



Hockley Residents Association

www.hockleyresidents.co.uk

MAJOR CHANGES FOR TOWN CENTRE/ ELDON WAY REVAMP PROPOSED

Rochford District Council (RDC) has published its long overdue proposals for Hockley Town Centre at: http://www.rochford.gov.uk/rdc/PDF/planning_hockley_aap_issues_and_options.pdf. Paper copies are also available from the Council.

A whole range of options have been suggested and essentially these involve redeveloping whole sections of Spa Road and completely rebuilding Eldon Way as a mix of retail, residential (nearly 200 extra homes), commercial and community uses, as well as some changes in Southend Road and Main Road.

We welcome the broad thrust and the acknowledged need to work with local health authorities to create a new health centre. However, we are concerned there is no mention of how changes will be funded or timescales. It is also surprising there is no mention of the current economic problems and pre-existing high level of shop vacancies. There may be a case for a smaller but higher quality village centre creating space for improvements.

There are also complex ownership issues and the possible use of Compulsory Purchase Orders. How long will it take (eg relocating Eldon Way factories first)? How financially viable are the proposals and consequent risk of stagnation? What will be the price residents have to pay (eg yet more houses)?

We need to study the proposals in detail, but our initial reactions are that we are very disappointed there are no radical proposals for dealing with traffic, including the extra cars from the thousands of extra houses to be built in the area. Major improvements are desperately needed. Simply swapping the Spa roundabout for traffic lights will not solve the problem.

Overall we find it surprising that RDC seems unconcerned about the immediate problems. A few practical solutions NOW are needed. We will try to work with the Council to resolve these problems.

Consultation closes on 30th April. If you have any comments on the proposals, please let us know by **10th April**.

Developer's CCTV Spy Camera

On 12th January a mystery CCTV camera was discovered attached to a lamp post at Nursery Corner, Hawkwell. Local councillor, John Mason, alerted the authorities including the police and Essex County Council. The camera was taken down later that day.

It later emerged that it was installed by a company called 'Traffic Sense' on behalf of an unnamed developer, to monitor traffic movements at the busy junction. We understand that this is to support a future building proposal at Coombes Farm, Rochford.

Confusion initially reigned on whether or not the use of this camera had been approved by ECC, but they have now confirmed that it was NOT. Residents will also recall that a year or so ago, ECC forced RDC/Police to take down the cameras in Spa Road area used for crime prevention purposes on health and safety grounds.

RDC have confirmed that they will not accept data

gathered illegally to support any planning applications.

The Information Commissioner has been asked to investigate under the Data Protection Act. Meanwhile the HRA will try and resolve the outstanding issues, but, with lots of new developments in the offing, everyone should be aware of any new CCTV appearing in the area.

HRA meets on the 2nd Tuesday of every month in Kilnfield House (next to the Railway Station.) Meetings usually start at 7.30pm. Further information can be found at:

www.hockleyresidents.co.uk

Rochford District Council (RDC) has published the results of their public consultation on the proposed Core/Strategy detailing planning policies for the District. They can be found at: <http://cmis.rochford.gov.uk/CMISwesPublic/Binary.ashx?Document=16334>.

There were 417 responses from the public, local bodies and potential developers. Predictably, property developers generally supported RDC's proposals. Public opinion was against the proposals, but there was no consensus on what should happen and where the 4,600 additional new homes should be located.

The proposals were discussed at a Council meeting on Monday, 9th February, and it appears that the Council is still set on its policy of distributing housing across the district. The HRA remains concerned that this approach will not allow the necessary infrastructure improvements required to support the extra development. We await the next version of the plan, which will go to the Government Inspector for approval in mid-June.

Arriva slash buses—No RDC objections and ECC subsidy farce

Buses through Hockley and Hawkwell have been slashed from 6 per hour to just 2 between 10.00 and 16.00 on weekdays, bringing misery to users, especially people trying to get to/from the hospital. Four buses an hour will terminate at Ashingdon Schools—just 1.5 miles from Hockley Town Centre!

Arriva blamed low passenger volumes, but three surveys carried out by residents show numbers at 10-15 times higher than Arriva say! A survey also showed cancellations running at about 10%. Despite this, Arriva have refused repeated requests from the HRA and other local organisations to reinstate at least some services. We believe that this is a direct attack on bus pass holders. The cuts will save RDC money and sadly they have not objected.

ECC also refused help. HRA investigations have revealed that ECC subsidizes two buses an hour each evening and Sundays, ie twice as many services as during the day when usage is higher! ECC have refused to switch some subsidies to day-time services or to Hawkwell, which has no evening/weekend services at all.

The HRA will continue to press for improvements, but if you feel strongly on this subject, please complain to:

Norman.Hume@essex.gov.uk &/or

cllr.Elizabeth.Hart@essex.gov.uk,

or write to them at County Hall, Chelmsford.

If you experience any problems catching buses in the area, please tell us.

£33m threat to hospital budget, but more local services?

Local health bosses want to take money from the hospital's budget and use it to build 4 Urgent Care Centres around the District, as well as 8 Primary Care Centres to replace some existing GP services. Primary Care boss Andrew Pike will be explaining the proposals and what they mean for Hockley at our next meeting on **10th March at 7.30 pm in Kilnfield House, Hockley** (by the station).

Everyone welcome

HRA outings for 2009

- **Sunday, 1st March**—Guided tour of Broadcasting House followed by London transport tour
- **Saturday, 28th March**—Calamity Jane at the Cliffs Pavilion with SODS
- **Sunday, 19th April**—River trip on the Thames and guided tour of Christ Church College, Oxford
- **Friday, 5th June**—Ipswich and along the Orwell to Felixstowe
- **Sunday, 14th June**—Five day break to Dorset and Hampshire including Christchurch, Lymington and Shaftesbury
- **Sunday, 19th July**—Chenies Manor and Aylett Nurseries
- **Thursday, 17th September**—Bury St Edmunds and Euston hall
- **Saturday, 7th November**—My Fair Lady at the Cliffs Pavilion with SODS
- **Friday, 4th December**—VIP Day at Longleat House, including Christmas lunch

For full details see

<http://www.hockleyresidents.co.uk/events.htm>

or ring Brian O'Shea on **01702 203394**

WYVERN COMMUNITY TRANSPORT SCHEME

Wyvern Community Transport has been operating since 2003 and is funded by ECC in partnership with RDC. The organisation serves permanent residents who are unable to access conventional transport due to:

- ◆ Restricted mobility
- ◆ Temporarily unable to access public transport
- ◆ Living in an area not served by public transport
- ◆ Where transport needs are not met by existing timetables.

The scheme operates a number of social car drivers and offers its vehicles to group organisations for hire. **For more information call**