

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for the Rochford District Local Plan

SA Scoping Report

Rochford District Council

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1. Introduction

AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in support of Rochford District Council's emerging new Local Plan (hereafter referred to as the 'Local Plan'). SA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key sustainability issues. The aim of SA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative impacts. Through this approach, the SA for the Local Plan seeks to maximise the developing plan's contribution to sustainable development.

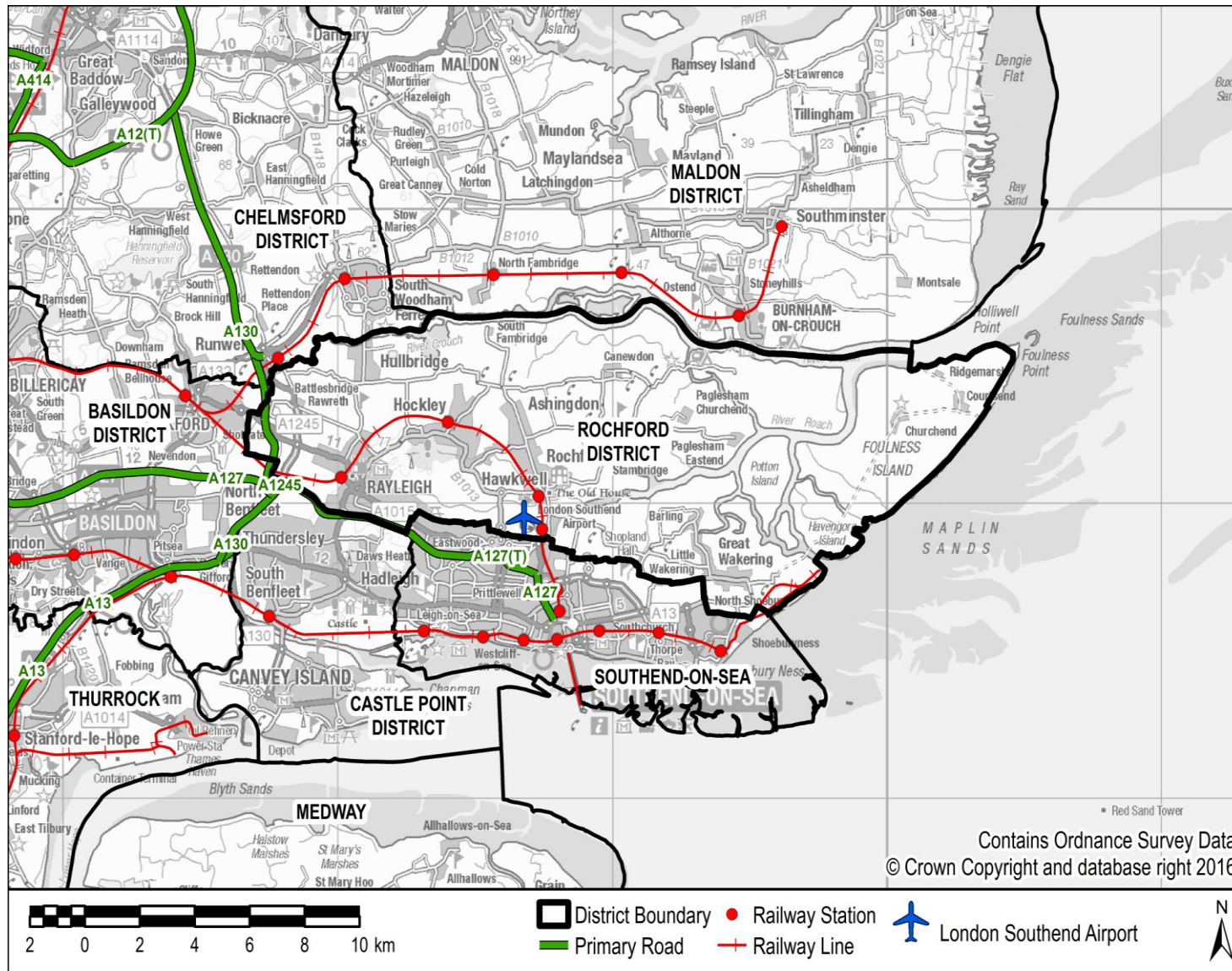
1.1 Rochford District's new Local Plan

The Council is in the process of undertaking an early review of its current Local Development Plan (LDP) in response to policy and guidance changes at the national and local level, which includes the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) and updated evidence (South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment). It will include strategic and detailed planning and development management policies, land allocations for housing, employment and mixed use and identify areas in the District for protection. Key information relating to the Local Plan is presented in **Table 1** below.

Table 1: Key facts relating to the Rochford District Local Plan

Title of Plan	Rochford District Local Plan
Subject	Spatial plan
Purpose	The Local Plan will set out the strategy for future growth within Rochford District up to 2036. The new Local Plan will replace a number of the adopted policy documents which form the local development plan for the District.
Timescale	Up to 2036
Area covered by the plan	Rochford District (Figure 1)
Summary of content	The Local Plan will set out the Council's strategic vision, policies and land allocations, where necessary, for meeting future needs (including housing, employment, community facilities, transport and other infrastructure needed to support development). It will also identify areas for protection, such as sites that are important for wildlife and open space.
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Figure 1: Rochford District



1.2 Sustainability Appraisal

SA is undertaken to address the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations) which transpose into national law the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive.¹ It also widens the scope of the assessment from focussing on environmental issues to further consider social and economic issues. SA is a legal requirement for Local Plans.

The National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) states that *“the role of the Sustainability Appraisal is to promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which the emerging plan, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives.”*

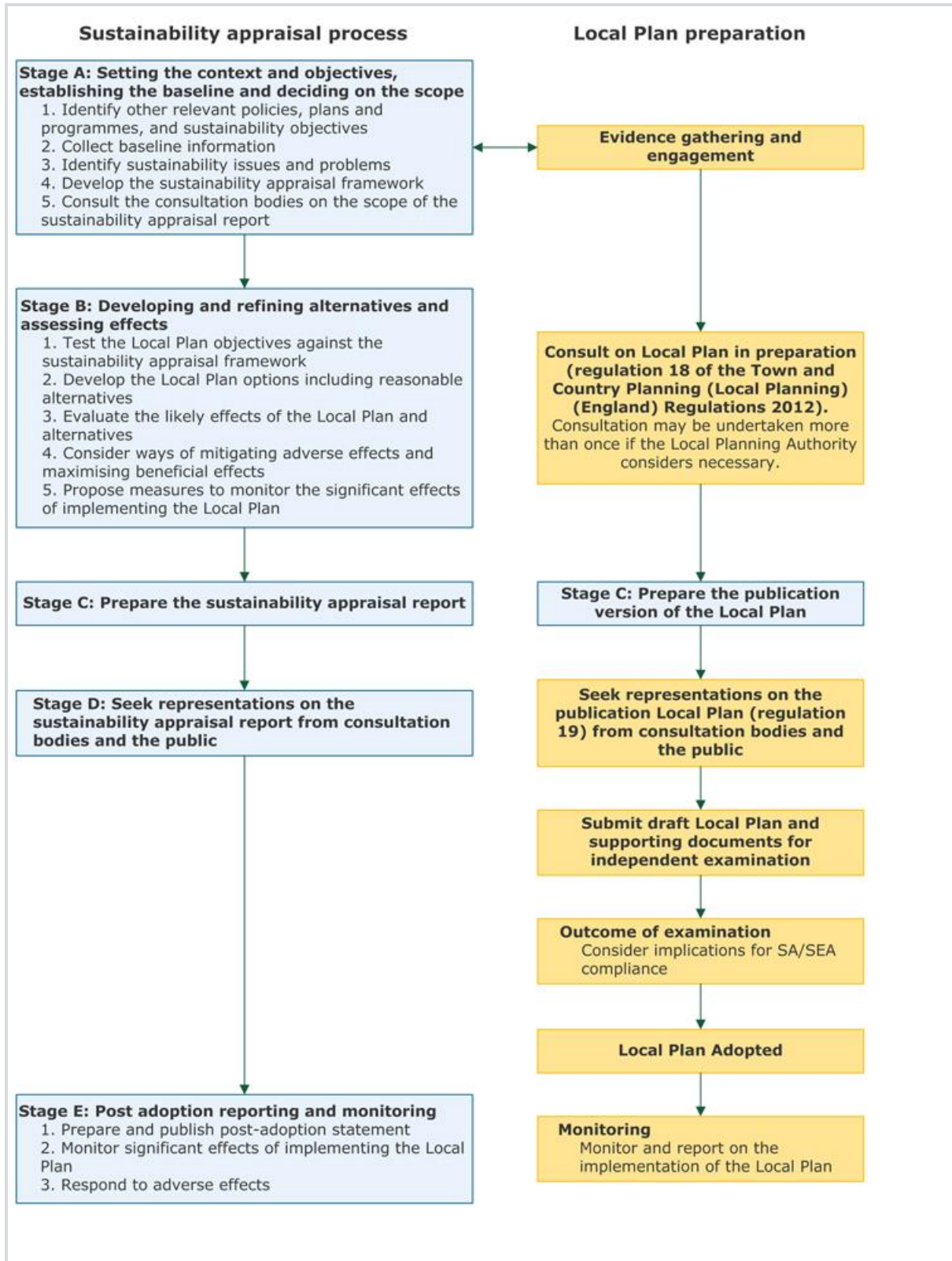
Two key procedural requirements of the SEA Directive are that:

1. When deciding on ‘the scope and level of detail of the information’ which must be included in the SA Report there is a consultation with nationally designated authorities concerned with environmental issues; and
2. A report (the ‘SA Report’) is published for consultation alongside the Draft Plan that presents an appraisal of the Draft Plan (i.e. discusses ‘likely significant effects’ that would result from plan implementation) and reasonable alternatives.

The key stages of Local Plan preparation and their relationship with the SA process are shown in **Figure 2** on the following page.

¹ Directive 2001/42/EC

Figure 2: SA and Local Plan Stages²



² National Planning Practice Guidance Ref ID: 11-013-20140306 [online] available at: http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal/sustainability-appraisal-requirements-for-local-plans/#paragraph_013 Accessed November 2016

This Scoping Report is concerned with Stage A in the figure above. Scoping is the first stage of the SA process in which the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the SA Report is identified. It sets out the context, objectives and approach of the assessment; and identifies relevant environmental, economic and social issues and objectives. The NPPG states that “a key aim of the scoping stage is to help ensure the SA process is proportionate and relevant to the Local Plan being assessed”. It also states more widely that the SA process “should only focus on what is needed to assess the likely significant effects.....It does not need to be done in any more detail, or using more resources, than is considered to be appropriate for the content and level of detail in the Local Plan”.

It presents a suggested scope for the SA so that the nationally designated authorities (which, in England, are Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England) can provide timely comment. A Draft Scoping Report was made available for public consultation for six weeks from 20th December 2016 to 31st January 2017. The representations received and how they have been taken into account are presented in **Appendix I** of this report.

1.3 Approach to scoping

Developing the scope has involved the following steps:

1. Exploring the policy context for the SA, i.e. reviewing high level messages (e.g. from government departments and agencies in particular) with a view to gaining an understanding of broadly what the plan and SA needs to include a focus on.
2. Establishing the baseline for the SA, i.e. the current and further situation in the area in the absence of the Local Plan, in order to help identify the plan’s likely significant effects.
3. Identifying particular problems or opportunities (‘issues’) that should be a particular focus of the plan and SA.
4. Developing an SA Framework comprising objectives and appraisal questions which can then be used as the basis for appraising the draft plan.

1.4 Structure of this report

The outcomes of the scoping elements introduced through steps 1 - 4 above have been presented under a series of SA themes, as follows:

- Biodiversity
- Climate Change
- Landscape and Historic Environment
- Environmental Quality
- Land, Soil and Water Resources
- Population and Communities
- Health and Wellbeing
- Transportation and Movement
- Economy

The selected SA themes incorporate the ‘SEA topics’ suggested in Annex I(f) of the SEA Directive³. These were refined to reflect a broad understanding of the anticipated scope of plan effects.

It is intended that presenting the scoping information under these themes will help enable the reader to easily locate the information of greatest interest to them. Once agreed (i.e. subsequent to the current consultation), the suggested scope presented under nine themes will provide a methodological ‘framework’ for the appraisal of the draft plan and reasonable alternatives. The

³ The SEA Directive is ‘of a procedural nature’ (para 9 of the Directive preamble) and does not set out to prescribe particular issues that should and should not be a focus, beyond requiring a focus on ‘the environment, **including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors**’ [our emphasis]

discussion of the scoping information under each SA theme is presented in **Sections 2 to 10** and the next steps are set out in **Section 11**.

2. Biodiversity

2.1 Context Review

2.1.1 National

- **Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006⁴**: Section 40 places a duty on public bodies to conserve biodiversity.
- **Biodiversity 2020 Strategy⁵**: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services, 2011: builds on the Natural Environment White Paper and set out the "strategic direction for biodiversity policy for the next decade". Aims to halt biodiversity loss and improve the ecological networks and ecosystems for all peoples.
- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)⁶**: commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity by minimising impacts and achieving net gains in biodiversity wherever possible. Promote the 'preservation, restoration and recreation of priority habitats, ecological networks' and the 'protection and recovery of priority species'. Emphasises planning for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries.
- **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)⁷**: Local Plans should consider the opportunities that individual development proposals may provide to enhance biodiversity and contribute to wildlife and habitat connectivity in the wider area. It also highlights that brownfield land can have a high ecological value.
- **Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP)⁸**: sets out the importance of a healthy, functioning natural environment to sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal well-being.
- **The Biodiversity Offsetting Green Paper (September 2013)⁹**: Biodiversity offsets are conservation activities designed to compensate for residual losses. The Green Paper sets out a framework for exploring offsetting.

2.1.2 Regional

- **The Essex Biodiversity Action Plan 2010 - 2020¹⁰**: is focused upon 19 Priority Habitat Types and recognises that many local authorities continue to use or reference local or historic national BAP targets following the publication of the Biodiversity 2020 Strategy and subsequent switch from a target based approach to a set of high-level outcomes.
- **Improving Nature in the Greater Thames - Action Plan (2015)¹¹**: Vision is for a living and vibrant marshland and estuary landscape. Objectives include building the biological evidence base; delivering more, bigger, better and connected habitats; facilitating better co-ordination of resources by working in partnership; communications and access and securing a long-term future.

⁴ Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 [online] available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents> Accessed Nov 2016

⁵ Defra (2011) Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services> Accessed Nov 2016

⁶ Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf Accessed Nov 2016

⁷ Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Practice Guidance [online] available at: <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/> Accessed Nov 2016

⁸ Defra (2012) The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (Natural Environment White Paper) [online] available at: <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.pdf> Accessed Nov 2016

⁹ Defra (2013) Biodiversity Offsetting in England Green Paper [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/biodiversity-offsetting-in-england> Accessed Nov 2016

¹⁰ Essex Biodiversity Project (2011) The Essex Biodiversity Action Plan 2010 - 2020. A vision to protect and enhance the biodiversity of Essex. [online] available at <http://www.essexbiodiversity.org.uk/biodiversity-action-plan> Accessed Nov 2016

¹¹ Thames Gateway Local Nature Partnership (2015) Improving Nature in the Greater Thames - Action Plan [online] available at: <http://greaterthamesmarshes.com/> Accessed Nov 2016

2.1.3 Local

- **Rochford District Core Strategy (adopted 2011)¹²**: seeks to protect and enhance the District's distinctive character as well as enhance its role as the green part of the Thames Gateway South Essex sub-region. Policy ENV1 seeks to maintain, restore and enhance sites of international, national and local nature conservation importance. Policy ENV2 seeks to protect and enhance the wildlife qualities of the coastline and ensure that development does not affect the open and rural character or wildlife within the Coastal Protection Belt. Policy URV1 of the Core Strategy supports the recognition of the Upper Roach Valley as a vast 'green lung' within the District and as an area providing informal recreation opportunities for local residents. This recognises the importance of this area as part of the wider green infrastructure network.
- **Rochford District Allocations Plan (adopted 2014)¹³**: identifies the sites to be designated for local wildlife importance in the District (Policy ELA1) and the area to be designated as the Coastal Protection Belt (Policy ELA2). It also allocates an area in the Upper Roach Valley in order to protect it from development that would undermine its role as a green space for informal recreation - in accordance with Core Strategy Policy URV1.
- **Rochford District Development Management Plan (adopted 2014)¹⁴**: Policy DM25 seeks for development to conserve and enhance existing trees and woodlands, particularly Ancient Woodland. Policy DM27 states that proposals should not cause harm to priority species and habitats identified under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. Policy DM5 relates to light pollution and seeks to ensure that proposed schemes are appropriately designed and installed to minimise the impact of light pollution on a number of receptors, including nature conservation interests.

2.2 Baseline Review

2.2.1 Summary of current baseline

2.2.1.1 Internationally designated sites

There are five internationally designated sites for nature conservation within the administrative boundary of the District (see **Figure 3**):

- Crouch and Roach Estuaries Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site;
- Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC); and
- Foulness SPA and Ramsar site.

The qualifying features of the Essex Estuaries SAC are¹⁵:

- Estuaries;
- Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide;
- Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand;
- Spartina swards (*Spartinion maritimae*);
- Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*);
- Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrubs (*Sarcocornetea fruticosi*); and
- Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time.

These habitats support a large number of waterfowl as well as wide range of important bird species for which the SPAs are designated. These include¹⁶:

- Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*);

¹² Rochford District Council - Adopted Plans [online] available at: <http://www.rochford.gov.uk/planning/policy/adopted-plans> Accessed Nov 2016

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ JNCC. Protected Sites. Essex Estuaries. [online] available at: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4> Accessed Nov 2016

¹⁶ Ibid.

- Dark-bellied brent goose (*Branta bernicla bernicla*);
- Avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*);
- Little Tern (*Sterna albifrons*);
- Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*);
- Sandwich Tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*);
- Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*);
- Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*);
- Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*);
- Eurasian Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*);
- Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*); and
- Common Redshank (*Tringa totanus*).

Natural England has produced a Site Improvement Plan (SIP) for the European sites within the Essex Estuaries, which includes the sites identified above.¹⁷ The SIP provides a high level overview of the issues (both current and predicted) affecting the condition of the European sites and outlines the priority measures required to improve the condition of the features. The SIP identifies the following priority and key issues in relation to the Essex Estuaries:

- Coastal squeeze
- Public access/disturbance
- Fisheries: commercial marine and estuarine
- Planning permission: general
- Changes in species distribution
- Invasive species
- Fisheries: both recreational and commercial marine/estuarine
- Air pollution: risk of atmospheric nitrogen deposition

2.2.1.2 Nationally designated sites

In terms of nationally designated nature conservation sites, there are no National Nature Reserves (NNRs) within the District; however, there are three Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) (see **Figure 3**):

- Hockley Woods SSSI
- Foulness SSSI
- Crouch and Roach Estuaries SSSI

The condition of these SSSIs, which is monitored and assessed by NE, is set out in **Table 2** below.

¹⁷ Natural England (2015) Site Improvement Plan Essex Estuaries [online] available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5459956190937088?category=4873023563759616> Accessed Nov 2016

Table 2: SSSI Condition Summary¹⁸

Condition Summary	Hockley Woods SSSI	Foulness SSSI	Crouch and Roach Estuaries SSSI
% Area meeting PSA target	100.00%	97.28%	99.3%
% Area favourable	100.00%	72.61%	22.87%
% Area unfavourable recovering	0.00%	24.68%	76.46%
% Area unfavourable no change	0.00%	0.02%	0.67%
% Area unfavourable declining	0.00%	2.70%	0.00%
% Area destroyed / part destroyed	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

The condition of SSSIs within the District has been improving in recent years and this is considered likely to continue, unless there are any significant changes with regard to the management of the land.

2.2.1.3 Locally designated sites

There are four Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) covering an area of over 105 hectares (see **Figure 3**):

- Hockley Woods (91 hectares);
- Hullbridge Foreshore (4 hectares);
- Marylands (3.69 hectares); and
- Magnolia Fields (9.7 hectares).

There are also 39 Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) scattered throughout the District, comprising mainly of woodland (approximately 54%¹⁹), but also some grassland, mosaic, coastal and freshwater habitats.²⁰ The largest LWS is the Wallasea Island Managed Realignment which covers 90.3 hectares (ha).

In England and Wales, Ancient Woodland is land which has been continuously wooded since AD1600. The woodland is a diverse ecosystem with enormous biodiversity value providing a wide range of habitats for wildlife as well as hosting many different species. There are fourteen areas of Ancient Woodland in the District, seven of which lie within the Upper Roach Valley²¹ (see **Figure 3**). Hockley Woods is the largest area of ancient semi-natural woodland within the District at more than 100 ha.²²

Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) requires the government to publish a list of habitats that are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity. In 2013, Natural England published a new priority habitats' inventory that replaced the previous Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitat inventories. The District contains the following priority habitats.²³

- Deciduous woodland;
- Traditional orchard;
- Coastal and flood plain grazing marsh;
- Coastal saltmarsh; and

¹⁸ Natural England - Sites of Special Scientific Interest [online] available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/> Accessed Nov 2016.

¹⁹ Rochford District Council (2007) Rochford District Local Wildlife Site Review [online] available at: http://www.rochford.gov.uk/planning/policy/local_development_framework/evidence_base Accessed Nov 2016.

²⁰ Rochford District Council (2013) Annual Monitoring Report 2013-14. [online] available at: http://www.rochford.gov.uk/sites/rochford.gov.uk/files/planning_evibase_annual_monitoring_report_2013_14_0.pdf Accessed Nov 2016.

²¹ Ibid.

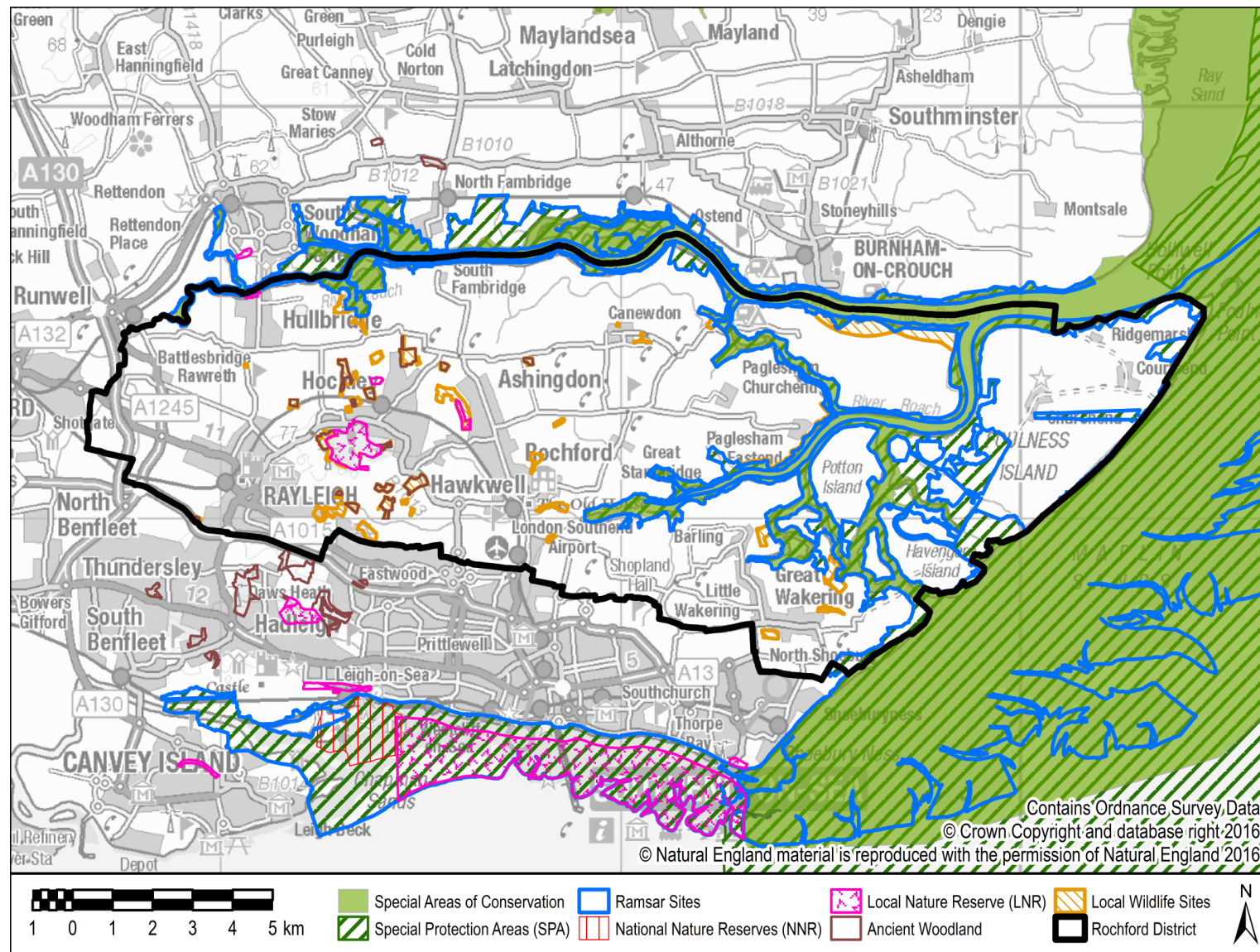
²² Rochford District Council (2010) SEA Baseline Information Profile 2009-2010 [online] available at: http://www.rochford.gov.uk/planning/policy/local_development_framework/evidence_base Accessed Nov 2016

²³ Defra. Magic Map [online] available at: <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/home.htm> Accessed Nov 2016.

- **Mudflats.**

The coastal saltmarsh, mudflats and coastal and flood plain grazing marsh habitats are primarily situated in the east of the District, with some also found in the north along the River Crouch. The deciduous woodlands are scattered across the District; however, there is a notable concentration around Hockley. Traditional orchards are also scattered across the District but there is a notable concentration to the east of Ashingdon along Brays Lane and Apton Hall Road.

Figure 3: Biodiversity Designations



2.2.2 Summary of future baseline

Habitats and species have the potential to come under increasing pressure from the provision of new housing, employment and infrastructure in the District, including at designated sites. This could include from increased disturbance (recreational, noise and light induced) and atmospheric pollution as well as the loss of habitats and fragmentation of biodiversity networks. The loss and fragmentation of habitats will be exacerbated by the effects of climate change, which has the potential to lead to changes in the distribution and abundance of species and changes to the composition and character of habitats. Coastal defences along much of the coastline prevent intertidal habitats from shifting landward in response to rising sea levels. As a result, these habitats are being gradually degraded and reduced in extent, with knock-on effects on the waterbirds and other species they support.

Benefits for biodiversity have the potential to arise from the increasing integration of biodiversity considerations within forward planning and efforts to improve green infrastructure networks across the District and sub-regionally. To maintain and improve the condition of biodiversity in the future it will be important to not only protect and enhance important habitats but the connections between them.

2.3 Key Issues

- There are five European designated sites (the Crouch and Roach Estuaries SPA and Ramsar, Foulness SPA and Ramsar and Essex Estuaries SAC) within the District and these are situated in the estuaries and along the coast in the east and to the north. The issues affecting these sites that are relevant for the Local Plan and SA include coastal squeeze, public access/disturbance, planning permissions and air pollution (nitrogen deposition).
- There are three SSSIs in the District, located at Hockley Woods, Foulness and the Crouch and Roach Estuaries. The SSSIs are generally in a favourable or unfavourable recovering condition. Overall, the condition of SSSIs within the District has been improving in recent years and this is considered unlikely to change in the future, unless there are any significant changes with regard to the management of the land.
- There are four LNRs, 39 LWSs (predominantly woodland but also with significant areas of grassland, mosaic coastal and freshwater habitat types) and 14 Ancient Woodlands within the District. These sites are predominantly located in the west of the District near to Hockley and Rayleigh; however, there are also large sites in the east of the District on the coast. There is limited information on the condition of locally important biodiversity. A LWS review is to be undertaken and will form part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan.
- The District contains a number of priority habitats, which include; deciduous woodland; traditional orchard; coastal and flood plain grazing marsh; coastal saltmarsh; and mudflats.
- Rochford includes provision of a large area of open space in the Upper Roach Valley that is acknowledged to be green space for nearby areas in neighbouring councils - there is a need to manage biodiversity and recreational/amenity needs carefully.
- Intertidal and freshwater habitats are under threat from coastal squeeze, where the intertidal zone is trapped between the coastal defence (flood bank or sea wall) and rising sea levels.

2.4 SA Objectives

Table 3: SA Objectives and decision-aiding questions for Biodiversity

SA Objective	Decision-aiding questions
Protect and enhance biodiversity within and surrounding the District. <i>Relevant SEA Topics:</i> Biodiversity, flora & fauna <i>Relevant NPPF Paragraphs:</i> 109 & 117	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid, or if not possible minimise impacts on biodiversity, ancient woodland, nationally or locally protected sites and provide net gains where possible? • Protect and enhance ecological networks, including those that cross administrative boundaries? • Minimise recreational impacts on designated sites, in particular European sites?

3. Climate Change

3.1 Context Review

3.1.1 National

- **Climate Change Act 2008:**²⁴ established a framework to develop an economically credible emissions reduction path. The Act sets targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions through action in the UK of at least 80% by 2050, and reductions in CO₂ emissions of at least 26% by 2020, against a 1990 baseline.
- **Flood and Water Management Act (2010):**²⁵ sets out measures to ensure that risk from all sources of flooding, not just rivers and seas, is managed more effectively. This includes: incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings; utilising the environment in order to reduce flooding; identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere; rolling back development in coastal areas to avoid damage from flooding or coastal erosion; and creating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).
- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):**²⁶
 - This supports the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate as a ‘core planning principle’. To support the move to a low carbon future, local planning authorities should: plan for new development in locations and ways which reduce greenhouse gas emissions; actively support energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings; and when setting any local requirement for a building’s sustainability, do so in a way consistent with the Government’s zero carbon buildings policy and adopt nationally described standards.
 - Direct development away from areas highest at risk of flooding, with development ‘not to be allocated if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower probability of flooding’. Where development is necessary, it should be made safe without increasing levels of flood risk elsewhere.
 - Take account of the effects of climate change in the long term, taking into account a range of factors including flooding. Adopt proactive strategies to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including well planned green infrastructure.
- **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG):**²⁷
 - This guidance states that Local Plans should support the delivery of appropriately sited green energy and the management of greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency measures. Local Planning Authorities should “adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change”. Climate change can be mitigated through Local Plans by reducing the need to travel, providing opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy technologies, identifying opportunities for decentralised energy and heating and through the design of new development to reduce energy demand.
 - Sets out the steps to take flood risk into account in the preparation of a Local Plan.
- **How local authorities can reduce emissions and manage climate change risk (2012):** This report emphasises the crucial role councils have in helping the UK meet its carbon targets and preparing for the impacts of climate change. It outlines specific opportunities for reducing emissions and highlights good practice examples from a number of local authorities. The Committee on Climate Change recommends that a statutory duty and/or additional funding is needed to ensure local authorities have stronger incentives to act.

²⁴ Climate Change Act 2008 [online] available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents> Accessed Nov 2016

²⁵ Flood and Water Management Act (2010) [online] available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents> Accessed Nov 2016

²⁶ Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf Accessed Nov 2016

²⁷ Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Practice Guidance [online] available at: <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/> Accessed Nov 2016

- **Adapting to Climate Change: Advice for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Authorities (updated 2016):**²⁸ provides advice to ensure that an economically credible appraisal, taking into account of the uncertainties associated with climate change, can be made to support investment decisions. Given the long lifetime and high cost of the built environment and many flood and coastal erosion management measures, it is imperative that plans and investment projects take into account, in an appropriate way, the changing risks over the coming century. This includes designing for adaptation to a changing climate where appropriate.

3.1.2 Regional

- **Essex Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan (2016):**²⁹ Sets out headline priority climate risks and actions for Essex.
- **South Essex Catchment Flood Management Plan (2010):**³⁰ recognises five Sub-Areas within Rochford District and directs future flood risk management for the area. It is acknowledged that flood risk is likely to increase and that the protection given by defences may decline. It is therefore important to maintain the current level of flood risk into the future.
- **South Essex Surface Water Management Plan (2012):**³¹ outlines the preferred surface water management strategy for South Essex and includes consideration of flooding from sewers, drains, groundwater and runoff from land, small watercourses and ditches that occurs as a result of heavy rainfall. The plan identifies nine Critical Drainage Areas within Rochford District, which are areas or catchments where multiple or interlinked sources of flood risk cause flooding during a severe rainfall event, affecting houses, businesses and/or infrastructure and where mitigation measures may be implemented to reduce the impact of flooding.
- **The Essex SuDS Design Guide (2016):**³² provides local standards for water quality and water quantity from developments and guidance on SuDS design. a

3.1.3 Local

- **Rochford District Core Strategy (adopted 2011):**³³
 - Policy ENV2 seeks to protect the coastline taking into account the implications of climate change; preventing the potential for coastal flooding and not permitting development in coastal areas that are at risk from flooding. Policy ENV3 directs development away from areas at risk of flooding by applying the sequential test and Policy ENV4 requires all residential development over 10 dwellings to incorporate runoff control via SuDS.
 - Policies ENV6 and ENV7 support proposals for large and small scale renewable energy projects subject to a number of criteria. Policy ENV8 seeks developments of five or more dwellings or non-residential developments of 1,000 sqm or more to secure at least 10% of their energy from decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources. Finally policies ENV9 and ENV10 seek improvements in terms of carbon dioxide emissions for all new residential development. There are also a number of transport policies that seek to reduce reliance on the private car and improve accessibility to sustainable transport modes.

²⁸ Environment Agency (2016) Adapting to Climate Change: Advice for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Authorities [online] available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/571572/LIT_5707.pdf Accessed Mar 2017.

²⁹ Essex County Council (Aug 2016) Managing the risks from weather extremes - Adaptation in Action [online] available at: <http://www.essex.gov.uk/Environment%20Planning/Strategic-Environment/Pages/Adapting-to-climate-change.aspx> Accessed Nov 2016.

³⁰ Environment Agency (2010) South Essex Catchment Flood Management Plan: Summary Report [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/south-essex-catchment-flood-management-plan>

³¹ Essex County Council, Basildon Borough Council, Rochford District Council, Castle Point Borough Council (2012) South Essex Surface Water Management Plan [online] available at <https://www.rochford.gov.uk/new-local-plan-evidence-base> Accessed Nov 2016

³² Essex County Council (2016) Sustainable Drainage Systems Design Guide [online] available at: http://www.essex.gov.uk/Environment%20Planning/Environment/local-environment/flooding/View-It/Documents/suds_design_guide.pdf Accessed Mar 2017.

³³ Rochford District Council - Adopted Plans [online] available at: <http://www.rochford.gov.uk/planning/policy/adopted-plans> Accessed Nov 2016

- **Rochford District Development Management Plan (adopted 2014):**³⁴ Policy DM28 requires that in cases where there is a perceived risk of flooding from surface water run-off arising from the development of 10 residential units or fewer, the Council will require the submission of a flood risk assessment. The assessment must include details of SuDS to be incorporated in the development to ensure that any risk of flooding is not increased by surface water runoff arising from the site.

3.2 Baseline Review

3.2.1 Summary of current baseline

3.2.1.1 Climate change adaptation

The outcome of research on the probable effects of climate change in the UK was released in 2009 by the UK Climate Projections (UKCP09) team.³⁵ UKCP09 gives climate information for the UK up to the end of this century and projections of future changes to the climate are provided, based on simulations from climate models. Projections are broken down to a regional level across the UK and are shown in probabilistic form.

As highlighted by the research, the effects of climate change for the East of England by 2050 under a medium emissions scenario³⁶ are likely to be as follows:

- increase in winter mean temperature of 2.2°C and an increase in summer mean temperature of 2.5°C; and
- increase in winter mean precipitation of 14% and a decrease in summer mean precipitation of -17%.

It is also predicted that there could be an increase of 36cm in sea level and, as weather is likely to become more variable, there could be more frequent extreme events, such as flash flooding, storms and coastal erosion. Defra announced in January 2016 that the UK Climate Projections will be updated following the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (December 2015).³⁷ The Environment Agency's guidance 'Flood risk assessments: climate change allowances' provides allowances for future sea level rise, wave height and wind speed to help planners, developers and their advisors to understand the likely impact of climate change on coastal flood risk³⁸.

The Environment Agency (EA) provides climate change allowances to be considered as part of flood risk assessments. They are based on climate change projections and different scenarios of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions to the atmosphere. The EA provides predictions of anticipated change for the following:

- peak river flow by river basin district
- peak rainfall intensity
- sea level rise
- offshore wind speed and extreme wave height

Tables 4 to 7 below set out the EAs currently identified allowances.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ UK Climate Projections (2009) South East 2050s Medium Emissions Scenario [online] available at: <http://ukclimateprojections.metoffice.gov.uk/> Accessed Nov 2016

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Met Office. UK Climate Projections - UKCP18 Project announcement [online] available at: <http://ukclimateprojections.metoffice.gov.uk/24125> Accessed Nov 2016.

³⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessments-climate-change-allowances>

Table 4: Peak river flow for the Anglian River Basin District³⁹

Allowance category	Total potential change anticipated for the '2020s' (2015 to 2039)	Total potential change anticipated for the '2050s' (2040 to 2069)	Total potential change anticipated for the '2080s' (2070 to 2115)
Upper end	25%	35%	65%
Higher central	15%	20%	35%
Central	10%	15%	25%
Lower	0%	0%	10%

Table 5: Peak rainfall intensity allowance in small urban catchments (use 1961 to 1990 baseline)⁴⁰

Applies across all of England	Total potential change anticipated for the '2020s' (2015 to 2039)	Total potential change anticipated for the '2050s' (2040 to 2069)	Total potential change anticipated for the '2080s' (2070 to 2115)
Upper end	10%	20%	40%
Central	5%	10%	20%

Table 6: Sea level allowance for each epoch in millimetres (mm) per year with cumulative sea level rise for each epoch in brackets (use 1990 baseline)⁴¹

Areas of England	1990 to 2025	2026 to 2055	2056 to 2085	2086 to 2115	Cumulative rise 1990 to 2115/ metres (m)
East, East Midlands, London and South East	4 (140 mm)	8.5 (255 mm)	12 (360 mm)	15 (450 mm)	1.21 m

Table 7: Offshore wind speed and extreme wave height allowance (use 1990 baseline)⁴²

Applies around all the English Coast	1990 to 2055	2056 to 2115
Offshore wind speed allowance	+5%	+10%
Offshore wind speed sensitivity test	+10%	+10%
Extreme wave height allowance	+5%	+10%
Extreme wave height sensitivity test	+10%	+10%

The Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)⁴³ (2011) found that parts of the District are at significant residual risk of flooding from tidal sources. Overtopping or a breach in the flood defences has the potential to result in flooding to depths of greater than 3m throughout Shoeburyness, Paglesham, Wallasea Island and South Fambridge putting existing development and occupants at great risk. Given the low lying nature of the coastline in this part of the District, flood waters are likely to spread rapidly, greatly reducing the time available for warning and evacuation of residents, as was the case in the 1953 flood. It should be noted that the Council's SFRA is in the process of being updated and will form part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan. The Final SA Scoping Report will reflect the findings of the updated SFRA.

In addition to flood risk from tidal sources, fluvial systems also pose a risk to parts of the District. The impermeable underlying geology and seasonally wet, deep clay soils in the western parts of the

³⁹ Environment Agency – Climate Change Allowances [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessments-climate-change-allowances> Accessed Mar 2017.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

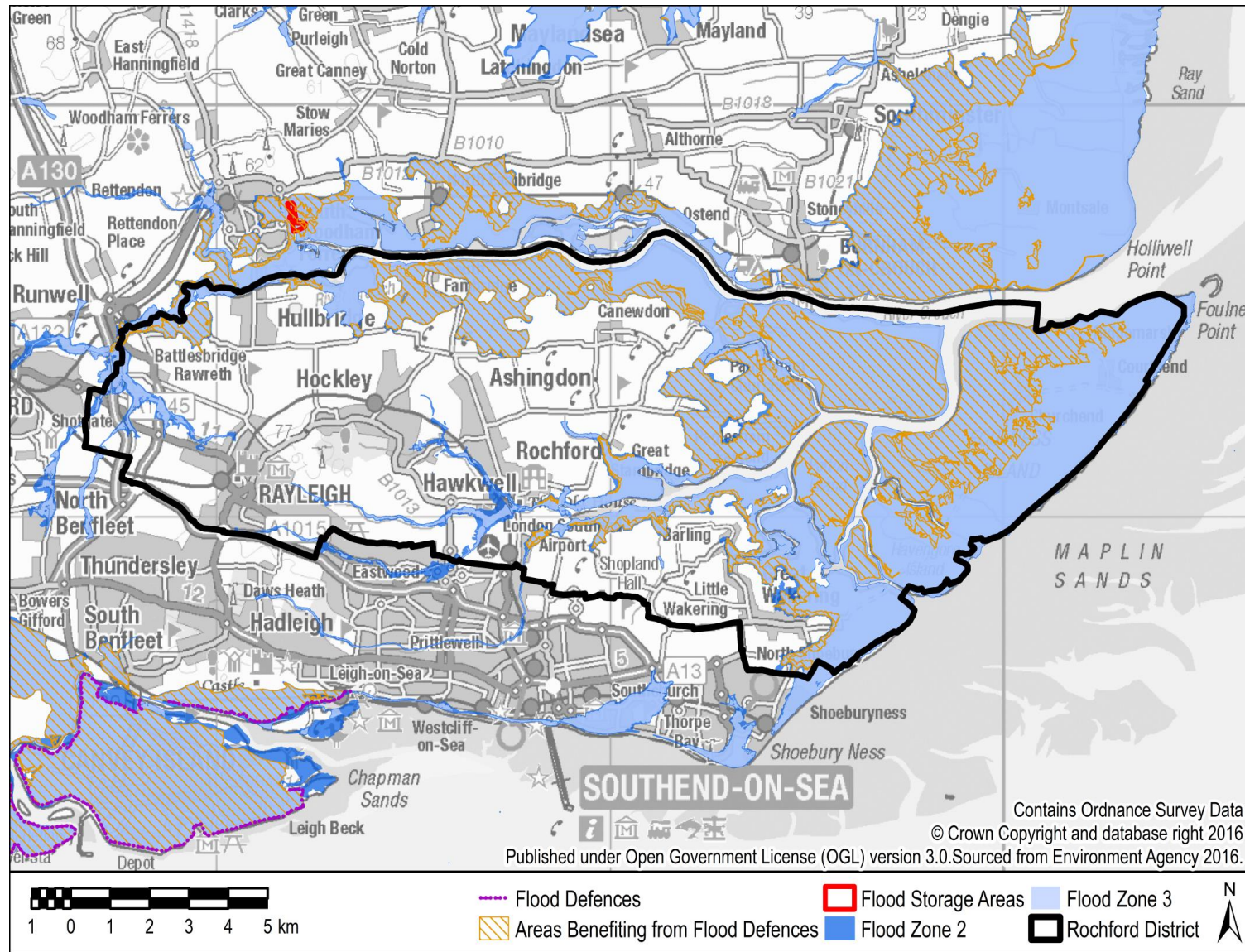
⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Rochford District Council (2011) Strategic Flood Risk Assessment [online] available at: http://www.rochford.gov.uk/sites/rochford.gov.uk/files/planning_floodrisk2011.compressed.pdf Accessed Nov 2016.

District lead to rapid runoff of surface water into local watercourses. The channelisation of these watercourses increases the rapid conveyance of water downstream and leads to problems where watercourses converge. There are a number of main rivers draining Rochford District Council, mainly the tributaries of the Tidal River Roach and the Tidal River Crouch. As a result, a large proportion of the district falls within the Environment Agency's fluvial and tidal flood Zones 2 and 3. **Figure 4** illustrates the areas of the District that fall within these areas.

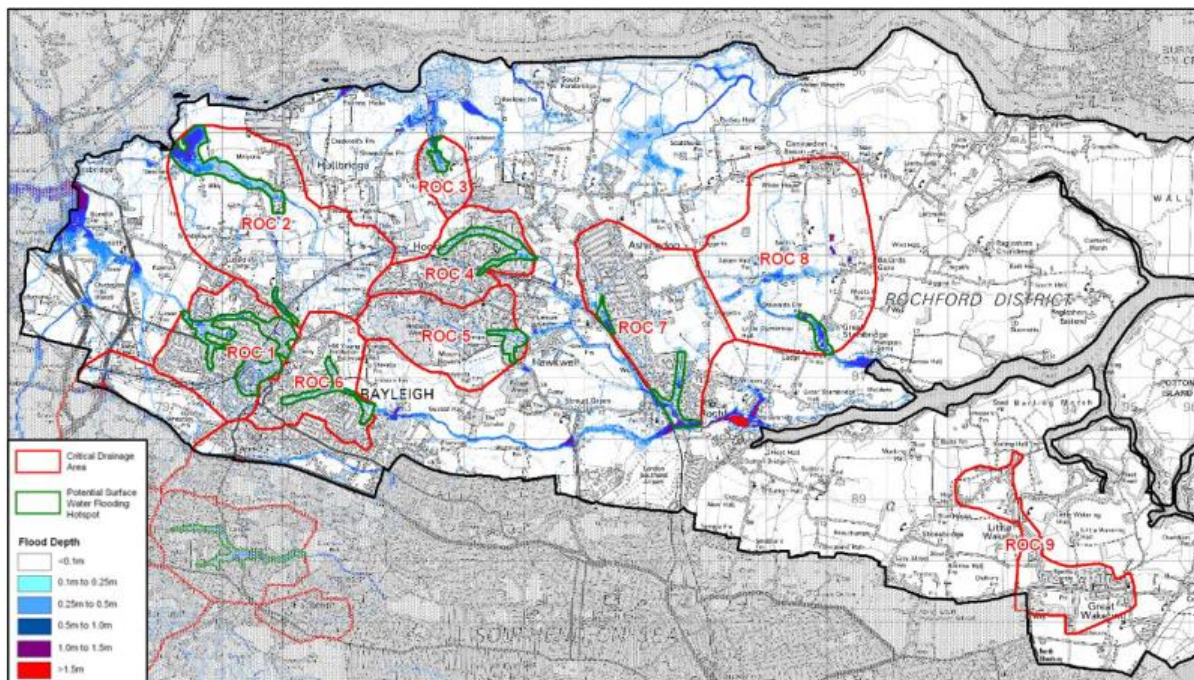
Figure 4: Flood Risk



The South Essex Surface Water Management Plan 2012 (SWMP) 2012 identifies that surface water flooding within the District is driven predominantly by the topography relating to the river channels of the River Roach, River Crouch and tributaries of these. The historical flood records suggest that the recorded surface water flooding incidences are mainly due to inundation of the surface water drainage systems and under capacity of ordinary watercourses during high intensity rainfall events.

Nine Critical Drainage Areas (CDAs) are identified by the SWMP within Rochford District. These areas are shown in **Figure 5** below.

Figure 5: Identified CDAs within Rochford District Council⁴⁴



The South Essex Outline Water Cycle Study⁴⁵ suggests that opportunities for providing infiltration SuDS are limited by the largely impermeable geology underlying most of the District. Despite these limitations, SuDS can still be provided as long as they are appropriate for the geology of the District. New development within Castle Point and Basildon should provide attenuation of surface water run-off, although infiltration may be possible in some areas.

3.2.1.2 Climate change mitigation

In relation to greenhouse gas emissions, source data from the Department of Energy and Climate Change⁴⁶ suggests that per capita emissions across all sources have been declining in the District since 2005. The largest reduction is from industrial and commercial sources at 19%, with an 11.5% reduction in domestic sources and 8% reduction in road sources between 2005 and 2012. Total per capita emissions for the District are significantly lower when compared to Essex, the East of England and national comparators. The data also demonstrates that Rochford District has lower per capita transport emissions when compared to Essex as a whole. Please refer to **Table 8** below.

Rochford's average domestic energy consumption is 7012 kWh; which is lower than the East of England average of 9644 kWh, and lower than the England average of 9749 kWh.⁴⁷ The District's

⁴⁴ Essex County Council, Basildon Borough Council, Rochford District Council, Castle Point Borough Council (2012) South Essex Surface Water Management Plan [online] available at <https://www.rochford.gov.uk/new-local-plan-evidence-base> Accessed Nov 2016

⁴⁵ Basildon Borough, Castle Point Borough and Rochford District Councils (2011) South Essex Outline water Cycle Study Technical Report [online] available at: http://fs-drupal-rochford.s3.amazonaws.com/pdf/planning_evidencebase_watercycle.pdf Accessed Nov 2016.

⁴⁶ Department of Energy and Climate Change (2011) Official statistics: Local Authority carbon dioxide emissions [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-emissions-estimates> Accessed Nov 2016.

⁴⁷ DECC (2016) Regional and local authority electricity consumption statistics: 2005 to 2014 [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/regional-and-local-authority-electricity-consumption-statistics-2005-to-2011> Accessed Nov 2016.

domestic carbon dioxide emissions, 2.4 ktCO₂, are also lower than the Essex average of 6.5 ktCO₂, and national average of 7.1 ktCO₂.

Table 8: Carbon Dioxide emissions and sources, plus emissions per capita, 2005-2012⁴⁸

	Industrial and Commercial (t CO ₂)	Domestic (t CO ₂)	Road and Transport (CO ₂)	Total (CO ₂)
Rochford District				
2005	1.6	2.6	1.3	5.6
2006	1.5	2.6	1.3	5.5
2007	1.5	2.5	1.3	5.3
2008	1.4	2.5	1.3	5.1
2009	1.2	2.2	1.3	4.7
2010	1.3	2.4	1.2	4.9
2011	1.2	2.1	1.2	4.5
2012	1.3	2.3	1.2	4.8
Essex				
2005	2.3	2.6	2.6	7.6
2006	2.3	2.6	2.6	7.5
2007	2.2	2.5	2.7	7.4
2008	2.1	2.4	2.5	7.1
2009	1.9	2.2	2.5	6.6
2010	2.0	2.4	2.4	6.8
2011	1.8	2.1	2.4	6.2
2012	1.9	2.3	2.3	6.5
East of England				
2005	3.0	2.6	2.6	8.3
2006	3.0	2.6	2.6	8.2
2007	2.8	2.5	2.6	8.0
2008	2.8	2.4	2.5	7.7
2009	2.4	2.2	2.4	7.0
2010	2.6	2.3	2.3	7.3
2011	2.3	2.0	2.3	6.6
2012	2.4	2.2	2.3	7.0
England				
2005	4.0	2.6	2.3	8.7
2006	4.0	2.6	2.2	8.7
2007	3.9	2.5	2.3	8.5
2008	3.7	2.4	2.1	8.1
2009	3.2	2.2	2.0	7.3
2010	3.3	2.3	2.0	7.5
2011	3.0	2.0	2.0	6.8
2012	3.1	2.2	1.9	7.1

⁴⁸ Ibid.

3.2.2 Summary of future baseline

3.2.2.1 Climate change adaptation

Climate change has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events in the District, with increases in mean summer and winter temperatures, increases in mean precipitation in winter and decreases in mean precipitation in summer. The UK Climate Projections (UKCP09) team have estimated that, under a medium emissions scenario, the central estimate of change in winter mean precipitation is an increase of 16%, while there is estimated to be an average drop in summer precipitation of 19%. This is likely to increase the risk of flooding in winter months and increase water shortages during summer months with an increased need for resilience and adaptation. The EA recommend that the SA and Local Plan should promote the implementation and funding of Property Level Resilience (PLR) to individual properties affected by all sources of flooding⁴⁹.

3.2.2.2 Climate change mitigation

In terms of climate change mitigation, per capita emissions are likely to continue to decrease as energy efficiency measures, renewable energy production and new technologies become more widely adopted. This includes relating to transport, as increased take up of more energy efficient vehicles and electric vehicles takes place. However, increases in the built footprint of the District may lead to increases in overall emissions if efficiency measures do not keep pace.

3.3 Key Issues

- Parts of the District are at significant risk from tidal flooding. Overtopping or a breach in the flood defences has the potential to result in flooding to depths of greater than 3m throughout Shoeburyness, Paglesham, Wallasea Island and South Fambridge putting existing development and occupants at great risk.
- Climate change is likely to exacerbate the existing drainage infrastructure deficit which currently exists in the locations identified as Critical Drainage Areas by the South Essex Surface Water Management Plan.
- In addition to flood risk from tidal sources, fluvial systems also pose a risk to parts of Rochford District. The impermeable underlying geology and seasonally wet, deep clay soils in the western parts of the District lead to rapid runoff of surface water into local watercourses. Fluvial flooding primarily affects Rochford town, where the River Roach, Nobles Green Ditch and Eastwood Brook meet. A number of other smaller watercourses in Rawreth and Rayleigh also pose a fluvial flood risk.
- Impermeable geology structure in the west of the District limits opportunities for infiltration SuDS.
- Per capita greenhouse gas emissions are decreasing and this is likely to continue as energy efficiency measures, renewable energy production and new technologies become more widely adopted.

⁴⁹ <http://www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk/bluepages/>

3.4 SA Objectives

Table 9: SA Objectives and decision-aiding questions for Climate Change

SA Objective	Decision-aiding questions
<p>Promote climate change mitigation in Rochford District.</p> <p><i>Relevant SEA Topics:</i> <i>Climatic factors</i></p> <p><i>Relevant NPPF Paragraphs:</i> <i>93 – 108</i></p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport? • Reduce the need to travel? • Promote use of energy from low carbon sources? • Reduce energy consumption and increase efficiency? • Promote climate change mitigation to address the impacts on the water environment?
<p>Support the resilience of Rochford District to the potential effects of climate change.</p> <p><i>Relevant SEA Topics:</i> <i>Climatic factors & water</i></p> <p><i>Relevant NPPF Paragraphs:</i> <i>93 – 108</i></p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct development away from areas at risk of all forms of flooding as per the sequential test, taking into account the likely effects of climate change? • Make development safe where it is necessary within an area of flood risk and without increasing flood risk elsewhere? • Sustainably manage water run-off, with priority given to SuDS, ensuring that the risk of flooding is not increased and where possible reduced? • Improve and enhance multifunctional green infrastructure networks in the District (and beyond) to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change? • Support the priorities identified in the Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan?

4. Landscape and Historic Environment

4.1 Context Review

4.1.1 National

- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):**⁵⁰ Core planning principles stated in the NPPF include: to always seek high quality design; conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance; take account of the roles and character of different areas and contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Local Authorities/ the planning system should:
 - Protect and enhance valued landscapes, giving particular weight to those identified as being of national importance.
 - Maintain the character of the undeveloped coast, protecting and enhancing its distinctive landscapes, particularly in areas defined as Heritage Coast, and improve public access to and enjoyment of the coast.
 - Recognise that heritage assets are an ‘irreplaceable resource’ and conserve them in a ‘manner appropriate to their significance’.
- **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG):**⁵¹
 - Local plans should include strategic policies for the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including landscape. This includes designated landscapes but also the wider countryside.
 - Local authorities should set out in their Local Plans a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. The strategy should recognise that conservation is not a passive exercise. In developing their strategy, local planning authorities should identify specific opportunities within their area for the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets.
- **Historic Environment for England:**⁵² sets out the Government’s vision for the historic environment. It calls for those who have the power to shape the historic environment to recognise its value and to manage it in an intelligent manner in light of the contribution that it can make to social, economic and cultural life. Also of note is the reference to promoting the role of the historic environment within the Government’s response to climate change and the wider sustainable development agenda.

4.1.2 Local

- **Rochford District Core Strategy (adopted 2011):**⁵³ seeks to protect and enhance the District’s distinctive character as well as enhance its role as the green part of the Thames Gateway South Essex sub-region.
 - Policy ENV1 seeks to protect the natural landscape; Policy ENV2 protects and enhances the landscape of the coastal area; and Policy ENV6 directs large-scale energy projects away from areas of landscape value. Policy URV1 requires that access through the Upper Roach Valley and any essential development will be designed to have minimum impact on the landscape.
 - Policy CP1 promotes good, high quality design and Policy CP2 ensures that the actions recommended in adopted Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans are implemented.

⁵⁰ Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf Accessed Nov 2016

⁵¹ Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Practice Guidance [online] available at: <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/> Accessed Nov 2016

⁵² HM Government (2010) The Government’s Statement on the Historic Environment for England [online] available at: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/6763.aspx

⁵³ Rochford District Council - Adopted Plans [online] available at: <http://www.rochford.gov.uk/planning/policy/adopted-plans> Accessed Nov 2016

- **Allocations Plan (adopted 2014):**⁵⁴ sets out the important local areas for landscape with Policy ELA2 defining the protection for the Coastal Protection Belt.
- **Development Management Plan (adopted 2014):**⁵⁵ Policy DM1 ensures that the design of new development promotes the character of the locality and positively contributes to the surrounding natural and built environment. Policy DM7 seeks to protect any buildings of local historic, architectural or visual importance. Policy DM8 sets out criteria for the demolition of a building within a Conservation Area and Policy DM9 sets out requirements for any proposed development within or in close proximity to a Conservation Area. Policy DM26 states that proposals for development must show that consideration has been given to the landscape character of the area and findings of the Rochford District Environment Characterisation Project (2006).

4.2 Baseline Review

4.2.1 Summary of current baseline

4.2.1.1 Historic environment baseline

There are a number of nationally designated heritage assets within the District (see **Figure 6**).

- Six Scheduled Monuments, including Rayleigh Castle and Rochford Hall;
- Ten Conservation Areas (areas of special architectural or historic interest), including areas at Great Wakering, Rayleigh and Rochford, and Battlesbridge (joint with Chelmsford Borough Council); and
- Many Listed Buildings - including one Grade 1 (Rochford Hall) and 17 Grade II* scattered throughout the District.

More than 350 sites of archaeological interest are recorded on the Heritage Conservation Record (HCR) in the District. These range from Palaeolithic flint axes through a variety of prehistoric, Roman, Saxon and medieval settlements to post-medieval and modern industrial sites, and World War II and Cold War monuments. These represent only a small fraction of the archaeological resource with probably many sites undiscovered and unrecorded.⁵⁶ Rochford District currently has no heritage registered by Historic England as being at risk. However, Essex County Council produces a Heritage at Risk Register and this identifies that there were nine heritage assets at risk within the District in 2013. These included:⁵⁷

- Outbuilding at Apton Hall Farmhouse, Canewdon (Grade II Listed Building)
- Ridgemarsh Farmhouse, Court End, Foulness (Grade II Listed Building)
- Barn SE of Ridgemarsh Farmhouse, Court End, (Grade II Listed Building)
- Quay Farmhouse (Monkton Barns), Foulness (Grade II Listed Building)
- Bake/Brewhouse 3m N of Quay Farmhouse, Foulness (Grade II Listed Building)
- Church of St. Mary The Virgin, St. Thomas and All Saints, Church End, Foulness (Grade II Listed Building)
- Clements Hall, Victor Gardens, Hawkwell (Grade II Listed Building)
- Trender's Hall, Trender's Avenue, Rawreth (Grade II Listed Building)
- Heavy Anti-Aircraft Gunsite, TN2 Butler's Farm, Sutton (Scheduled Monument)

The Rochford Historic Environment Characterisation Project investigated the historic urban, historic landscape and archaeological character of the District. The project explored the diversity, character and sensitivity of the historic environment working with the 14 Historic Environment Character Areas (HECAs) that had been defined across the District. The assessment built on earlier work on the

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Rochford District Council. Ancient Monuments. [online] available at: http://www.rochford.gov.uk/planning/environment/ancient_monuments Accessed Nov 2016.

⁵⁷ Essex County Council (2013) Heritage at Risk in Essex Register 2013 [online] available at: <http://www.essex.gov.uk/Activities/Heritage/Pages/Heritage-At-Risk-Register.aspx> Accessed Nov 2016.

Thames Gateway Historic Environment Characterisation Project (2004) and divided the HECAs into 40 more specific and more detailed Historic Environment Character Zones (HECZs) to better inform spatial planning. This also included consideration of 10 Archaeological Character Areas (ACAs). The character and baseline conditions as well as the location and extent of the Historic Character Areas are available within the Project Report.⁵⁸

4.2.1.2 Landscape baseline

There are no nationally designated landscapes (National Park, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) within or in close proximity to the District. The District is situated within two Landscape Character Areas defined at the national level: The Greater Thames Estuary and The Northern Thames Basin. Further information on these areas is presented below.

The Greater Thames Estuary:⁵⁹

- Predominantly flat, low-lying coastal landscape.
- Important site for geodiversity due to underlying geology of London Clay.
- Open grazing pastures patterned by a network of ancient and modern reed-fringed drainage ditches and dykes, numerous creeks and few hedges or fences, with limited tree cover.
- Traditional unimproved wet pasture grazed with sheep and cattle combined with extensively drained and ploughed arable land protected by floods by sea walls, with some areas of more mixed agriculture on higher ground.
- Strong feelings of remoteness and wilderness persist on extensive salt marshes, mud flats and reclaimed farmed marshland, which support internationally important plants, invertebrates and populations of breeding and overwintering birds, notably overwintering Brent geese.
- Distinctive landmarks of coastal military present such as military defences, forts and pill boxes.
- Increasing development pressures around major settlements and especially towards London, with urban, industrial and recreational sites often highly visible within the low-lying marshes.

The Northern Thames Basin:⁶⁰

- The landform is varied with a wide plateau divided by river valleys. There are prominent hills and ridges to the north-west and extensive tracts of flat land in the south.
- Characteristic of the area is a layer of thick clay producing heavy acidic soils, resulting in retention of considerable areas of ancient woodland.
- Areas capped by glacial sands and gravels have resulted in nutrient-poor, free-draining soils which support remnant lowland heathlands, although these are now small. Areas that have alluvial deposits present are well drained and fertile.
- The diverse range of semi-natural habitats include ancient woodland, lowland heath and floodplain grazing marsh and provide important habitats for a wide range of species including great crested newt, water vole, dormouse and otter.
- Rich archaeology including sites relating to Roman occupation.
- The medieval pattern of small villages and dispersed farming settlement remains central to the character of parts of Hertfordshire and Essex.

The East of England Intrusion Map⁶¹ demonstrates how the east of the District is largely formed of undisturbed and tranquil areas. The west contains the built-up parts of the District, which includes many areas disturbed by noise and visual intrusion, particularly to the south west around Rayleigh and boundaries with Castle Point and Southend Borough areas.

⁵⁸ Rochford District Council (2006) Rochford District Historic Environment Characterisation Project [online] available at: http://fs-drupal-rochford.s3.amazonaws.com/pdf/planning_historic_environment_characterisation_project.pdf Accessed Nov 2016.

⁵⁹ National Character Area Profile 81: Greater Thames Estuary [online] available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4531632073605120> Accessed Nov 2016.

⁶⁰ National Character Area Profile 111: Northern Thames Basin [online] available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4721112340496384> Accessed Nov 2016.

⁶¹ CPRE (2007) East of England Intrusion Map [online] available at: http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/countryside/tranquil_places/item/1786 Accessed Nov 2016.

The landscape character of the District includes three types⁶² (See **Figure 7**):

- Crouch and Roach Farmland
- Dengie and Foulness Coast
- South Essex Coastal Towns

The area least sensitive to development is identified as being the South Essex Coastal Towns area. The Rochford Core Strategy indicates that there is a clear east-west divide in the character of the District. The east of is where the majority of the District's protected landscapes are found. As such the east is sparsely populated, with the District's population predominantly in the west. There are vast areas of open space surrounding the main settlements known as the Upper Roach Valley. It is an objective of the current Core Strategy to protect and enhance these open spaces.

The majority of the District is designated as Green Belt land (See **Figure 12**). The rural settlements that are located within this area are often without services and therefore residents are reliant on cars to access amenities.

Further information on baseline conditions is presented in the Landscape Character Assessments (LCAs) for the Essex Coast (2005)⁶³ and Southend-on-Sea (2003).⁶⁴ Each of the Landscape Areas present within the District are characterised below:

Crouch and Roach Farmland: This character area is located in the north of the District and extends south to the centre. This area is characterised as having a rural and tranquil setting with the coastal character of the area defined by moderate to steep estuary valley, narrow estuaries, mudflats, saltmarsh and reclaimed marshlands. A significant loss of hedgerows in the south of the landscape area has created an open character here with sparse settlement patterns.

The key characteristics are summarised below:

- Undulating arable farmland;
- Long narrow Crouch and Roach river estuaries with flat low lying marshlands;
- Small villages/hamlets, farms and suburban properties are present along lanes on higher ground;
- Right angled pattern of lanes; and
- Long views across the farmland to the estuaries from higher ground.

The Southend-on-Sea LCA (2003) reports that the condition of small settlements is mixed, with some including out-of-character modern infill. Agricultural intensification has resulted in the removal of many hedgerows as well as loss of grazing marsh resulting in the character of the area becoming increasingly open. Pressures for development in this character area include urban development, transportation development as well as demand for additional boat moorings and marina facilities along the estuaries, together with the need to maintain existing flood protection.

Dengie and Foulness Coast: This is an exposed area of reclaimed marshland and sweeping tidal mudflats and sands beyond the sea wall. This character area includes the islands in the east of the District. Settlement in the area is sparse with few trees or roads.

The key characteristics are summarised below:

- Flat and open landscape with panoramic views;
- Vast tidal mud flats and sands;
- Mainly arable farmland, with only a few hedgerows;
- Isolated farms and barns, small villages are present on the fringes;
- Bradwell Nuclear Power Station is location to the north of Rochford District;
- Limited accessibility;

⁶² Rochford District Council (2011) Core Strategy [online] available at: <http://www.rochford.gov.uk/planning/policy/adopted-plans> Accessed Nov 2016.

⁶³ Essex County Council (2005) Landscape Character Assessment of the Essex Coast [online] available at: http://www.rochford.gov.uk/sites/rochford.gov.uk/files/documents/files/planning_character_JAAP12.pdf Accessed Nov 2016

⁶⁴ Essex County Council (2003) Landscape Character Assessment of Southend-on-Sea [online] available at: http://www.essex.gov.uk/AnalyticsReports/CB_LCA_Essex_2002.pdf Accessed Nov 2016.

- Military presence; and
- Remote tranquil character.

According to the Southend-on-Sea LCA (2003), agricultural intensification has resulted in a loss of coastal grazing marsh and an old sea wall. In the future it is likely that the key influences will be on agriculture and flood protection.

South Essex Coastal Towns: This area is of a mixed character in a mainly urban setting. This character area includes Rochford and Hockley. In Hockley, the urban character is softened by large expanses of woodland and the Roach Valley is largely undeveloped.

The key characteristics are summarised below:

- Landscape features present: Rayleigh Castle, Pylons and overhead lines, and Southend Airport
- Large areas of woodland
- Large areas of dense urban development
- Major transportation routes
- Presence of pylons and overhead lines dominate farmland

The Southend-on-Sea LCA reports that the area has undergone significant change in the 20th century including large areas of urban development, which is forecast to be an ongoing trend. The condition of settlements is mixed with poor quality development common, and the quality of woodlands and hedgerows is moderate.

Figure 6: Historic Environment

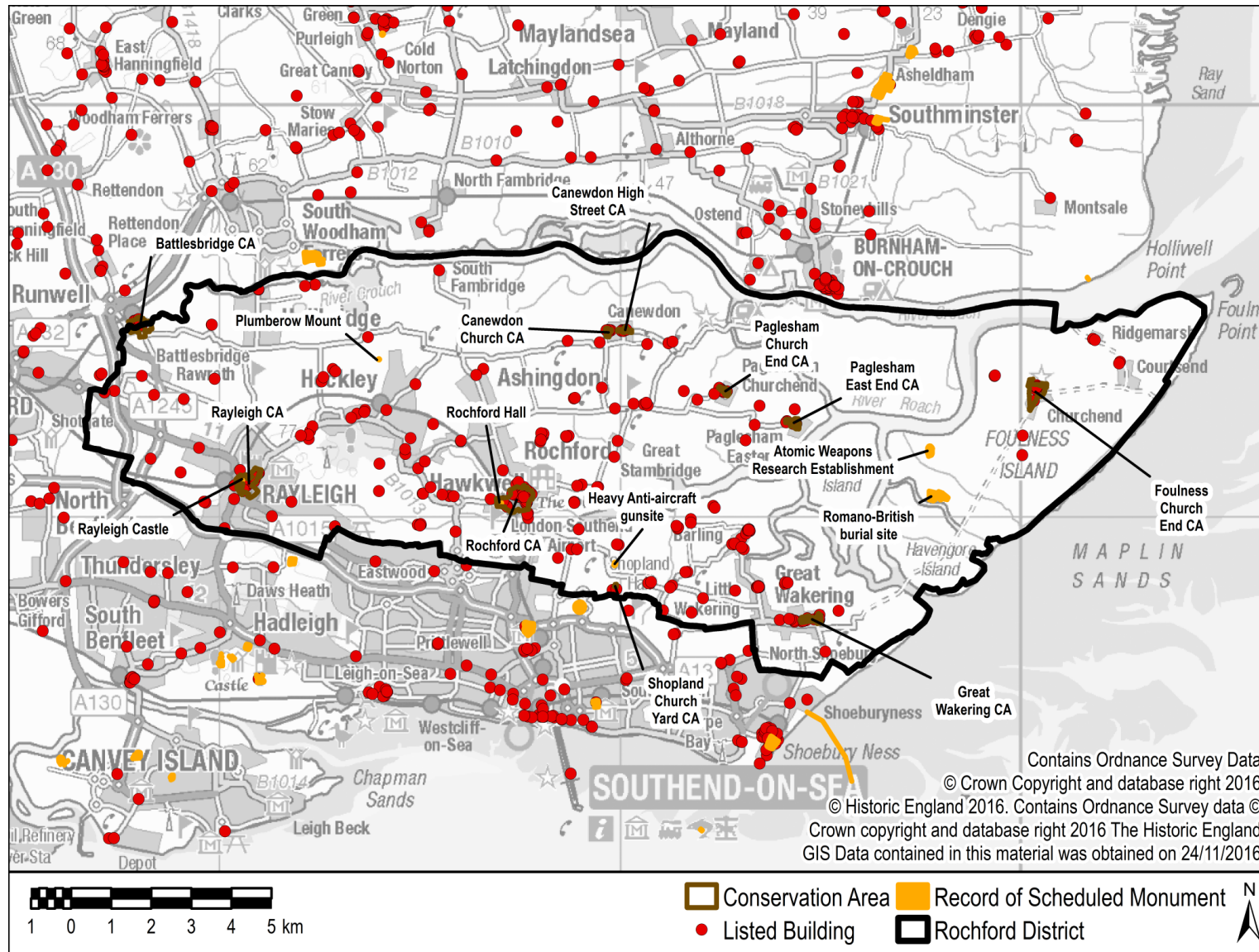
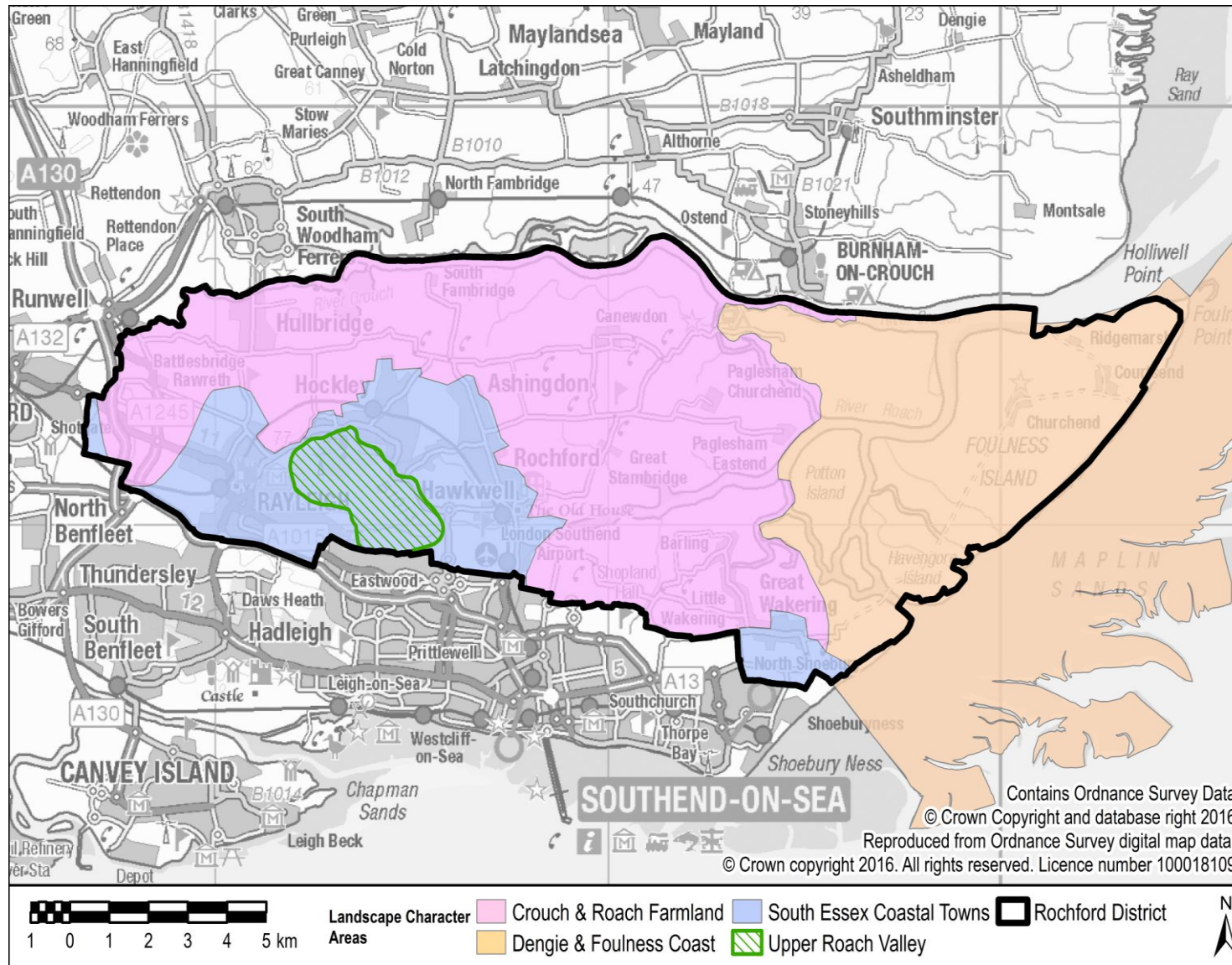


Figure 7: Landscape Character Areas



4.2.2 Summary of future baseline

New development in the District has the potential to impact on the fabric and setting of cultural heritage assets. This includes through inappropriate design and layout. It should be noted, however, that existing historic environment designations will offer a degree of protection to cultural heritage assets and their settings. Also new development need not be harmful to the significance of a heritage asset; new development may be an opportunity to enhance the setting of an asset and better reveal its significance.

New development has the potential to lead to incremental changes in landscape and townscape character and quality in and around the District. This includes from the loss of landscape features and visual impact. There may also be potential effects on landscape/townscape character and quality in the vicinity of the road network due to an incremental growth in traffic flows.

There are likely to be small scale and incremental changes in tranquillity in and around the District, affected by changes in the levels of light and noise pollution.

4.3 Key Issues

- There are a range of nationally designated heritage assets present within the District, including six Scheduled Monuments, ten Conservation Areas and numerous Listed Buildings.
- There are more than 350 sites of archaeological interest recorded in the District.
- There is a clear east-west divide in terms of the landscape.
- The east of the District is largely formed of undisturbed and tranquil areas.
- The majority of the District is designated as Green Belt.

4.4 SA Objectives

Table 10: SA Objectives and decision-aiding questions for Landscape and Historic Environment

SA Objective	Decision-aiding questions
<p>Protect and enhance the significance of the District's historic environment, heritage assets and their settings.</p> <p><i>Relevant SEA Topics:</i> Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage</p> <p><i>Relevant NPPF Paragraphs:</i> 6 – 10 & 126 – 141</p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect, and where possible, enhance heritage assets and their settings? • Protect, and where possible, enhance conservation areas? • Protect, and where possible, enhance the wider historic environment? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic environment?
<p>Protect and enhance the character and quality of the District's landscapes and townscapes.</p> <p><i>Relevant SEA Topics:</i> Landscape</p> <p><i>Relevant NPPF Paragraphs:</i> 109 – 125</p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance landscape and townscape character? • Support the integrity of the District's conservation areas? • Protect the tranquil areas in the east of the District that remain relatively undisturbed by noise and are important for their recreational and amenity value?

5. Environmental Quality

5.1 Context Review

5.1.1 National

- **Anglian River Basin Management Plan (2015):**⁶⁵ provides a framework for protecting and enhancing the benefits provided by the water environment. It sets out the current status and pressures affecting the water environment; environmental objectives; and a programme of measures.
- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):**⁶⁶ encourages the effective use of land and seeks to protect and enhance valued soils. The planning system should prevent new and existing development from contributing to unacceptable levels of air, water and soil pollution. Planning policies should sustain compliance with and contribute towards EU limit values or national objectives for pollutants.
- **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG):**⁶⁷
 - The Local Plan should consider the potential cumulative impact of a number of smaller developments on air quality as well as more substantial ones. The impact of point sources of air pollution should also be considered as well as ways in which new development would be appropriate in locations where air quality is or is likely to be a concern and not give rise to unacceptable risks from pollution.
 - Plan-making should consider how to help protect and enhance local surface water and groundwater in ways that allow new development to proceed and avoid costly assessment at the planning application stage. It should also consider the type or location of new development where an assessment of the potential impacts on water bodies may be required.
 - Reiterates the NPPF in stating that the planning system should protect and enhance valued soils and prevent the adverse effects of unacceptable levels of pollution.

5.1.2 Regional

- **South Essex Surface Water Management Plan (2012):**⁶⁸ provides a surface water management strategy for South Essex which includes consideration of flooding from sewers, drains, groundwater and runoff from land, small watercourses and ditches.
- **The Essex SuDS Design Guide (2016):**⁶⁹ provides design advice and guidance on surface water drainage schemes including local standards for water quality and water quantity from developments and guidance on SuDS design.

5.1.3 Local

- **Rochford District Core Strategy (adopted 2011):**⁷⁰ prioritises the reuse of previously developed land and includes policies to reduce impacts on air quality, protect water quality and water resources and reduce flood risk.

⁶⁵ Defra and the Environment Agency (Dec 2015) Part 1: Anglian river basin District – River Basin Management Plan [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/anglian-river-basin-District-river-basin-management-plan> Accessed Nov 2016.

⁶⁶ Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf Accessed Nov 2016

⁶⁷ Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Practice Guidance [online] available at: <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/> Accessed Nov 2016

⁶⁸ South Essex Surface Water Management Plan [online] available at: http://www.rochford.gov.uk/sites/rochford.gov.uk/files/planning_surfacemanagement.pdf Accessed Nov 2016.

⁶⁹ Essex County Council (2016) Sustainable Drainage Systems Design Guide [online] available at: http://www.essex.gov.uk/Environment%20Planning/Environment/local-environment/flooding/View-It/Documents/suds_design_guide.pdf Accessed Mar 2017.

⁷⁰ Rochford District Council - Adopted Plans [online] available at: <http://www.rochford.gov.uk/planning/policy/adopted-plans> Accessed Nov 2016

- **Rochford District Development Management Plan (adopted 2014):**⁷¹ Major developments are required to submit an air quality assessment (Policy DM29) and must include appropriate traffic management measures (Policy DM31).
- **Rochford Draft Air Quality Action Plan (2016):**⁷² outlines the action the Council will take to improve air quality in the District between 2016 and 2020, in particular within the Rayleigh Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

5.2 Baseline Review

5.2.1 Summary of current baseline

5.2.1.1 Air Quality

In relation to air quality monitoring, there is one continuous automatic air quality monitoring site (CMS) in the District which is deployed for 6 months each year. This is based in Rayleigh High Street and monitors nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). In the past, a CMS has also been located outside Rawreth Industrial site to monitor fine airborne dust (PM10). There are currently 10 NO₂ diffusion tubes at six sites in the towns of Rayleigh and Rochford. These diffusion tubes are non-automatic.

Rochford District Council declared an Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) for particulate matter at Rawreth Industrial Estate, Rayleigh in 2010. This was subsequently revoked in March 2013 following measured improvements between 2011 and 2012.⁷³

In 2015, Rochford District Council declared an AQMA in Rayleigh due to exceedance's of NO₂ from road traffic. The area extends from the A127 trunk road to and encompassing the Rayleigh Town Centre one way system. A Draft Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) outlines the action the Council will take to improve air quality in the District between 2016 and 2020, in particular within the AQMA. Priorities are to; reduce congestion in areas where people live close to busy roads, reduce the volume of traffic within the AQMA and strengthen planning policies to avoid new residential development in the AQMA, manage growth and support electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure.⁷⁴

Traffic is the primary source of air pollution in the District. Rayleigh is Rochford District's principal centre and offers retail and leisure outlets. In addition to traffic from commuting, shopping and business, the road network in Rayleigh also acts to transfer traffic between the A127 trunk road and villages such as Hockley, Hawkwell, Ashingdon and Canewdon. The Town Centre is also the crossroads for three other key routes, A129 / A1015 and B1013. These routes carry significant through traffic between Southend and the west of Rayleigh towards Chelmsford avoiding the congested A127. There are no major industrial sources of air pollution in the District.

5.2.1.2 Water quality

In terms of water quality, Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs) have been defined by the Environment Agency in England and Wales to protect groundwater sources such as wells, boreholes and springs that are used for public drinking water supply. The zones show the risk of contamination from activities that might cause groundwater pollution in the area. There are no SPZs designated in the District. The Chalk Formation, a principal aquifer is overlain across the District by the unproductive London Clay Formation. However, some overlying bedrock and superficial deposits are designated as Secondary aquifers. These deposits are important locally for abstraction and supporting base flow in watercourses⁷⁵.

The Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) requires Member States to identify areas where groundwaters have nitrate concentrations of more than 50 mg/l nitrate or are thought to be at risk of nitrate contamination. Areas associated with such groundwaters are designated as Nitrate Vulnerable Zones

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Rochford District Council (2016) Air Quality Action Plan [online] available at: https://www.rochford.gov.uk/sites/default/files/environ_airqualitydraftplan_0.pdf Accessed Feb 2017.

⁷³ Rochford District Council - 2014 Air Quality Progress Report [online] available at: www.essexair.org.uk/Reports/Rochford_Progress_Report_2016.pdf Accessed Nov 2016.

⁷⁴ Rochford District Council (2016) Air Quality Action Plan [online] available at: https://www.rochford.gov.uk/sites/default/files/environ_airqualitydraftplan_0.pdf Accessed Feb 2017.

⁷⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/groundwater-protection-principles-and-practice-gp3>

(NVZs) within which Member States are required to establish Action Programmes in order to reduce and prevent further nitrate contamination. There are no NVZs for groundwater in the District; however there is designated surface water NVZ in the north of the District and this reflects the agricultural use of the land.

The Environment Agency's (EA) Catchment Data Explorer builds on data in the River Basin Management Plans. The ecological and chemical classifications for surface waters within the borough are set out in **Table 11** below.

Table 11: Ecological and chemical classification for surface waters (2015 Cycle 2)⁷⁶

Catchment	No of water bodies	Ecological status or potential					Chemical Status	
		Bad	Poor	Moderate	Good	High	Fail	Good
Crouch and Roach	8	0	1	7	0	0	1	7

The EA predicts that the ecological and chemical quality of the surface waters within the Crouch and Roach catchment will improve by 2027. They also identify that the main reasons why the water bodies above are not achieving good status is as a result of the existing urban area and transport as well as local and central Government. The Environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive are:

- to prevent deterioration of the status of surface waters and groundwater
- to achieve objectives and standards for protected areas
- to aim to achieve good status for all water bodies or, for heavily modified water bodies and artificial water bodies, good ecological potential and good surface water chemical status
- to reverse any significant and sustained upward trends in pollutant concentrations in groundwater
- the cessation of discharges, emissions and hazardous substances into surface waters
- progressively reduce the pollution of groundwater and prevent or limit the entry of pollutants

5.2.1.3 Soil quality

The District includes the following soil types⁷⁷:

- Loamy and Clayey soils of coastal flats with naturally high groundwater (predominantly in the east of the District, but also in the north surrounding the River Crouch)
- Freely draining acid loamy soils over rock (predominantly in the south and central area of the District)
- Fen peat soils (predominantly in the central area of the District just north of the River Roach)
- Slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage (predominantly in the central area of the District)
- Slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils (predominantly in the west of the District, and stretching east across the north of the District)

There is no evidence to suggest that contaminated land is a significant issue within the District. Agricultural land quality is addressed within Section 6.

5.2.2 Summary of future baseline

New housing and employment provision in the District and sub-regionally has the potential to have adverse effects on air quality through increasing traffic flows and associated levels of pollutants such

⁷⁶ Environment Agency Catchment Data Explorer [online] available at: <http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/> Accessed Feb 2017.

⁷⁷ Defra: Magic Map [online] available at: <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/> Accessed Nov 2016.

as nitrogen dioxide. Areas of particular sensitivity to increased traffic flows are likely to be routes with the largest congestion issues, including the designated AQMA in Rayleigh.

Water quality is also likely to continue to be affected by pollution incidents in the area, the presence of non-native species and physical modifications to water bodies. In the short to medium term, the requirements of the Water Framework Directive are likely to lead to continued improvements to water quality in watercourses in the wider area.

5.3 Key Issues

- Nitrogen dioxide levels in excess of the annual average objective level have been monitored at ten roadside locations in the District.
- There is one Air Quality Management Area within the District in Rayleigh and it has been designated as a result of emissions from road transport.
- Ecological status of the upper reaches of Rivers Crouch and Roach are moderate quality and at risk of non-compliance with WFD in 2015.
- Estuarine waters and coastal waters to the south east of the District are of good chemical quality and moderate ecological quality with some risk of non-compliance with WFD in 2015; there are no designated bathing waters.

5.4 SA Objectives

Table 12: SA Objectives and decision-aiding questions for Environmental Quality

SA Objective	Decision-aiding questions
<p>Improve air, soil and water quality.</p> <p><i>Relevant SEA Topics:</i> <i>Soil, water & air</i></p> <p><i>Relevant NPPF Paragraphs:</i> <i>109 - 125</i></p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain or improve local air quality? • Promote the remediation of contaminated land? • Protect and improve the area's chemical & biological water quality? • Protect groundwater resources?

6. Land, Soil and Water Resources

6.1 Context Review

6.1.1 National

- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):**⁷⁸ Key messages include:
 - Protect and enhance soils. The value of best and most versatile agricultural land should also be taken into account.
 - Prevent new or existing development from being ‘adversely affected’ by the presence of ‘unacceptable levels’ of soil pollution or land instability and be willing to remediate and mitigate ‘despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate’.
 - Encourage the effective use of land’ through the reuse of land which has been previously developed, ‘provided that this is not of high environmental value’.
 - With regards to waste, the NPPF does not contain any specific waste policies as waste planning policy will be published as part of the National Waste Management Plan.
- **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG):**⁷⁹
 - Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to those of a higher quality.
- **Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England:**⁸⁰ this document sets out a vision for soil use in England.
- **Water White Paper:**⁸¹ sets out the Government's vision for a more resilient water sector. It states the measures that will be taken to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystems, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources.
- **Government Review of Waste Policy in England:**⁸² recognises that environmental benefits and economic growth can be the result of a more sustainable approach to the use of materials.

6.1.2 Regional

- **Essex and Suffolk Water, Water Resource Management Plan (2014):**⁸³ sets out how Essex and Suffolk Water will manage the balance between water supply and demand over a 25 year period up to 2040. Non-household demand is forecast to be lower at the end of the period than it is today and this follows the trend of the last 20 years although the rate of decline is forecast to be much more modest. It concludes that in 2040, Essex will have a demand of around 11 Mega litres per day less than today, despite a population increase of 100,000 people.
- This includes using cost-effective demand management, transfer, trading and resource development schemes to meet growth in demand from new development and to restore abstraction to sustainable levels (‘sustainability reductions’), and in the medium to long term, ensuring that sufficient water continues to be available for growth and that supply systems are flexible enough to adapt to climate change.

⁷⁸ Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf Accessed Nov 2016

⁷⁹ Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Practice Guidance [online] available at: <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/> Accessed Nov 2016

⁸⁰ Defra (2009) Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England [online] available at: <http://archive.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/land/soil/documents/soil-strategy.pdf>

⁸¹ Defra (2011) Water for life [online] available at <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm82/8230/8230.pdf> Accessed Nov 2016.

⁸² Defra (2011) Government Review of Waste Policy in England [online] available at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13540-waste-policy-review110614.pdf> Accessed Nov 2016.

⁸³ Essex and Suffolk Water (2014) Water Resources Management Plan [online] available at: https://www.eswater.co.uk/assets/documents/ESW_Final_Published_PR14_WRMP_Report_-_V3_-_08OCT14.pdf

- **Essex & Southend Waste Local Plan:**⁸⁴ Management of waste is guided by the Essex & Southend Waste Local Plan (adopted, 2001); the Replacement Waste Local Plan has been submitted for Examination and will address waste planning until 2032 including allocations for sites.

6.1.3 Local

- **Rochford District Core Strategy (adopted 2011):**⁸⁵
 - Policy H1 on the efficient use of land for housing takes into account (inter alia) the agricultural value of land.
 - Policy ENV2 directs development away from the Coastal Protection Belt as far as practicable. Policy ENV9 guides development towards real improvements in water efficiency and expects developers to go beyond the Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 (maximum indoor consumption of 105 litres per person per day) with regard to water conservation measures (the highest Levels 5 & 6 are 80 l/person/day).
- **Rochford District Development Management Plan (adopted 2014):**⁸⁶ Policy DM10 favours proposals for the redevelopment of previously developed land in the Green Belt.
- **Rochford District Contaminated Land Strategy (2013):**⁸⁷ This document sets out how land which merits detailed individual inspection will be identified in order to ensure the safe remediation of contaminated land in the District.

6.2 Baseline Review

6.2.1 Summary of current baseline

6.2.1.1 Agricultural land

The Agricultural Land Classification classifies land into six grades (including ‘non-agricultural’ and ‘urban’), where Grades 1 to 3a are ‘best and most versatile’ land and Grades 3b to 5 are of poorer quality. Best and most versatile land is the land which is most flexible, productive and efficient in response to inputs and which can best deliver food and non food crops for future generations.

Figure 8 shows that Grade 1 agricultural land is located in the south of the District. Land classified as Grade 2 land is present in the centre of the District as well on the eastern edge of the District on Foulness Island. Whilst significant areas of Grade 3 land are present, recent land classification has not been carried out to determine whether this comprises land classified as the best and most versatile (i.e. Grade 3a land) or land classified as Grade 3b land. The Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations 2008 provide information on steps to reduce nitrogen pollution from agriculture⁸⁸.

6.2.1.2 Waste Management

There is one Household Waste and Recycling Centre in Rayleigh that serves the District, which is operated by Essex County Council, rather than Rochford District Council. In addition there are approximately 25 recycling banks located across the District⁸⁹.

⁸⁴ Essex County Council & Southend Unitary Authority (2001) The Essex and Southend Waste Local Plan [online] available at: <http://www.essex.gov.uk/Environment%20Planning/Planning/Minerals-Waste-Planning-Team/Planning-Policy/Pages/Current-Waste-Local-Plan.aspx> Accessed Nov 2016.

⁸⁵ Rochford District Council - Adopted Plans [online] available at: <http://www.rochford.gov.uk/planning/policy/adopted-plans> Accessed Nov 2016.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Rochford District Council (2013) Contaminated Land Strategy [online] available at: http://www.rochford.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/policies_plans_and_strategies/contaminated_land_strategy Accessed Nov 2016.

⁸⁸ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/1849/made>

⁸⁹ Rochford District Council Website – Recycling Banks [online] available at: <https://www.rochford.gov.uk/environment/recycling/recycling-banks> Accessed Nov 2016.

6.2.1.3 Water Availability

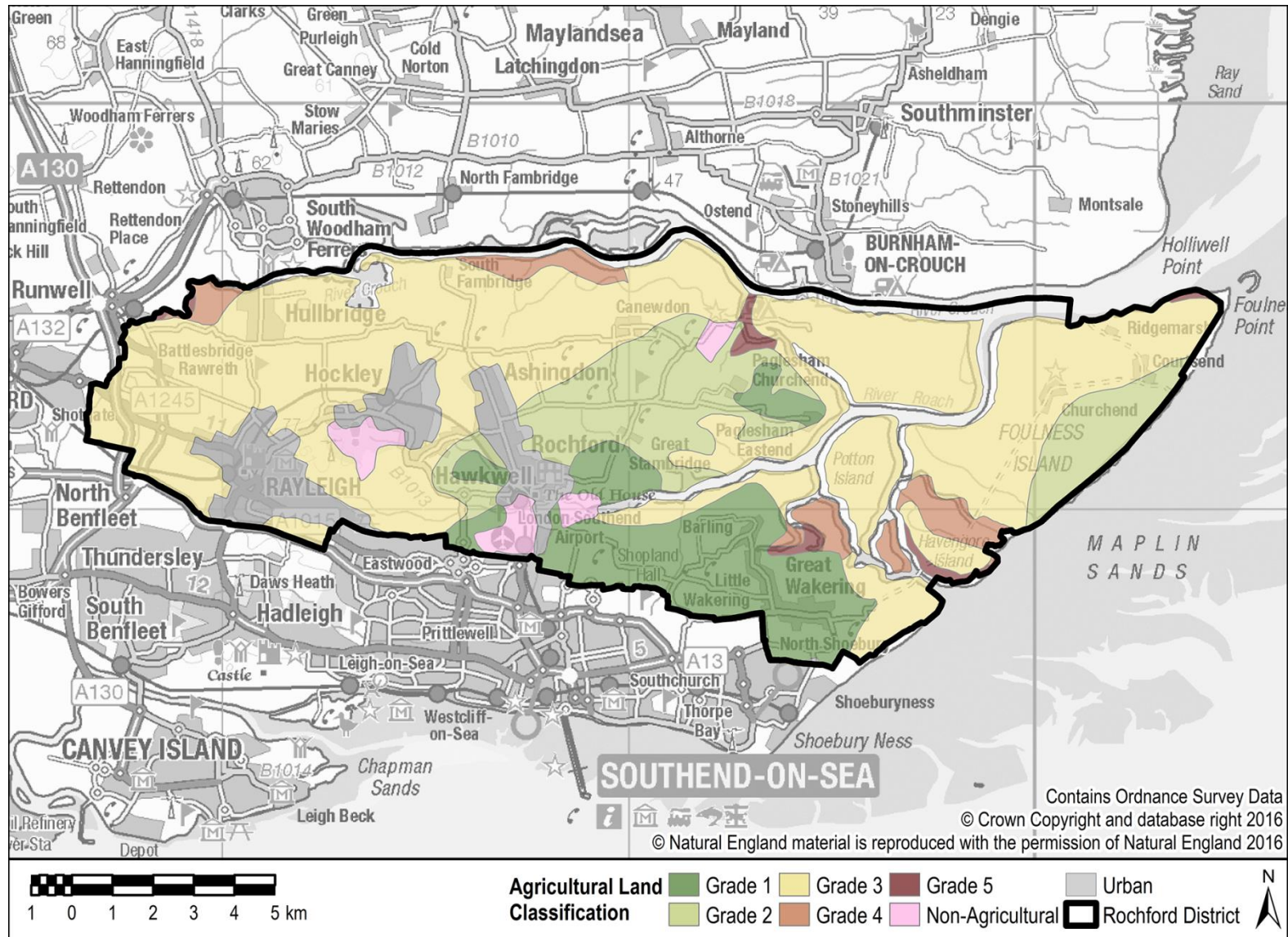
South Essex relies on water imported from outside the area and this is provided by Essex & Suffolk Water; Rochford District is within the Essex Water Resource Zone (WRZ). Water companies are required to set out how they will maintain the balance between supply and demand in Water Resource Management Plans (WRMPs). The Essex & Suffolk Water's (ESW) WRMP⁹⁰ covers the period from 2015 to 2040 indicates that the Essex WRZ will maintain a surplus of supply across the 25 year planning horizon and negotiations are ongoing with the neighbouring water companies regarding bulk transfer schemes from Essex.

The annual review for the WRMP published in June 2016 concluded that the supply demand balance will remain in surplus throughout the 25 year planning period now that the Abberton scheme is fully available.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Essex & Suffolk Water (2014) Final Water Resources Management Plan 2014 [online] available at: <https://www.eswater.co.uk/your-home/current-WRMP.aspx> Accessed Nov 2016.

⁹¹ Essex & Suffolk Water (2016) Annual Review of the Water Resources Management Plan 2016 [online] available at: https://www.eswater.co.uk/assets/documents/ESW_WRMP_Annual_Update_-_2015_16_-_Final.pdf Accessed Nov 2016.

Figure 8: Agricultural Land Quality



6.2.2 Summary of future baseline

Existing planning policy encourages the efficient use of land and a preference for the development of brownfield land where possible. Future housing, employment and infrastructure growth is likely to result in further loss of greenfield and agricultural land. In line with the NPPF, the Council should seek to use areas of poorer agricultural land in preference to those of higher quality.

Due to increasing legislative and regulatory requirements, there are increasing pressures to improve recycling and composting rates and move towards zero waste to landfill. However, potential population increases within the District may increase pressures on recycling and waste management facilities. Furthermore, Defra’s estimation for waste growth shows that national waste growth and estimates of future waste arisings expected to remain consistent with current levels. This is because widespread initiatives to reduce waste and improve materials reuse and recycling are likely to reduce long-term production of waste.

Water availability in the wider area may be affected by regional increases in population and an increased occurrence of drought, which is estimated to become increasingly prevalent as a result of climate change.

6.3 Key Issues

- Significant areas of best and most versatile agricultural land are present in the central area of the District. There are also significant areas of Grade 3 agricultural land present across the District; however, there is a data gap in terms of the distribution of Grade 3a and 3b.
- Due to increasing legislative and regulatory requirements, there are increasing pressures to improve recycling and composting rates.
- The Essex Water Resource Zone will maintain a surplus of water supply for at least the next 25 years.

6.4 SA Objectives

Table 13: SA Objectives and decision-aiding questions for Land, Soil and Water Resources

SA Objective	Decision-aiding questions
<p>Promote the efficient and sustainable use of natural resources.</p> <p><i>Relevant SEA Topics:</i> Water & soil</p> <p><i>Relevant NPPF Paragraphs:</i> 47 - 78</p>	<p>Will the option/proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the use of previously developed land? • Avoid the use of land classified as best and most versatile agricultural land? • Minimise water consumption? • Reduce the amount of waste produced and move it up the waste hierarchy? • Encourage recycling of materials and minimise consumption of resources during construction?

7. Population and Communities

7.1 Context Review

7.1.1 National

- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):**⁹² These policies include:
 - To ‘boost significantly the supply of housing’, local planning authorities should meet the ‘full, objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing’ in their area. They should prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment to assess their full housing needs, working with neighbouring authorities where housing market areas cross administrative boundaries. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment should identify the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that the local population is likely to need over the plan period.
 - With a view to creating ‘sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities’ authorities should ensure provision of affordable housing onsite or externally where robustly justified.
 - In rural areas, when exercising the duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities, local planning authorities should be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate. Authorities should consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of affordable housing to meet local needs.
 - The NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. It explains how good design is a key aspect in sustainable development, and how development should improve the quality of the area over its lifetime, not just in the short term. Good architecture and landscaping are important, with the use of design codes contributing to the delivery of high quality outcomes. Design should reinforce local distinctiveness, raise the standard more generally in the area and address the connections between people and places.
 - The social role of the planning system involves ‘supporting vibrant and healthy communities’.
 - The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities.
 - Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.
 - Ensure that developments create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. Places should contain clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public spaces, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.
 - Ensuring that there is a ‘sufficient choice of school places’ is of ‘great importance’ and there is a need to take a ‘proactive, positive and collaborative approach’ to bringing forward ‘development that will widen choice in education’.
 - The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.
- **Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change report Ready for Ageing? (2013):**⁹³ warns that society is underprepared for the ageing population. The report says that ‘*longer lives can be a great benefit, but there has been a collective failure to address the implications and without urgent action this great boon could turn into a series of miserable crises*’. The report says that the housing market is delivering much less specialist housing for

⁹² Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf Accessed Nov 2016.

⁹³ Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change (2013) Ready for Ageing? [online] available at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/public-services-committee/report-ready-for-ageing/> Accessed Nov 2016.

older people than is needed. Central and local government, housing associations and house builders need urgently to plan how to ensure that the housing needs of the older population are better addressed and to give as much priority to promoting an adequate market and social housing for older people as is given to housing for younger people.

7.1.2 Local

- **Rochford District Development Plan Documents (DPDs):**⁹⁴ The Council has adopted a number of DPDs that will help to meet the housing, employment and infrastructure needs of communities within the District. This includes the Core Strategy, Development Management Plan and Allocations Plan.

7.2 Baseline Review

7.2.1 Summary of current baseline

7.2.1.1 Demographic makeup of the District

According to the most recent census data available, in 2011 the total population of Rochford District was 83,287.⁹⁵ This was an increase of 4,798 from the 2001 census, or a 6% population growth (see **Table 14**). The rate of population growth in the District during this period was below regional and national levels.

Table 14: Population growth, 2001-2011⁹⁶

Date	Rochford District	East	England
2001	78,489	5,388,140	49,138,831
2011	83,287	5,846,965	53,012,456
Population Change 2001-2011	6.11%	8.5%	7.88%

Table 15 highlights the age structure of the Rochford District compared with East of England and England averages. Adapted from statistics compiled by the ONS, the data indicates the total population of each age group, and the percentage of that group within the total population of each area.

⁹⁴ Rochford District Council - Adopted Plans [online] available at: <http://www.rochford.gov.uk/planning/policy/adopted-plans> Accessed Nov 2016.

⁹⁵ Office for National Statistics (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics [online] available at: <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/> Accessed Nov 2016.

⁹⁶ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Population Density, 2001 (UV02) [online] available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census> Accessed Nov 2016.

Table 15: Age Structure (2011)⁹⁷

Age group	Rochford District	East	England
0-15	15016 (18%)	1108632 (19%)	10,022,836 (18.9%)
16-24	8130 (9.8%)	638273 (11%)	6,284,760 (11.9%)
25-44	19802 (23.8%)	1546616 (25%)	14,645,152 (27.5%)
45-59	17554 (21%)	1156696 (20%)	10,276,902 (19.4%)
60+	22785 (27%)	1396748 (24%)	11,832,806 (22.3%)
Total	83,287 (100%)	58,46965 (100%)	530,12456 (100%)

As highlighted by the above table, the District has a lower proportion of individuals across the 16-24 age range compared to national and regional averages, with a higher proportion of the 60+ age group within the District than all other comparators. There are 22,785 people aged 60 or over living in the District, comprising 27% of the population. This proportion is higher than the regional and national comparators.

7.2.1.2 Ethnicity

Table 16 shows the breakdown of ethnic groups in the District, which is predominantly comprised of White English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British or White Irish people or White; other white people (97%). Other ethnic groups comprise less than 1% of the District's population.

Table 16: Ethnicity

Ethnic group	Rochford	East	England
White English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	95.6%	85.2%	79.8%
White Irish	0.6%	85.2%	79.8%
White Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%
White; other white	1%	4.4%	4.6%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups: White and Black Caribbean	0.4%	0.5%	0.8%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups: White and Black African	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups: White and Asian	0.4%	0.7%	0.6%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups: Other mixed	0.2%	0.5%	0.5%
Asian/Asian British: Indian	0.3%	1.8%	2.6%
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	0.1%	1.1%	2.1%
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	0.1%	0.3%	0.8%
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	0.3%	0.6%	0.7%
Asian/Asian British: Other Asian	0.3%	1.4%	1.5%

⁹⁷ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Age structure (KS108EW) [online] available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census> Accessed Nov 2016.

Ethnic group	Rochford	East	England
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African	0.3%	1%	1.8%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Caribbean	0.1%	0.4%	1.1%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black: Other Black	0.1%	0.2%	0.5%
Other Ethnic Group: Arab	0.04%	0.2%	0.4%
Other Ethnic Group: Any Other Ethnic Group	0.1%	0.4%	0.6%

7.2.1.3 Deprivation

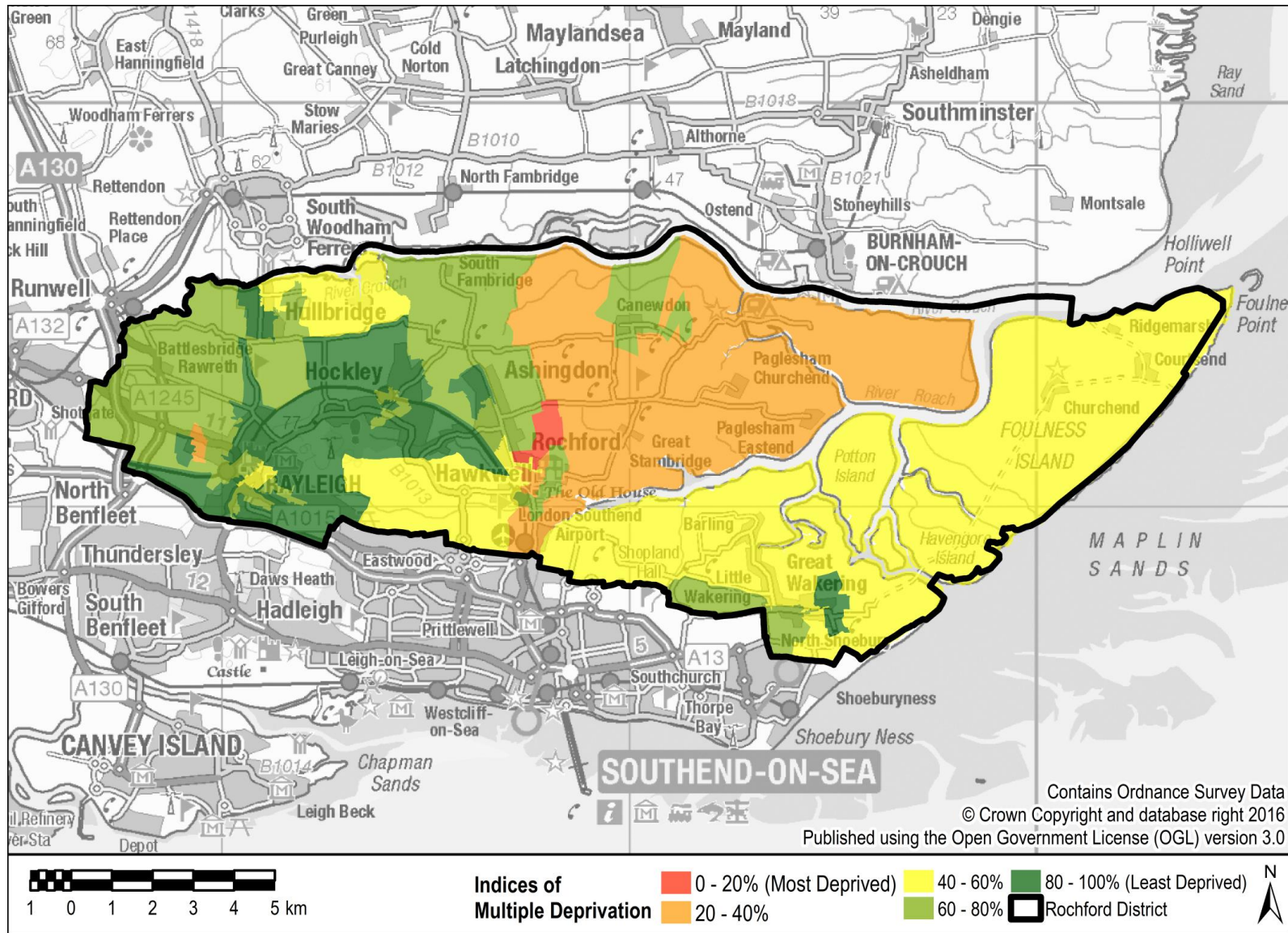
The Multiple Deprivation Index (2013) shows that Rochford District is one of the least deprived Districts in Essex. This is reflected in the national rankings which highlights it is of 285th out of 327 local authorities nationally.⁹⁸

Figure 9 illustrates relative deprivation across the District. Although the District has generally low levels of deprivation there are pockets of deprivation in Foulness and Great Wakering ward which has high levels of child poverty although long-term unemployment is just below the county average. Rochford ward has high levels of both child poverty and long-term unemployment. Sweyne Park has above average levels of both child poverty and long-term unemployment.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ DCLG (2015) English indices of deprivation [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015> Accessed Nov 2016.

⁹⁹ JSNA (2016) A profile of people living in Rochford [online] available at: <https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=A+profile+of+people+living+in+Rochford&og=A+profile+of+people+living+in+Rochford&ags=chrome..69i57j69i64l2.134j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8> Accessed Nov 2016.

Figure 9: Deprivation



7.2.1.4 Housing

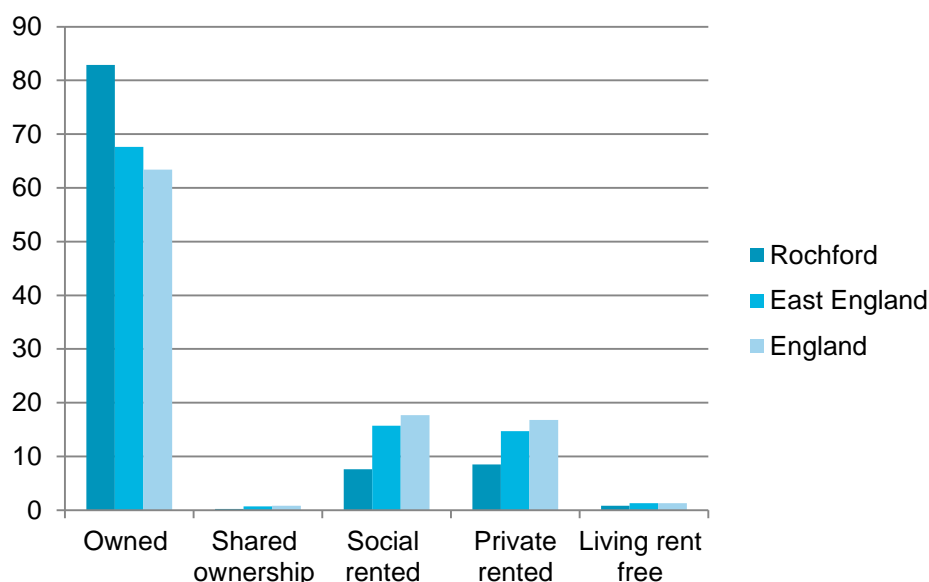
Figure 10 shows the tenure of households¹⁰⁰ in Rochford District in comparison with tenure in the East of England and nationally. A higher proportion of the District's residents live in housing owned either outright or with a mortgage (82.9% in total) than the regional average (67.6%). This figure is also higher than the national average of 63.4%.

Rochford has a smaller proportion of people that rent privately than regional and national averages. The District also has lower proportions of social rented tenures than regional and national comparators.

In terms of house prices the median selling price in 2013 was £225,000. Alongside, the median house price to income ratio was 11.40 in 2015. This was an increase from 9.16 in 2013.¹⁰¹

In 2015, there were 704 households on local authority housing waiting lists in Rochford District, an increase of 140 since 2010.¹⁰²

Figure 10: Tenure by Household



7.2.1.5 Community Facilities

A range of community facilities (i.e. village halls, medical service, post office, recreation space) are available in the larger settlements such as Rayleigh, Hockley and Rochford itself within the District.

The Rochford Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) indicates that primary school pupils are forecast to increase in Rochford as a result of higher births and pupils arising from planned housing developments. There is also likely to be increased pressure on the secondary school within Rochford as a result of proposed development. In Rayleigh, the number of primary school pupils are forecast to stabilise over the next four years and there will be sufficient capacity. The two academies serving Rayleigh are full at present and forecast to remain so over the course of the next five years; however, pressure is likely to increase as a result of planned housing in the area. Primary pupil numbers are expected to decline across Hockley but when additional housing is taken into consideration there will be a slight increase in the intake of pupils by 2020, worsening the current deficit of capacity. Even

¹⁰⁰ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Tenure - Households, 2011 (QS405EW) [online] available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census> Accessed Nov 2016.

¹⁰¹ Department for Communities and Local Government Live Table 577 & 582 [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-housing-market-and-house-prices> Accessed Nov 2016.

¹⁰² DCLG (2012) Statistical data set Live tables on rents, lettings and tenancies. Table 600: numbers of households on local authorities' housing waiting lists, by District: England 1997 to 2013. [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-housing-market-and-house-prices> Accessed Nov 2016.

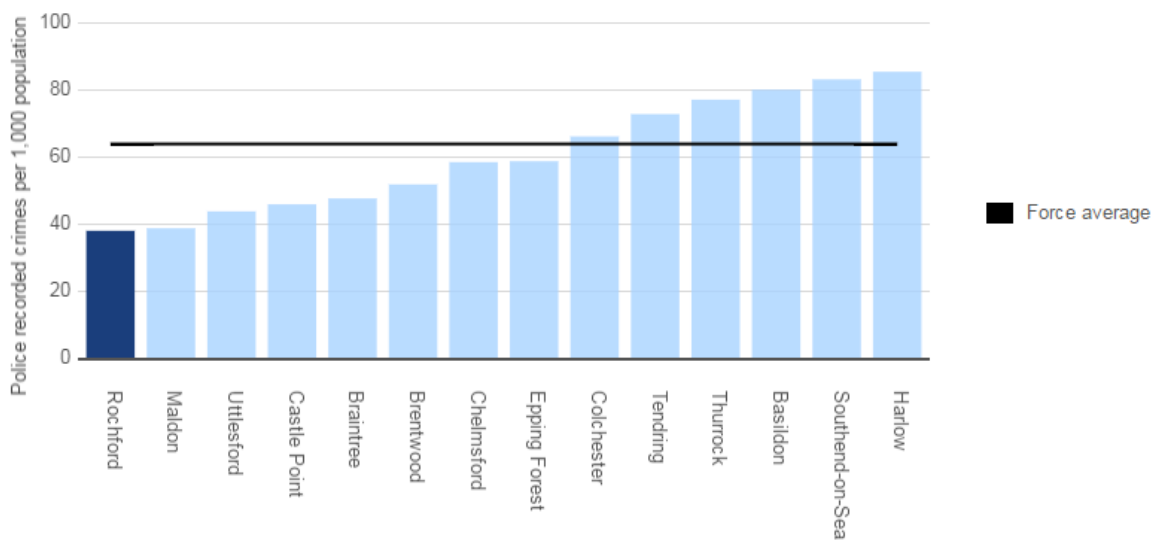
taking account of proposed housing growth in the area, secondary school pupils are forecast to drop over the course of the next five years in Hockley.¹⁰³

There is currently no shortfall of swimming pools or sports courts in the District; however, there is a slight shortfall of indoor bowls rinks for the year 2014-16.¹⁰⁴

7.2.1.6 Safety

Rochford has a relatively low crime rate. As highlighted by **Figure 11** Rochford has a low crime rate per 1,000 of the population, and the lowest in Essex.

Figure 11: Crime Rates



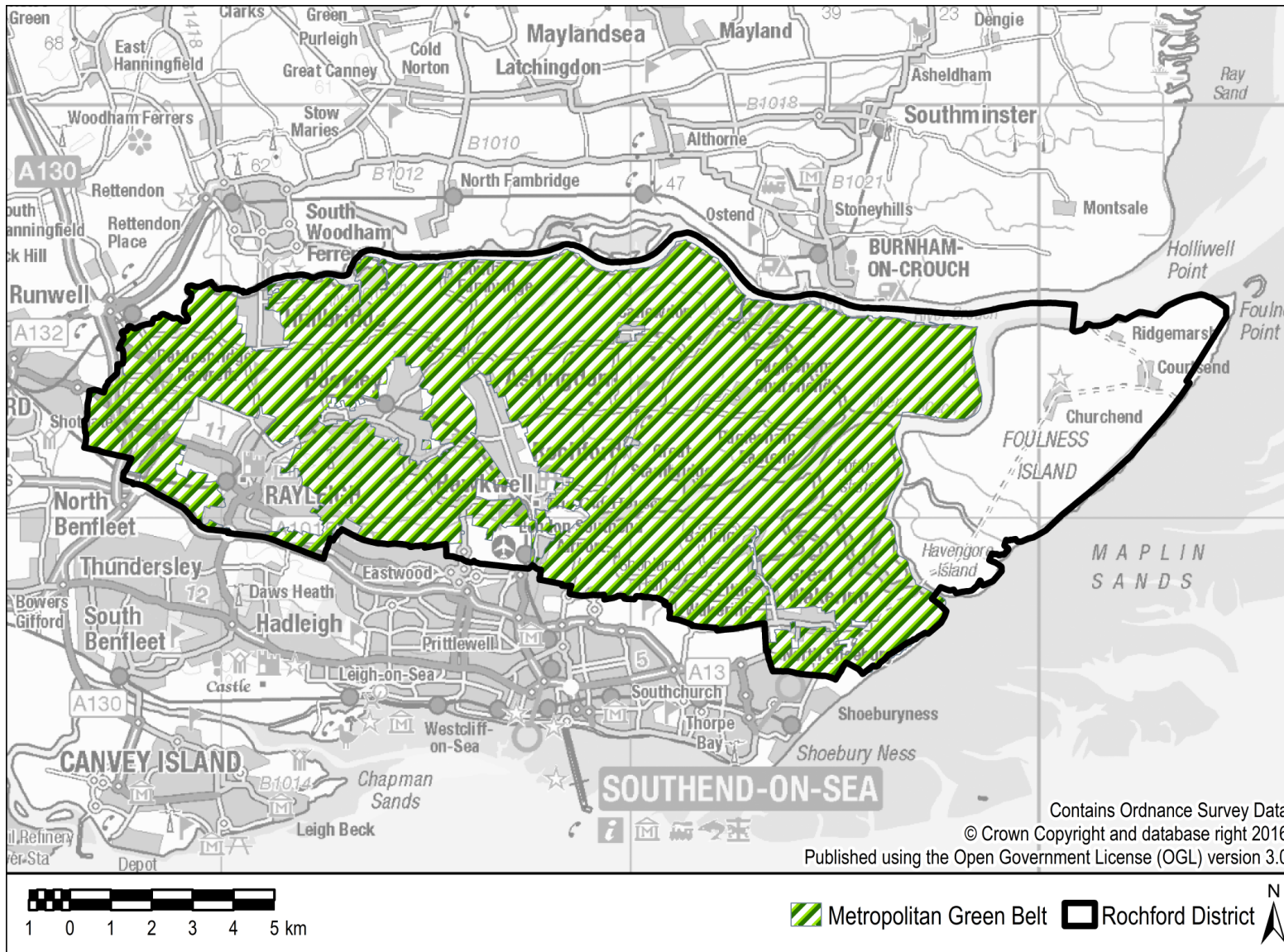
7.2.1.7 Green Belt

The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. This helps to protect the identity of settlements and communities within the District. **Figure 12** shows that the majority of the District's land mass is designated as Green Belt land.

¹⁰³ Rochford District Council (2016), Annual Monitoring Report 2016 [online] available at: <https://www.rochford.gov.uk/authority-monitoring-report> Accessed Nov 2016.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

Figure 12: Green Belt



7.2.2 Summary of future baseline

Recent population increases experienced in Rochford District are likely to continue. Population trends will result in a further increase in the proportion of older people within the District.

The suitability of housing for local requirements depends in part on the successful implementation of appropriate housing policies taken forward through the Local Plan. However, without interventions, the affordability, suitability and quality of housing in the District may continue to be an issue. Unplanned development may also have wider implications in terms of transport and access to infrastructure or the natural environment.

7.3 Key Issues

- The District, in common with many other areas, is experiencing an ageing population. This will have implications for health service provision and the provision of other services, facilities and amenities.
- New community and employment provision in the District should reflect existing and future needs.
- Deprivation is low in the District.
- Affordability of housing in the District is a key issue. Median house price to income ratio was 11.40 in 2015, an increase from 9.16 in 2013.
- Green Belt designation effectively across the whole Rochford District area, important as it aims to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The NPPF (Para 83) allows for the amendment of the Green Belt boundary if there are exceptional circumstances identified through the preparation or review of the Local Plan.

7.4 SA Objectives

Table 17: SA Objectives and decision-aiding questions for Population and Communities

SA Objective	Decision-aiding questions
<p>Cater for existing and future residents' needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community.</p> <p><i>Relevant SEA Topics:</i> <i>Population & human health</i></p> <p><i>Relevant NPPF Paragraphs:</i> <i>47 - 78</i></p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet the identified objectively assessed housing needs for the District? • Ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures to meet the needs of all sectors of the community? • Provide housing in sustainable locations that allow easy access to a range of local services and facilities? • Promote the development of a range of high quality, accessible community facilities, including specialist services for disabled and older people?
<p>To maintain and enhance community and settlement identity.</p> <p><i>Relevant SEA Topics:</i> <i>Population & human health</i></p> <p><i>Relevant NPPF Paragraphs:</i> <i>47 - 78</i></p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid the coalescence of settlements and loss of Green Belt land, where possible? • Provide development in the most deprived areas and stimulate regeneration? • Can development effectively integrate within the existing settlement pattern? • Enhance the identity of a community or settlement?

8. Health and Wellbeing

8.1 Context Review

8.1.1 National

- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):**¹⁰⁵
 - The social role of the planning system involves ‘supporting vibrant and healthy communities’.
 - A core planning principle is to ‘take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all’.
 - The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities.
 - Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.
 - Set out the strategic policies to deliver the provision of health facilities.
 - Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.
 - Health and wellbeing and health infrastructure should be considered in local plans. In this context local plans should promote healthy lifestyles, social and cultural wellbeing and ensure access to the whole community by all sections of the community is promoted.
- **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)**¹⁰⁶:
 - Local planning authorities should ensure that health and wellbeing, and health infrastructure are considered in local and neighbourhood plans and in planning decision making.
- **Fair Society, Healthy Lives (‘The Marmot Review’)**:¹⁰⁷ investigated health inequalities in England and the actions needed in order to tackle them. Subsequently, a supplementary report was prepared providing additional evidence relating to spatial planning and health on the basis that there is: *“overwhelming evidence that health and environmental inequalities are inexorably linked and that poor environments contribute significantly to poor health and health inequalities”*.

8.1.2 Regional

- **Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Essex (2013):**¹⁰⁸ sets out how the partners will work together to improve health and wellbeing over the next five years in Essex. Priorities include starting and developing well (every child has the best start in life), living and working well (residents make better lifestyle choices and have the opportunities needed to enjoy a healthy life) and ageing well (older people remain as independent for as long as possible).

¹⁰⁵ Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf Accessed Nov 2016.

¹⁰⁶ Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Practice Guidance [online] available at: <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/> Accessed Nov 2016.

¹⁰⁷ The Marmot Review (2011) The Marmot Review: Implications for Spatial Planning [online] available at: <http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/12111/53895/53895.pdf> Accessed November 2016.

¹⁰⁸ Essex Partnership (2013) Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Essex [online] available at: <http://essexpartnership.org/content/joint-health-and-wellbeing-strategy> Accessed November 2016.

8.1.3 Local

- **Rochford District Core Strategy (adopted 2011):**¹⁰⁹
 - Policy GB1 will ensure that only the minimum amount of Green Belt will be allocated as necessary to meet the District’s housing and employment needs. Outdoor recreational, leisure and green tourism activities are also supported to enhance the local rural economy whilst protecting the character and openness of the Green Belt (Policy GB2).
 - Policy URV1 seeks to support the Upper Roach Valley becoming a green lung providing informal recreational opportunities with access managed for minimal adverse impacts on landscape and wildlife.
 - Policy URV2 supports the RSPB and the Wallasea Island Project, promoting recreational use that will not cause adverse ecological impacts.
 - Policy CLT4 Healthcare requires new development to incorporate accessible public open space, including providing for recreation.
- **Rochford District Development Management Plan (adopted 2014):**¹¹⁰ Policy DM1 requires that any proposal for development must demonstrate accessibility, integration of existing and proposed public rights of way and local open space requirements.
- **Rochford District Allocations Plan (adopted 2014):**¹¹¹ provides policies to protect locally important green spaces, for example, Policy ELA1 lists 39 sites for Local Wildlife Sites designation. Policy ELA2 protects the Coastal Belt and Policy ELA3 allocates the Upper Roach Valley area protecting this from development that would undermine its role as a green space providing informal recreation opportunities.
- **Rochford District Ageing Population Strategy (2014):**¹¹² seeks to support older people in the District to live independent lives for as long as possible and to receive high quality services when they need them. The strategy sets out a number of measures to improve the overall wellbeing of older people in Rochford and support them to play an active role in their local community.

8.2 Baseline Review

8.2.1 Summary of current baseline

As highlighted in **Table 18**, general health across Rochford District is broadly favourable against all comparators. In this context 47.8% of people reported that they were in ‘very good’ health,¹¹³ which is above the comparative averages. The proportion of people reporting that they were in ‘very bad’ or ‘bad’ health’ is slightly lower than regional and national averages.

Table 18: General Health

Categories	Rochford District	East England	England
Very Good Health	47.8%	47.2%	47.2%
Good Health	34.9%	35.2%	34.2%
Fair Health	13%	12.9%	13.1%
Bad Health	3.4%	3.6%	4.2%
Very Bad Health	0.9%	1 %	1.2%

¹⁰⁹ Rochford District Council - Adopted Plans [online] available at: <http://www.rochford.gov.uk/planning/policy/adopted-plans> Accessed Nov 2016.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

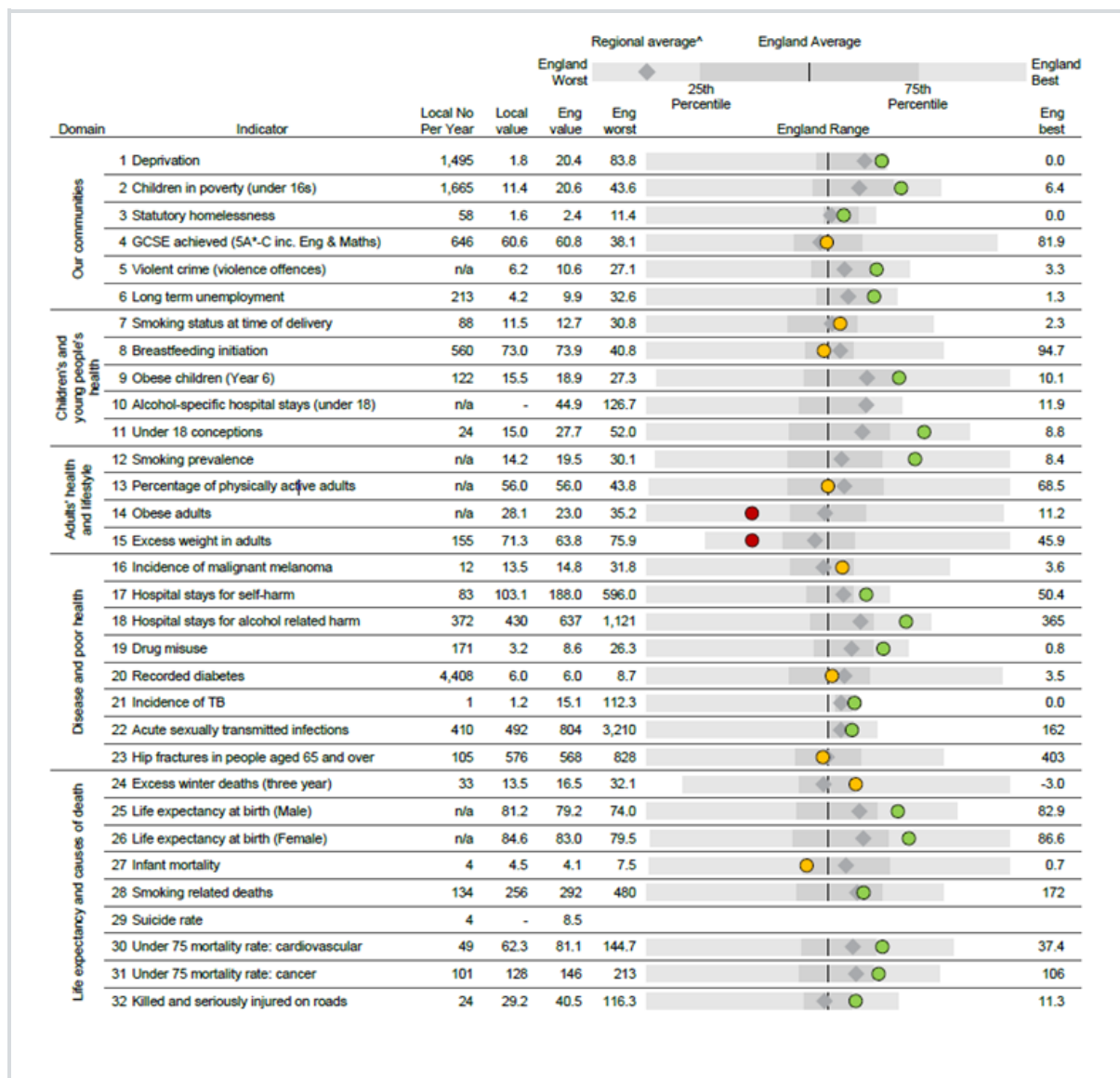
¹¹² Rochford District Council (2014) Ageing Population Strategy [online] available at: http://www.rochford.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/policies_plans_and_strategies/ageing_population_strategy Accessed Nov 2016.

¹¹³ ONS (2011) Census 2011, General Health (QS302EW)

Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures for Rochford District shows that life expectancy in the District is 80.3 for men and 84.4 for women¹¹⁴, above the national averages of 79.2 and 83, respectively.

The 2015 Health Profile for Rochford¹¹⁵ suggests that life expectancy is 4.9 years lower for men living in the most deprived areas of Rochford District when compared to those living in the least deprived areas of the District. **Figure 13** is from the health profiles developed by Public Health England and shows how the health of Rochford residents compared with those in the rest of England.

Figure 13: Health Profile for Rochford



According to the 2015 Health Profile for Rochford, some 28.1% of the District's population was classified as obese in 2012, which is less favourable when compared to the England average of 23%. The number of deaths attributable to smoking (134 deaths per annum) is better than the national average. The number of people with recorded diabetes is the same as the England average as is the percentage of adults achieving 150 minutes of physical activity per week (56%). The number of hospital stays as a result of alcohol-related harm (372 stays per annum) and the number of hospital

¹¹⁴ ONS Life Expectancy at Birth [online] available at: [http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/viewFullDataset.do?instanceSelection=027385&productId=937&\\$ph=60_61&datasetInstanceId=27385&startColumn=1&numberOfColumns=8&containerAreald=276720](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/viewFullDataset.do?instanceSelection=027385&productId=937&$ph=60_61&datasetInstanceId=27385&startColumn=1&numberOfColumns=8&containerAreald=276720) Accessed November 2016.

¹¹⁵ Health Profile for Rochford District (2015) [online] available at: <http://www.apho.org.uk/resource/view.aspx?RID=50215&SEARCH=rochford&SPEAR> Accessed November 2016.

stays as a result of self-harm (83 stays per annum) was also favourable when compared than the national average.

In addition, rates of statutory homelessness, violent crime, long-term unemployment, drug misuse, and early deaths from cardiovascular disease and cancer are favourable when compared with the national average. Rates of sexually transmitted diseases and the rate of under-18 conceptions are also better than the national average.

Local priorities in the Rochford District include addressing dementia and assisting vulnerable older people, addressing long term chronic conditions, and promoting adult physical activity.

The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Essex identifies that Rochford has the second highest level of increasing and higher risk drinking, and a relatively high level of hospital stays due to alcohol-related harm.¹¹⁶

The District provides a range of leisure facilities and these include The Mill Arts and Events Centre (Rayleigh), Clements Hall Leisure Centre (Hawkwell), Great Wakering Leisure Centre (Great Wakering), and The Freight House (Rochford). Recreation and open spaces within the District include¹¹⁷:

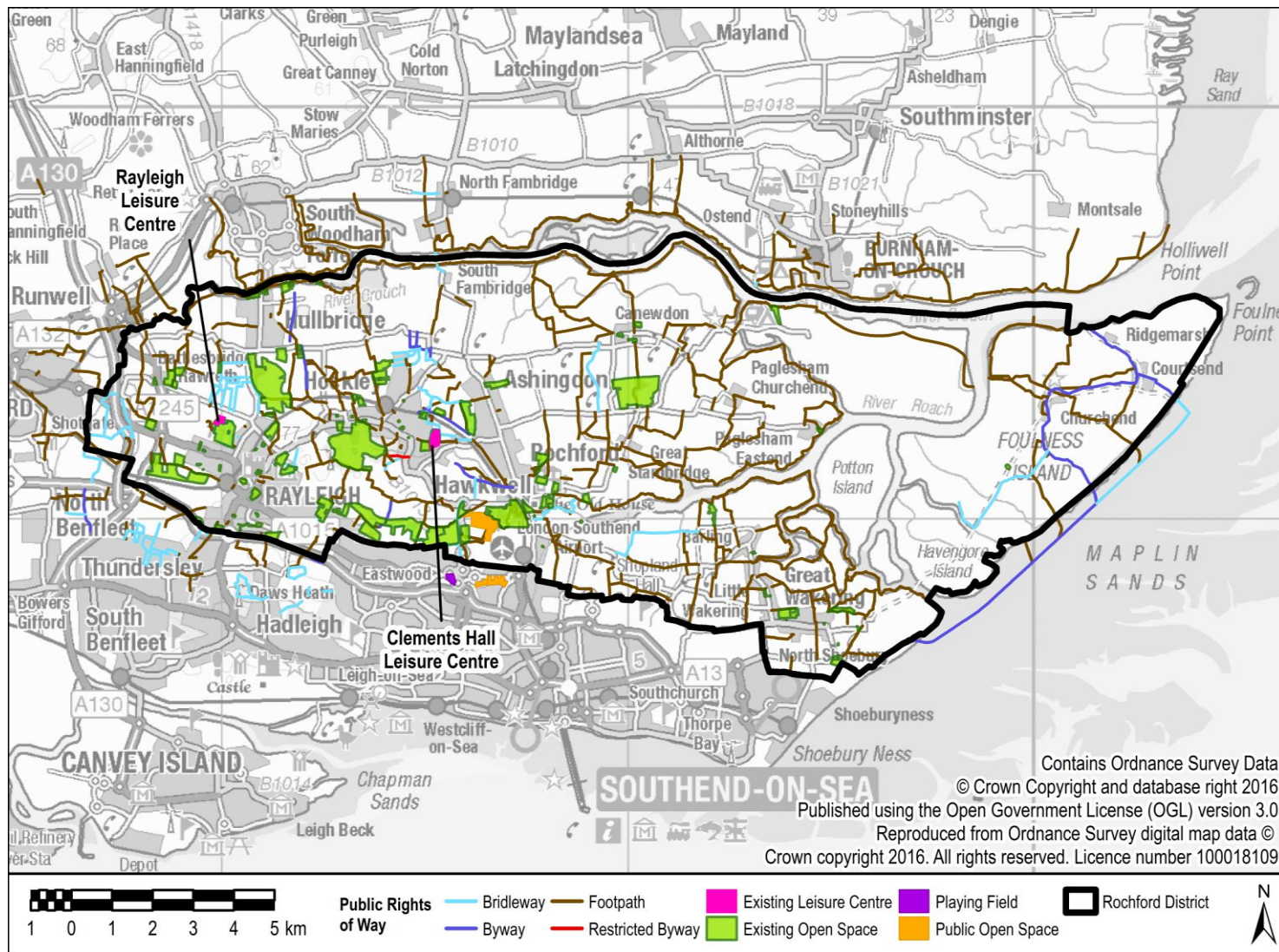
- Over 30 football pitches
- 27 play spaces for children
- Sweyne Park, Rayleigh – offering children’s play space, a wildlife area with environmental ponds and 2km bridle path over 57 acres
- Hockley Woods – ancient semi-natural woodland designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Local Nature Reserve (LNR) covers an area of almost 300 acres, offering parking, toilets, picnic area, play space, marked trails and a permissive horse route
- Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park, south of Hawkwell – a 100 acre country park with woodlands, a lake, bridleways, flower meadows and way marked walks.
- The Rayleigh Windmill Museum and heritage resource centre
- Cinemas and community centres generally within settlements
- Three golf courses - Ballards Gore, Rochford Hundred and The Rayleigh Club
- Marinas include the Essex Marina on Wallasea Island and Sutton Wharf just south east of Rochford town centre

Figure 14 shows some of the existing areas of open space and footpaths within the District. Generally, there is an uneven distribution of open spaces across the District with most natural and semi-natural greenspaces focused around the Hockley/Hawkwell settlement area.

¹¹⁶ Essex Partnership (2013) Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Essex [online] available at: <http://essexpartnership.org/content/joint-health-and-wellbeing-strategy> Accessed November 2016.

¹¹⁷ Rochford District Council (2015) Environmental Capacity Study [online] available at: <http://www.rochford.gov.uk/planning/policy/new-local-plan/new-local-plan-evidence-base> Accessed November 2016.

Figure 14: Open Space & Recreation



8.2.2 Summary of future baseline

Broadly speaking, the health of the population in Rochford is good and in line with national averages and this trend is likely to continue. Ongoing cuts to community services have the potential to lead to effects on health and wellbeing over the longer term.

Obesity is seen as an increasing issue by health professionals, and one that will contribute to significant health impacts for individuals, including increasing the risk of a range of diseases (heart disease, diabetes and some forms of cancer).

Rochford has an ageing population; this trend is likely to continue and has the potential to increase pressures on healthcare services.

8.3 Key Issues

- The health of people in Rochford District is generally favourable when compared to the England average.
- The District has a higher percentage of obese adults compared to the national average. If this trend continues there will be significant health impacts on individuals and increased pressure on healthcare services.
- Life expectancy in the District is high. Life expectancy is 80.3 for men and 84.4 for women, above the national averages of 79.2 and 83, respectively. However, the 2015 Health Profile for Rochford¹¹⁸ suggests that life expectancy is 4.9 years lower for men living in the most deprived areas of Rochford District when compared to those living in the least deprived areas of the District.
- Forecasts suggest the number of people aged 85 and over in the District will increase in the future. An ageing population has the potential to increase pressures on healthcare services in the District.
- Investment in open space, sports facilities and walking and cycling infrastructure should be supported in order to encourage increased physical activity.

8.4 SA Objectives

Table 19: SA Objectives and decision-aiding questions for Health and Wellbeing

SA Objective	Decision-aiding questions
<p>Improve the health and wellbeing of Rochford District's residents.</p> <p><i>Relevant SEA Topics:</i> <i>Population & human health</i></p> <p><i>Relevant NPPF Paragraphs:</i> <i>69 - 78</i></p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities for all age groups? • Encourage healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities? • Enhance multifunctional green infrastructure networks in the District and neighbouring authority areas? • Provide and enhance the provision of community access to green infrastructure? • Improve access to the countryside for recreation? • Promote the use of sustainable transport modes such as walking and cycling?

¹¹⁸ Health Profile for Rochford District (2015) [online] available at: <http://www.apho.org.uk/resource/view.aspx?RID=50215&SEARCH=rochford&SPEAR> Accessed November 2016.

9. Transport and Movement

9.1 Context Review

9.1.1 National

- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):**¹¹⁹
 - Use technology to reduce the need to travel;
 - Encourage land use and transport development which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduced congestion; and
 - Ensure that developments that generate significant traffic movements are located where the need to travel can be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised.
- **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG):**¹²⁰
 - It is important for local planning authorities to undertake an assessment of the transport implications in developing or reviewing their Local Plan so that a robust transport evidence base may be developed to support the preparation and/or review of that Plan.

9.1.2 Regional

- **Essex Transport Strategy - the Local Transport Plan for Essex:**¹²¹ sets out the County Council's aspirations for improving travel in the county. Priorities include providing for and promoting access by sustainable modes of transport to and from development areas; improving journey times on congested routes; improving the attractiveness of cycling; and improving access to green spaces. Consideration will also need to be given to other Non-Motorised Users (NMUs) such as equestrians, as well as ensuring the connectivity and accessibility between the sustainable transport modes.

9.1.3 Local

- **Rochford District Core Strategy (adopted 2011):**¹²² includes a range of policies that seek to improve accessibility to sustainable transport modes and reduce reliance on the private car. There are also policies that seek to improve transport infrastructure, including public transport.
- **Rochford District Allocations Plan (adopted 2014):**¹²³ sets out requirements for transport and highway improvements for a range of allocations.
- **Rochford District Development Management Plan (adopted 2014):**¹²⁴ includes a policy (DM31) that requires any new major development to include appropriate traffic management measures to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods by all modes.

¹¹⁹ Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf Accessed Nov 2016.

¹²⁰ Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Practice Guidance [online] available at: <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/> Accessed Nov 2016.

¹²¹ Essex County Council (2012) Local Transport Plan [online] available at: <http://www.essexhighways.org/Highway-Schemes-and-Developments/Local-Transport-Plan.aspx> Accessed Nov 2016.

¹²² Rochford District Council - Adopted Plans [online] available at: <http://www.rochford.gov.uk/planning/policy/adopted-plans> Accessed Nov 2016.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

9.2 Baseline Review

9.2.1 Summary of current baseline

9.2.1.1 Road network and congestion

There are no motorways within Rochford District. The main strategic routes in the District are the A130 which links Rayleigh with Chelmsford and the A127 which links Southend-on-Sea with the M25.

Much of the inter-urban network in the sub-region is acknowledged by the Essex Transport Plan¹²⁵ as being at or near capacity with particular problems on the A127 and A13 which provide important links between the Thames Gateway centres and London. There are a number of congestion issues in the District mainly attributed to local journeys, school runs and commuting to London or elsewhere for work.

9.2.1.2 Rail network

Rail links in the District are good. There are links from Rochford to London stations. Journey times are 50 minutes to central London. Other railway stations in the District include London Southend Airport, Hockley and Rayleigh.

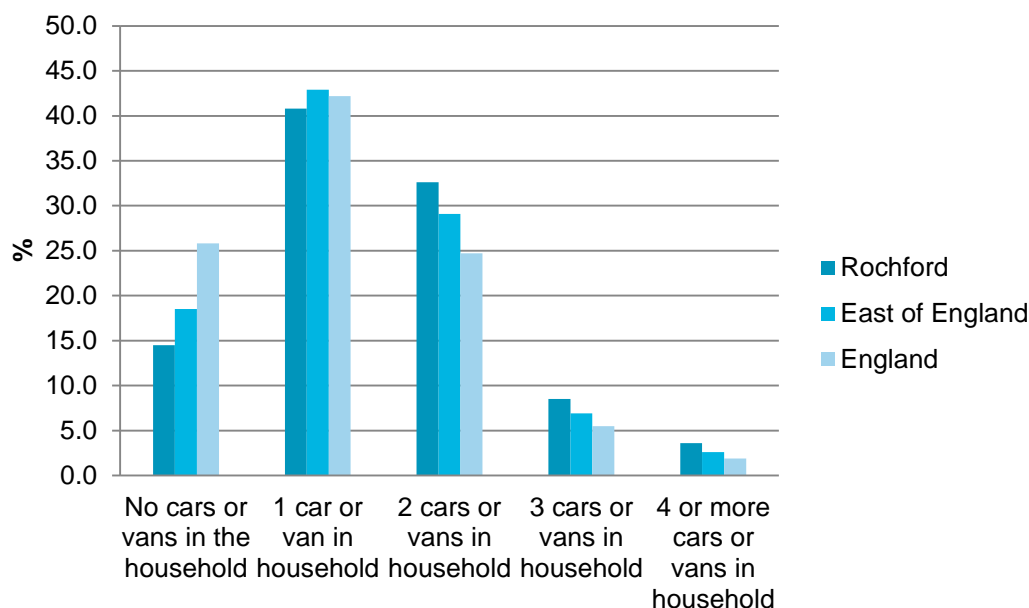
9.2.1.3 Availability of cars and vans

Figure 15 highlights the availability of cars and vans in the District.¹²⁶ The proportion of households with no access to a car/van is significantly lower than regional and national averages, whilst the proportion of the population with two or more cars/vans is significantly higher. The proportion of households with three or more vehicles is also higher than all comparators, as is those households with four or more. High car ownership reflects the District's relative affluence and, in parts, its rural nature.

¹²⁵ Essex County Council (2012) Local Transport Plan [online] available at: <http://www.essexhighways.org/Highway-Schemes-and-Developments/Local-Transport-Plan.aspx> Accessed Nov 2016.

¹²⁶ ONS (2011) Car or van availability [online] available at: https://www.google.co.uk/search?espv=2&q=office+of+national+statistics+car+ownership+in+rochford&og=office+of+national+statistics+car+ownership+in+rochford&gs_l=serp.3...1804.5503.0.5616.20.19.1.0.0.0.137.1725.13j6.19.0...0...1c.1.64.serp..0.14.1200...0i22i30k1j33i21k1.fYIG_GXFtn0 Accessed Nov 2016.

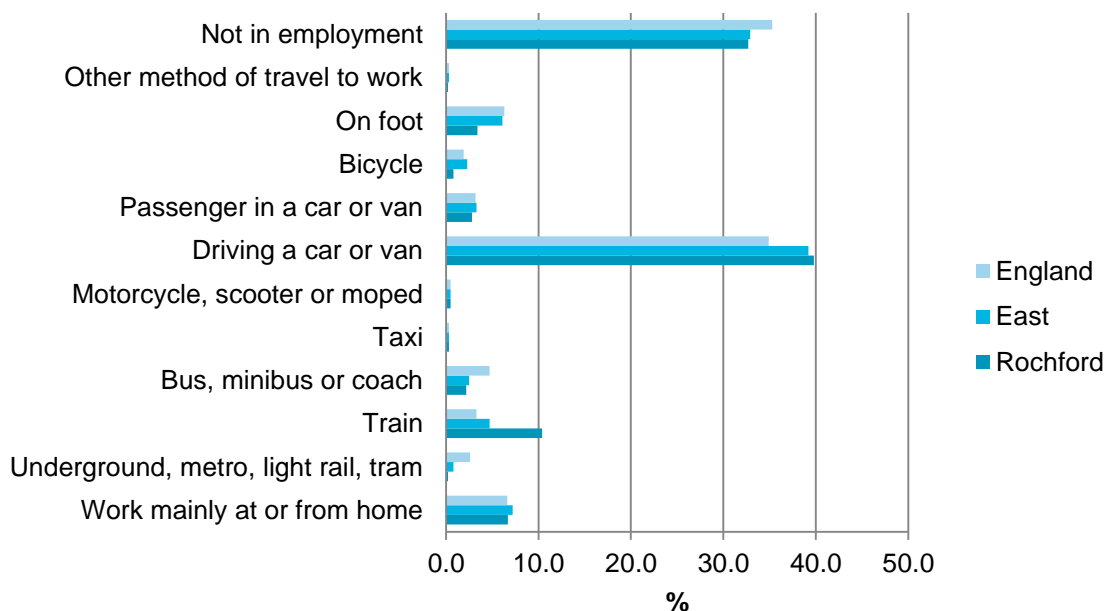
Figure 15: Car and Van Ownership



9.2.1.4 Travel to work

Figure 16 shows the method of travel to work for residents in the District. As highlighted by the figure, the proportion of people who travel to work driving a car or van is higher than regional and national comparators. A lower proportion of people travel to work by bicycle or on foot than all other comparable areas. Reflecting the District's rail links to London, a significantly higher proportion of people travel to work by train compared with the regional and national averages.

Figure 16: Method of travel to work



9.2.1.5 Airport

London Southend Airport is located in the south of the District and serves business and leisure passengers flying within the UK, Europe and beyond. In April 2012, a proposed extension to the new terminal at London Southend Airport was given planning permission by the Council. The extension

was to accommodate the increasing numbers of passengers visiting the airport; these numbers are expected to increase to 2 million per year by 2020.¹²⁷

There are good transport links to the airport at peak times with 8 trains per hour which run from Southend Airport Station to Central London. The journey time from London Liverpool Street Station is 53 minutes. The airport is also served well by the road network and can be reached by the A127, via the A12, A130 or A13. However, the A127 is a constrained route operating near capacity.

9.2.2 Summary of future baseline

Given the rural nature of the District and high levels of car ownership, the car is likely to remain a dominant form of transport in the District over the coming years. New housing and employment provision also has the potential to increase traffic flows without appropriate locational policies and interventions. As such, congestion is likely to continue to be an issue for parts of the District. Whilst negative effects of new development on the transport network are likely to be mitigated to a degree, there will be a continuing need for development to be situated in accessible locations which limit the need to travel by private car. Connected and attractive sustainable transport networks will need to be considered further including increases in coverage of passenger transport, cycling and walking networks to rail stations as part of the developments, to provide a realistic alternative to the private car.

Given the District's proximity to London, and good links available locally, travel by rail is likely to continue to be a dominant mode of travel for work purposes. There is potential for the number of people working from home in the District to significantly increase due to modern working patterns and through the provision of high-speed broadband.

9.3 Key Issues & Objectives

- High levels of car ownership in the District and limited access to public transport in many areas.
- There are existing capacity issues on the highway network, with particular traffic hotspots on A127 and A13.
- There is potential for the number of people working from home in the District to significantly increase.
- A lower proportion of people travel to work by bicycle or on foot than regionally or nationally.
- New development areas should be situated in accessible locations which limit the need to travel by the private car.

9.4 SA Objectives

Table 20: SA Objectives and decision-aiding questions for Transport and Movement

SA Objective	Decision-aiding questions
Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel. <i>Relevant SEA Topics:</i> <i>Population, human health & material assets</i> <i>Relevant NPPF Paragraphs:</i> 29 - 41	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the need to travel through sustainable patterns of land use and development? • Encourage modal shift to more sustainable forms of travel? • Enable transport infrastructure improvements? • Facilitate working from home and remote working? • Provide improvements to and/ or reduce congestion on the existing highway network?

¹²⁷ London Southend Airport Website [online] available at: <http://www.southendairport.com/about/about-us/> Accessed Nov 2016.

10. Economy

10.1 Context Review

10.1.1 National

- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):**¹²⁸
 - The planning system can make a contribution to building a strong, responsive economy by ‘ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure’.
 - Capitalise on ‘inherent strengths’, and to meet the ‘twin challenges of global competition and of a low carbon future’.
 - Support new and emerging business sectors, including positively planning for ‘clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries’.
 - Support competitive town centre environments.
 - Edge of town developments should only be considered where they have good access. This should be followed with an impact assessment to ensure the town centre remains viable in the long term.
 - Enhance and retain markets is also outlined.
 - Support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas and promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.

Local Plans should:

- Set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth
- Support existing business sectors
- Plan for new or emerging sectors
- Flexibility to accommodate needs not anticipated
- Identify priority areas for economic regeneration
- Facilitate flexible working practices
- Policies should avoid protecting land for employment where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the allocated employment use
- Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas
- **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG):**¹²⁹
 - A positive vision or strategy for town centres, articulated through the Local Plan, is key to ensuring successful town centres which enable sustainable economic growth and provide a wide range of social and environmental benefits.
- **The Local Growth White Paper (2010):**¹³⁰ notes that government interventions should support investment that will have a long term impact on growth, working with markets rather than seeking to create artificial and unsustainable growth. The White Paper identifies that economic policy should be judged on the degree to which it delivers strong, sustainable and balanced growth of income and employment over the long-term. More specifically, growth should be: broad-based

¹²⁸ Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf Accessed Nov 2016

¹²⁹ Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Practice Guidance [online] available at: <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/> Accessed Nov 2016

¹³⁰ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2010, Local Growth: Realising Every Place's Potential [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-growth-realising-every-places-potential-hc-7961> Accessed Nov 2016

industrially and geographically, ensuring everyone has access to the opportunities that growth brings (including future generations), whilst also focused on businesses that compete with the best internationally.

10.1.2 Regional

- **The Greater Essex Integrated County Strategy (2010):**¹³¹ provides a shared vision across all local authorities in Greater Essex, identifying the priorities needed to achieve increased economic growth. The broad strategic focus of the strategy is on the Thames Gateway, key towns and low carbon energy.

10.1.3 Local

- **Rochford District Core Strategy (adopted 2011):**¹³² includes a range of policies that seek to encourage development that enables economic growth and diversity. This includes policies that support the development potential of London Southend Airport as a catalyst for economic growth and employment generation as well as protect town centres. There is also a policy that safeguards existing employment land.
- **Rochford District Allocations Plan (adopted 2014):**¹³³ sets out a number of employment allocations as well as town centre and primary shopping area boundary allocations. It also sets out a number of transport and highway improvements and residential allocations which will all benefit the economy.
- **Rochford District Development Management Plan (adopted 2014):**¹³⁴ includes policies that support the extension of established businesses within the Green Belt as well as support rural diversification. The plan also supports proposals for green tourism in the District.
- **Rochford District Growth Strategy (2014):**¹³⁵ sets out a number of actions that are intended to assist local businesses to grow and develop, to promote new business startups, to nurture and inspire entrepreneurial talent, and to encourage existing businesses to relocate to Rochford.

10.2 Baseline Review

10.2.1 Summary of current baseline

The District's economy is broad-based; the balance of employment is not skewed by one dominant sector or large employer. 79% of businesses in the District employ less than ten people, and 1% of companies in the District employ 50 people or more.

As **Figure 17** illustrates, economic activity rates in the District are broadly in line with regional and national comparators.

¹³¹ Essex County Council (2014) Integrated County Strategy [online] available at: <http://www.essex.gov.uk/Your-Council/Strategies-Policies/Integrated-County-Strategy/Pages/Default.aspx> Accessed Nov 2016

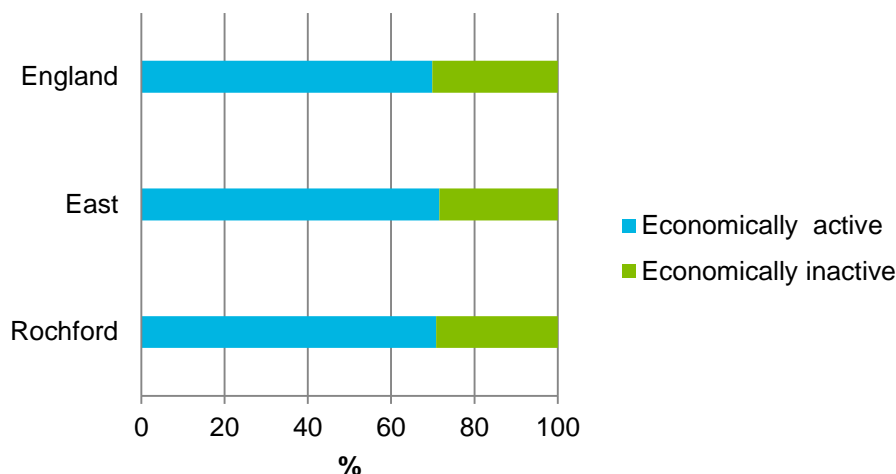
¹³² Rochford District Council - Adopted Plans [online] available at: <http://www.rochford.gov.uk/planning/policy/adopted-plans> Accessed Nov 2016.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Rochford District Council (2014) Growth Strategy [online] available at: http://www.rochford.gov.uk/business_and_licensing/growth-strategy-and-delivery-plans Accessed Nov 2016.

Figure 17: Economic Activity Rates



Rates of full time employment in Rochford (39%) are slightly lower than regional levels (40%) but similar to national levels (38.6%). Rates of part-time employment in Rochford are fractionally higher (15.2%) than regional (14.3%) and national (13.7%) levels.

The average unemployment rate in the District has stayed consistently below regional and national unemployment averages. According to the 2011 census data unemployment in the District was 3.0%, which is lower than in the East (3.8%) and England (4.4%).

The population of the District is generally less qualified compared to regional and national figures. In Rochford only 20% of residents aged 16 and above having at least a Level 4 Qualification¹³⁶, as shown in **Figure 18**. This is lower than the regional (26%) and national (27.4%) comparators.¹³⁷ There are slightly more people in the District that have no qualifications (24%) compared to the regional (22.5%) and national (22.5%) averages.

¹³⁶ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Qualifications and Students (KS501EW) [online] available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census> Accessed Nov 2016.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

Figure 18: Highest Level of Qualification

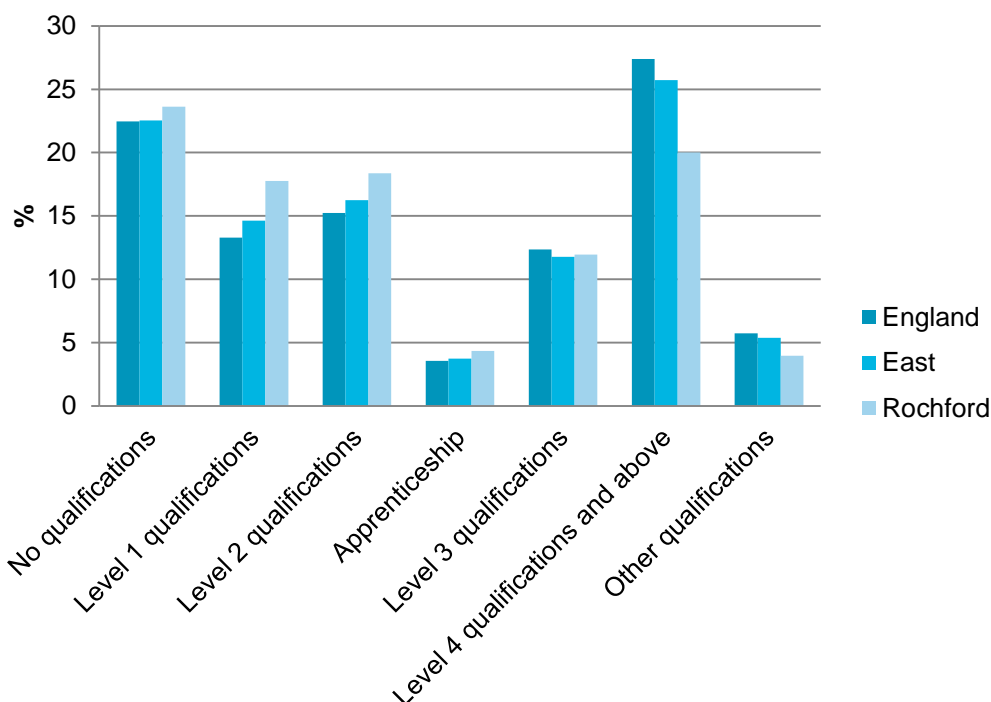
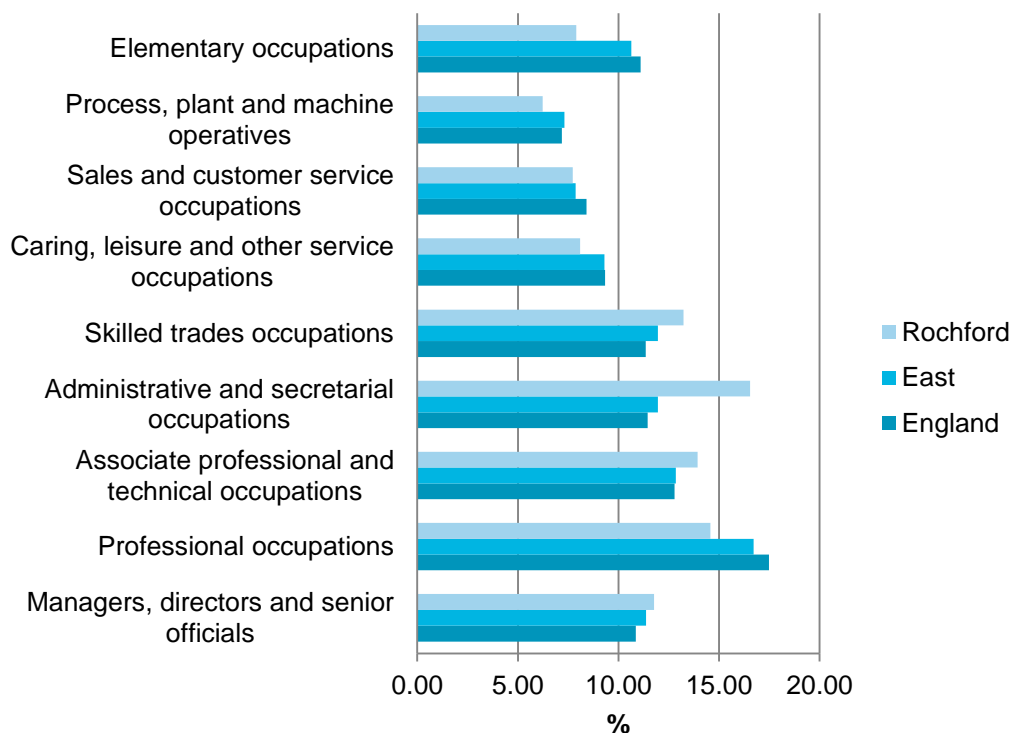


Figure 19 highlights the occupation of working-age residents.¹³⁸ Overall, the occupation profile for Rochford District is broadly aligned with regional and national averages, with some notable exceptions. The District has significantly larger proportions of people in ‘administrative and secretarial’ roles, and significantly fewer in ‘professional occupations’ when compared to regional and national averages.

Figure 19: The occupation of residents aged 16 to 74 in employment



¹³⁸ ONS (2011) Occupation 2011 (KS610EW) [online] available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census> Accessed Nov 2016.

10.2.2 Summary of future baseline

The District has significantly larger proportions of people in ‘administrative and secretarial’ roles, and significantly fewer in ‘professional occupations’ when compared to regional and national averages; this trend is likely to continue in the absence of a major shift in the nature of the local economy.

The rural economy will continue to play a large part in the economic vitality of the District. The District also has an important tourism offer and historic and cultural legacy, which provides significant opportunities for the economy.

An increasing trend of homeworking, self-employment and home based businesses is likely to have influence on the District’s economic landscape in forthcoming years. Likewise an increasing trend of businesses relocating from London may support the local economy.

10.3 Key Issues

- Rochford’s District’s economy is broad-based, with a high proportion of administrative and secretarial occupations.
- 79% of businesses in the District employ less than ten people, and only 1% of businesses employ 50 or more people.
- Unemployment rates in the District have been consistently lower than County and national levels.
- The rural economy will continue to play a large part in the economic vitality of the District.
- The tourism and visitor economy provides significant opportunities for growth.
- London Southend Airport provides an opportunity for economic growth within the District.

10.4 SA Objectives

Table 21: SA Objectives and decision-aiding questions for the Economy

SA Objective	Decision-aiding questions
<p>Support a strong, diverse and resilient economy that provides opportunities for all.</p> <p><i>Relevant SEA Topics:</i> <i>Population & human health</i></p> <p><i>Relevant NPPF Paragraphs:</i> <i>18 - 22, 42 & 43</i></p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the provision of the right type of employment land in the right place? • Provide employment in the most deprived areas and stimulate regeneration? • Support the economic vitality and viability of the District’s town centres? • Create opportunities for a variety of businesses and people to flourish in the District? • Support the rural economy? • Support the visitor economy? • Facilitate working from home, remote working and home-based businesses? • Support the growth of London Southend Airport? • Enhance educational opportunities?

11. Next Steps

11.1 Subsequent stages for the SA process

Scoping (the current stage) is the first stage in a five-stage SA process:

- Scoping (NPPG Stage A)
- Appraise reasonable alternatives, with a view to informing preparation of the draft plan, and subsequent appraisal of the draft plan (NPPG Stage B)
- Prepare the SA Report with a view to informing consultation (NPPG Stage C)
- Consultation on the SA Report (NPPG Stage D)
- Publish a 'statement' at the time of plan adoption in order to 'tell the story' of plan-making/SA (and present 'measures decided concerning monitoring') (NPPG Stage E)

The next stage will involve appraising reasonable alternatives for the Local Plan. This will consider alternative policy approaches for the District, including alternative spatial strategies. The findings of the appraisal of these alternatives will be fed back to the Local Plan development team so that they can be taken into account in preparing the draft plan.

An SA Report will accompany a Local Plan Issues and Options Document for public consultation in Spring 2017.

11.2 Consultation on the Scoping Report

In line with the SEA Regulations (12(5)) the scoping information has been subject to consultation with the SEA consultation bodies (i.e. Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England). A Draft Scoping Report was made available for public consultation for a period of six weeks from 20th December 2016 to 31st January 2017. The representations received and how they have been taken into account are presented in **Appendix I** of this report.

Appendix I: Consultation Responses

Ref	Scoping Report Ref	Comment	Response
Environment Agency			
1	General	We have reviewed this document and overall consider it refers to all the policies and plans required. Our detailed comments are included below relating to the chapters on biodiversity, climate change, environmental quality and land, soil and water resources.	Noted.
2	Section 2 - policy context & baseline	<p>The list of policies and evidence documents looks appropriate.</p> <p>Paragraph 9 of the NPPF sets out that planning should seek positive improvements and include an aim to move from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains. These aspirations should be promoted and facilitated in your new local plan-</p> <p>Green infrastructure, defined as a network of new and existing multi-functional green space and features, such as ecological corridors or other appropriate planting, should be considered in new developments. Incorporating green and / or brown roofs and walls can be a particularly effective measure. They provide urban habitats, increased energy efficiency of buildings and attenuation of rain water.</p> <p>Landscaping proposals should demonstrate that consideration has been given to maximizing the potential ecological enhancements. They also presents an opportunity to provide multi-functional benefits – providing open spaces for residents, sustainable transport links and climate change resilience. We would also draw attention to the need to join fragmented habitats through the plan area by the inclusion of measures such as green corridors.</p>	Noted.
3	Section 2 - SA Objectives	We would encourage you to include a decision aiding question for the identified SA objective related to the potential risk posed by invasive species which is not currently included in the appraisal. Invasive species pose a risk to natural wildlife and can contribute to environmental degradation if not controlled.	Noted. It will be extremely difficult to predict the potential effects of the Local Plan, including proposed allocations, on biodiversity as a result of invasive species. This can only be established through a detailed ecological survey of proposed development sites at a lower level of planning.
4	Section 3 - policy context & baseline	<p>It is recognised within the scoping report that significant areas in Rochford District of Shoeburyness, Paglesham, Wallasea Island and South Fambridge are at significant risk of flooding from: overtopping and breaches of tidal defence. The Scoping Report has highlighted that future climate change could increase levels up to 3m in depth. Your SFRA review, which we are working with you to prepare, will help inform this further.</p> <p>All development in areas at risk from flooding will have to take climate change in account by robustly applying the requirements of the NPPF. This includes avoiding new development in areas at risk from flooding, but where it is necessary, ensuring it is safe and that opportunities are taken to reduce flood risk where possible.</p> <p>Currently defended areas which are predicted to be affected by flood risk should provide additional compensatory areas of both fluvial and tidal floodplain as mitigation. This will contribute to ensuring that</p>	Noted, the scoping report now includes reference to the funding of PLR and EA guidance.

Ref	Scoping Report Ref	Comment	Response
		<p>development does not increase flood risk elsewhere and helps to provide additional floodplain storage to take account of future climate change.</p> <p>Section 3.3 recognise the flood risk associated with the “flashy” and fast flowing river systems such as Nobles Green Ditch, River Roach, Eastwood Brook. We will continue working with yourself, Parish Councils and the other RMA's to promote improvements in their flows to reduce the flood risk to the affected communities.</p> <p>The appraisal should also promote the implementation and funding of Property Level Resilience (PLR) to individual properties affected by all sources of flooding. More details can be found at http://www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk/bluepages/</p> <p>Climate change allowance our guidance 'Flood risk assessments: climate change allowances' provides allowances for future sea level rise, wave height and wind speed to help planners, developers and their advisors to understand the likely impact of climate change on coastal flood risk.</p>	
5	Section 3 - SA Objectives	<p>We recommend that you edit the first decision aiding question of the SA objective relating to resilience of the District to the effects of climate change to the following: Direct development away from areas at risk of flooding as per the sequential test, taking into account the likely effects of climate change?</p> <p>We also recommend you add a decision aiding question to the SA objective on promoting climate change mitigation in the district to address the impacts on the water environment.</p>	Noted and amended.
6	Section 5 - policy context & baseline	<p>Water quality</p> <p>Section 5.2.1.2 provides the baseline review for Water Quality' we feel reference to the hydrogeology of the District and the presence of groundwater should be made in this section. The Chalk Formation, a principal aquifer is overlain across the District by the unproductive London Clay Formation. However, some overlying bedrock and superficial deposits are designated as Secondary aquifers. These deposits are important locally for abstraction and supporting base flow in watercourses.</p> <p>Information relating to groundwater protection can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/groundwater-protection-principles-and-practice-gp3</p> <p>This section also refers to the future statuses of the waterbodies, predicting no change in their status for 2015, we are unsure if this is correct and feel the date needs clarification. We feel that more information needs to be provided to explain how water quality will be improved and maintained. The Water Framework Directive and local River Basin Management Plans are key documents in regards to water quality and should be used to inform the local plan.</p> <p>The Environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to prevent deterioration of the status of surface waters and groundwater • to achieve objectives and standards for protected areas • to aim to achieve good status for all water bodies or, for heavily modified water bodies and artificial water bodies, good ecological potential and good surface water chemical status • to reverse any significant and sustained upward trends in pollutant concentrations in groundwater • the cessation of discharges, emissions and hazardous substances into surface waters 	Noted, the water quality information has been amended to reflect the EA's catchment data explorer.

Ref	Scoping Report Ref	Comment	Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> progressively reduce the pollution of groundwater and prevent or limit the entry of pollutants 	
7	Section 5 - policy context & baseline	<p>Contaminated Land</p> <p>We would like to see the inclusion of an objective that would seek to remediate contamination when it does occur during development. The constraints posed by contaminated land can be overcome with suitable remediation and the risk to public health and environmental degradation can be overcome.</p>	Noted, the SA Objective already includes a decision-aiding question that relates to the remediation of contaminated land.
8	Section 6 - policy context & baseline	The context review refers to the Anglia Water: water resources management plan. We believe this is not relevant and the Essex and Southend water resources management plan should be used as a basis for managing water resources.	Noted and amended.
9	Section 6 - key issues & SA Objectives	<p>We welcome the inclusion of the objective that will require developers to incorporate water saving measures in their designs. Previously the Code for Sustainable Homes provided guidance on sustainable water uses. Although no longer a requirement we feel this provides a useful guide and would promote 105 l/p/d of water per day, which mirrors level 3-4 of the code.</p> <p>Whilst Section 6.2.1 states the district has a lower than average number of agricultural business, it should include information as to how these could impact upon the environment. In particular you should consider the impact of pollution from nutrient run off on water quality. The Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations 2008 provide information on steps to reduce nitrogen pollution from agriculture further information can be found http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/1849/made</p>	Noted. Have now included reference to the Nitrate Pollution Regulations 2008 in Section 6.
Historic England			
10	General	Having reviewed the plan, we are very encouraged to note that it sets out a positive strategy for the historic environment acknowledging that the historic environment is formed by tangible designated assets less tangible elements such as landscape character and associations of place.	Noted
11	Section 4	<p>We welcome the identification of Rochford's rich historic environment, set out in paragraph 4.2.1.1. We are particularly pleased to note that the comprehensive consideration of heritage at risk includes those Grade II listed properties maintained by the County Council as well as the national register. We additionally support the recognition that known archaeological deposits represent only a fraction of the archaeological record.</p> <p>We are very supportive of Rochford's detailed review of Historic Environment Character Areas that has identified further sub-areas as Historic Environment Character Zones as well as Archaeological Characterisation Areas. We welcome the aim stated within paragraph 4.2.1.2 to protect and enhance the district's open spaces where they surround settlements.</p> <p>Within paragraph 4.3, the SA sets out the key issues with regard to the historic environment. We support the stated objective to <i>Protect and enhance the significance of the district's historic environment, heritage assets and their settings</i>.</p>	Noted.
12	Section 4 - SA Objectives	We are very supportive of the intention to both protect and enhance the historic environment and are encouraged that the wording is <i>the historic environment</i> , encompassing more than designated heritage assets. The appraisal questions that relate to this aim are as follows:	Noted and additional decision-aiding question incorporated.

Ref	Scoping Report Ref	Comment	Response
		<p><i>Will the option/proposal help to:</i></p> <p><i>Protect and where possible enhance heritage assets and their settings?</i></p> <p><i>Protect and where possible enhance conservation areas?</i></p> <p><i>Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic environment?</i></p> <p>These are likely to be very positive with regard to achieving the aims of the SA objective. Given the exemplary wording of the sustainability appraisal objective, it would be beneficial to reflect this with an additional question to reflect less tangible cultural heritage and to acknowledge that not all elements of the historic environment are designated assets (eg: character, archaeology and cultural heritage). We suggest the following addition or similar:</p> <p><i>Protect and where possible enhance the wider historic environment?</i></p>	
13	General	We have no other comments to make with regard to the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report which is well written and, where applied to policies within the forthcoming sustainability report, will hopefully lead to a robust local plan that makes a positive provision for the historic environment.	Noted.
Natural England			
14	General	Natural England is broadly satisfied that the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the SEA Directive, as transposed through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. We may need to revise our response once we are consulted on the Rochford District Local Plan.	Noted.
15	Section 2 - SA Objective	Biodiversity: We would agree that an important Key Issue is recreational disturbance (particularly impacts caused by dog-walking) to wildlife, especially to the wintering bird interest features of the SPA and Ramsar sites within the District. There should be opportunities through the careful strategic management of recreational sites in the Upper Roach Valley and other areas as a mechanism to avoid, and if not possible, mitigate the impacts of development to interest features of protected sites. We note that ancient woodland (NB this should include plantations on ancient woodland sites -PAWS) is present in a number of areas of the District, including large site at Hockley Woods. It is not clear that ancient woodlands have been included clearly in the Appraisal Question. For more information see Ancient woodland and veteran trees: protecting them from development. In the same way we would advise that designated sites are referred to in the Appraisal Question explicitly.	Noted. An additional decision-aiding question has been included that deals specifically with designated sites for biodiversity. It is considered that this is sufficient to cover Ancient Woodlands.
16	Section 2 - SA Objective	Climate Change: Coastal squeeze is described as an issue affecting the European designated sites at point 2.3. We advise that coastal squeeze should be should be a Key Issue, referencing the Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan and including a new Appraisal Question.	Coastal squeeze has now been identified as a key issue under the biodiversity theme. New decision-aiding question has been added to the SA Objective relating to climate change adaptation.
17	Section 4, landscape and historic environment, policy	Landscape: Point 4.2.1.2 describes the baseline of tranquil and undisturbed areas, particularly in the east of the District. However tranquillity is not then subsequently translated as a Key Issue. We refer you to paragraph 123 of the NPPF "Planning policies and decisions should aim to... identify and protect areas of tranquillity	Noted, this has been added as a key issue and an additional decision-aiding question incorporated.

Ref	Scoping Report Ref	Comment	Response
		context which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason.” There are links to light pollution which can have negative impacts on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation (especially bats and invertebrates).	
18	Section 6, SA objectives	Land, Soil and Water Resources: We strongly support the Appraisal Questions regarding the use of previously developed land and the avoidance of land classified as best and most versatile agricultural land. Development (soil sealing) has a major and usually irreversible adverse impact on soils.	Noted.
19	Section 8, SA objectives	Health and Wellbeing: Whilst Natural England supports the SA Objective at point 8.4 in improving peoples access to nature, it is not clear that the Appraisal Questions establish whether the provision of open greenspace is currently sufficient, and to what extent any option/proposal would reduce any shortfall. Our Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) describes the amount, quality and level of visitor services we recommend for all areas.	Noted. At this stage specific thresholds or standards are not set out. Where possible, these will be considered through the next stages of the SA process.
20	Section 1, SA objectives	Biodiversity 1. We support the inclusion of enhancement of ecological networks as a means to ensure that future improvements in habitat connectivity are not prejudiced. Otherwise there may be a risk that development on land of limited biodiversity value in its own right can lead to the creation of islands of biodiversity, permanently severed from other areas. 2. We advise that the Appraisal Questions should also make reference to whether an option/proposal would affect sites of high or irreplaceable biodiversity value. We recommend amending the Appraisal Question as follows “Avoid, or if not possible minimise impacts on biodiversity, ancient woodland, nationally or locally protected sites and provide net gains where possible?”	Noted, decision-aiding questions have been amended to reflect this comment.
21	Section 3, SA objectives	Climate Change 1. We strongly support the Appraisal Question “Improve green infrastructure networks in the District (and beyond) to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change?” as part of proactive decision-making strategy to mitigate and adapt to climate change. 2. We recommend an addition to the Appraisal Questions of the following: “Support the priorities identified in the Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan?”	Noted, new decision-aiding question has been included.
22	Section 4, SA objectives	Landscape We recommend the addition of an Appraisal Question to consider the relationship and potential impact of any option/proposal to the existing areas of tranquillity.	Noted, an additional decision aiding question has been included.
23	Section 5, SA objectives	Environmental Quality 1. We advise that the SA Objectives in Table 7 are more clearly linked to those in Table 3 (p12) in order that potential effects on protected sites is considered – particularly (but not exclusively) air pollution from increased traffic. This is recognised in point 5.2.2. 2. We support the Appraisal Question “Protect and improve the area’s chemical & biological water quality?” in order to protect habitats (particularly nationally and locally protected sites) from water-related impacts and to	Noted.

Ref	Scoping Report Ref	Comment	Response
		seek enhancement to water quality.	
24	Section 8, SA objectives	<p>Health and Wellbeing: We would advise that two factors are included in the Appraisal Questions;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Linkages: We would recommend that the Appraisal Question at point 2.3 “Enhance multifunctional green infrastructure networks in the District?” be amended as follows: “Enhance multifunctional green infrastructure networks that exist through the District and neighbouring authority areas?” 2. Sufficiency: Natural England advises that Appraisal Question is reviewed to include the broader progress toward the achievement of the recommended amount, quality and levels of accessible natural greenspace. 	Noted, the decision-aiding question has been revised to reflect this comment. At this stage specific thresholds or standards are not set out. Where possible, these will be considered through the next stages of the SA process.
25	General	<p>As this is a Scoping Report we may need to review our advice in this letter once options and alternatives have been developed and we have seen the proposals put forward in the local plan that are likely to have a significant adverse effect on biodiversity, including designated sites.</p> <p>We may also need to review the advice provided based the following factors:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Appraisal Questions ought to consider the potential for likely significant effects on European sites when considered in-combination with other plans or projects, via a check that any adverse or significant effects identified through the HRA of the Local Plan are considered. 2. The Essex coastline is actively promoted for tourism, and Local Plan policies and appraisal should assist in ensuring that any significant effects are either avoided or mitigated for. This may include providing alternative high quality areas for recreational activity away from protected coastal sites and visitor access management measures. Public access is described as a key issue in the Essex Estuaries SAC Site Improvement Plan. While controlled visitor access via sensitively managed tours of sensitive areas, additional development may lead to residual indirect effects on protected sites, an effect that would be exacerbated if appropriate on-site green infrastructure and visitor access management measures are not planned in at design-stage of an option/proposal. 	Noted.
26	General	<p>Annex A Sources of local plan evidence on the natural environment</p> <p>The following sources of evidence may be useful in ensuring local plans are evidence based, in line with paragraph 165 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and assist in meeting Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) requirements. A range of additional locally specific evidence is also likely to be needed to underpin plan preparation.</p> <p>General natural environmental evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Character Areas (NCAs) divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. NCA profiles contain descriptions of the area and statements of environmental opportunity, which may be useful to inform proposals in your plan. • Natural England has also published downloadable natural capital maps. These are a suite of ten maps, of different aspects of natural capital, contributes to our understanding of where our natural capital is. • The Magic website will provide you with much of the nationally held natural environment data for your plan area in downloadable GIS format. Specific data sets are listed under the environmental topics below. 	Noted. This information will be used to inform the future stages of the SA.

Ref	Scoping Report Ref	Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local environmental record centres may hold a range of additional information on the natural environment, principally ecological. The following local organisations may also hold environmental information where applicable: Local Nature Partnerships, Wildlife trusts, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and Nature Improvement Areas. Evidence relating to the significant environmental effects of the current local plan should be available (in line with SEA legislation), as should suitable biodiversity evidence for any plan adopted after the NPPF came into effect (27 March 2012), usually through the current plan's Annual Monitoring Report. <p>Landscape</p> <p>Data on tranquillity is held by CPRE. They also hold mapping data on light pollution.</p> <p>Biodiversity and geodiversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The most relevant layers on Magic for you to consider are Ancient Woodland, Local Nature Reserves, Priority Habitat Inventory, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (including their impact risk zones), Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, and Ramsar Sites (including, where relevant, marine designations). You may also wish to draw on more detailed information on specific Sites of Special Scientific Interest and the Conservation Objectives and Site Improvement Plans for Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas. Priority habitats and species are those listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006 and UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP). Larger areas of priority habitat will usually be mapped either as Sites of Special Scientific Interest on the Magic website or as Local Wildlife Sites or Local Geological Sites. Local wildlife site data is usually held by local planning authorities themselves as is local geological site data. Local Environmental Record Centres and local wildlife and geoconservation groups are also a source of information on Local Sites. Natural England maintains the Open Mosaic Habitat on Previously Developed Land Inventory (a priority habitat dataset currently not integrated into the Priority Habitat Inventory on Magic) and is available on request from Natural England via email; NaturalEnglandGIDataManagers@naturalengland.org.uk. Some areas have identified Biodiversity Opportunity Areas or similar for spatially targeting biodiversity restoration work. Protected species are those species protected under domestic or European law. Local environmental record centres are likely to hold much of the available data on such species. APIS holds data on air pollution in particular in relation to protected nature conservation sites. <p>Access</p> <p>The Magic website holds the following access related data: National Trails, Public Rights of Way (on the Ordnance Survey base map), Open Access Land (the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 layer), together with national and local nature reserves, country parks and the England Coast Path.</p> <p>Locally held data will include the definitive Public Rights of Way, and may include Rights of Way Improvement Plans where they exist, and any locally mapped open space audits or assessments.</p>

Ref	Scoping Report Ref	Comment	Response
		<p>Natural England's work on Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) may be of use in assessing current level of accessible natural greenspace and planning improved provision.</p> <p>Green infrastructure</p> <p>Green infrastructure strategies may comprise or contain useful evidence sources where they exist.</p> <p>Climate change</p> <p>The Climate Change Adaptation Manual provides evidence to support nature conservation in a changing climate.</p> <p>The National Biodiversity Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment Model provides a spatially explicit assessment of the relative vulnerability of priority habitats.</p> <p>The LWEC Climate Change Impacts Report Cards present the latest evidence on how climate change is affecting different aspects of our environment, economy and society.</p> <p>Coastal and Marine issues</p> <p>The following may be of help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catchment flood management plans (considers all types of inland flooding, from rivers, groundwater, surface water and tidal flooding). • Shoreline management plans (considers flooding from the sea). • Any estuary or harbour management plans that are held locally. • River basin management plans (covers entire river systems, including river, lake, groundwater, estuarine and coastal water bodies). • Coastal Erosion Maps. • The Marine Management Organisation has a marine planning evidence base which supplies a range of information on marine planning. • There may be specific Heritage Coast information held locally, such as a management plan. <p>Water Quality and Resources and Flood Risk Management</p> <p>The Planning Practice Guidance provides guidance on information sources for the water environment.</p>	
Further Comments			
27	General	<p>The current housing developments in Great Wakering have put considerable pressure on health and education resources without any increase in funding. The roads are already busy and the footpaths require improvement. It would be nice to see evidence of planning at the moment we are being subjected to in fill.</p> <p>Little Wakering Road, Great Wakering High Street and Star Lane require traffic calming measures. At the moment cars speed with impunity.</p>	Noted.
28	Consultation	<p>The period that this review session is open is not chosen very well. It was received on the second day, covers Christmas and New Year holiday times when many people will away and/ or looking at other matters. It should be extended until mid- January at least.</p>	As stated in Section 11 of the Draft Scoping Report (Dec 2016), " <i>In line with the SEA Regulations (12(5)) this Scoping Report should be subject to consultation with the</i>

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			<p><i>SEA consultation bodies (i.e. Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England) for a minimum period of <u>five weeks</u>. Given that the report is published close to the Christmas period, this has been extended by <u>one week</u> to a total of <u>six weeks</u>, with the consultation ending 31st January 2017".</i></p>
29	Section 5, Figure 7.	<p>5.2 Baseline Review 5.2.1 Summary of current baseline 5.2.1.1 Air Quality</p> <p>States The area extends from the A127 trunk road to and encompassing the Rayleigh Town Centre one way system. The location of the AQMA is shown in Figure 7 in the following section.</p> <p>However, figure 7 is before this section and there does not appear to be a plan showing location of AQMA from A127 trunk road to town centre, particularly the width included from High road Kingswood Crescent for example?</p>	<p>Noted, reference to figure 7 is a typo and has been removed. The scoping now includes reference to the Draft Air Quality Action Plan.</p>
30	General	<p>I note the acknowledgement in Section 9 of the problems with traffic congestion in the district. I also note the theme of continued house building throughout the document. The Council yet again fails to address the link between these two things or to suggest any solutions to the problems of congestion on local highways. The Council appears to believe that it has a duty to support profit seeking "here today gone tomorrow" developers rather than protecting the interests of Council Tax payers and existing residents.</p> <p>Perhaps the Council needs to ask itself "What is the reason for its existence" and "Who does it exist to serve"? It might then be in a better position to make good decisions on behalf of its residence and those that have "skin in the game", rather than lining the pockets of those who do not have the long term interests of the district at heart.</p>	<p>Noted. The purpose of the SA process and the Scoping Report is provided in Section 1.</p>
31	General	<p>Living on High Road Hockley we have noticed the vast increase in traffic over the past couple of years! This is a B road. It is not going to sustain further massive housing development in the area.</p> <p>Victoria gardens now under construction in Hall road Rochford, will seriously increase local traffic having a dramatic effect on our small local roads! This should be taken seriously into account!</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
32	General	<p>This has not been considered in the current core strategy where land has been allocated for building in Hullbridge. Direct development away from areas highest at risk of flooding, with development 'not to be allocated if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower probability of flooding'. Where development is necessary, it should be made safe without increasing levels of flood risk elsewhere.</p> <p>Nowhere in this report are current building projects being considered, perhaps again the problem with the current core strategy?? Also note that on the plan for Hullbridge there are no designated open spaces and yet a further 500 homes are to be built on the green belt in that area?</p> <p>It seems the consultants want to keep the green belt and open spaces, retain wildlife and historic culture yet</p>	<p>Noted.</p>

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		seek to destroy it by building in areas that cannot support further traffic or people due to lack of facilities and infrastructure.	
33	General	Please ensure the review looks at the inevitable impact on the road system from all the current house building programs. The current road system is already totally inadequate for the current traffic, particularly on days when refuse collection takes place. There is also a huge amount of heavy goods vehicle traffic along roads whose width were never designed for the large articulated trucks that usually head to and from the industrial sites particularly the Baltic Wharf. This obviously affects the environment both from traffic congestion and exhaust emissions especially particulates from these huge trucks. It seems it is time to consider construction of a by-pass around the east side of Rochford connecting the A127 with the A130.	Noted.
34	Section 6, agricultural land quality	<p>On behalf of our clients, Stolkin and Clements (Southend) LLP, who own the Tithe Park site, we would like to make the following representations on the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.</p> <p>We are concerned that Figure 8 'Agricultural Land Quality' uses a very broad brush approach in defining the agricultural land classifications. In Figure 8 our clients land at Tithe Park is identified as wholly Grade 1 agricultural land. This conflicts with the survey carried out by Land Research which found that only 10% of the land was Grade 1. The rest of the site comprised 75% Grade 2 and 15% Grade 3A. The results of this survey are attached for information. In the past the site has been the subject of brickearth extraction, which has reduced its agricultural quality.</p> <p>It is vital that strategic decisions about the location of future development are based on accurate information. A sustainable urban extension to Southend in the location of the Tithe Park could be a preferred choice compared with the provision of large housing extensions to existing villages and small towns of Rochford.</p>	Noted. It is important to note that the scoping stage sets out the baseline, context and key issues for the borough. The NPPG states that <i>"a key aim of the scoping stage is to help ensure the SA process is proportionate and relevant to the Local Plan being assessed"</i> . This information will be taken into account in the further stages of the SA.
35	General	<p>The report recognises flood risk in some areas but not suggest any solutions. Significant housing developments across the district can only have the effect of reducing natural run off and I would think increase flood risk.</p> <p>The report identifies that in our area we have lower per capita emissions and highlights the need to achieve "economically credible" emissions reductions. It also talks about increased traffic congestion risks. The proposition of more walking and cycling seems a case of more hope than expectation given that emissions are already lower per capita.</p> <p>On a practical level it seems that none of the developments in housing have been supported by any significant road improvements. The traffic congestion is made a great deal worse by poor planning of road and footpath works by the utilities/councils. For example, it is not unusual for there to be works and traffic light controls on Main Road Hawkwell, Greensward Lane and Ashingdon Road all at the same time leaving no alternative way around. Similarly, last year there was traffic light control on Main Road by Gusted Hall Lane whilst a small pavement section was resurfaced. A couple of weeks later after it was completed the traffic lights were there again but 50 yards further along for another small section of pavement to be resurfaced. Surely it is not beyond the ability of those in charge to have done both at the same time.</p> <p>Another related point is that when traffic light control is set up it is often over-controlled. Again to use the Main Road example at Gusted Hall Lane. Three way traffic control was set up which meant that the two traffic flows along Main Road were held up at every traffic light cycle in order for Gusted Hall Lane to exit- except there is</p>	Noted. The purpose of the SA process and the Scoping Report is provided in Section 1.

Ref	Scoping Report Ref	Comment	Response
		<p>almost no traffic from there and it requires only a small level of common sense to turn out of there as traffic flows in the direction you wish to turn. It was a similar story at Mansted Gardens/Ashingdon Road. The vast majority of traffic going into Mansted Gardens is for the shops at Golden Cross. It's one way at the shops so traffic comes out in to Rectory Road. Few cars come out of Mansted because there are other exits depending on which way you want to travel. Bottom line again was that with three way control the heavy flow of traffic along in both directions along Ashingdon Road, at every traffic light cycle had to wait in both directions whilst Mansted Gardens was on green with nobody coming out.</p> <p>My point is that more thought in planning and control of roadworks could significantly reduce disruption and of course the level of emissions. The report also noted "much of the inter urban network in the sub-region is acknowledged as at or near capacity" I know that a relative who live in Hockley goes to his office in Basildon because of the huge delays in getting on to the A127 at the Rayleigh Spur when he goes via Rawreth Lane. It is also clear that many people use Watery Lane/The Beeches to bypass the main roads. Perhaps the time has come to again consider the idea of an outer bypass. Clearly tinkering will not solve the problems which will only get worse with the level of housing building.</p>	
36	General	<p>Thank you for consulting Essex County Council (ECC) on the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for the new Rochford Local Plan. Officer comments are provided overleaf and respond to the questions raised throughout the document. Weblinks are provided to relevant documents where appropriate.</p> <p>ECC will continue to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis during the review and preparation period of the new Local Plan. This will ensure the continuation of a robust long-term strategy for the District that provides a reliable basis on which ECC may plan future service provision for the required community and physical infrastructure for which it is responsible.</p>	Noted.
37	Section 1	<p>The SA Report (Table 1) summarises that the Local Plan will '<i>set out the Council's strategic vision, policies and land allocations, where necessary, for meeting future needs (including housing, employment, community facilities, transport and other infrastructure needed to support development).</i>' With this in mind it would be useful for the Scoping Report to develop a framework for the assessment of such sites in a quantitative manner.</p> <p>It is anticipated that such a framework will have to be formulated to assess site allocations and alternatives within the SA at future stages, and it is felt that such a framework should have been presented at this Scoping stage in order to benefit from consultation with the Statutory Consultees and infrastructure providers. This would have allowed any comments or recommendations to be factored into such a framework prior to any appraisal work being undertaken.</p> <p>It is recommended that a detailed site appraisal framework is shared with the Statutory Consultees and ECC for informal consultation / comments prior to any future SA work being undertaken on the appraisal of sites.</p>	<p>Noted; however, at this stage this would be premature until we know more about the sites, the number of sites to be assessed, the uses proposed for them and evidence available.</p> <p>It is not clear what is being proposed in terms of a 'quantitative method'. We assume this is referring to the use of distance criteria and thresholds to appraise site options. SA is an iterative process and there will be a number of opportunities to comment and have an influence on the proposed method and findings.</p>

Ref	Scoping Report Ref	Comment	Response
38	Section 3, climate change, policy context	<p>The following additional guidance documents should be included within the national and regional evidence base as follows:</p> <p>National: Adapting to Climate Change: Advice for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Authorities (2015): this document contains advice to ensure that an economically credible appraisal, taking into account of the uncertainties associated with climate change, can be made to support investment decisions. Given the long lifetime and high cost of the built environment and many flood and coastal erosion management measures, it is imperative that plans and investment projects take into account, in an appropriate way, the changing risks over the coming century. This includes designing for adaptation to a changing climate where appropriate.</p> <p>Regional: The Essex SuDS Design Guide (2016) -The Essex SuDS Design guide provides local standards for water quality and water quantity from developments and guidance on SuDS design. (weblink: SuDS design guide PDF, 15MB)</p>	Noted and included.
39	Section 3, climate change, baseline	<p>Summary of Baseline Climate Change adaptation (summary of current baseline)</p> <p>It is noted that the outcome of the UKCP09 are outlined in terms of the temperature and precipitation increase as a result of climate change, however it is recommended that additional consideration is given to the latest EA research (2016) which identifies peak river flood flow allowances by river district. The EA has also provided new Guidance in 2016 entitled “<i>Flood risk assessments: climate change allowances</i>” this was last updated April 2016 and provides new guidance on precipitation, as outlined below:</p> <p>Respondent includes baseline information. Web link: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessments-climate-change-allowances)</p> <p>3.2.1.1 continued (Page17/61); South Essex Outline Water Cycle Study, the following factual correction is proposed by inserting the word “<u>infiltration</u>”, to read as follows:</p> <p><i>“The South Essex Outline Water Cycle Study suggests that opportunities for providing <u>infiltration</u> SuDS are limited by the largely impermeable geology underlying most of the District. New development within Castle Point and Basildon should provide attenuation of surface water run-off, although infiltration may be possible in some areas.”</i></p>	Noted, further baseline information included and minor amendments made to text.
40	Section 3, climate change, key issues	<p>Key Issues The second bullet should be amended to read as follows:</p>	Noted and amended.

Ref	Scoping Report Ref	Comment	Response
		<p><i>“Climate change is likely to exacerbate the existing drainage infrastructure deficit which currently exists in the locations identified as Critical Drainage Areas by the South Essex Surface Water Management Plan.”</i></p> <p>The forth bulled should be amended to read as follows: <i>“Impermeable geology structure in the west of the District limits opportunities for <u>infiltration</u> SuDS.”</i></p> <p>Please note that it needs to be made clear in the document that impermeable geology does not limit the use of all SuDS – just potentially SuDS that rely on infiltration.</p> <p>However, there may be pockets across developments that allow for some infiltration.</p>	
41	Section 3, climate change, SA objectives	<p>Table 5 SA Objectives</p> <p>The following additions and amendments are proposed //to the Appraisal Questions:</p> <p>Additions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production). (This is in line with paragraph 17 of the NPPF) • Planning policy should require that the impact of climate change is fully assessed. Reference should be made to the SWMP by the spatial planning teams to assess the sustainability of developments. <p>Amend 3rd and 4th bullets as to read as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Direct development away from areas at highest risk <u>of all forms</u> of flooding as per the sequential test, taking into account the likely effects of climate change?</i> • <i>“Sustainably manage water run-off, <u>with priority given to SuDS</u>, ensuring that the risk of flooding is not increased and where possible reduced? (This is in line with paragraph 103 of the NPPF)”</i> <p><u>Other Flood and Water Management comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is unclear why flood risk has only been included in the climate change section and does not have its own section. It needs to be made clear that for development to be sustainable, it cannot increase flood risk on or off site and flood risk has to be managed sustainably and reference should be made to the South Essex SWMP. • The Essex SuDS Design Guide (2016) provides local standards for water quality and water quantity from developments and guidance on SuDS design. 	Noted, decision-aiding questions have been amended to reflect this comment.
42	Section 3, landscape	LANDSCAPE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT	Noted. It is not considered necessary or

Ref	Scoping Report Ref	Comment	Response
		and historic environment, SA objectives SA Objectives (page 32) - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscape objectives - There should be a reference to multifunctional areas that can also be used for drainage and flood risk mitigation (see SA objective comments for climate change) 	appropriate to keep repeating a decision-aiding question about the multifunctional uses of areas.
43	Section 5, environmental quality, policy context	ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY Context Review The following document is applicable and should be included within the “regional” context: The Essex SuDS Design Guide (2016) – The Essex SuDS Design guide provides design advice and guidance on surface water drainage schemes including local standards for water quality and water quantity from developments and guidance on SuDS design. (weblink: SuDS design guide PDF, 15MB)	Noted and included.
44	Section 5, environmental quality, baseline	5.2.1.1 Air Quality Fourth Paragraph – Omission, the paragraph includes a reference to “Figure 7”, which is missing and the Rayleigh AQMA is shown as figure 8 (see section 6 page 35/61) Last paragraph - The paragraph should be amended to read as follows: <i>“Traffic is the primary source of air pollution in the District. Rayleigh is Rochford District’s principal centre and offers retail and leisure outlets. In addition to traffic from commuting, shopping and business, the road network in Rayleigh also acts to transfer traffic between the A127 trunk road and villages such as Hockley, Hawkwell, Ashingdon and Canewdon. <u>The Town Centre is also the crossroads for three other key routes, A129 / A1015 and B1013. These routes carry significant through traffic between Southend and the west of Rayleigh towards Chelmsford avoiding the congested A127. There are no major industrial sources of air pollution in the District.</u>”</i>	Noted and amended.
45	Section 8, health and wellbeing, SA objectives	HEALTH AND WELLBEING Table 14 SA Objectives Insert the following additional bullet within the Appraisal Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Promote the use of sustainable transport such as walking and cycling.</i> 	Noted and included.
46	Section 9, transport and movement, policy context	TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT Regional Amend the text to read as follows: <i>“Local Transport Plan for Essex:107 sets out the County Council’s aspirations for improving travel in the County. Priorities include providing for and promoting access by sustainable modes of transport to <u>and from</u> development areas; improving journey times on congested routes; improving the attractiveness of cycling; and improving access to green spaces. <u>Consideration will also need to be given to other Non-Motorised Users (NMUs) such as equestrians, as well as ensuring the connectivity and accessibility between the sustainable transport modes.</u>”</i>	Noted and amended.

Ref	Scoping Report Ref	Comment	Response
47	Section 9, transport and movement, baseline	<p>9.2.1.1: Amend the paragraph to read as follows: <i>“There are no motorways within Rochford District. The main <u>strategic</u> routes in the District are the A130 which links Rayleigh with Chelmsford and the A127 which links Southend-on-Sea with the M25.”</i></p> <p>9.2.1.5: Amend the paragraph to read as follows: <i>“There are good transport links to the airport at peak times with 8 trains per hour which run from Southend Airport Station to Central London. The journey time from London Liverpool Street Station is 53 minutes. The airport is also served well by the road network and can be reached by the A127, <u>via the A12, A130 or A13.</u> However, the A127 is a constrained route operating near capacity.”</i></p> <p>9.2.2 Amend the paragraph to read as follows: <i>“Given the rural nature of the District and high levels of car ownership, the car is likely to remain a dominant form of transport in the District over the coming years. New housing and employment provision also has the potential to increase traffic flows without appropriate locational policies and interventions. As such, congestion is likely to continue to be an issue for parts of the District. Whilst negative effects of new development on the transport network are likely to be mitigated to a degree, there will be a continuing need for development to be situated in accessible locations which limit the need to travel by private car. <u>Connected and attractive sustainable transport networks will need to be considered further including increases in coverage of passenger transport, cycling and walking networks to rail stations as part of the developments, to provide a realistic alternative to the private car.</u></i></p> <p><i>Given the District’s proximity to London, and good links available locally, travel by rail is likely to continue to be a dominant mode of travel for work purposes. There is potential for the number of people working from home in the District to significantly increase due to modern working patterns and through the provision of high-speed broadband.”</i></p>	Noted and amended.
48	Section 9, transport and movement, general	<p><u>Other Transport Comments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater recognition required of other industry areas in a transport context, such as Purdeys and emerging Southend Airport/Saxon Business Park as areas of potentially significant and increasing HGV activity. • Recognition of need for greater Community or Demand Responsive Transport for increasingly elderly population scattered across a wide rural area? • Need for town centres such as Rayleigh, Hockley and Rochford to have more sustainable links with wider areas such as direct cycle links with surrounding villages, in recognition of the parking pressures already experienced, to help ensure that town centres remain vibrant without discouraging economic growth due to a constrained local and strategic road network. 	Noted. This will be considered through the further SA work.

Ref	Scoping Report Ref	Comment	Response
49	General	<p><u>General comments:</u> There is a range of Evidence available to be aware of and taken into account at the National and Local level and these are set out below for your information and action.</p> <p>Respondent lists evidence.</p>	Noted. This evidence will be considered through the further SA work.
50	Section 4, heritage	<p>Paragraph 4.1.2 – The current Development Management Plan (2014) does not appear to include any policy regarding the protection of the setting and surrounds of scheduled monument sites. While S.M. sites themselves are well protected, inappropriate development overlooking or close to S.M. site can detract from the visual setting of scheduled monuments. A specific policy protecting the setting of S.M. sites would be welcome.</p> <p>Any Acknowledgement of the importance of protecting the setting of S.M. sites, even if only in the text of a document would be welcome.</p>	Noted, the scoping report includes baseline information on nationally designated heritage assets and proposes an appropriate SA Objective and decision-aiding questions.
51	General	Would just like to be kept in the loop incase you are going to destroy our lovely village more.	Noted.
52	General	<p>4. Landscape & Historic Environment</p> <p>4.1.2 Development Management Plan, Policy DM1 – New development locally has not promoted local character, nor contributed to natural and built environment.</p> <p>Policy DM7 has not protected buildings of local historic, architectural, visual importance. On the contrary, the latter have often been demolished in Hockley, replaced by inharmonious, not always profitable, buildings, usually jeopardising existing homes of good quality, being out of height, bulk, scale and character with same.</p> <p>4.2.1.2 Landscape character of District (3 types)</p> <p>1. Croach & Roach Farmland</p> <p>2. Denghie & Foulness Coast</p> <p>“Majority of the District is designated as Green belt” – Fig. 12 “It is objective of current Core Strategy to protect and enhance these open spaces” – so permanent protection, then.</p> <p>3. “South Essex Coastal Towns”</p> <p>“The area least sensitive to development”. As expected, Hockley in particular is dismissed as “ Large area of urban development, with major transport routes”. Southend’s planning department is also dismissive: “..area has undergone significant change in the 20th Century, including large areas of urban development, forecast to be an on-going trend”.</p> <p>This is the gist of all these reports and appraisals, produced by Consultants at great expense to the same end, to enable developers to carry out constant demolition of existing settlements and redevelopment. The cost of this exercise necessitates cuts in basic local services.</p>	Noted. The purpose of the SA process and the Scoping Report is provided in Section 1.

Ref	Scoping Report Ref Comment	Response
	<p>“ the condition of settlements is mixed, with poor quality development common”. If so, that is due to allowing constant demolition and redevelopment, “..the quality of woodlands and hedgerows is moderate” – why? To ensure more redevelopment?</p> <p>Re Green Belt – much of Hawkwell’s has been used up – Clements Hall, Christmas Tree Farm, 600 in Hall Road, with mansions too costly for children of local people, but for eg rich Londoners.</p> <p>First Publicity of the appraisal was a meeting 18.8.16, the holiday period. I was told next issue would be in autumn. A letter arrived Christmas Eve, consultation to run 19.12.16 to 31.1.17. Naturally, local minds will be on Christmas and New Year, not planning. Probably the next issue will be at Easter. Clearly RDC don’t intend residents and traders to be cognisant of what they’re doing, RDC just going through the motions while actually facilitating redevelopment.</p> <p>I still wish to be added to the Planning Policy mailing list, both to know what is happening and in the hope of bringing some influence to bear on outcomes. Thank you.</p> <p>I note former Planning & Development Services is now Planning & Regeneration Services – pulling something down. That says it all – run out of land except Green Belt – we who are not in it will be demolished instead to facilitate development.</p>	
53	<p>General</p> <p>I am responding to your letter of 19/12/16 inviting me to comment on the above Local Plan and current consultation on the future for Rochford.</p> <p>I am a long time resident of Leigh-on-Sea with relatives and friends living in Rochford. As an historic market town and agricultural and farming area, it has always been a place set apart from the modern development of the Southend Borough. However, the new development of Hall Road on what was I understand Grade 1 Agricultural land is already changing Rochford to its detriment.</p> <p>This South East Region of Essex is already becoming unsustainable regarding road access in and out of Southend, Rayleigh, Hockley and now Rochford, especially with the Airport and further industrial developments.</p> <p>Our local hospital, Doctors’ Surgeries and schools cannot cope now.</p> <p>Further housing will surely lead to more demand for another major road link and will completely urbanise this corner of South East Essex.</p> <p>I believe therefore that any further in-roads into the Rochford District will be a step too far.</p>	Noted.
54	<p>General</p> <p>Scanned representation referring to proposed development in Hullbridge.</p> <p>The representation states that the Council has not assessed, previously, any of the alternatives in terms of major impacts and sustainability especially in connection with the Malyons Lane Site in Hullbridge. The Council needs to take carbon emission, overcrowding, traffic congestion and further drains on existing infrastructure.</p>	Noted. The purpose of the SA process and the Scoping Report is provided in Section 1

