

21 February 2018

Planning and Licensing Committee

Response to the Rochford New Local Plan Issues and Options Document

Report of: *Phil Drane – Planning Policy Team Leader*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks approval on a formal response from Brentwood Borough Council to the Rochford New Local Plan Issues and Options consultation document (Regulation 18).
- 1.2 The proposed response conveys broad support of Rochford District Council's aims in preparing a new local plan. The Rochford Plan is currently at the early stages of the plan-making process with little specific details provided on the strategic approach for the area.
- 1.3 Brentwood Borough Council has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding for joint working with other South Essex local authorities, including Rochford District Council. The Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) meet regularly on a number of workstreams including strategic planning and cross-boundary issues.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 To approve the response to Rochford District Council's New Local Plan Issues and Options document (December 2017), as set out in Appendix A.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 Rochford District Council is currently working towards replacing their existing Core Strategy with a new Local Plan, subject to the plan period of 2017-2037. An Issues and Options consultation document has been produced as part of the plan-making process and is available for public

consultation between Wednesday 13 December 2017 and Wednesday 7 March 2018.

- 3.2 The document does not set out specific proposals about how Rochford District Council will progress strategic planning in the area, but rather outlines possible options for planning appropriately on a number of matters, such as, but not limited to, meeting housing needs; infrastructure provision; and protecting the environment.
- 3.3 Brentwood Borough Council is duty bound to undergo the duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities on preparation of their local plans. Rochford District is not a neighbouring authority but is within the neighbouring South Essex housing market area as well as being part of cross-boundary joint working that both authorities are signatories to. Considering this the proposed response is limited to high level comments regarding strategic planning issues shared by Rochford District and Brentwood Borough.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires each local planning authority to produce a local plan. This should set out strategic priorities for the area and plan positively for development and infrastructure needs, in line with national policy and guidance.
- 4.2 Local Plans should include strategic policies to deliver:
- a) Homes and employment needed in the area;
 - b) Provision of retail, leisure, and other commercial development;
 - c) Provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, water supply, waste water, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
 - d) Provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and
 - e) Climate change mitigation and adaption, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.
- 4.3 Rochford District Council is at the beginning stages of developing their local plan. The Issues and Options document outlines key strategic planning topics and identifies possible approaches for developing a local plan.

- 4.4 The majority of the issues and options identified in the document do not have a direct impact on Brentwood Borough. Therefore, the proposed response is limited to addressing the need for both councils to continue to engage through the duty to cooperate and address the need for Rochford District to meet local housing needs.
- 4.5 Rochford District Council forms part of the South Essex housing market area, along with, Southend-on-Sea, Castle Point, Basildon, and Thurrock. According to the South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Addendum 2017, Rochford's objectively assessed housing need is between 331-361 homes per annum, equating to 6,620-7,220 homes over the plan period (2017-2037). The Rochford Issues and Options document proposes to develop a plan which meets a target of 362 new homes per annum. However, this is to be dependent on the consultation responses received.
- 4.6 The South Essex SHMA Addendum 2017 identifies a need for 50 special private homes for older people over the period 2014 to 2037. The Rochford Issues and Options document identifies that the number of residents applying for traditional forms of sheltered accommodation is decreasing, therefore it may be sufficient to refurbish existing units rather than requiring such new homes. An additional 62 units per annum from 2014 to 2037 (1,421 units in total) were identified for those individuals with disabilities.
- 4.7 Due to the Government's proposed standardised methodology in calculating objectively assessed housing need, there is still uncertainty as to what the actual housing figures will be until the next stages of the Rochford plan-making process are published later this year. The consultation document states that local authorities have a legal requirement to work with neighbouring authorities, both inside and outside their housing market area. The proposed Brentwood response sets out that Brentwood Borough Council has a lack of brownfield land to meet local housing and employment needs, having to resort to proposed allocation of land in the Green Belt to meet local development needs fully. Therefore, Brentwood Borough is unlikely to be in a position to take any of Rochford District's unmet development needs if these are not fully provided locally.
- 4.8 Brentwood Borough Council has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding for joint working with other South Essex local authorities, consisting of Rochford, Southend-on-Sea, Castle Point, Basildon, and Thurrock councils, as well as Essex County Council. The Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) meet regularly on a number of

workstreams and are working towards a shared vision for South Essex. The Memorandum of Understanding outlines the core purpose and aims of ASELA and the principles of collaboration. It is expected that a Statement of Common Ground will be developed and signed by group, which will include issues such as the need to address distribution of housing needs.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 Rochford District Council are at the early stages of the plan-making process. No policies or site allocations have been proposed as part of this consultation and so the proposed response focuses on high-level strategic issues.
- 5.2 It is considered appropriate that Brentwood Borough Council express broad support for Rochford District Council's efforts to develop a local plan in accordance with national policy and guidance, and the commitment to continued collaboration through the duty to cooperate on strategic planning matters that affect South Essex.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 The Rochford Issues and Options consultation is open for comments from Wednesday 13 December 2017 to Wednesday 7 March 2018. Local planning authorities have a statutory obligation to allow consultees a minimum of six weeks to respond as part of the plan-making process.

7. References to Corporate Plan

- 7.1 The Rochford District Local Plan will have a close relationship with the emerging Brentwood Local Development Plan and joint working within South Essex.

8. Implications

Financial Implications

Name/Title: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts, Financial Services Manager

Tel/Email: 01277 312829/jacqueline.vanmellaerts@brentwood.gov.uk

- 8.1 None directly arising from this report.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Surinder Atkar, Planning Solicitor

Tel & Email: 01277 312860 /surinder.atkar@brentwood.gov.uk

- 8.2 The Localism Act 2011 places a legal duty on local planning authorities and other defined local bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters. It is not a duty to agree, but local planning authorities must make every effort to secure the necessary cooperation before they submit their Local Plan for examination. The cooperation should produce effective and deliverable policies on strategic cross boundary issues.

9. Background Papers

- 9.1 Rochford New Local Plan Issues and Options Document, Rochford District Council (December 2017)

10. Appendices to this report

Appendix A - Response to Rochford New Local Plan Issues and Options Document

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: Phil Drane, Planning Policy Team Leader

Telephone: 01277 312610

E-mail: phil.drane@brentwood.gov.uk