



Hockley Residents Association

www.hockleyresidents.co.uk

Community Update March 2010

Planning Special – Update on Council Plans for Thousands of Extra Houses

There is a lot happening on the planning front at the moment, which we are a bit surprised about as this will clash with the General and Local elections which are due in May. May be its “a good day to bury bad news”? The key events are:

1. Planning: Core Strategy Public Inquiry

Following a preliminary hearing on 24 March, the Public Inquiry to examine Rochford District Council’s (RDC) proposed ‘Core Strategy’, for building thousands of extra houses across the District, is due to start on 10 May. The HRA will be working with other local groups to try and ensure that the views of residents are fully heard.

2. Updated Council Proposals Impact Hockley

RDC is holding two further major consultations on the next stage of its Core Strategy:

- Details of exactly where thousands of new houses and industrial estates will go.
- Proposals on the policies the council will adopt detailing how development takes place in our District.

The two documents can be downloaded from <http://www.hockleyresidents.co.uk/Other/>

The consultation period is 17 March to 30 April 2010. The public will be encouraged to comment online via RDC’s web site, by email and letter. A manuscript form will also be available.

There are 3 areas of interest for Hockley:

i) 50 Houses are proposed for land off Folly Lane near Folly Chase. A number of options are provided and the council asks:

- Are these the right options?
- Should other sites in this location be considered?
- Should a mix of these sites be considered?
- Would it be better to locate the 50 dwellings on one of these sites or spread the dwellings between a selection of sites?

ii) The council seems to have largely ignored all the representations made by residents, including our survey (see below) and is still proposing major redevelopment for the Town Centre. However, the paper does say:

“The Retail and Leisure Study August 2008 also noted that currently Hockley is not fulfilling the functions of a town centre and it may be possible to reallocate this area as a District Centre as an alternative. This would protect the area from further expansion and retail growth, thus preserving the village feel. However this would also mean that an opportunity to regenerate and improve the area would be lost and as such improvements to the area in any form would be restricted. Do you think Hockley centre should be reallocated as a District Centre?”

[Note: keeping Hockley as a village is effectively the option the vast majority of people voted for in our survey – see below. BUT you need to tell RDC yet again!]

iii) The council has also suggested 2 possible sites in Hockley for gypsy camps. They are off Plumberow Avenue and off Lower Road. The council has to provide 11 more pitches but no details given for these sites.

These proposals will have a major impact on Hockley. The HRA will publish further information on its web-site as soon as possible. Our next meeting is on 13 April when we will discuss the proposals.

It is important you have your say – ‘people power’ can win! (see below)

The very bureaucratic process means that you have to submit comments to RDC, even though you may have voiced your views in the past. The HRA will publish details of how to comment on our website, once RDC announce the arrangements but you can simply write to Planning, RDC, South St. Rochford, SS4 1BW

3. Residents' Survey Rejects Council Proposals For Village Centre

New proposals due May

Many thanks to everyone who completed the survey in the autumn on the future of Hockley Village Centre. We had nearly 1,000 responses, representing over 20% of households – an exceptionally high response rate for such a postal survey – demonstrating the strength of feeling.

The full report can be found at <http://www.hockleyresidents.co.uk/Other/> or at <http://www.hockleyparishplangroup.co.uk/> or <http://www.hockleyunderthreat.com/>.

In summary, the key findings were:

- shops: only 5% in favour of major redevelopment (43% supported moderate redevelopment and 52% only wanted minor improvements)
- Eldon Way & Foundry Industrial Estates: just 13% wanted major change with a youth centre suggested as the most popular improvement.
- Roads: nearly 2/3rds wanted to retain a roundabout at the Spa Junction instead of traffic lights proposed by the council.

Rochford District Council (RDC) Planning Supremo, Cllr Keith Hudson, has promised an improved version when the next proposals are published - due May 2010. However, it has since become clear that RDC have ignored the survey and included 150 new homes for the village centre area in their future planning.

The HRA will continue to press the council to ensure that any improvements to the village centre reflect Hockley's character and village atmosphere in accord with the survey's findings. Thank you again for your support on this key issue - we hope you will continue to participate in the next round of consultations due in May.

4. Other Core Strategy Implications

Outside Hockley, the Core Strategy is proposing 1,375 extra houses on a number of sites clustered on and around Rectory Road, Hawkwell. This will put extra traffic on the Ashingdon Road and B1013 both impacting Hockley. North Rayleigh and Rawreth is down for 1,250 extra houses, many near the very aptly named Watery Lane!

5. Southend Airport Update

Plans to extend the runway from 1,605 to 1,905 metres, to allow larger jets to carry business and leisure passengers to destinations all over Europe, were approved by Rochford District Council in December 2009 and Southend District Council on 20th January 2010.

The plan will now be reviewed by the Government before final approval. This means that an updated version of the Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP), detailing the regeneration of the airport and the development of new business parks nearby, has been deferred.

If approved, the aim is to complete the runway extension, the new terminal, and the diversion of Eastwoodbury Lane by May 2011 in time for the Olympics in 2012 and it will provide job opportunities. The new rail station is already under construction and planned to open mid 2010. Proposals for a new control tower falls within the criteria of 'permitted development' and as such can be considered as approved.

The use of larger, more modern airport will, it is claimed, reduce noise levels whilst enabling higher passenger numbers. The plans also include a reduction in the number of night flights, from 900 to 120 per month, and a reduction in the number of flights over Leigh by increasing the number over Rochford / Stambridge areas.

The HRA has lodged objections that the impact of road traffic through Hockley on the B1013 has not been fully considered.

Hockley NHS Dental Reorganisation – Temporary Dentist In Rayleigh

Major changes are in store for all Hockley's dentists and these are likely involve people, including children, having to travel to Rayleigh to see a temporary dentist. South East Essex NHS (SEE NHS) is making the changes:

- Temporary NHS capacity being provided by the White Hart Lane (WHL) surgery is being withdrawn.
- A new NHS dentist is being set-up in Hockley to take on this work.
- 'Children only' services provided by the Joyce and Patel Surgeries will transfer to the two other surgeries.

Following a formal tendering process, the PCT has awarded the temporary capacity currently being provided by the WHL surgery to a new dentist to be established in Hockley. The new practice will be run by Harunani & Co Group (see: <http://www.dental-online.co.uk/dentistryforyou>). There is no firm date yet for the new contract starting, although it is unlikely to be before late summer.

The existing temporary cover at WHL expires on 31 March. SEE NHS has been unable to give their reasons for this change due to legal constraints but say the new dentist will provide an enhanced service. We cannot, therefore, judge whether or not the change justifies the inconvenience to patients until the full details are known. WHL will continue to provide full NHS treatment to patients of Dr Schnell and Dr Anklert.

SEE NHS is also withdrawing "children only" contracts from the Joyce and Patel surgeries on 31 March. These contracts will be replaced by full, 'open' NHS services at the WHL and Harunani surgeries. There is no reduction in the size of the new contract, but we discovered that the PCT had recently made some reductions in our overall NHS dental capacity and hadn't told us. We took this up with SEE NHS and are pleased to say that they agreed to fully reinstate the cuts. So overall we get a small increase in capacity!

SEE NHS is planning to send all 'displaced' patients to Rayleigh until the new surgery is established. Extra capacity will be provided at the Oasis and Smile dental surgeries. We told the PCT that this was unacceptable and suggested a revised approach but sadly there was a delay in SEE NHS following this up and the opportunity was lost, so hundreds of patients will need to go to Rayleigh until the new surgery is open. This was completely foreseeable and avoidable and SEE NHS is aware of our feelings!

The HRA are continuing to press the PCT to quickly implement measures to ease the transition process - watch our web-site for updates. Please contact the NHS PALS helpdesk (01702 204629) for more details on the temporary cover being provided.

NHS Walk-in Centre

Your local NHS walk-in centre is situated at: St Luke's Health Centre, Pantile Avenue, Southend, SS2 4BD. 01702 611505 Open every day 8am-8pm (including bank holidays). Walk-in centres treat minor illnesses and injuries that do not need a visit to A&E. No appointment is required and you will be seen by an experienced nurse.

Clamp Down on Parking on Pavements

Police are appealing to motorists to park considerately. Vehicles parking on the footpath have been raised as a problem by the community at the Neighbourhood Action Panels. Local police are trying to address the problem without the need to issue tickets. 31 warning letters have recently been sent to motorists around Hockley. The Police will continue to monitor the area and repeat offenders may find a fixed penalty fine on their windscreen - Fixed penalty tickets are non endorsable and currently £30. Obstruction is defined as 'Without lawful authority or excuse wilfully obstructs the free passage along the highway' including roads and footpaths.

Easter Holiday Activities

Rochford District Council, Virgin Active and Rochford Extended Schools have combined resources to arrange a full programme of events over the Easter holidays. See www.rochford.gov.uk/holidayactivities for full details of these and other events.

HRA's Brian O'Shea Honoured

The HRA is delighted that the efforts of their Social Secretary, Brian O'Shea, have been recognised by RDC. The Council awarded Brian "Highly Commended" in their 'Citizen of the Year' competition. This is long overdue recognition of Brian's efforts over 35 years arranging holidays, trips and social outings for the district's residents. Brian arranges pick-ups by coach from near people's homes meaning disabled people and non-drivers can easily join in outings.

Details of trips can be found at <http://www.hockleyresidents.co.uk/events.htm> or ring Brian on 01702 204334. Current plans include:

- **Sunday 23rd May – Beaulieu** including a guided tour of the House and Gardens.
- **Saturday 26th June – Hemingford Abbots** - a lovely village and many beautiful open gardens.
- **Sunday 4th to Thursday 8th July – North Yorkshire Dales & Northumberland** staying at a 4* Jacobean Mansion in Bishop Auckland.

Extra buses for Hockley & Hawkwell – people power won the day!

Arriva are reverting to the previous frequency of 6 buses per hour to/from Hockley/Southend, with effect from 4 May. This is great news and there will be 4 No 7s via Ashingdon and 2 No 8s via Hawkwell. Services to/from Rayleigh will be unchanged ie one No 7 and one No 8 per hour.

It never made any sense to have so many buses terminating at Ashingdon Schools and it is good news that a way has been found to use the existing ECC subsidy to operate these more efficiently. These arrangements have been agreed until August 2011.

Our thanks to everyone who protested to Arriva & ECC and made this possible. Well done!

Youth Centre at Last!

After a MASSIVE amount of effort over the last three years, Hockley residents have succeeded in creating a purpose built youth centre. Opening at the end of April, the MASSIVE Project charity has converted the upstairs of 7a Eldon Way, next to CJ's Bowling, for use as a youth centre.

Initially the youth centre will provide somewhere for the young people of Hockley, and surrounding areas, with a place to go, that is not school and not run by 'authority' where they can feel safe and unpressured when meeting friends. It is hoped this will develop into a meaningful attempt to integrate different parts of the community, to reduce the numbers of teenagers hanging about on the streets, and be somewhere for new ideas to blossom forth with the youth being the driving force.

The centre is very spacious, and split into two areas, one for sitting about, and the other much bigger and lends itself to all sorts of possibilities, from table tennis, to dancing, film shows, theatre, and any sort of activity that requires a reasonable amount of space. Membership will be quarterly, with non members allowed as guests, so that members feel it is their club, and are part of its development. There is lift access for the disabled.

The Massive Project is a registered Charity. Many tens of thousands of pounds have been raised and grants obtained to make this dream become a reality. Local individuals and organisations have dipped their hand in their pockets, to help, including £500 recently from the HRA, for which the Trustees were very grateful. A fun night was held last month at Hockley Public Hall, when the HRA sponsored a quiz night organised by the Hockley Parish Plan Group in aid of the youth centre. Barclays Bank matched the money raised, resulting in nearly £2000 in total. MASSIVE would like to thank publicly all those who got teams together, and everyone involved in the organising of the event. Training is available for volunteer helpers, and anyone interested in helping should contact the Charity, via Kath Muncer tel 01702 202915.