

# Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) for the Rochford New Local Plan

Interim IIA Report

Rochford District Council

July 2021

## Quality information

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# 1. Introduction

## Background

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) in support of Rochford District Council's emerging new Local Plan (hereafter referred to as the 'Local Plan'). IIA fulfils the requirements and duties for Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) and Health Impact Assessment (HIA).

## IIA explained

- 1.2 IIA 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 IIA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative impacts and maximising positive impacts. Through this approach, the IIA for the Local Plan seeks to maximise the developing plan's contribution to sustainable development.
- 1.3 As identified above, the IIA seeks to fulfil the requirements and duties for SA, SEA, EqIA and HIA. The approach is to fully integrate these components to provide a single assessment process to inform the development of the new Local Plan. A description of each of the various components and their purposes is provided below.

## Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

- 1.4 SA is undertaken to address the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations). SA is a legal requirement for Local Plans<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.5 The National Planning Practice 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.*"<sup>2</sup>
- 1.6 In line with the requirements of the SEA Regulations, the two key steps in SA 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 assessment of the Draft Plan (i.e. discusses 'likely significant effects' that would result from plan implementation) and reasonable alternatives.
- 1.7 This Interim IIA Report is concerned with the reasonable alternatives that have been identified and considered at this Regulation 18 stage in the plan making process. The assessment of these alternatives will help inform the local planning authority's choice of preferred approach. This stage should also involve considering ways of mitigating any adverse effects, maximising beneficial effects and identifying ways of monitoring likely significant effects.
- 1.8 The NPPG states that, "*The development and appraisal of proposals in Local Plan documents should be an iterative process, with the proposals being revised to take account of the appraisal findings. This should inform the selection, refinement and publication of proposals*".

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<sup>1</sup> Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2015) Planning Practice Guidance Strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal Para 001 Reference ID: 11-001-20140306 [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal> Accessed Dec 2018

- 1.9 It also states more widely that the SA “should identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on environmental, economic and social factors using the evidence base”.<sup>3</sup> Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment are set out in schedule 1 to the SEA Regulations.

## Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)

- 1.10 As a public-sector organisation, Rochford District Council has a duty under the Equality Act 2010<sup>4</sup> and associated Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to ensure that the objectives and policy options within the Local Plan avoid unlawful discrimination (direct and indirect), as well as advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between those with protected characteristics<sup>5</sup> and all others. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) is often used by public sector organisations to demonstrate how this duty has been met.

## Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

- 1.11 There are numerous links to planning and health highlighted throughout the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019). The NPPG states that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should ensure that health and wellbeing, and health infrastructure are considered in Local Plans and in planning decision-making.<sup>6</sup> A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a tool used to identify and assess the potential impacts of a plan and to inform decision-making. Public Health England published a guide for HIA in spatial planning in October 2020<sup>7</sup>, this includes suggestions on how it can be integrated with the SA/ SEA process.

## This Interim IIA Report

- 1.12 This Interim IIA Report is published alongside the Spatial Options Consultation Document, under Regulation 18 of the Local Planning Regulations. The legally required IIA Report will be published subsequently, alongside the final draft (‘Pre-Submission’) version of the Local Plan, under Regulation 19 of the Local Planning Regulations.

## Rochford District’s new Local Plan

- 1.13 The Council is in the process of producing a new Local Plan in line with policy and guidance changes at the national and local level, which includes the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). The new Local Plan will include strategic and detailed planning and development management policies, land allocations for housing, employment and mixed use and will identify areas in the borough for protection. The area covered by the Local Plan can be seen in **Figure 1.1**.
- 1.14 The new Local Plan is being prepared in the context of the emerging South Essex Strategic Framework, which seeks to deliver upon the ‘South Essex 2050 Ambition’ (SE2050). This is a long-term growth ambition being developed by the South Essex Local Authorities that underpins the strategic spatial, infrastructure and economic priorities across the sub-region.
- 1.15 In January 2018, Basildon Borough Council, Brentwood Borough Council, Castle Point Borough Council, Rochford District Council, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, Thurrock Borough Council and Essex County Council formed the Association of South Essex Local Authorities

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2015) Planning Practice Guidance Strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal Para 014 Reference ID: 11-001-20140306 [online] available at: [http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal/sustainability-appraisal-requirements-for-local-plans/#paragraph\\_013](http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal/sustainability-appraisal-requirements-for-local-plans/#paragraph_013)

<sup>4</sup> Equality Act 2010 [online] available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

<sup>5</sup> Protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 include age, sex, marital status, disability, gender reassignment, ethnicity, religion, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation and deprived/disadvantaged groups.

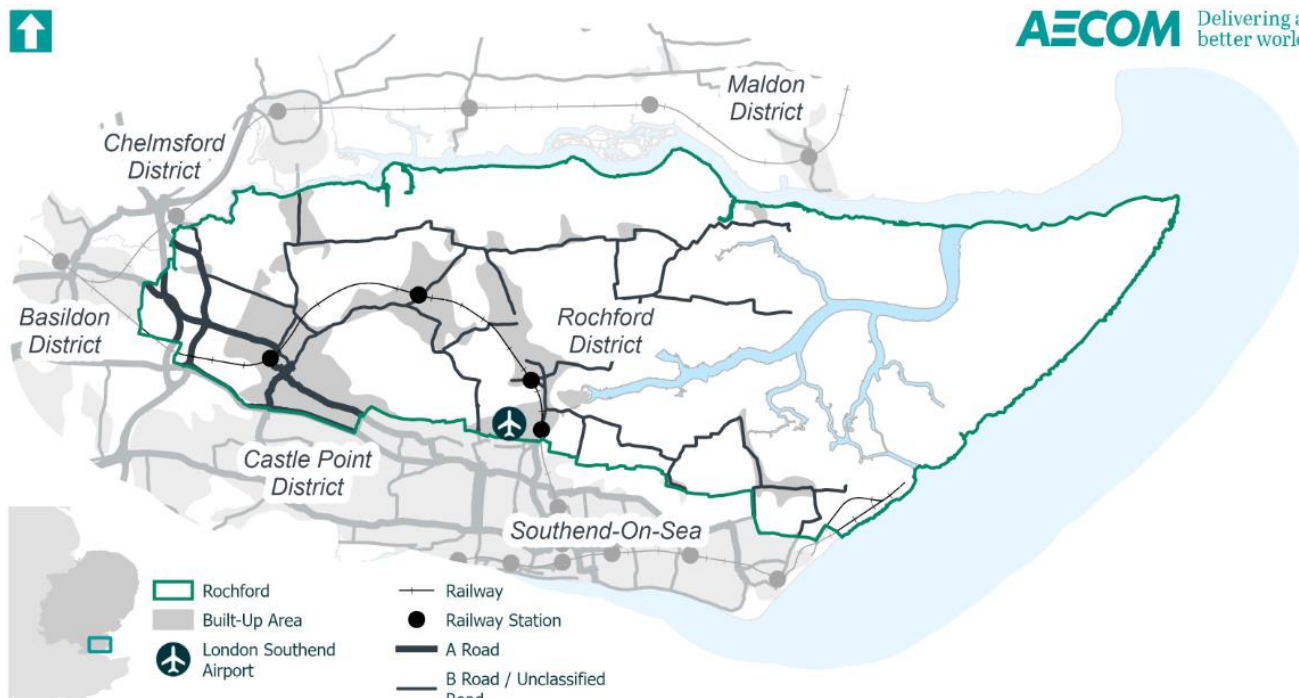
<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2015) Planning Practice Guidance. Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 53-001-20140306 [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/health-and-wellbeing>

<sup>7</sup> Public Health England (2020) Health Impact Assessment in spatial planning [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/929230/HIA\\_in\\_Planning\\_Guide\\_Sept2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/929230/HIA_in_Planning_Guide_Sept2020.pdf)

(ASELA) to ensure that implementation of the SE2050 Ambition has strong leadership and is managed on a truly collaborative basis.

- 1.16 The spatial strategy to implement the SE2050 Ambition is being implemented through a new planning ‘portfolio’. The non-statutory South Essex Strategic Framework (SEP) currently being prepared will provide the overarching planning context for the South Essex sub-region. The constituent statutory Local Plans and other place-shaping tools will be used to deliver this on the ground, using the range of planning tools available in a more flexible and responsive way.

**Figure 1.1: Rochford District**



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## Spatial Options Consultation Paper

- 1.17 The Spatial Options document sets out a range of challenges and opportunities relating to how Rochford District can change and grow over the next 20 years. These challenges and opportunities relate to a number of important, interconnected themes that together will contribute to achieving a sustainable vision for the District. The consultation is an important step in exploring the advantages and disadvantages of different strategy options, to inform future stages in the preparation of the Local Plan.

- 1.18 The Spatial Options Consultation Paper is structured and seeks views on the following:

- Strategy Options;
- Planning Themes; and
- Planning for Complete Communities.

## What is the scope of the IIA?

- 1.19 The aim here is to introduce the reader to the scope of the IIA, i.e. the integrated sustainability, equalities and health objectives that should be a focus of (and provide a broad methodological framework) the IIA.

- 1.20 The Regulations require that “*When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the Environmental Report [i.e. the IIA scope], the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies*”. In England, the consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England. A SA Scoping Report was sent to the statutory



consultees for comment in December 2016. The responses received were taken into account and amendments made where necessary with a Final SA Scoping Report published in March 2017.<sup>8</sup>

- 1.21 The Council decided to progress with an integrated assessment (SA, EqIA and HIA) for the new Local Plan to deliver efficiencies and enhance engagement. The scoping information (baseline and policy context) was updated to reflect this in early 2020 and IIA objectives and assessment questions developed. Updated scoping information will be presented in the IIA Report that accompanies the Regulation 19 version of the new Local Plan in due course.

## IIA Objectives

- 1.22 **Table 1.1** presents the IIA Objectives - grouped under ten topic headings - established through IIA scoping, i.e. in light of updated context/ baseline review and key issues.
- 1.23 Taken together, the IIA topics and draft objectives presented in **Table 1.1** provide a methodological 'framework' for assessment. We would welcome any comments from the statutory bodies and wider stakeholders on the refined IIA objectives and assessment questions as part of this consultation.

**Table 1.1: IIA framework**

IIA theme	IIA objectives	IIA assessment questions – will the option/ proposal help to:
<p><b>Population and Communities</b></p> <p><i>Relevant SEA Topics:</i> <i>Population &amp; human health</i></p> <p><i>Relevant NPPF Paragraphs:</i> <i>59 - 79</i></p>	<p>Cater for existing and future residents' needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet the identified objectively assessed housing needs, including affordable, for the plan area?</li> <li>Ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures to meet the needs of all sectors of the community?</li> <li>Improve cross-boundary links between communities?</li> <li>Provide housing in sustainable locations that allow easy access to a range of local services and facilities?</li> <li>Promote the development of a range of high quality, accessible community facilities, including specialist services for disabled and older people?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Population and Communities</b></p> <p><i>Relevant SEA Topics:</i> <i>Population &amp; human health</i></p> <p><i>Relevant NPPF Paragraphs:</i> <i>59 - 79, 85 - 101</i></p>	<p>To maintain and enhance community and settlement identity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid the coalescence of settlements and loss of Green Belt land?</li> <li>Provide development in the most deprived areas and stimulate regeneration?</li> <li>Can development effectively integrate within the existing settlement pattern?</li> <li>Enhance the identity of a community or settlement?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Health and Wellbeing</b></p>	<p>Improve the health and wellbeing of residents within the plan area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities for all age groups?</li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> AECOM (2017) Southend-on-Sea Local Plan Integrated Impact Assessment Scoping Report [online] available at: <https://www.rochford.gov.uk/sites/default/files/RochfordFinalSAScopingReport.pdf>

IIA theme	IIA objectives	IIA assessment questions – will the option/ proposal help to:
<p><i>Relevant SEA Topics:</i> <i>Population &amp; human health</i></p> <p><i>Relevant NPPF Paragraphs:</i> <i>96 - 101</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities?</li> <li>• Enhance multifunctional green infrastructure networks throughout the plan area?</li> <li>• Provide and enhance the provision of community access to green infrastructure?</li> <li>• Improve access to the countryside for recreation?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Equality, diversity and inclusion</b></p> <p><i>Relevant IIA Topics:</i> <i>Population &amp; human health</i></p> <p><i>Relevant NPPF Paragraphs:</i> <i>99 – 101</i></p>	<p>Cater for existing and future residents' needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet the needs of all people in the plan area, including the specific needs of Gypsy &amp; Travellers?</li> <li>• Encourage the integration and interaction of different people/ communities?</li> <li>• Reduce inequalities?</li> <li>• Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics?</li> <li>• Improve access to housing, employment, training, health and leisure opportunities?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Economy</b></p> <p><i>Relevant SEA Topics:</i> <i>Population &amp; human health</i></p> <p><i>Relevant NPPF Paragraphs:</i> <i>18 - 22, 42 &amp; 43</i></p>	<p>Support strong, diverse and resilient economies with both Rochford District and Southend Borough; providing local and cross-boundary opportunities throughout the plan area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate the provision of the right type of employment land in the right place?</li> <li>• Provide employment in the most deprived areas and stimulate regeneration?</li> <li>• Support the economic vitality and viability of the plan area's centres and shopping areas?</li> <li>• Create opportunities for a variety of businesses and people to flourish?</li> <li>• Support the visitor economy?</li> <li>• Support the rural economy?</li> <li>• Facilitate working from home, remote working and home-based businesses?</li> <li>• Support the growth of London Southend Airport?</li> <li>• Enhance educational opportunities?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transport and movement</b></p> <p><i>Relevant SEA Topics:</i> <i>Population, human health &amp; material assets</i></p> <p><i>Relevant NPPF Paragraphs:</i> <i>102 - 111</i></p>	<p>Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the need to travel through sustainable patterns of land use and development?</li> <li>• Encourage modal shift to more sustainable forms of travel?</li> <li>• Enable transport infrastructure improvements?</li> <li>• Support the uptake of low carbon transport?</li> <li>• Contribute towards the EV charging network?</li> <li>• Facilitate working from home and remote working?</li> <li>• Provide improvements to and/ or reduce congestion on the existing highway network?</li> </ul>

IIA theme	IIA objectives	IIA assessment questions – will the option/ proposal help to:
<p><b>Landscape</b></p> <p><i>Relevant SEA Topics:</i> <i>Landscape</i></p> <p><i>Relevant NPPF Paragraphs:</i> <i>170 – 173, 127 &amp; 180</i></p>	<p>Protect and enhance the character and quality of the plan area's landscapes and townscapes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhance landscape and townscape character, including urban areas and the sparsely populated rural coastal landscapes?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance locally important townscape and landscape features in the plan area?</li> <li>• Protect the tranquil areas that remain relatively undisturbed by noise and are important for their recreational and amenity value?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Historic environment</b></p> <p><i>Relevant SEA Topics:</i> <i>Cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage</i></p> <p><i>Relevant NPPF Paragraphs:</i> <i>184 - 188</i></p>	<p>Protect and enhance the significance of the historic environment, heritage assets (both designated and non-designated) and their settings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve and where possible enhance the significance of buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their setting?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of conservation areas and their settings?</li> <li>• Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic environment?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance archaeological remains, including historic landscapes?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Climate change</b></p> <p><i>Relevant SEA Topics:</i> <i>Climatic factors</i></p> <p><i>Relevant NPPF Paragraphs:</i> <i>93 - 108</i></p>	<p>Promote climate change mitigation in the plan area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport?</li> <li>• Reduce the need to travel?</li> <li>• Promote use of energy from low carbon sources?</li> <li>• Reduce energy consumption and increase efficiency?</li> <li>• Encourage the update of electric and alternatively fuelled vehicles?</li> <li>• Provide place-based solutions for emissions reductions?</li> <li>• Support the use of smart, green technology, and benefit from the industrial opportunities that technology and innovation can play in addressing climate change?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Climate change</b></p> <p><i>Relevant SEA Topics:</i> <i>Climatic factors &amp; water</i></p> <p><i>Relevant NPPF Paragraphs:</i> <i>93 - 108</i></p>	<p>Support the resilience of the plan area to the potential effects of climate change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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?</li> <li>• Make development safe where it is necessary within an area of flood risk and without increasing flood risk elsewhere?</li> <li>• Sustainably manage water run-off, with priority given to SuDS, ensuring that the risk of flooding is not increased and where possible reduced?</li> </ul>

IIA theme	IIA objectives	IIA assessment questions – will the option/ proposal help to:
<p><b>Biodiversity</b></p> <p><i>Relevant SEA Topics:</i> <i>Biodiversity, flora &amp; fauna</i></p> <p><i>Relevant NPPF Paragraphs:</i> <i>118 &amp; 174 -177</i></p>	<p>Protect and enhance biodiversity within and surrounding the plan area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve and enhance multifunctional green infrastructure networks in the plan area (and beyond) to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change?</li> <li>• Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the plan area to the effects of climate change, including enhancements to ecological networks?</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains where possible?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance ecological networks, including those that cross administrative boundaries?</li> <li>• Minimise recreational impacts on designated sites, in particular European sites?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Environmental quality</b></p> <p><i>Relevant SEA Topics:</i> <i>Soil, water &amp; air</i></p> <p><i>Relevant NPPF Paragraphs:</i> <i>103, 170, 178 &amp; 181</i></p>	<p>Improve air, soil and water quality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain or improve local air quality?</li> <li>• Promote the remediation of contaminated land?</li> <li>• Prioritise development in areas of poorer agricultural land quality?</li> <li>• Protect and improve the area’s chemical &amp; biological water quality?</li> <li>• Protect groundwater resources?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Natural resources</b></p> <p><i>Relevant SEA Topics:</i> <i>Water &amp; soil &amp; material assets</i></p> <p><i>Relevant NPPF Paragraphs:</i> <i>20, 84, 149 &amp; 170</i></p>	<p>Promote the efficient and sustainable use of natural resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the use of previously developed land?</li> <li>• Minimise water consumption?</li> <li>• Reduce the amount of waste produced and move it up the waste hierarchy?</li> <li>• Encourage recycling of materials and minimise consumption of resources during construction?</li> </ul>

Part 1: What has plan-making/  
IIA involved up to this point?



## 2. Introduction (to Part 1)

2.1 The chapter sets out the work undertaken by the Council to date in the preparation of the Local Plan and the Spatial Options Consultation Document.

### Issues and Options (2017)

- 2.2 The Issues and Options Document represented the Council's first public stage of plan preparation in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Regulations (2012). It set out a number of key District-wide challenges in preparing the new Local Plan and planning positively for growth in homes, jobs and associated infrastructure. It proposed a number of key issues for discussion, including options for the overall level and distribution of growth as well as policies which may be needed in the Local Plan to deliver good growth, high quality design, jobs and economic activity and protection of the natural and built environment.
- 2.3 Each set of options under the key issues were considered through the SA (now the IIA) process. The findings were presented in an Interim IIA Report (October 2017) that accompanied the Issues and Options Document on public consultation from 5 February to 2 April 2019.<sup>9</sup> The representations received through this first consultation stage are presented in the Issues and Options Feedback Report (2018).<sup>10</sup>

### Spatial Options Consultation Paper

- 2.4 Since the publication of the Issues and Options Document in 2017, the policy context has changed and there have been a number of new evidence base studies emerging in support of the South Essex Strategic Framework including:
- South Essex Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (April 2019).
  - South Essex Employment Grow-on Space Study (Feb 2020).
  - South Essex Green and Blue Infrastructure Study (2020).
  - South Essex Strategic Growth Locations Study (May 2020).
  - South Essex Tourism, Recreation and Leisure Strategy (2020).
- 2.5 There have also been several new evidence base studies published to inform the emerging new Local Plan, including:
- Green Belt Study (2020).
  - Landscape Character, Sensitivity and Capacity Study (2020).
  - Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) Update (2021).
  - Urban Capacity Study (2021).
- 2.6 The updated context and evidence as well as consultation feedback on the Issues and Options Document have informed the development of the Spatial Options Consultation Paper.
- 2.7 The document presents a range of different options, which includes high-level options for the overall level and distribution of growth, these are set out in more detail below.

### Growth scenarios

- 2.8 The Spatial Options Consultation Paper sets out the policy context and evidence base that informs the consideration of housing, employment and retail growth during the plan period. In summary:

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.rochford.gov.uk/sites/default/files/DraftSARreport.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.rochford.gov.uk/sites/default/files/planning\\_newlocalplanfeedback.pdf](https://www.rochford.gov.uk/sites/default/files/planning_newlocalplanfeedback.pdf)

- The Government’s current standard method suggests the need to build around 360 homes per year over the next 20 years, which equates to 7,200 homes.
- NPPF requires Local Plan to provide strategies that accommodate unmet need from neighbouring areas where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development.
- The Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) 2020 identifies a supply of over 4,300 homes that are already planned for.
- The South Essex Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) identified a potential need for up to 7 hectares of employment land by 2036, which rises to 16 hectares when making an allowance for churn and windfall.
- The South Essex Retail Study 2017 identifies a need for around 13,000m2 of new retail floorspace by 2037, if Rochford was to build 360 homes a year over that period.

2.9 Taking account of the context and evidence above the Spatial Options Consultation Paper identifies three high-level growth scenarios set out in **Table 2.1** below.

**Table 2.1: Growth scenarios**

Option	Scenario	Explanation
A	Lower growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approx 4,500 new homes by 2040 from maximising urban and brownfield capacity and windfalls</li> <li>• 7 hectares of employment land (based on EDNA combined scenario)</li> <li>• No new retail floorspace other than windfalls</li> </ul>
B	Medium growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7,200 new homes by 2040 (based on current standard method)</li> <li>• 16 hectares of employment land (based on EDNA combined scenario with allowance for churn and windfall)</li> <li>• C. 13,000 m2 of new retail floorspace (based on South Essex Retail Study)</li> </ul>
C	Higher growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10,800 new homes by 2040 (based on current standard method +50%)</li> <li>• 40 hectares of employment land (based on maintaining existing employment allocations)</li> <li>• C. 20,000 m2 of new retail floorspace (based on Retail Study adjusted for housing growth)</li> </ul>

## Spatial Strategy Options

2.10 The Spatial Options Consultation Paper also identifies four broad spatial strategy options and these are presented in **Table 2.2** below.

**Table 2.2: Growth scenarios**

**Strategy and sub-options**      **This strategy could deliver...**

### Option 1: Urban intensification

- No sub-options**
- Existing planned housing developments, including sites with planning permission, existing allocated sites and urban developments, involving around 4,200 new homes of which at least 800 will be affordable.
  - Existing planned employment developments, including sites with planning permission and existing allocated sites, involving a minimum of 120,000 m2 of permissioned employment space, including new high quality space at Airport Business Park and Michelin Farm.
  - Potentially a further 1,500 homes by allowing higher density developments in urban areas and on existing allocations.
  - Capacity improvements to existing schools and healthcare centres, new on-site open spaces and sports facilities.
  - Limited opportunities to deliver transformational new infrastructure as many of the developments would fall below the 50-home threshold to contribute to new infrastructure.

### Option 2: Urban Extensions

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Option 2a: Focused on main towns</b>                                      | • An additional 3,000 – 5,000 homes relative to Option 1 of which at least 1,000-2,000 would be affordable.  |
| <b>Option 2b: Dispersed to all settlements based on Settlement Hierarchy</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 3 new primary schools, new medical facilities, open spaces, employment areas and transport connections.</li> <li>• Opportunities to support rural services by directing some growth to villages with rural shops, schools or community facilities.</li> </ul> |

### Option 3: Concentrated growth

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Option 3a: Focused west of Rayleigh</b>  | • An additional 3,000 – 5,000 homes relative to Option 1 of which at least 1,000-2,000 would be affordable.   |
| <b>Option 3b: Focused north of Southend</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 1 new secondary school, 3 new primary schools, new medical facilities, open spaces, employment areas and new link roads.</li> <li>• Greater opportunities to attract Government investment into existing and new infrastructure as part of the Thames Estuary Growth Area.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Option 3c: Focused east of Rochford</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater opportunities to work with Basildon, Castle Point, Essex and Southend Councils to co-ordinate funding towards transformational transport infrastructure projects such as a new inter-urban rapid transit system or new link roads.</li> <li>• Opportunities to deliver the eastern extent of the South Essex Estuary Park forming a new coastal country park in the east of the District.</li> </ul> |

### Option 4: Balanced Combination

- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>No sub-options</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An additional 3,000 – 5,000 homes relative to Option 1 of which at least 1,000-2,000 would be affordable.</li> <li>• Up to 1 new secondary school, 3 new primary schools, new medical facilities, open spaces, employment areas and new link roads.</li> <li>• Greater opportunities to attract Government investment into existing and new infrastructure as part of the Thames Estuary Growth Area.</li> <li>• Greater opportunities to work with Basildon, Castle Point Essex and Southend Councils to co-ordinate funding towards transformational transport infrastructure projects such as a new inter-urban rapid transit system or new link roads.</li> <li>• Opportunities to support rural services by directing some growth to villages with rural shops, schools or community facilities.</li> <li>• Opportunities to deliver the eastern extent of the South Essex Estuary Park forming a new country park in the east of the District.</li> </ul> |
|-----------------------|--|

2.11 The growth and spatial strategy options identified above have been subject to a comparative assessment against the IIA framework. The summary findings are presented in Part 2 of this Interim IIA Report with the detailed assessments available in **Appendix I**.

2.12 The Spatial Options Consultation Paper also identifies a number of key spatial themes, setting out facts, challenges and opportunities for each theme as well as a number of options. The key spatial themes are set out in **Figure 2.1** on the next page.



**Figure 2.1: Rochford District**



2.13 While options are set out under the spatial themes, they have not been subject to detailed consideration through the IIA at this stage. In the majority of cases, the potential policy directions would be unlikely to result in significant effects and further to this, it is unlikely there would be substantial differences between them in relation to a number of IIA themes. The IIA at this stage is focussed on the growth and spatial strategy options, as the quantum and location growth during the plan period is most likely to give rise to significant effects.


2.14 A number of key settlements and communities are also identified in the Spatial Options Consultation Paper in the Planning for Complete Communities section. A profile, emerging draft vision, promoted sites and key constraints are identified for each of the following settlements/ communities:

- Rayleigh
- Rochford & Ashingdon
- Hockley & Hawkwell
- Wakerings and Barling
- Hullbeidge
- Canewdon
- Great Stambridge
- Rawreth
- Paglesham
- Stonebridge and Sutton

2.15 Individual site options have not been considered through the IIA at this stage. Subsequent IIA Reports will consider potential growth opportunities for settlements/ community areas, informed by an assessment of the individual sites (housing and employment) available for development in the district.

- 2.16 It should also be noted that the Council will also publish a Site Appraisal Paper alongside the Spatial Options Consultation Paper. The purpose of the Site Appraisal Paper is to identify general considerations and observations about how different sites perform in planning terms, rather than to directly compare sites or justify the selection of particular sites.

Part 2: What are the IIA findings  
at this current stage?



## 3. Introduction (to Part 2)

- 3.1 This part of the Interim IIA Report presents the summary findings of the assessment of the growth and spatial strategy options.

## 4. Summary assessment findings

### Methodology

- 4.1 A comparative assessment of the three growth scenarios and four spatial strategy development options was carried out against the IIA framework. The assessment examines likely significant effects on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability objectives and themes identified through scoping (see Table 1.1) as a methodological framework.
- 4.2 Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high level nature of the options under consideration. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline (now and in the future under a 'no plan' scenario). In light of this, there is a need to make considerable assumptions regarding how scenarios will be implemented 'on the ground' and what the effect on particular receptors would be. Where there is a need to rely on assumptions in order to reach a conclusion on a 'significant effect' this is made explicit in the assessment text.
- 4.3 It is important to note that effects are predicted taking into account the criteria presented within the SEA Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the duration, frequency and reversibility of effects. Cumulative effects are also considered (i.e. where the effects of the plan in combination with the effects of other planned or on-going activity).
- 4.4 Based on the evidence available a judgement is made if there is likely to be a significant effect. Where it is not possible to predict likely significant effects on the basis of reasonable assumptions, efforts are made to comment on the relative merits of the alternatives in more general terms and to indicate a rank of preference. The number indicates the rank and does not have any bearing on likely significant effects. This is helpful, as it enables a distinction to be made between the alternatives even where it is not possible to distinguish between them in terms of 'significant effects'. For example, if an option is ranked as 1 then it is judged to perform better against that IIA theme compared to an option that is ranked 2.

### Summary assessment

#### Growth options

- 4.5 The three options for the overall level of growth identified in Chapter 2 were subject to a comparative assessment under each IIA theme. The detailed findings are presented in **Appendix I** and summary findings provided in **Table 4.1** below.

**Table 4.1: Summary assessment findings for the growth options**

IIA Themes	Rank/ significant effect	Categorisation and rank		
		Lower growth	Medium growth	High growth
Population and Communities	Rank	3	2	1
	Significant effect?	No	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive
Health and wellbeing	Rank	3	2	1
	Significant effect?	No	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive
Equalities, diversity and social inclusion	Rank	3	2	1
	Significant effect?	No	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive
Economy	Rank	3	2	1
	Significant effect?	No	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive
Transport and movement	Rank	3	2	1
	Significant effect?	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain
Landscape	Rank	1	2	3
	Significant effect?	No	Uncertain	Uncertain
Historic environment	Rank	1	2	3
	Significant effect?	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain
Climate change	Rank	2	1	1
	Significant effect?	No	Uncertain	Uncertain
Biodiversity	Rank	3	2	1
	Significant effect?	No	Uncertain	Uncertain
Environmental quality	Rank	1	2	3
	Significant effect?	No	Uncertain	Uncertain
Natural resources	Rank	1	2	3
	Significant effect?	No	No	No

4.6 The lower growth option performs less well against the socio-economic IIA themes compared the medium and higher growth options as it will not meet the needs of all people in the district. The medium and in particular the higher growth options will meet the needs of the district and beyond, delivering a greater number of affordable homes and a mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures alongside wider community infrastructure improvements. Significant long-term positive effects are predicted for the medium and higher growth options in relation to the population and communities, health and wellbeing, equalities, diversity and inclusion and the economy themes.

4.7 The lower growth option performs better in comparison to the medium and higher growth options in relation to the landscape, historic environment, environmental quality and natural resource themes, as it would deliver a lower level of growth that is focused on brownfield sites within the existing urban areas. The medium and higher growth options would deliver a higher level of growth and include the loss of large areas of greenfield and agricultural land on the edge of settlements and in the rural areas. The higher the level of growth the greater potential for negative effects of significance on these IIA themes.

4.8 In terms of the transport and climate change themes, as the level of growth increases so does the potential for development to impact upon congestion and the road network in the district.

However, the medium and in particular the higher growth options are also more likely to deliver new significant new transport infrastructure, capitalising on cross-boundary infrastructure opportunities, and opportunities to further attract significant investment from Government in infrastructure proposals. The delivery of large-scale growth under the medium and higher growth options also provide a greater opportunity for the delivery of low carbon infrastructure through economies of scale compared to the lower growth option.

- 4.9 The medium and in particular the higher growth options provide an opportunity to deliver sub-regional improvements to the green infrastructure network and the delivery of biodiversity net gains, outlined in the South Essex Green and Blue Infrastructure Study. This includes the delivery of a Regional Parkland has the potential to act as alternative greenspace that will help to reduce recreational pressures at designated biodiversity sites.

## Spatial Strategy Options

- 4.10 Each of the four spatial strategy options, including sub-options where necessary, identified in Chapter 2 were subject to a comparative assessment under each IIA theme. The detailed findings are presented in **Appendix I** and summary findings provided in **Table 4.2** on the next page.

**Table 4.2: Summary assessment findings for the spatial strategy options**

		Option 1	Option 2a	Option 2b	Option 3a	Option 3b	Option 3c	Option 4
Population and communities	Rank	4	3	2	4	4	4	1
	Significant effect?	Uncertain	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Yes - Positive
Health and wellbeing	Rank	3	2	2	1	1	1	1
	Significant effect?	No	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive
Equality, diversity and inclusion	Rank	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
	Significant effect?	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Yes - Positive
Economy	Rank	4	3	3	2	2	2	1
	Significant effect?	No	No	No	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive
Transport and movement	Rank	3	2	3	1	1	1	1
	Significant effect?	No	Uncertain	Uncertain	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive
Landscape	Rank	1	3	4	2	5	5	2
	Significant effect?	No	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Uncertain
Historic environment	Rank	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
	Significant effect?	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain
Climate change	Rank	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Biodiversity	Rank	1	3	3	2	2	2	2
	Significant effect?	No	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain
Environmental quality	Rank	1	2	2	3	3	3	3
	Significant effect?	No	Uncertain	Uncertain	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative
Natural resources	Rank	1	4	4	3	3	3	2
	Significant effect?	No	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative

- 4.11 Overall, Option 4 is noted for its potential to perform better against other options in relation to the socio-economic IIA themes. This predominantly relates to the flexibility provided in a tailored approach, essentially combining the best performing aspects of each individual approach (urban intensification, urban extensions and concentrated growth).
- 4.12 The potential for significant negative effects has been identified under all options except for Option 1, this is due to likely extensive loss of high-quality soil resources and encroachment on the countryside as well as potential landscape impacts.
- 4.13 Significant positive effects are considered likely for all options except for Option 1, this relates to significant delivery of new homes and supporting infrastructure, including new open spaces, to support a growing population, meeting housing needs in full (whilst risks are associated with concentrated growth options) and delivering new employment areas.
- 4.14 As the precise location of growth is not known at this stage, uncertain effects have been identified across the options in relation to a number of IIA themes. The different spatial strategy options could be brought forward in different configurations that could alter the predicted nature and scale of effects for IIA themes. More detailed (i.e. site specific) spatial strategy options will be considered in due course through the IIA process, in order to explore the likely significant effects in relation to the IIA themes.

## 5. Developing the Preferred Approach

- 5.1 At this stage there has been no decision made in terms of a preferred approach. The Council is currently seeking views from key stakeholders and the public on the options proposed and issues raised. Alternatives will be explored in further detail through the IIA process, this includes more defined spatial strategy options, informed by an assessment of individual site options.



## Part 3: What are the next steps?



## 6. Introduction (to Part 3)

6.1 The aim of this chapter is to explain next steps in the plan-making/ IIA process.

### Next steps

- 6.2 This Interim IIA Report will accompany the Spatial Options Consultation Document for public consultation commencing in July 2021. Any comments received will be reviewed and then taken into account as part of the iterative plan-making and IIA process. Following the consultation there will be consideration of site options, more clearly defined spatial strategy options as well as the assessment of plan policies for the delivery and management of growth.
- 6.3 The representations received along with further evidence base work, including further IIA work, will inform the development of a first draft of the Local Plan (Preferred Approach), which is scheduled to be published for consultation in 2022. An updated Interim IIA Report will accompany the Preferred Approach Local Plan consultation.

# Appendices



# Appendix I: Assessment of growth and spatial strategy options

## A.1 Introduction

Each of the growth and spatial strategy options identified in Chapter 2 were subject to a comparative assessment under each IIA theme and the detailed findings are presented in this Appendix.

## A.2 Method

For each of the options, the assessment examines likely significant effects on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability objectives and themes identified through scoping (see Table 1.1 in the main body of the report) as a methodological framework

Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high level nature of the options under consideration. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline (now and in the future under a 'no plan' scenario). In light of this, there is a need to make considerable assumptions regarding how scenarios will be implemented 'on the ground' and what the effect on particular receptors would be. Where there is a need to rely on assumptions in order to reach a conclusion on a 'significant effect' this is made explicit in the assessment text.

It is important to note that effects are predicted taking into account the criteria presented within the SEA Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the duration, frequency and reversibility of effects. Cumulative effects are also considered (i.e. where the effects of the plan in combination with the effects of other planned or on-going activity).

Based on the evidence available a judgement is made if there is likely to be a significant effect. Where it is not possible to predict likely significant effects on the basis of reasonable assumptions, efforts are made to comment on the relative merits of the alternatives in more general terms and to indicate a rank of preference. The number indicates the rank and does not have any bearing on likely significant effects. This is helpful, as it enables a distinction to be made between the alternatives even where it is not possible to distinguish between them in terms of 'significant effects'. For example, if an option is ranked as 1 then it is judged to perform better against that IIA theme compared to an option that is ranked 2.

## A.3 Assessment of growth options

### IIA Theme: Population and communities

Options	Lower growth	Medium growth	Higher growth
Rank	3	2	1
Significant effect?	No	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive
<b>Discussion</b>	<p>The medium and high growth options will help to meet the identified needs of the district, with the higher growth option helping to meet the needs of the wider South Essex Housing Market Area (HMA). The lower growth option performs poorly compared to the other options in relation to this IIA theme as it would not meet the needs of the district.</p> <p>The medium and higher growth options provide a greater opportunity to deliver new and improved community infrastructure in the district as well as deliver a greater number of affordable homes and a mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures. This includes the delivery of suitable homes for an ageing population, which is a particular issue for the district. The higher growth option in particular is more likely to achieve this as well as improve cross-boundary links between communities, such as Southend. While it is possible that the higher growth options could lead to coalescence and erode the identity of communities, this is uncertain at this stage and dependent on the precise location of development.</p>		

### IIA Theme: Health and wellbeing

Options	Lower growth	Medium growth	Higher growth
Rank	3	2	1
Significant effect?	No	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive
<b>Discussion</b>	<p>While the precise location of growth is not known, it is assumed that as the level of growth increases, so does likelihood for the loss of open/ green space and land in the countryside. It is possible that these areas are not accessible for recreation, but this is uncertain at this stage. As a result, the medium and higher growth options are more likely to have a negative effect in this regard compared to the lower growth option. Similarly, as the level of growth increases, so too does the potential for congestion and negative impacts on air quality.</p> <p>As the level of growth increases so does the likelihood of opportunities to deliver new health and leisure facilities as well as new areas of accessible open space and multi-functional green infrastructure. This includes improvements being explored in the green infrastructure network across the sub-region through the South Essex Green and Blue Infrastructure Study (2020), such as the Regional Parkland. Alongside wider infrastructure and active travel network improvements delivered through higher level growth options, this could help to improve accessibility to healthcare facilities, recreational opportunities and the wider countryside, and reduce effects on air quality which impact on resident health. On this basis, the higher growth level is preferred overall.</p>		

## IIA Theme: Equality, diversity and inclusion

Options	Lower growth	Medium growth	Higher growth
Rank	3	2	1
Significant effect?	No	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive
Discussion	<p>The lower growth option will not meet the needs of all people in the district during the plan period. The medium and higher growth options will meet the needs of all people in the district and improve accessibility to housing, employment, training, health, and leisure opportunities. The higher growth option is more likely to meet the needs of not only people in the district but beyond, as well and encourage the integration and interaction of cross-boundary communities through the delivery of large-scale developments. The medium and higher growth options are also considered for their overall potential to deliver a wider range of housing types, tenures and sizes, particularly catering for the needs of groups with protected characteristics, such as specialist housing for the elderly and disabled. It is assumed that the specific needs of Gypsy and Travellers could be met under any of the options.</p>		

## IIA Theme: Economy

Options	Lower growth	Medium growth	Higher growth
Rank	3	2	1
Significant effect?	No	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive
Discussion	<p>The medium and higher growth options are more likely to have a significant positive effect on this IIA theme through the delivery of new employment land and retail floorspace. These options are also likely to deliver more new infrastructure upgrades and sustainable transport routes to attract further inward investment. Further to this, the higher growth options could contribute to the delivery of sub-regional improvements to green and blue infrastructure, which could have a positive effect on the tourism economy. Whilst positive effects are considered likely under all options, the lower growth option is considered less likely to lead to positive effects of significance.</p>		

## IIA Theme: Transport and movement

Options	Lower growth	Medium growth	Higher growth
Rank	3	2	1
Significant effect?	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain
Discussion	<p>Whilst ultimately dependent upon the location of growth, it is recognised that as the level of growth increases so does the potential for development to impact upon congestion and the road network in the district. However, the medium and higher growth options are also more likely to deliver new infrastructure and sustainable transport connections, particularly capitalising on cross-boundary infrastructure opportunities, and opportunities to further attract significant investment from Government in infrastructure proposals.</p> <p>The lower growth option is likely to focus development in urban areas and at regeneration sites in the main settlements. This option therefore promotes development within the most accessible areas of the district. However, smaller scale development proposals bring less opportunity for strategic infrastructure improvements, and may place increased pressure on local road networks. In this respect, the higher growth option is preferred overall for its greater potential for more transformative change.</p> <p>Overall effects are uncertain at this stage, until the location of development, and potential infrastructure improvements have been identified.</p>		

## IIA Theme: Landscape

Options	Lower growth	Medium growth	Higher growth
Rank	1	2	3
Significant effect?	No	Uncertain	Uncertain
<b>Discussion</b>	<p>As the level of growth increases so does the potential for development to fall within areas identified as having higher landscape sensitivity and lower capacity to accommodate growth through the Landscape Character, Sensitivity and Capacity Study (2019). While the location of development is not known at this stage and there is clearly uncertainty, it is assumed that as the level of growth increases so does the likelihood for a significant negative effect on the landscape. While large-scale growth under the medium and higher growth options could provide an opportunity to deliver new accessible landscapes, this is uncertain at this stage.</p> <p>The lower level of growth will predominantly result in the delivery of new homes on urban and brownfield sites so would avoid the areas identified as having higher landscape sensitivity and lower capacity to accommodate growth. The regeneration of previously developed land provides opportunities to enhance the townscape through the removal of derelict or underused buildings with high quality development and wider public realm improvements. The lower growth option is considered more likely to avoid negative effects of significance and is preferred overall in this respect.</p>		

## IIA Theme: Historic environment

Options	Lower growth	Medium growth	Higher growth
Rank	1	2	3
Significant effect?	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain
<b>Discussion</b>	<p>It is recognised that as the level of growth increases, so too does the likelihood of development in close proximity or within the setting of designated and non-designated assets. However, it is recognised that the lower growth option will focus development in existing urban areas, with a higher potential in this respect to impact on historic centres. Brownfield development and regeneration sites may however bring forward opportunities to improve the immediate townscape setting and public realm and indirectly benefit heritage settings in this respect. While the precise location of growth is not known, the higher growth options are more likely to affect designated and non-designated assets outside the settlements and in the rural areas. Overall effects remain uncertain until the location of development is better defined.</p>		

## IIA Theme: Climate change

Options	Lower growth	Medium growth	Higher growth
Rank	2	1	1
Significant effect?	No	Uncertain	Uncertain
<b>Discussion</b>	<p>For this IIA topic, climate change mitigation and adaptation are relevant considerations. In respect of mitigation, a primary consideration is the need to minimise per capita emissions from transport by minimising the need to travel and supporting a modal shift away from car dependency, i.e. by supporting a shift to 'sustainable' modes of transport (walking, cycling, public transport, electric vehicles). In this context, it is difficult to differentiate between the options at this stage as the location of development is not known. It is assumed that any of the options would focus on the regeneration of previously developed land within the urban areas first before seeking development on greenfield land and prioritise sites that are or can be made accessible. The higher the level of growth the more likely it will increase the number of private vehicles and therefore traffic on the road network; however, this will be dependent on the level of self-containment. Furthermore, the higher the level of growth the more funding that would be available for the delivery of new infrastructure and therefore more opportunities for comprehensive new transport and access routes. The higher growth opportunities are also noted for the potential to attract further Government investment in significant infrastructure improvements.</p> <p>Another consideration is the need to support delivery of low carbon infrastructure (e.g. a ground source heat network; or solar PV with battery storage) and/ or high standards of sustainable design and construction, such that the development can achieve net zero or, at least, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions standards that exceed the requirements of Building Regulations. While it is recognised that there are barriers to this, the delivery of large-scale growth that is more likely to come forward under the medium and high growth options present more opportunities for the delivery of low carbon infrastructure through economies of scale compared to the lower growth option.</p> <p>In relation to adaptation, it is assumed that all options could avoid locating vulnerable development within areas of high flood risk. The lower growth option is ultimately recognised for its potential to reduce development pressures in settlements that may be subject to flooding; however, the location of growth under all options will ultimately determine the likelihood and extent of any potential effects. It is also assumed that all options can incorporate measures to improve drainage and manage surface water runoff.</p>		



## IIA Theme: Biodiversity

Options	Lower growth	Medium growth	Higher growth
Rank	3	2	1
Significant effect?	No	Uncertain	Uncertain
<b>Discussion</b>	<p>As the level of growth increases so does the potential for development to fall within proximity of designated biodiversity sites and intersect important habitats. While the location of development is not known at this stage and there is clearly uncertainty, it is assumed that as the level of growth increases so does the likelihood for negative impacts on biodiversity. However, this will depend on the biodiversity value of the land where growth is delivered, with agricultural land often not providing significant biodiversity value (depending on the agricultural practices in use). The medium and higher growth options are also noted for their potential to support the delivery of strategic green infrastructure provisions and associated biodiversity net gain. This includes improvements being explored in the green infrastructure network across the sub-region through the South Essex Green and Blue Infrastructure Study (2020), such as the Regional Parkland. The Regional Parkland has the potential to act as alternative greenspace targeted at reducing recreational pressures at designated biodiversity sites. These options thus provide a greater contribution to the principles of the Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance &amp; Mitigation Strategy (RAMS).</p> <p>The lower level of growth will mainly result in the delivery of new homes on urban and brownfield sites so has greater potential to avoid designated sites and support urban greening to some extent. The urban focus however is less likely to bring forward strategic mitigation, such as the Regional Parkland to mitigate the recreational pressures on designated biodiversity resulting from a growing population. As a result, the medium and higher growth options are considered more likely to perform better overall in relation to this IIA theme; however, the potential for a significant effect is uncertain as will be dependent on the location of growth.</p>		

## IIA Theme: Environmental quality

Options	Lower growth	Medium growth	Higher growth
Rank	1	2	3
Significant effect?	No	Uncertain	Uncertain
<b>Discussion</b>	<p>As identified under the transport and movement IIA theme, as the level of growth increases so does the potential for development to impact upon congestion and thus air quality. However, the medium and higher growth options are also more likely to deliver new infrastructure and sustainable transport connections, particularly capitalising on cross-boundary infrastructure opportunities, and opportunities to further attract significant investment from Government in infrastructure proposals. Thereby providing greater opportunities to mitigate the effects of growth on air quality.</p> <p>It is assumed that all options could prioritise accessible brownfield sites and contribute to the remediation of contaminated land where appropriate. Furthermore, all options are considered likely to ensure onsite mitigation where appropriate to address any likely impacts on water quality.</p> <p>However, as the level of growth increases so does the potential for greenfield development, and the loss of high-quality agricultural land. As a result, the medium and higher growth options are likely to place greater pressures on environmental quality in the long-term. Whilst the overall effects are uncertain until the precise location of development is defined, negative effects of greater significance could be anticipated under the medium and higher growth options.</p>		

## IIA Theme: Natural resources

Options	Lower growth	Medium growth	Higher growth
Rank	1	2	3
Significant effect?	No	No	No
<b>Discussion</b>	<p>As the level of growth increases so does the potential for greenfield development, increased water abstraction and supply, increased aggregate needs, and increased generation of waste. The lower growth option is considered likely to perform better overall in relation to this IIA theme, given its focus on urban and brownfield development, minimisation of water consumption and lower levels of construction and waste generation. However, it is assumed that all options could promote high levels of water efficiency in development, as well as encourage recycling and promote the waste hierarchy and sustainable construction practices. At this stage, no significant effects are considered likely; however, it is recognised that planning for growth requires joint working with appropriate stakeholders such as water supply companies and the minerals and waste authority (ECC).</p>		

## Summary assessment findings for the growth options

IIA Themes	Rank/ significant effect	Categorisation and rank		
		Lower growth	Medium growth	High growth
Population and Communities	Rank	3	2	1
	Significant effect?	No	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive
Health and wellbeing	Rank	3	2	1
	Significant effect?	No	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive
Equalities, diversity and social inclusion	Rank	3	2	1
	Significant effect?	No	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive
Economy	Rank	3	2	1
	Significant effect?	No	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive
Transport and movement	Rank	3	2	1
	Significant effect?	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain
Landscape	Rank	1	2	3
	Significant effect?	No	Uncertain	Uncertain
Historic environment	Rank	1	2	3
	Significant effect?	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain
Climate change	Rank	2	1	1
	Significant effect?	No	Uncertain	Uncertain
Biodiversity	Rank	3	2	1
	Significant effect?	No	Uncertain	Uncertain
Environmental quality	Rank	1	2	3
	Significant effect?	No	Uncertain	Uncertain
Natural resources	Rank	1	2	3
	Significant effect?	No	No	No

### Summary:

The lower growth option performs less well against the socio-economic IIA themes compared the medium and higher growth options as it will not meet the needs of all people in the district. The medium and in particular the higher growth options will meet the needs of the district and beyond, delivering a greater number of affordable homes and a mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures alongside wider community infrastructure improvements. Significant long-term positive effects are predicted for the medium and higher growth options in relation to the population and communities, health and wellbeing, equalities, diversity and inclusion and the economy themes.

The lower growth option performs better in comparison to the medium and higher growth options in relation to the landscape, historic environment, environmental quality and natural resource themes, as it would deliver a lower level of growth that is focused on brownfield sites within the existing urban areas. The medium and higher growth options would deliver a higher level of growth and include the loss of large areas of greenfield and agricultural land on the edge of settlements and in the rural areas. The higher the level of growth the greater potential for negative effects of significance on these IIA themes.

In terms of the transport and climate change themes, as the level of growth increases so does the potential for development to impact upon congestion and the road network in the district. However, the medium and in particular the higher growth options are also more likely to deliver new significant new transport infrastructure, capitalising on cross-boundary infrastructure opportunities, and opportunities to further attract significant investment from Government in infrastructure proposals. The delivery of large-scale growth under the medium and higher growth options also provide a greater opportunity for the delivery of low carbon infrastructure through economies of scale compared to the lower growth option.

The medium and in particular the higher growth options provide an opportunity to deliver sub-regional improvements to the green infrastructure network and the delivery of biodiversity net gains, outlined in the South Essex Green and Blue Infrastructure Study. This includes the delivery of a Regional Parkland has the potential to act as alternative greenspace that will help to reduce recreational pressures at designated biodiversity sites.

## A.4 Assessment of the spatial strategy options

### IIA Theme: Population and communities

Options	Option 1	Option 2a	Option 2b	Option 3a	Option 3b	Option 3c	Option 4
Rank	4	3	2	4	4	4	1
Significant effect?	Uncertain	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Yes - Positive

#### Discussion

Option 1 would avoid the loss of any greenbelt land, supporting communities in the longer term to retain settlement boundaries and countryside connections. Furthermore, Option 1 will locate development in the most accessible areas of the district, reducing reliance on provisions of new infrastructure to achieve sustainable development. However, in the absence of new infrastructure, this may place significant pressures on existing infrastructure. Capacity upgrades may be necessary to accommodate the proposed growth and with a higher proportion of brownfield development under Option 1, this may affect viability to some degree. Additionally, Option 1 would not deliver sufficient housing to meet local needs over the Plan period, in this respect it is also likely to deliver less affordable housing and long-term negative effects can be anticipated.

Urban extensions under Options 2a and 2b provide large scale development opportunities that can deliver new infrastructure provisions to support both existing (particularly those in edge of settlement locations) and future residents. However, these Options are likely to require the release of Green Belt land in some areas and will reduce countryside access for existing residents to some degree.

Concentrated growth under Options 3a, 3b and 3c would provide the critical mass to ensure the delivery of significant infrastructure provisions to support residents. These Options are considered the least likely to place significant pressure on existing infrastructure and service provisions. However, development at this scale would significantly alter the Green Belt boundary and has implications for housing supply in the short-term, with associated longer lead-in times and phasing of development. Additionally, reliance is placed solely on housing numbers being met at one location. Any development delays, or failure to bring forward development at the location has repercussions for housing land supply and the effectiveness of the Plan. This could inevitably result in a lack of housing land supply and speculative development. Furthermore, the concentration of growth at one location means that development benefits will not be spread across the district, and existing residents are less likely to see new homes, including affordable homes, or infrastructure improvements in their areas.

Ultimately Option 4 provides an opportunity to tailor the growth strategy; to prioritise accessible brownfield locations as well as transformative opportunities, seeking growth that benefits the broadest range of residents and locations in the district. Option 4 will provide housing to meet local needs, including a proportion of affordable housing, and creates a more balanced housing supply, delivering both a short-term supply and longer-term development opportunities. The option is likely to reduce risk in this respect. Whilst Green Belt release is likely to be required under this Option, more flexibility is provided in being able to target more areas that perform less well in relation to Green Belt objectives and seek reprovisions that strengthen its purpose.

Overall, Option 4 is considered to perform better than the remaining options. Whilst the negative effects of Green Belt release are considered likely under this Option, it provides the greatest potential to; meet local housing needs over the Plan period, deliver a proportion of affordable housing, target settlements areas where new housing and development benefits are most needed, prioritise viable and accessible brownfield opportunities, and deliver transformational change in targeted locations. There are pros and cons to each of the remaining Options which makes ranking them difficult; however, Options 1 and 3 (a, b & c) are considered to perform less well than Option 2 (a & b) given the potential to under-deliver against housing needs over the Plan period. Furthermore, by targeting more settlement locations, Option 2b is considered to perform marginally better than Option 2a. Significant positive effects are considered likely under Options 2a, 2b and 4. The potential under-delivery noted against Options 1, 3a, 3b and 3c make the overall effects uncertain, with a potential for long-term negative effects considered likely under Option 1, and short-term negative effects likely under Options 3a, 3b and 3c.

## IIA Theme: Health and wellbeing

Options	Option 1	Option 2a	Option 2b	Option 3a	Option 3b	Option 3c	Option 4
Rank	3	2	2	1	1	1	1
Significant effect?	No	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive

### Discussion

Option 1 would target development within existing settlement areas, relying on capacity improvements to existing healthcare provisions and the delivery of new on-site open spaces. Targeting the most accessible areas could support residents in terms of active travel opportunities.

Options 2a and 2b provide greater opportunities to support existing (particularly edge of settlement) residents and future residents with new healthcare facilities and greater opportunities for new open spaces. Edge of settlement locations can however make active travel opportunities more difficult dependent on the accessibility of individual locations and no transformative changes to sustainable transport routes are anticipated under Option 2. By focusing development in the main towns, Option 2a could perform marginally better than Option 2b in this respect (as these areas are established as the most accessible locations).

Options 3a, 3b and 3c provide opportunities to design healthy new communities from the outset, supported by new healthcare facilities and open spaces as well as active travel opportunities connecting with a range of accessible services, facilities, employment opportunities and recreational opportunities. Concentrated growth under these Options is recognised for its potential to deliver the eastern extent of the South Essex Estuary Park forming a new coastal country park in the east of the district.

Option 4 would deliver a combination of the above options, which could prioritise accessible urban and brownfield locations where capacity upgrades can be facilitated, supported by growth in other areas which are or can be made accessible and which deliver new healthcare facilities and open spaces, as well as support the delivery of the South Essex Estuary Park.

Overall, Options 3a, 3b, 3c and 4 are considered to provide the greatest opportunities for positive health outcomes; particularly by supporting the delivery of the South Essex Estuary Park. Options 2a and 2b are considered to follow given the potential to support new healthcare provisions and greater potential to deliver new open spaces. New provisions under the above Options are considered likely to lead to significant positive effects. Whilst overall positive effects are still considered likely under Option 1, given the reliance on smaller scale development contributions to capacity improvements at existing healthcare facilities, these effects are not considered likely to be of significance, and the Option is ranked least favourably in this respect.

## IIA Theme: Equality, diversity and inclusion

Options	Option 1	Option 2a	Option 2b	Option 3a	Option 3b	Option 3c	Option 4
<b>Rank</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Significant effect?</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Yes - Positive</b>
<b>Discussion</b>	<p>Option 1 would not deliver sufficient housing to meet the needs of all people in the district, this has the potential to exacerbate inequalities in access to housing. The Option is also likely to deliver less affordable homes, and a reduced range of housing types, tenures and sizes, including specialist housing. However, urban intensification is likely to maximise opportunities for accessible development.</p> <p>Option 2 provides greater flexibility in meeting housing needs over the Plan period and in reducing inequalities in edge of settlement locations through new community infrastructure and employment opportunities. Edge of settlement locations will be relatively dependent on making development accessible, as peripheral locations further from town centres, and this may have implications for less mobile groups.</p> <p>By focusing all new growth in one location (outside of the existing settlement areas) under Options 3a, 3b and 3c, existing residents are unlikely to experience development benefits that improve equality of access. There will be limited regeneration opportunities and no targeted provisions of affordable or specialist housing within existing settlement areas. Whilst no significant negative effects are considered likely, the Option is not considered likely to positively support improved outcomes in terms of equality, diversity or social inclusion.</p> <p>Option 4 provides the opportunity to address some of the constraints associated with the options in isolation. Option 4 would ensure that housing needs are met in full, delivering affordable homes and a range of housing types, tenures and sizes. It will seek a relatively wide distribution of growth, maximising opportunities for accessible development in this respect and supporting existing communities with new homes, employment opportunities and infrastructure improvements, including strategic improvements to green infrastructure.</p> <p>Overall, constraints to delivering positive outcomes in relation to equalities, diversity and social inclusion are identified under all proposed approaches (urban intensification, urban extensions and concentrated growth). As a result, a balanced and combined approach proposed under Option 4 provides greater opportunities to minimise the associated impacts and ensure a sufficient supply of a range of houses in accessible areas. The Option is preferred overall in this respect. Significant positive effects are considered more likely under Option 4. The overall effects under the remaining options, given the outlined constraints, are uncertain at this stage.</p>						

## IIA Theme: Economy

Options	Option 1	Option 2a	Option 2b	Option 3a	Option 3b	Option 3c	Option 4
<b>Rank</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Significant effect?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes - Positive</b>	<b>Yes - Positive</b>	<b>Yes - Positive</b>	<b>Yes - Positive</b>

### Discussion

Option 1 will locate development in the most accessible areas of the district, enhancing connections with existing employment and retail centres and supporting their vitality and vibrancy. Regeneration is also considered for its potential to stimulate further economic investment and the visitor economy. Despite this, this option will not deliver any additional employment land over and above that which is already planned for or committed.

Urban extensions (under Options 2a and 2b) would provide larger scale development opportunities which deliver infrastructure improvements and create new opportunities for economic investment in the area. These options would also deliver new employment areas to support settlement growth. As edge of settlement locations however, the accessibility of employment development will need to be considered.

Options 3 (a, b & c) and 4 provide greater opportunity to capitalise on opportunities associated with the Thames Estuary Growth Area and improve infrastructure in certain locations. Options 3b and 3c also connect well with London Southend Airport. These options have good potential to provide new employment areas that connect well with new communities and provide accessible local jobs.

Overall, through the delivery of new employment areas, Options 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3c and 4 are considered likely to perform better against this IIA theme than Option 1. Option 4 is likely to perform marginally better overall, through the inclusion of brownfield regeneration opportunities (alongside transformative growth) which support continued investment in existing town and retail centres as well as the visitor economy. Concentrated growth (Options 3a, 3b, and 3c) is also considered likely to perform marginally better than urban extensions (Option 2a and 2b) given the opportunities to incorporate accessibility as a design principle from the outset, ensuring new communities are well connected with job opportunities. Significant positive effects are considered most likely under Options 3a, 3b, 3c and 4.



## IIA Theme: Transport and movement

Options	Option 1	Option 2a	Option 2b	Option 3a	Option 3b	Option 3c	Option 4
Rank	3	2	3	1	1	1	1
Significant effect?	No	Uncertain	Uncertain	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive

### Discussion

Option 1 would locate development in the most accessible areas of the district, with good access to existing services, facilities, employment areas and public transport links. However, the Option would rely on smaller scale development contributions to improve the capacity of the existing road network and deliver sustainable transport improvements to support future growth. The piecemeal approach is not considered likely to deliver transformative changes such as new link roads or new sustainable transport connections. The potential for development to impact on network areas currently under stress in the short- to medium-term is also noted.

Whilst the scale of development opportunities increase under Options 2a and 2b, urban extensions are not thought likely to bring about any transformational infrastructure provisions or upgrades, such as new link roads or new sustainable transport connections. No significant opportunities to mitigate the impacts of growth on the road and infrastructure network have been identified at this stage, and edge of settlement development will need to consider locations which are most accessible or can easily be made more accessible. In this respect, Option 2a is likely to perform better than Option 2b.

The concentrated growth options under Options 3a, 3b and 3c provide the critical mass required to deliver transformative infrastructure upgrades, including new link roads and sustainable transport routes. The scale of development proposed also has the potential to attract further inward investment through Government initiatives. Furthermore, Options 3a and 3b provide opportunities for cross-boundary growth (with Wickford and Southend respectively) to maximise the potential for infrastructure improvements. These Options have the greatest potential to reduce impacts on the existing road network dependent upon the level of new provisions alongside housing and employment growth (i.e. the level of self-containment in any new settlement area).

Option 4 will deliver a combined approach, which could still deliver transformative growth opportunities, alongside what could be a targeted approach to development in the most accessible existing areas.

Considering the above, Options 3a, 3b, 3c and 4 are considered likely to perform better in relation to this IIA theme than Options 1, 2a and 2b. Transformative changes under Options 3a, 3b, 3c and 4 are considered for potential significant positive effects, particularly changes which improve access by more sustainable modes of transport, including active travel opportunities. The overall effects remain uncertain in relation to Options 2a and 2b given the greater need for mitigation to reduce the impacts of growth on existing transport and movement networks. Significant long-term negative effects are not considered likely under Option 1 given the lower level of growth and focus of development within the most accessible areas of the district.

## IIA Theme: Landscape

Options	Option 1	Option 2a	Option 2b	Option 3a	Option 3b	Option 3c	Option 4
Rank	1	3	4	2	5	5	2
Significant effect?	No	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Uncertain

By directing more growth to existing urban areas under Option 1, it is likely that higher densities will be required in some areas, which has the potential to negatively affect local character and townscape values. However, this approach will ultimately prioritise the regeneration of brownfield land and reduce impacts on the countryside, and positives can be drawn in this respect.

Similarly, urban extensions (under Options 2a and 2b) are considered for their potential to expand settlements and change their pattern, function and form in this respect and lead to negative effects. These effects may be particularly prominent under Option 2b, which encompasses more rural villages and smaller settlement areas. This approach has the added negative effects of the loss of greenfield land encroaching upon the countryside surrounding settlements.

Concentrated growth west of Rayleigh (Option 3a) would see development around the A130 and A127 transport routes and reduce the open countryside gap between Rayleigh and Wickford, between Rayleigh and Castle Point (South Benfleet and Thundersley) and between Rayleigh and Rawreth. Negative effects can be anticipated in relation to landscape and open countryside values in this area. However, the Landscape Character, Sensitivity and Capacity Study (2019) identifies this area as of low to medium sensitivity with medium to high landscape capacity; suggesting there is some scope for development at this location.

Concentrated growth north of Southend (Option 3b) will reduce the extent of open countryside between Rochford and Southend, south of the River Roach and within the riverside setting. The area is identified as of medium landscape sensitivity with medium to low landscape capacity. The effects of concentrated growth in this area are considered likely to be of significance.

Concentrated growth east of Rochford (Option 3c) will reduce the extent of open countryside between Rochford and Stambridge and will ultimately change the settlement form and pattern of Rochford to some degree. This area is identified as having medium landscape sensitivity with medium landscape capacity. The effects of large-scale concentrated growth in this area are considered likely to be of significance.

### Discussion

All concentrated growth options are also considered likely to support the delivery of improvements being explored in the green infrastructure network across the sub-region through the South Essex Green and Blue Infrastructure Study (2020), such as the Regional Parkland (the South Essex Estuary Park). This will contribute to creating accessible new valued landscape areas in the district.

Option 4 seeks a balanced combination of the different approaches (urban intensification, urban extensions and concentrated growth), which will still include concentrated and significant growth. Whilst there is the potential for negative effects of significance, it is also recognised that a tailored strategy could prioritise brownfield regeneration and target areas of lower landscape sensitivity and higher landscape capacity to avoid significant negative effects arising. Furthermore, the delivery of new regional parkland could lead to positive effects of significance in landscape terms.

Taking the above into account, Option 1 is preferred overall as it focus growth towards the urban areas and away from areas of higher landscape sensitivity around the settlements and in the rural areas. Options 3a and 4 either focus growth in areas with greater landscape capacity for change or allows for a strategy where development could be focused in areas that are less sensitive. They are also more likely to contribute to the delivery of new accessible landscapes, such as the regional parkland. Options 3b and 3c are considered more likely to lead to negative effects of significance.

Overall, the concentrated growth options 3b and 3c are likely to lead to negative impacts of greatest significance, with significant loss of greenfield land and open countryside within areas of higher landscape sensitivity in the district. Options 3a and 4 could direct growth in areas with lower sensitivity and a greater opportunity to contribute to the creation of new sub-regional landscapes. As a result the potential for significant effects is uncertain at this stage. Options 2a and 2b have the potential to impact on settlement patterns, form and function, and result in the loss of greenfield land and open countryside at the settlement edge. The overall extent of effects under Options 2a and 2b remain uncertain until precise preferred locations have been identified. Option 1 is predicted to not have a significant effect on the landscape.

## IIA Theme: Historic environment

Options	Option 1	Option 2a	Option 2b	Option 3a	Option 3b	Option 3c	Option 4
<b>Rank</b>	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
<b>Significant effect?</b>	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain
<b>Discussion</b>	<p>By directing more growth to existing urban areas under Option 1, it is likely that higher densities will be required in some areas, which has the potential to negatively affect historic town/ village centres and the settings of designated and non-designated historic assets within these settlements. Such effects are considered likely to be most prominent under this Option. However, the regeneration of brownfield land in many cases offers considerable opportunities for enhancements to the fabric and setting of features and areas of historic environment interest, and for supporting their significance.</p> <p>Urban extensions (under Options 2a and 2b) have greater potential to reduce impacts on historic cores; however, any large-scale development which changes settlement pattern, form and function could have indirect negative impacts on historic centres. Furthermore, the extent of effects will be dependent upon precise locations and their connection with designated and non-designated assets and their settings.</p> <p>Concentrated growth west of Rayleigh (Option 3a) is likely to change the rural setting of designated (and non-designated) heritage assets in this area, particularly designated farmstead buildings and the Church of St Nicholas at Rawreth (with existing far-reaching countryside views). The extent of the overall effects will ultimately be dependent upon the design, layout and massing of development at this location. Development is also likely to affect 20<sup>th</sup> Century agricultural boundaries that form part of the historic landscape character (as identified within the Landscape Character, Sensitivity and Capacity Study (2019)).</p> <p>Concentrated growth north of Southend (Option 3b) is also likely to change the rural setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets in this area, particularly listed farmstead buildings and the Grade II* listed Church of All Saints. The extent of the overall effects again will ultimately dependent upon the design, layout and massing of development at this location. Development is also likely to affect 20<sup>th</sup> Century agricultural boundaries that form part of the historic landscape character.</p> <p>Similar to the other concentrated growth options, concentrated growth east of Rochford (Option 3c) is likely to change the rural setting east of Rochford, between Rochford and Stambridge. This is likely to affect designated (and non-designated) assets in this area, particularly around Little Stambridge Hall and Doggetts Farm. Development is also likely to affect 20<sup>th</sup> Century agricultural boundaries that form part of the historic landscape character.</p> <p>Option 4 seeks a balanced combination of the different approaches (urban intensification, urban extensions and concentrated growth), and as such the potential impacts highlighted under each of the options apply to this Option. However, the extent of the potential effects again is ultimately dependent upon the design, layout and massing of development.</p> <p>All options are thus considered for potential negative effects of significance, though the overall effects remain uncertain at this stage, until the precise location of development is identified, and design proposals provide more insight into development schemes and their potential impacts. It is difficult to differentiate the options at this stage, they are therefore all ranked equally. The likely significant effects of alternative spatial strategy options on the historic environment will be considered in further detail through the IIA process at the next stage, informed by the assessment of individual site options.</p>						

## IIA Theme: Climate change

Options	Option 1	Option 2a	Option 2b	Option 3a	Option 3b	Option 3c	Option 4
<b>Rank</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Significant effect?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Discussion</b>	<p>Urban intensification proposed under Option 1 could have impacts for existing flood risk within settlement areas, particularly through higher density development and increased hard surfacing.</p> <p>The effects of urban extensions proposed under Options 2a and 2b in relation to flood risk will ultimately be dependent upon the precise location of development. It is assumed that in line with national policy, sequential testing will support a growth strategy that avoids locating vulnerable development in areas of high flood risk.</p> <p>Similarly, the concentrated growth options extend large areas and Options 3a and 3b are likely to intersect the floodplains of the Crouch and Roach tributaries. Given the extent of these areas, it is likely that development can avoid areas of high flood risk and direct vulnerable development towards more appropriate locations within the sites.</p> <p>Option 4 provides greater flexibility in the spatial strategy. This could ensure that development avoids areas of high flood risk and contributes to improved drainage strategies where appropriate.</p> <p>All options are likely to be able to address surface water flood risk constraints onsite with appropriate mitigation such as sustainable drainage systems.</p> <p>With regards to climate change mitigation, whilst no specific opportunities are highlighted under the options, it is assumed that the large-scale growth opportunities proposed through Options 3a, 3b, 3c and 4 provide an opportunity to incorporate more measures to improve energy and water efficiency, such as district heating systems, rain water harvesting and renewable energy generation.</p> <p>All options are likely to avoid locating vulnerable development within areas of high flood risk; however, it is recognised that this may be more difficult to achieve/ require more extensive mitigation under Option 1 given that less flexibility is provided in the spatial strategy overall. As a result, Options 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3c and 4 are considered likely to perform marginally better than Option 1. At this stage, no significant effects are considered likely.</p>						

## IIA Theme: Biodiversity

Options	Option 1	Option 2a	Option 2b	Option 3a	Option 3b	Option 3c	Option 4
<b>Rank</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Significant effect?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>

### Discussion

By directing more growth to existing urban areas under Option 1, negative effects are likely to be limited by nature of the built environment and prioritisation of brownfield land opportunities. Development which integrates green infrastructure and strengthens ecological networks within settlement areas could support long-term positive effects.

Urban extensions proposed under Options 2a and 2b will encroach upon the countryside and have greater potential to intersect important habitats; however, the extent of potential impacts will be dependent upon precise locations and their connections with valued biodiversity sites/habitats. There may be effects of significance in settlements nearby designated sites, such as Rochford with its proximity to the Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Crouch & Roach Estuaries Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site. However, the potential for larger-scale development under Options 2a and 2b is recognised for the potential for greater net gains in biodiversity.

All concentrated growth options (Options 3a, 3b and 3c) will deliver significant growth in the vicinity of the Essex Estuaries SAC and Crouch & Roach Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site. There is significant potential for negative impacts of significance which will ultimately be explored in greater detail through a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) should any option be progressed. Option 3b (north of Southend) also lies within a Nature Improvement Area (the Greater Thames Marshes) where habitat improvements and improved ecological connections are sought and where targeted net gains could support longer-term nature connectivity goals. However, all concentrated growth options are also recognised for their potential to support the delivery of regional parkland (The South Essex Estuaries Park) which can provide alternative recreational space for residents to relieve such pressures at designated biodiversity sites; thus supporting the principles of the Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance & Mitigation Strategy (RAMS).

Option 4, with a balanced combination of the above options, will ultimately need to address the impacts outlined above under each option, but also provides the opportunity to support the regional parkland proposals.

All options will be expected to contribute to mitigating the effects of recreational disturbance in accordance with the emerging Essex Coast RAMS.

Options 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3c and 4 are also likely to intersect areas of National Habitat Network Expansion and Enhancement Zones where again habitat improvements and improved ecological connections are sought.

Overall, Option 1 is considered likely to perform best overall in relation to this IIA theme and supported by green infrastructure improvements and a biodiversity net gain principle this Option is likely to lead to minor long-term positive effects. All other options are noted for significant growth in the vicinity of European designated sites, the precise effects of which would need to be explored through HRA. At this stage, uncertainty is noted. Options 3a, 3b, 3c and 4 are however preferred to Options 2a and 2b, given their potential to support the delivery of new recreational space and habitats that alleviate recreational pressures on designated biodiversity sites.

## IIA Theme: Environmental quality

Options	Option 1	Option 2a	Option 2b	Option 3a	Option 3b	Option 3c	Option 4
Rank	1	2	2	3	3	3	3
Significant effect?	No	Uncertain	Uncertain	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative

**Discussion**

In relation to air quality, the discussion under the transport and movement theme has identified that concentrated growth (Options 3a, 3b and 3c) and a balanced combination of approaches under Option 4 are likely to have least impact upon the existing road network, particularly areas of the network currently under significant stress. With lower levels of congestion predicted under these options, they are likely to perform better in relation to air quality. However, it is noted that there are historic air quality issues in Rochford (with an Air Quality Management Area revoked in 2013) and the implications of significant growth in this area should be considered in detail so as to not reverse the improved status of air quality in this area. It is also noted that the lower overall level of growth proposed under Option 1 is likely to put less pressures on the highway network and therefore air quality.

Urban intensification under Option 1 has greater potential to address any known contamination issues at brownfield sites, which may lead to long-term positive effects for soil quality, it is also assumed that such sites would be prioritised under Option 4.

Option 1 is also noted for its significant potential to avoid the loss of high-quality agricultural land. This is compared to the remaining options which are all considered likely to involve the loss of agricultural land to some extent, particularly through extensive countryside development proposed through the concentrated growth options (Options 3a, 3b and 3c); which is considered highly likely to lead to negative effects of significance in this respect.

Options 3a and 3b are also likely to intersect the flood plains of the Crouch and Roach tributaries, and development will need to ensure appropriate mitigation to avoid impacts on water quality.

Overall, Option 1 is considered likely to perform marginally better than the remaining options, by way of its lower overall growth level, prioritisation of brownfield land opportunities and avoidance of development on high-quality agricultural land. Whilst no significant effects are anticipated in isolation at development sites, the likely cumulative loss of high-quality agricultural land under Options 2a and 2b may lead to effects of significance; however, uncertainty is noted at this stage until the spatial strategy is more clearly defined. Negative effects of significance are considered more likely under Options 3a, 3b, 3c and 4 given the extent of concentrated growth development locations in the countryside.

## IIA Theme: Natural resources

Options	Option 1	Option 2a	Option 2b	Option 3a	Option 3b	Option 3c	Option 4
Rank	1	4	4	3	3	3	2
Significant effect?	No	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative

<b>Discussion</b>	<p>Option 1 would ultimately reduce the extent of greenfield development and minimise impacts on soil resources in this respect. The prioritisation of brownfield land opportunities will ultimately support effective land use as well as avoid impacts on mineral resources and waste management.</p> <p>Whilst Option 4 is likely to prioritise an element of brownfield development, all remaining options (Options 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3a and 4) will all involve greenfield development, and as noted under the environmental quality theme, significant loss of high-quality agricultural land is anticipated under all options either as a result of one significant growth location in the countryside or cumulative edge of settlement losses. These options also have greater potential to impact upon brickearth and river terrace deposit mineral resources in the district, however, it is recognised that these are not currently worked.</p> <p>There are no significant differences between the options in terms of water resources and none are likely to have a significant effect. Whilst some options propose a higher level of growth, any increased demand would be addressed through other legislative and plan-making processes, in particular the development of regional and water company level water resource management plans. However, it is recognised that concentrated growth (Options 3a, 3b and 3c) and Option 4 provide greater opportunities through strategic scale development to deliver water efficiencies, making these options perform marginally better.</p> <p>Overall, Option 1 is considered likely to perform best in relation to this IIA theme given it focus for development within existing settlement areas, prioritising brownfield land opportunities and avoiding wider impacts on natural resources as a result. By including an element of urban intensification and brownfield development, Option 4 is considered to perform marginally better than the remaining options (Options 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b and 3c). The likely loss of high-quality soil resources under Options 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3c and 4 is considered for the potential to lead to negative effects of significance, though it is recognised that greater water efficiencies may be achieved through concentrated growth options (and Option 4).</p>
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### Summary assessment findings for the growth options

		Option 1	Option 2a	Option 2b	Option 3a	Option 3b	Option 3c	Option 4
Population and communities	Rank	4	3	2	4	4	4	1
	Significant effect?	Uncertain	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Yes - Positive
Health and wellbeing	Rank	3	2	2	1	1	1	1
	Significant effect?	No	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive
Equality, diversity and inclusion	Rank	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
	Significant effect?	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Yes - Positive
Economy	Rank	4	3	3	2	2	2	1
	Significant effect?	No	No	No	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive
Transport and movement	Rank	3	2	3	1	1	1	1
	Significant effect?	No	Uncertain	Uncertain	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive	Yes - Positive
Landscape	Rank	1	3	4	2	5	5	2
	Significant effect?	No	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Uncertain
Historic environment	Rank	=	=	=	=	=	=	=
	Significant effect?	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain
Climate change	Rank	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Significant effect?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Biodiversity	Rank	1	3	3	2	2	2	2
	Significant effect?	No	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain	Uncertain
Environmental quality	Rank	1	2	2	3	3	3	3
	Significant effect?	No	Uncertain	Uncertain	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative
Natural resources	Rank	1	4	4	3	3	3	2
	Significant effect?	No	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative	Yes - Negative



Overall, Option 4 is noted for its potential to perform better against a wider range of the IIA themes than the remaining options. This predominantly relates to the flexibility provided in a tailored approach, essentially combining the best performing aspects of each individual approach (urban intensification, urban extensions and concentrated growth).

The potential for significant negative effects has been identified under all options except for Option 1, this is due to likely extensive loss of high-quality soil resources and encroachment on the countryside as well as potential landscape impacts.

Significant positive effects are considered likely for all options except for Option 1, this relates to significant delivery of new homes and supporting infrastructure, including new open spaces, to support a growing population, meeting housing needs in full (whilst risks are associated with concentrated growth options) and delivering new employment areas.

Uncertain effects have also been identified across the IIA themes, relating to the uncertainty of housing supply under some options and the potential accessibility of some locations and reflecting the need to understand more precise locations of development.

