and leisure opportunities to support our district's local economy?



How will you get from where you live to where you work in the future? What prevents you from using public transport? How will your children get to school or college?

Delivering Infrastructure

Infrastructure includes a whole range of facilities that we use everyday such as roads, footpaths, public transport, utilities, community centres, pubs etc. We need to ensure that these types of infrastructure across the district meet the needs of residents, businesses and visitors in the future. We need to work with infrastructure providers and neighbouring areas to ensure a joined-up planning approach. What types of infrastructure should we be focussing on to support our needs now and in the future?

Supporting Health, Community and Culture

Health and well-being is important. These can be improved not just by improving access to physical healthcare facilities such as doctors and dentists, but also to opportunities for physical activity such as open spaces. Access to education and childcare, as well as, facilities for the wider community, young people and children are also vitally important for our communities. How should we plan to ensure that our communities are healthy, active and social in the future?

Where will your children go to school or college? How will you access your local healthcare facilities? Where will your local parks and green spaces be? How will you access childcare facilities?

What will our historic centres look like in the future? How will we achieve the right balance between protecting our unique environment as well as also provide for the needs of existing and future generations?

Protecting and Enhancing our Environment

The district is characterised by small towns and villages set in a rural and coastal environment, which is defined by the heritage and culture of the area. There are many areas which are protected by environmental designations, most of the district is designated as 'Green Belt' and there are many valued landscapes. We have 10 Conservation Areas, and hundreds of Listed Buildings, highlighting the unique history of the district. How can we preserve and enhance, wherever possible, our historic and natural characteristics in the future?

Detailed Policy Considerations - What should our specific, detailed planning policies require to ensure the best possible quality of development where it is most appropriate?

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- 1.8 You can view the full *Issues and Options Document*, and all supporting documents, at www.rochford.gov.uk/newlocalplan.

Why do we need to plan?

- 1.9 Our current adopted documents are delivering homes, jobs and infrastructure to meet the current needs of the District, but if not reviewed, these documents may become out of date. Having an up-to-date plan is a requirement of national planning policy, and without one, we would not have a robust, relevant or well-informed policy framework to assess planning applications against, or meet the needs of local residents and businesses.

How can you give us your views?

- 1.10 Involvement of local residents and businesses is fundamental to effective plan-making to ensure that we not only plan effectively to meet local needs but ensure that we plan for the right development in the right places. We want to hear from both local residents and businesses to make sure that we are able to represent the needs of all in our local community.

- 1.11 We are inviting comments on the main *Issues and Options Document*, and its accompanying *Draft Sustainability Appraisal*, from Wednesday 13 December 2017 until 5pm on the 7 March 2018. Comments can be made in any of the following ways, but please be aware that late comments may not be accepted:

Online – using our online public consultation system: www.rochford.gov.uk/iao. This is a simple process requiring a valid email address.

Email – issuesandoptions@rochford.gov.uk

Post – Planning Policy, Rochford District Council, Council Offices, South Street, Rochford, Essex. SS4 1BW.

Fax – 01702 318181

- 1.12 Please be reminded that this Executive Summary document only provides a brief summary of the draft plan and should not be used to provide comment or representations on the main *Issues and Options Document*.

- 1.13 There is a lot of information in the *Issues and Options Document* and you may only want to look at one or two sections depending on which issues you are interested in. You can respond to as many or as few issues as you like. The future of the district is important for everyone who lives, works or visits so now is a great opportunity to get involved and have your say.

What happens next?

- 1.14 After this consultation on the *Issues and Options Document*, we will review and respond to the comments that have been received. We will then continue developing the evidence base to support our plan-making and, taking the comments received into account, will be working towards the preparation of a draft new local plan that sets out our preferred options for the future of the district. This will be available for further public consultation in the future.