

RDC/Spatial Consultation 2021 Questions. Hullbridge Parish Council official response/answers. 14th September 2021.

Q1. Are there any other technical evidence studies that you feel the Council needs to prepare to inform its new Local Plan, other than those listed in this section?

Hullbridge Parish Council feels strongly that a local highways study needs to take place. The document only refers to a study of the main roads in the south Essex infrastructure position statement. This states in 4.2.4 that much of the main road network which leads to our district is operating at, or near, capacity in peak periods.

We cannot understand why Rochford District Council would base its planning upon the 2025 flood risk area when developments could reasonably be expected to be in place for more than 100+ years. All evidence from the IPCC and other scientific institutions demonstrate that global sea level rise is a real and presently accelerating threat. In addition, the British Geological survey shows that the Eurasian tectonic plate is tilting along an axis between the Wash and the Bristol Channel, this means that Essex is sinking at a rate of 0.4 to 0.7mm per year (ref. research carried out at Durham University and published in the Journal 'GSA Today'). These projections are not the worst-case scenario, and the sea level rise could be much worse if climate change continues raising temperatures beyond 1.5 degrees centigrade.

The map generated by Coastal Climate Central for 2050 shows that all of the promoted sites to the west of Hullbridge will be in the flood risk area, and that those to the North East of Hullbridge are also in the flood risk area. Rochford District Council needs to ensure that no site at risk of flooding by 2050 is developed.

The Coastal Climate Central 2050 map shows large part of Rochford including Hullbridge below flood levels:

https://coastal.climatecentral.org/map/15/0.6252/51.6246/?theme=sea_level_rise&map_type=year&basemap=roadmap&contiguous=true&elevation_model=best_available&forecast_year=2050&pathway=rcp45&percentile=p50&refresh=true&return_level=return_level_1&slr_model=kopp_2014

Q2. Do you agree with our draft vision for Rochford District?

Hullbridge Parish Council believes that the vision should take into consideration the differences in towns and villages; for example, Rayleigh or Rochford may have a more business focus, whereas Hullbridge may be more of a rural community with a greater need to cater for its older population who do not need employment but do need more health services. In principle, the results of this consultation need to feed into it to make specific plans for each settlement.

Q3. Do you agree that we should develop a range of separate visions for each of our settlements to help guide decision-making?

Hullbridge Parish Council agrees that there should be separate visions for each settlement, however, these should be determined by each Parish Council working with residents - this is the appropriate level of localisation. Whilst agreeing with the principle of the localisation approach, it is not visible in the document as a whole. As we have already covered, there should be separate visions for each settlement. In this way it will support planning decisions at a local and district level to ensure the unique character of each distinct settlement remains rather than developing into one indistinct mass.

Q4. Do you agree with the strategic priorities and objectives we have identified?

Strategic Option 2 fails to address the problem of the aging population within the district. This is in large part due to the failure to provide adequate low rent social housing to enable young people to remain in the district and to develop stable family units. The failure of Housing Associations to meet this need is well documented nationally, and locally the largest Housing Association (Sanctuary) has a poor record of maintaining properties and honouring contractual promises made when the council's housing stock transferred. The strategy should provide council housing (preferably directly managed) with genuinely affordable rents and secure tenancies in small local exception sites. There also needs to be provision within these sites for social housing accommodation for elderly residents.

With regard to objective 12 we are concerned that Rayleigh tip has been put forward for development. If so there still needs to be a site for waste disposal close to Rayleigh. The restrictions on vans needs to be lifted to prevent fly tipping.

We believe that sufficient primary school places should be provided within local communities, and steps should be taken to minimise the use of cars to transport children to schools; we are concerned that this is currently not the case.

Strategy Options

Q5. Do you agree with the settlement hierarchy presented?

Yes, the hierarchy seems logical. We feel the strategy should take into account that many more people are working from home, reducing the need to commute to employment centres.

Q6. Which of the identified strategy options do you consider should be taken forward in the Plan?

It seems that some elements of option 1 and 3 will be required but given the requirement to build more homes the least disruptive option preferred by Hullbridge Parish Council would be to go for option 3a. Option 3a has the advantage of being close to the existing road hubs (A127 and A130) and services, and would be of a sufficient scale to attract section 106 funding for vital infrastructure. 3a would also be close to employment opportunities in Wickford and Basildon.

Option 3b would create considerable pressure on the existing road network and would erode the green belt separation of Southend and Rochford.

Option 3c would place development within the flood risk area and not be sustainable without the need for major road building that would open up the green belt to considerable development in the Crouch Valley.

The building of a major bypass road (as promoted by landowners in the past) to deal with congestion caused by 3b and 3c would destroy the green environment of Rochford and generate further development within the green belt. Development in the villages should be small scale and focussed on providing homes for young families and the elderly.

Small 'exception' housing developments added to the village settlements could provide council housing, sheltered housing and bungalows to meet the needs of low-income young families and the elderly. Such provision for the elderly could free up existing houses for younger residents and families to purchase.

Q7. Are there any reasonable alternatives to these options that should be considered instead?

Using option 3a as a starting point, other areas could be developed in future using option 1 when the infrastructure is planned and/or in place.

Restrict overdevelopment in rural and village communities to protect the character of village life.

Spatial Themes

Q8. Are there any key spatial themes that you feel we have missed or that require greater emphasis?

We are concerned about the fact that access was denied to the topic papers, and wholeheartedly believe that the existing lifestyle of the area should be protected from overdevelopment.

Q9. Do you agree we should take a sequential approach to flood risk and coastal change in our plan, locating development away from areas at risk of flooding and coastal change wherever possible? How can we best protect current and future communities from flood risk and coastal change?

We agree that it is imperative that both flood risk and coastal change should be central to any development plans going forward; for us in Hullbridge, many of the proposed sites to the west of the existing settlement are projected to be deep within flooding territory by 2050, as are numerous ones in the east as well. With 2050 now less than three decades away, and no sign of any imminent alteration in the path of climate change, development in any of the areas identified to be in potential flood plains today and in the near future must not be considered.

Q10. Do you agree that the Coastal Protection Belt and Upper Roach Valley should be protected from development that would be harmful to their landscape character? Are there other areas that you feel should be protected for their special landscape character?

The main concern that we have about the Coastal Protection Belt is that it only extends up until 2025 – other areas would need to be included past this date because, as we have mentioned previously, the flood plains across the Rochford district will be vastly different by 2050. It is our view that any and all housing developments proposed in flood plains, current and near future, must not be approved and those that are approved should be given the assurance of protection from flooding over the coming decades. Closer to home, we believe that the river front in Hullbridge should equally be protected for its special landscape character. We would also like to make it known we are very supportive and enthusiastic about the Central Woodlands Arc and the Island Wetland proposals.

Q11. Do you agree we should require development to source a percentage of their energy from low-carbon and renewable sources? Are there other opportunities in the District to supply low-carbon or renewable energy?

Providing that the development is affordable and deliverable, and the cost is not lumped onto the buyer for many years to come then this is the right decision as the future rests in renewable energy. Suggestions from councillors regarding other opportunities to supply renewable energy ranged from a solar farm in a place that will not impact its surroundings to solar panels and/or wind turbines on Foulness Island.

Q12. Do you agree we should require new development to achieve energy efficiency standards higher than building regulations? What level should these be set at?

Again, this is something that is a fantastic plan providing the brunt of the cost is not rested on the shoulders of the buyer and that these homes are affordable.

Q13. How do you feel the plan can help to support the local generation of low-carbon and renewable energy? Are there locations where you feel energy generation should be supported?

The installation of wind and solar power generators, in locations such as Foulness, would certainly assist in supporting the local generation of low-carbon and renewable energy which is a necessity in the modern day.

Q14. Do you consider that the plan should include a place-making charter that informs relevant policies? Should the same principles apply everywhere in the District, or should different principles apply to different areas?

Yes, these should be settlement specific, to allow for the maintenance of the integrity and specific characteristics of each area, sufficiently detailed to avoid confusion, and widely distributed.

Q15. Are the principles set out in the draft place-making charter the right ones? Are there other principles that should be included?

Yes, provided individual settlements are consulted and these are adhered to.

Q16a. Do you consider that new design guides, codes or masterplans should be created alongside the new Local Plan?

Yes, providing that each individual settlement is at the heart of it and considered as their own entities with their own individual characteristics. It is imperative that certain areas are protected completely, and that any future developers are aware of the identified characteristics of each area.

Q16b. If yes, do you think it is more appropriate to have a single design guide/code for the whole District, or to have design guides/codes/masterplans for individual settlements or growth areas?

Design guides should be area specific under one singular guide which is inclusive to the whole district – providing it remains flexible to local conditions.

Q16c. What do you think should be included in design guides/codes/masterplans at the scale you are suggesting?

As long as the character and aesthetic are maintained concurrently with necessary growth, nothing else needs to be included.

Housing for All

Q17. With reference to the options listed above, or your own options, how do you feel we can best plan to meet our need for different types, sizes and tenures of housing?

Meet the need for different types, sizes and tenures of housing (including Affordable, Social, Council and Specialist Housing) by requiring a standard non-negotiable mix of housing to be provided on all housing developments.

New homes should meet the standards set out in Parts M4(2) or M4(3) of Building Regulations.

Q18. With reference to your preferred Strategy Option, are there areas or sites in Rochford that you feel require a specific approach to housing types, size and tenure? What is required to meet housing needs in these areas?

There is too much focus currently across the district on the provision of 4/5 bedroom properties. This focus needs to shift towards 2/3 bedroom properties which would benefit more local residents/families in search of their first home. "Affordable" homes should not only be flats/apartments but other property types also.

1/2 bed bungalows (or similar) should be a priority, as with an ageing population, there will be increasing demand for such properties when elderly residents are looking to downsize. RDC should actively discourage bungalows being converted into larger properties. Additional provision for residential care is also a priority.

These can all be accommodated within Strategy Option 3a.

Q19. Are there any other forms of housing that you feel we should be planning for? How can we best plan to meet the need for that form of housing?

Affordable homes and social housing to enable single persons or families buy or rent their own home. Specialist homes for the disabled.

Smaller dedicated properties for the older generation, to enable them to downsize from larger properties, thereby freeing-up larger properties for younger families.

Q20. With reference to the options listed, or your own options, what do you think is the most appropriate way of meeting our permanent Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs?

The failure to provide traveller sites has led to many unauthorised sites within the green belt being granted planning permission on appeal. With Michelin Farm no longer being an option, RDC needs to identify an alternative appropriate site(s) either from within its ownership or purchased specifically for the purpose. This site(s) should be located so that it (they) does not cause difficulties with established communities; fly-tipping and the impact on nearby residents being just one example. Perhaps, particular consideration of a contained site(s) within the Green Belt, so as to obviate the likelihood of unplanned, piecemeal and unauthorised sites fragmenting the green belt.

Consideration also needs to be given to the fact that there are different groups within the Traveller communities who do not want to be placed together and perhaps ways can be found to integrate these into everyday life and housing.

Q21. With reference to the options listed, or your own options, what do you think is the most appropriate way of meeting our temporary Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs?

Some Traveller Groups tend to make their own arrangements to use owned land on a temporary basis. RDC needs to identify a site(s) either from within its ownership or purchased specifically for this purpose. It (they) would need to be sufficiently away from residences that they would not be disturbed or troubled by vehicles/caravans arriving or leaving. Perhaps a pre-payment/booking system could be introduced for this purpose and at the same time, reducing the likelihood of over-crowding.

Q22. What do you consider would need to be included in a criteria-based policy for assessing potential locations for new Gypsy and Traveller sites?

Locate sites close to main roads to enable easy access for large vehicles, so that residential roads are not congested and nearby residents are not disturbed. Allow a little room for expansion and limit the likelihood encroachment onto neighbouring land.

Locate away from spaces of national, regional, local or community interest or recreation, so as not to spoil the visual amenity of the landscape.

The sites should not be closed and available to the whole Traveller community.

Employment and Jobs

Q23. With reference to the options listed above, or your own options, how do you feel we can best ensure that we meet our employment and skills needs through the plan?

In addition to employment option 11 which states: Working with neighbouring authorities to identify land for higher or further education facilities where this would address current and future skills shortages, information should be collected and made available on where there are shortages or opportunities coming up. Offer advice to adults wishing to or needing to reskill. Provide local affordable adult education courses on the skills needed. Work with employers, education centres and Essex County Council.

With reference to employment option 4 that states: Meeting future needs by prioritising the delivery of new employment space alongside any new strategic housing developments. This should apply to the larger scale developments described in spatial strategy option 3. Employment option 4 goes on to specify live work units as an option. This would help with increasing numbers of people working from home. Also start up business centres and co-working spaces would be useful and there are many self-employed people and small businesses in this area. A sympathetic attitude is required towards people running a business from home provided that the impact on the surrounding area is minimal.

In all of this we need to be mindful of paragraph 83 of the NPPF which requires policies and decisions to accommodate local business needs in a way which is sensitive to the surroundings and prioritises the reuse of existing sites and buildings.

Q24. With reference to Figure 30, do you consider the current employment site allocations to provide enough space to meet the District's employment needs through to 2040? Should we seek to formally protect any informal employment sites for commercial uses, including those in the green belt?

Consider any brownfield site for employment use these are currently mainly getting used for housing. There needs to be employment opportunities even in the smaller settlements if we are going to be greener and cut down on transport use. Employment option 6 states: Meeting future needs by prioritising the regularisation of informal employment sites such as those shown on figure 30. This would make employment accessible to people living in the rural communities especially if other farms able to do this could also be identified. Most of the sites are in the western half of the district it would be useful to identify a few more sites in the east to make this a policy that serves the whole district.

Any use that is not heavily disruptive to the surrounding area should be permitted. Planning officers should be able to permit reasonable adjustments requested by residents to make extensions and adaptations to their homes to accommodate working from home or running a business from home.

Q25. With reference to your preferred Strategy Option, are there opportunities for growth to deliver new employment facilities or improvements to existing employment facilities?

Our preferred spatial strategy option is 3a. Concentrated growth is required to bring the necessary infrastructure to make business and employment growth viable. There needs to be links to main roads to accommodate the commercial traffic required to service industry. Improvements to public transport to employment sites are needed.

Employment option 4 which states: Meeting future needs by prioritising the delivery of new employment space alongside any new strategic housing developments, could be delivered by strategy 3a.

Employment Strategy 6, which meets future needs by prioritising the regularisation of informal employment sites, would help deliver more businesses and employment. Employment option 3 refers to Saxon Business Park, Michelin Farm and Star Lane; we should continue to expand and improve these sites, however this needs to be done in conjunction with other options not as a stand-alone policy. These two strategies are needed and can be included in any of the spatial options.

Q26. Are there any particular types of employment site or business accommodation that you consider Rochford District is lacking, or would benefit from?

Sites set aside for education and health uses in addition to the services they provide, they also provide good employment opportunities. Foulness would be ideal for green industries.

Q27. Are there other measures we can take through the plan to lay the foundations for long-term economic growth, e.g. skills or connectivity?

Provide appropriate schools and colleges to serve the increase in population due to high development, but locate with public transport links and accessibility by walking or cycling in mind. Also work with neighbouring authorities to identify land for higher or further education facilities where this would address current and future skills shortages as stated in employment option 11.

Work with bus companies and Essex County Council to make our existing employment sites as accessible as possible. Improve footpaths and cycle tracks using government funding applied for by Rochford District Council. Move away from planning employment sites in places that are designed to be accessed by car use. Some employment is going to have to be close to settlements. This of course would have to be taken into account paragraph 83 of the NPPF which requires policies and decisions to accommodate local business needs in a way which is sensitive to the surroundings and prioritises the reuse of existing sites and buildings.

Q28. With reference to the options listed above, or your own options, how do you feel we can best manage the Airport's adaptations and growth through the planning system?

Protect the airport and encourage airport linked transport adjacent or close to the airport eg, existing airport industrial park and Saxon Business Park. Both airport growth and industry will promote jobs.

The transport system both road network and public transport needs to be improved to make these growing opportunities accessible for all.

Biodiversity

Q29. Do you agree that the plan should designate and protect areas of land of locally important wildlife value as a local wildlife site, having regard to the Local Wildlife Sites review? Are there any other sites that you feel are worthy of protection?

YES

While Hockley Woods does not seem to be mentioned here, we would have thought this ancient woodland (and similar woodland), and its important wildlife habitat should be included as it provides for a number of rare species including lesser spotted woodpeckers and hawfinches.

The lower Crouch Valley, the River Crouch and its banks are important habitats for fauna including birds that are on the endangered species red list. This includes curlews, whimbrels, and other wading birds. The pasture land flanking the Crouch towards Battlesbridge is an important habitat for skylarks and other species; these areas should be protected.

Restrict development in all other green belt areas, in order to protect nature. Alongside this, provide protection for nature reserves, parkland and areas fronting rivers.

Q30. Do you agree that the plan should designate and protect areas of land of locally important geological value as a local geological site, having regard to the Local Wildlife Sites review? Are there any other sites that you feel are worthy of protection?

Yes, as we have already stated, many areas provide habitats for endangered or rare wildlife and therefore are more than worthy of protection.

**Q31. Do you consider net gains for biodiversity are best delivered on-site or off-site?
Are there specific locations or projects where net gain projects could be delivered?**

Onsite reduced developments in general will assist moving new developments to high unemployment areas.
We agree with the central woodlands arc and island wetlands proposals.

Green and Blue Infrastructure

Q32. With reference to the options above, or your own options, how do you feel we can best deliver a quality green and blue infrastructure network through the plan?

More investment is required in many areas of infrastructure, from roads to general services. It would be beneficial to green ideals to restrict or ban development in or near green belt sites and to keep development in the rural areas to a minimum.

Q33. With reference to the options above, or your own options, how do you feel we can best deliver a quality green and blue infrastructure network through the plan?

By lobbying central government to allow revision of RDC plans to support a quality green and blue infrastructure; additionally, Parish Councils could maintain coastal paths with funds from Section 106 agreements.

Q34. With reference to your preferred Strategy Option, are there opportunities for growth to help deliver new strategic green and blue infrastructure?

Concentrate on brownfield and town sites in order to protect rural communities and the green belt – as previously alluded, options 3 or 4 mean less development in rural areas and are therefore more accommodating to the needs of smaller rural areas like Hullbridge, hence our choice of option 3a.

Community Infrastructure

Q35. With reference to the options above, or your own options, how can we address the need for sufficient and accessible community infrastructure through the plan?

Build property where there is existing infrastructure or where infrastructure can be expanded without encroaching on green belt etc.
A survey needs to be carried out on local roads to determine what is needed to be upgraded to achieve any sustainable way for traffic, both domestic and that which uses these as through roads.
With reference to Hullbridge much of it is unadopted roads and cannot support any development, let alone be able to accommodate the use of these roads as through roads for both building access and ultimate through road access to any development.

Provide schools for development areas and provide transport links to these schools. Local schools, both primary and secondary, are already struggling with the increase in pupil numbers coupled with limited capacity.

Q36. With reference to your preferred Strategy Option, are there opportunities for growth to deliver new or improved community infrastructure?

Funds were given via section 106 to expand Hullbridge Healthcare Centre and provide more school places - neither of these has happened. This section 106 money was instead given to RDC in respect of the existing Malyons Farm development. More development would make the situation untenable, particularly if further section 106 monies were withheld by RDC and not allocated to benefitting the local community where new developments are built.

Q37. Are there areas in the District that you feel have particularly severe capacity or access issues relating to community infrastructure, including schools, healthcare facilities or community facilities? How can we best address these?

Even with section 106 grants, if made available, healthcare facilities in Hullbridge are severely restricted, especially since the pandemic due to doctor shortage. Further development in Hullbridge would worsen healthcare provision and, even with section 106 grants if released by RDC, will not improve the situation.

Whilst this is outside the control of RDC, developments would cause serious issues particularly as Hullbridge traditionally has an ageing population - one which is obviously more reliant on healthcare, alongside the inevitability of new patients from current and any new developments.

There are currently inadequate or no existent bus and footpath links to areas east of Hullbridge, such as the Dome Area. Any development to the east of Hullbridge would have transport difficulty and also the impact on Lower Road would be unacceptable; this would be the case even bus links were improved.

The same approach needs to be taken with schools and highways and new residents could be short changed without easy access to schools, healthcare and employment.

Open Spaces and Recreation

Q38. With reference to the options above, or your own options, how do you feel we can best meet our open space and sport facility needs through the plan?

With reference to open spaces and recreation option 5, we should improve and maintain what we already have, using section 106 money for improvements. We should ensure that any section 106 money does get spent how and where it was intended. No section 106 money should end up being unused.

We should improve bus links to existing facilities in the district, for example Clements Hall where buses used to run in the past (at least in the school holiday periods). There should be an aim to provide permanent all year-round bus services to our main leisure sites.

The Hockley 'Park Run' is very popular. Should the proposed Central Woodlands Arc come into being it would be ideal for a park run. Orienteering could be an interesting additional activity; local scouting groups, and schooling groups too, would certainly benefit from this.

Q39. Are the potential locations for 3G pitch investment the right ones? Are there other locations that we should be considering?

We should ensure that any proposal for a 3G pitch has the backing of local residents. For reference, in 2016 a 3G pitch was applied for planning permission by The Fitzwimarc School but turned down by Rochford District Council due the objections of local residents.

Q40. Are the listed potential hub sites and key centres the right ones? Are there other locations that we should be considering?

Primary Schools should also be considered along with any site that could host a hockey or a 5 a side pitch.

Q41. With reference to your preferred Strategy Option, are there opportunities for growth to help deliver improvements to open space or sport facility accessibility or provision?

Our preferred spatial strategy option is 3a. The section 106 money that comes with the larger developments has more chance of providing good sustainable new facilities.
A bus service needs to be run to facilities like Clements Hall, at least during half term and school holidays, to enable young people to access it from areas where it is currently difficult to access by public transport; this has been done in the past to access sports and in particularly swimming facilities which are not available in Hullbridge or Rawreth.
Swimming facilities were excluded from the Rawreth Lane sport facility.

Q42. Are there particular open spaces that we should be protecting or improving?

Hullbridge Recreation Ground. Our nature reserves, parks and woodlands to promote walking and other appropriate exercising activities.

Heritage

Q43. With reference to the options listed in this section, or your own options, how do you feel we can best address heritage issues through the plan?

Protect village and rural areas from over or inappropriate development through careful planning considerations.

Compose a list of sites with local consultation. Then look maintain them with local residents and organisations.

Q44. Are there areas of the District we should be considering for conservation area status beyond those listed in this section?

Villages fronting riversides: Hullbridge, Paglesham, Canewdon, South Fambridge.

Q45. Are there any buildings, spaces or structures that should be protected for their historic, cultural or architectural significance? Should these be considered for inclusion on the Local List of non-designated assets?

As with protected sites a consultation needs to be done for each locality. With reference to Hullbridge, in addition to the old school, Shell Cottage and River Cottage are already listed. We would add the school house next to the school, Brick Cottages, Tap's Cottage and the Anchor Cottages if they are not already listed buildings.

Town Centres and Retail

Q46. With reference to the options listed above, or your own options, how do you think we can best plan for vibrant town centres in Rochford, Rayleigh and Hockley? How can we also ensure our village and neighbourhood centres remain vibrant? [Please state]

Market forces are moving purchases online so town centres need to be more accessible and convenient to encourage day shopping, and also increase night time business where appropriate to take up capacity lost from retail.

Improve transport links to town shopping and amenities. There is no transport link from the Dome that would take their residents into nearby Hockley for example. There are no easy transport links from Hullbridge to Hockley or Rochford.

Q47. Do you agree with the local centre hierarchy set out in Figure 36? If not, what changes would you make? [Please state reasoning]

Protecting businesses generally will not work as commercially if they are not profitable, they will close and we will have empty shops. Rochford District Council needs to encourage business with free parking and reduced business rates.

Businesses should be encouraged to work together with a co-operative nature, or a number of shops all open a little later one night of the week to make it worth shoppers coming out in the early evening. Local eateries could offer special deals on those nights.

Community events that encourage shops and businesses to join in – fairs, celebrations, etc.

Q48. With reference to Figures 38, 39 and 40, do you agree with existing town centre boundaries and extent of primary and secondary shopping frontages in Rayleigh, Rochford and Hockley? If not, what changes would you make? [Please state reasoning]

Keep streets clean and tidy, and repair and repaint street furniture regularly. Conserve the character of the town centres by avoiding high rise development and buildings that are at odds with the street scene.

Q49. Should we continue to restrict appropriate uses within town centres, including primary and secondary shopping frontages within those centres? If yes, what uses should be restricted? [Please state reasoning]

Some existing ok but links to, e.g., Clements Hall from Hullbridge non-existent.

Businesses cannot be forced into staying unless benefits outlined in Q47 are adhered to which may encourage some business opportunities and current business to remain.

Q50. With reference to your preferred Strategy Option, are there opportunities for growth to deliver improved retail and leisure services in the District? [Please state reasoning]

Spatial strategy 3a will give the most opportunity to expand retail both in terms of including retail space and bringing customers into the town centres nearest to the new developments. The document mentions a cinema. The best site for this would be Saxon Business Park. A bowling alley would work well with this alongside some eateries.

Transport and Connectivity

Q51. With reference to the options above, or your own options, how do you feel we can best address our transport and connectivity needs through the plan?

Certainly, prepare an Infrastructure Delivery Plan that would deliver meaningful improvement to transport networks, including but not exclusively, cycle routes, walking pathways, public transport and roads. However, all these modes are currently completely stretched; modernisation and improvements to all need to happen before future housing developments are built. It should be noted that following the last developments in the Core Strategy, as far as Hullbridge is concerned (and almost certainly elsewhere also), the promised improvements have either not materialised, been completed or proven to be inadequate.

The plan needs to deliver improvements to public transport by working with bus companies to re-establish bus routes to isolated communities that have been either been terminated or severely curtailed. For example, 'The Dome' has a bus service twice a week. Residents regularly complain that they are isolated from everywhere else. It is also claimed that Hullbridge has its own bus service that runs 4 - 7 times a day. This is not the experience of Hullbridge residents and it only needs the slightest issue along Hullbridge Road for the service to either be even further curtailed or suspended entirely. RDC need to continue to work with Government, Highways England, Essex CC etc to deliver meaningful road improvements to both the main road arteries and to the local road network. However, any large-

scale bypass scheme such as the "Southend Outer Bypass" scheme needs to be opposed. Not only would it cut directly through the Green Belt but it would increase development along its course, which in turn would have enormous negative impact on the Green Belt itself, natural habitats and the environment generally.

Q52. Are there areas where improvements to transport connections are needed?

Whilst some improvements are shortly to commence at the Fairglen Interchange and A130, further improvements are needed to the Junction of Rawreth Lane and the A1245. Perhaps also the A127 could be widened along its length from four lanes to six lanes.

Additionally, the bus service between Hullbridge and Rayleigh can be cut with the slightest issue along Hullbridge Road and this needs to be addressed urgently. When this happens it consequently results in more vehicles using Hullbridge road, which in turn exacerbates traffic congestion and leads to other problems such as pollution.

A bus service between Rochford and Rayleigh via Hullbridge and Hockley and Rayleigh via Hullbridge would serve to reduce traffic congestion along Lower Road, especially at "rush" hours. This would benefit residents of the Dome as well as properties along the length of Lower Road. It would also serve to provide access for Hullbridge students to access the Greensward Academy that does not exist currently.

Q53. With reference to your preferred Strategy Option, are there opportunities for growth to deliver new transport connections, such as link roads or rapid transit? What routes and modes should these take? [walking, cycling, rail, bus, road etc.]

Improvements to existing road networks. Large scale bypass schemes, such as the "Southend Outer" bypass would be unacceptable because of the hugely detrimental impact on the Green Belt and its physical and natural environment.

Small low top busses to link smaller communities with larger ones. Trams not a viable option for the more rural areas as roads are too narrow and winding; additionally, would increase congestion on existing roads.

Improvements to the cycle path network, extending and linking the network as and where appropriate and safe.

Green Belt and Rural Issues

Q54. Do you feel that the plan should identify rural exception sites? If so, where should these be located and what forms of housing or employment do you feel need to be provided?

Yes, but not within the Green Belt and Rural and Village life must be safeguarded.

Any such sites must be small scale and have developments that prioritise genuinely "Affordable" homes and/or Social Housing that would benefit local residents/families most.

Q55. Are there any other ways that you feel the plan should be planning for the needs of rural communities?

Support changes that would require developers of 10 units or less to pay something akin to s.106/CIL monies, that would go towards infrastructure improvements, particularly those affecting rural communities.

Planning for Complete Communities

Q56a. Do you agree with our vision for Rayleigh? Is there anything you feel is missing?

N/A

Q56c. Are there areas in Rayleigh that development should generally be presumed appropriate?

N/A

Q56d. Are there areas that require protecting from development?

N/A

Q56e. Do you agree that the local green spaces shown on Figure 44 hold local significance? Are there any other open spaces that hold particular local significance?

N/A

Q57a. Do you agree with our vision for Rochford and Ashingdon?

N/A

Q57b. With reference to Figure 45 and your preferred Strategy Option, do you think any of the land edged blue should be made available for any of the following uses?

N/A

Q57c. Are there areas in Rochford and Ashingdon that development should generally be presumed appropriate?

N/A

Q57d. Are there areas that require protecting from development?

N/A

Q57e. Do you agree that the local green spaces shown on Figure 45 hold local significance?

N/A

Q58a. Do you agree with our vision for Hockley and Hawkwell?

N/A

Q58b. With reference to Figure 46 and your preferred Strategy Option, do you think any of the land edged blue should be made available for any of the following uses?

N/A

Q58c. Are there areas in Hockley and Hawkwell that development should generally be presumed appropriate?

N/A

Q58d. Are there areas that require protecting from development?

N/A

Q57e. Do you agree that the local green spaces shown on Figure 46 hold local significance? Are there any other open spaces that hold particular local significance?

N/A

Q59a. Do you agree with our vision for the Wakerings and Barling? Is there anything you feel is missing? [Please state reasoning]

N/A

Q59b. With reference to Figure 47 and your preferred Strategy Option, do you think any of the land edged blue should be made available for any of the following uses?

N/A

Q59c. Are there areas in the Wakerings and Barling that development should generally be presumed appropriate? Why these areas? [Please state reasoning]

N/A

Q59d. Are there areas that require protecting from development? Why these areas? [Please state reasoning]

N/A

Q59e. Do you agree that the local green spaces shown on Figure 47 hold local significance? Are there any other open spaces that hold particular local significance? [Please state reasoning]

N/A

Q60a. Do you agree with our vision for Hullbridge?

We do not agree with the wording or the aims of the provided vision statement for Hullbridge and have instead drafted our own (see below). We were sceptical about the suggestion that the river could be used for transport without consideration on the viability or environmental impact of this proposal.

Hullbridge will have expanded on its already self-reliant nature, boasting impressive local businesses and amenities – providing a perfect space for those who wish to enjoy their retirement as well as those with young families. Through small, localised and respectable developments, the thriving community and riverside aesthetic of the village remains as strong as ever; all of this has been achieved through the transparency and openness of different local authorities, residents, businesses and developers on any and all developments going forward.

Q60b. With reference to Figure 48 and your preferred Strategy Option, do you think any of the land edged blue should be made available for any of the following uses?

The biggest issue with further development in Hullbridge is the distinct lack of infrastructure – whether that be roads, schools, transport and other general services – and so, without even mentioning the fact that many sites lay within the projected 2050 flood plains, the suggestion that further development can take place on any considerable scale is untenable. Any consideration of commercial or community infrastructure, such as youth services, care facilities, or local businesses would equally need to be subject to the same discussion and scrutiny.

Q60c. With reference to Figure 48 and your preferred Strategy Option, do you think any of the land edged blue should be made available for any of the following uses?

All of the areas lie within the green belt, and many will be within the projected 2050 flood plains, and so general appropriateness is not met with any; numerous promoted sites are outside walking distance of the majority of services and as such would increase residents using vehicles and increase reliance on our already stretched local infrastructure.

Q60d. Are there areas in Hullbridge that development should generally be presumed appropriate?

Significant portions of Hullbridge remain vital for local wildlife, its habitats, and the natural environment. As such, any and all developments along the River Crouch, the surrounding areas of Kendal Park and those that lie north of Lower Road should be protected from development.

Q60e. Do you agree that the local green spaces shown on Figure 48 hold local significance? Are there areas that require protecting from development?

Yes, all of those identified as such in Figure 48 are definitely areas of local significance and are correct to be identified as such. Other areas that should be outlined include the Rose Garden, the banks of the River Crouch and the upcoming green space and Memorial Gardens provided as part of the recent Malyons Farm development.

Q61a. Do you agree with our vision for Canewdon? Is there anything you feel is missing? [Please state reasoning]

N/A

Q61b. With reference to Figure 49 and your preferred Strategy Option, do you think any of the land edged blue should be made available for any of the following uses? How could that improve the completeness of Canewdon?

N/A

Q61c. Are there areas in Canewdon that development should generally be presumed appropriate? Why these areas? [Please state reasoning]

N/A

Q61d. Are there areas that require protecting from development? Why these areas? [Please state reasoning]

N/A

Q61e. Do you agree that the local green spaces shown on Figure 49 hold local significance? Are there any other open spaces that hold particular local significance? [Please state reasoning]

N/A

Q62a. Do you agree with our vision for Great Stambridge? Is there anything you feel is missing? [Please state reasoning]

N/A

Q62b. With reference to Figure 50 and your preferred Strategy Option, do you think any of the land edged blue should be made available for any of the following uses? How could that improve the completeness of Great Stambridge?

N/A

Q62c. Are there areas in Great Stambridge that development should generally be presumed appropriate? Why these areas? [Please state reasoning]

N/A

Q62d. Do you agree that the local green spaces shown on Figure 50 hold local significance? Are there any other open spaces that hold particular local significance? [Please state reasoning]

N/A

Q63a. Do you agree with our vision for Rawreth? Is there anything you feel is missing? [Please state reasoning]

N/A

Q63b. With reference to Figure 51 and your preferred Strategy Option, do you think any of the land edged blue should be made available for any of the following uses?

N/A

Q63c. Are there areas in Rawreth that development should generally be presumed appropriate? Why these areas? [Please state reasoning]

N/A

Q63d. Are there areas that require protecting from development? Why these areas? [Please state reasoning]

N/A

Q63e. Do you agree that the local green spaces shown on Figure 51 hold local significance? Are there any other open spaces that hold particular local significance? [Please state reasoning]

N/A

Q64a. Do you agree with our vision for Paglesham? Is there anything you feel is missing? [Please state reasoning]

N/A

Q64b. With reference to Figure 52 and your preferred Strategy Option, do you think any of the land edged blue should be made available for any of the following uses?

N/A

Q64c. Are there areas in Paglesham that development should generally be presumed appropriate? Why these areas? [Please state reasoning]

N/A

Q64d. Are there areas that require protecting from development? Why these areas? [Please state reasoning]

N/A

Q65a. Do you agree with our vision for Sutton and Stonebridge? Is there anything you feel is missing? [Please state reasoning]

N/A

Q65b. With reference to Figure 53 and your preferred Strategy Option, do you think any of the land edged blue should be made available for any of the following uses?

N/A

Q65c. Are there areas in Sutton and Stonebridge that development should generally be presumed appropriate? Why these areas? [Please state reasoning]

N/A

Q65d. Are there areas that require protecting from development? Why these areas? [Please state reasoning]

N/A

Q65e. Do you agree that the local green spaces shown on Figure 53 hold local significance? Are there any other open spaces that hold particular local significance? [Please state reasoning]

N/A

Q66. Do you agree that our rural communities do not require individual vision statements? Are there communities that you feel should have their own vision? [Please state reasoning]

No - All communities should have their own individual, locally-determined vision statements, especially the more rural ones. Each settlement has its own distinct character and the vision statement would serve to aid the planning process in safeguarding their individual character.

Q67. Do you agree with our vision for our rural communities? Is there anything you feel is missing? [Please state reasoning]

Yes in the broadest terms. We would want it to re-iterate that the individual character and seeming uniqueness of our rural communities needs to be, and will be, safeguarded. By extension, we would like to see more activity in this regard from all tiers of Government.

Q68. Are there other courses of action the Council could take to improve the completeness of our rural communities?

Respect the green belt that surrounds our rural communities and our higher tier settlements; thereby ensuring a buffer ("defensible boundary") that would actively prevent communities merging into one conglomeration.

Create a Country Park to the west of Hullbridge.

Improve village roads, transport, educational and utility infrastructure. All of which are already in desperate need of improvement and renovation. For example, it is questionable whether the sewerage system in Hullbridge could cope with any further development without expansion and upgrading.