

Infrastructure Delivery Plan

Report to support the new Local Plan
Regulation 18 Consultation

Rochford District Council

Final report

Prepared by LUC

November 2025



Version	Status	Prepared	Checked	Approved	Date
1	Draft report	K. Moroney C. Bowden S. Newman	C. Bowden	P. Smith	29.10.25
2	Final report	C. Bowden	C. Bowden	P. Smith	5.11.25



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Infrastructure Delivery Plan

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Executive Summary

Rochford District Council's new Local Plan will set out the amount of housing and employment development, together with supporting infrastructure required in the District over the plan period, up to 2040. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) plays a vital role in realising this vision, as it will set out the infrastructure requirements of development proposed in the plan and a strategy for how this will be implemented in a timely manner.

This report comprises the early stages of the IDP process. Based on a literature review and engagement with infrastructure and service providers it describes the existing infrastructure provision in Rochford District. For each infrastructure topic area, it also provides a high-level assessment of the infrastructure implications of the different spatial strategy options (i.e. the growth options) being considered by Rochford District Council (please refer to Table 2.1 for the strategy options presented).

The growth options have been considered across a range of locations being considered for potential development in the District:

- Land North of Southend
- Rayleigh
- Rochford/Ashingdon
- Rawreth
- Hockley/Hawkwell
- Hullbridge
- Great Wakering

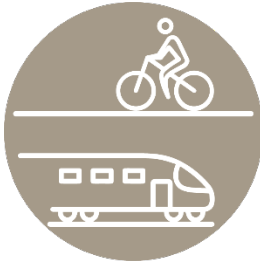
This has allowed for potential constraints and opportunities relating to infrastructure to be considered at the settlement scale (i.e. the focus was on

infrastructure opportunities and constraints across the settlements in the District and not at specific sites for development).

Rochford is currently home to around 85,661 people, with a projected further increase to 99,288 by 2043. In recent years, in line with trends witnessed at the national level, there has been a substantial rise in the proportion of residents aged 65 and older in the District. The increase in people older than working age, as well as the more rural and dispersed nature of development in parts of the District, will impact the delivery of infrastructure provision and how people access facilities, particularly the primary healthcare service provision.

The report has identified some more substantial potential infrastructure constraints to development.

These are set out below in relation to each relevant infrastructure topic area.



Transport and movement

The rural nature of much of the District means that private cars are used for many journeys with congestion a noted issue at a number of locations. Railway stations are accessible in Rayleigh, Rochford/Ashingdon and Hockley/Hawkwell; however, many of the District’s settlements do not benefit from frequent bus services to key services and facilities and/or employment locations.

The multiple points of congestion, presence of one-way systems and existing narrow road network in Rochford/Ashingdon means that the infrastructure required to support growth at this location is considered more difficult to deliver than requirements to support potential growth in other parts of the District. Furthermore, Great Wakering’s more isolated location within the less developed east of the District, where journey times by bus to key services and facilities and employment are noted to be longer, is considered less likely to support travel by more sustainable modes.



Education

Demand for school places in Rochford District is influenced by cross-border pupil movement, with school-run traffic noted between Rochford and Southend. This means that any development at North of Southend or in Rawreth (Dollymans Farm) will need to consider cross-border implications relating to education provision.

The growth option considered at North of Southend is of a scale that could deliver new primary and co-located early-years facilities, but not secondary provision in its own right. The potential to deliver secondary provision to meet the needs of the new development at North of Southend will need to be considered alongside the scale of growth to be provided in Southend and whether the cumulative level of growth justifies this type of provision. In Rayleigh, the lack of sites of sufficient scale to support the provision of new primary school facilities means potentially limits the options to deliver the scale of growth proposed.

There is no Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision in mainstream schools or special schools in Rochford. Despite new special school provision being developed in Rayleigh, this will not be able to accommodate the needs forecast. Rochford District Council will need to work with its neighbouring authorities to identify a site for a new satellite special school.



Health and wellbeing

There are noted capacity issues at healthcare centres in all existing settlements in the Rochford District. Particular issues have been identified at Rochford/Ashingdon and Hullbridge where the existing facilities have limited potential for improvements or expansion.

Only the growth option north of Southend would deliver the number of homes required to support the provision of a new medical facility in its own right and this would only

be on the basis of including growth beyond the plan period. Alternatively, if growth in Southend-on-Sea is taken into account, then a new medical centre may be the most appropriate solution to address needs in both districts. In this regard, the potential for cross boundary issues relating to the North of Southend location are noted in relation to healthcare facilities. The size and location of any new facility would need to be considered in the context of potential growth in Southend as well as in Rochford District. There is similar potential in respect of the needs arising from growth in Rawreth relating to growth in Basildon and Rochford districts.

There are also needs relating to adult social care provision. The increasing emphasis on care in the home means that there will be an increasing need for retirement/sheltered and extra care housing, as well as care home provision. There is also a need to improve day centre provision.



Utilities

Rochford District falls within an area of serious water stress. As such water supply is a critical issue for consideration for the development to be set out in the new Local Plan. Engagement with infrastructure providers indicates that there are issues relating to insufficient capacity within part of the water supply network at the locations for growth considered at North of Southend, Rayleigh and Rochford/Ashingdon.

Planning for infrastructure is dynamic – the context changes constantly due to new evidence, changing priorities, changes to available funding streams and available technologies. As such any infrastructure report must be regarded as a ‘snapshot’ in time and that the infrastructure picture will continue to evolve after its publication.

Infrastructure funding is critical to support Rochford’s future development. However, it is important to note that there are often funding sources which will come forward to support development as it progresses towards the application stage. Whilst developer contributions are likely to be the main source of funding for many of infrastructure projects identified through the later stages of the IDP, there are other sources of potential funding such as government grants and

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loans, support from the UK Infrastructure Bank, local government borrowing and in some cases (for example broadband, indoor sports provision and pharmacies), private company funding based on business models. As the list of infrastructure projects required to the support growth proposed by the Local Plan emerges it will be important to recognise that a mix of funding sources will be required to achieve their delivery.

Chapter 1

Purpose and scope of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan

1.1 Rochford District Council commissioned LUC to prepare an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) to support the Council's emerging Local Plan, which is at the Regulation 18 stage. The new Local Plan will set out the amount of housing and employment development, together with supporting infrastructure required in Rochford District over the plan period, up to 2040.

1.2 There is a requirement for the Council to demonstrate that the emerging Local Plan can be delivered in a sustainable way. As part of this requirement, infrastructure necessary to support future growth will need to be identified. The IDP is being prepared to identify the infrastructure required, as well as its importance to supporting the growth set out in the plan, its expected cost and funding, delivery timetable, who is responsible for its delivery and any delivery risks.

1.3 Based on a literature review and engagement with infrastructure and service providers, the report describes the existing infrastructure provision in Rochford District. For each infrastructure topic area, it then provides a high level assessment of the infrastructure implications of the location options for development (i.e. the growth options) that are being considered by Rochford District Council. This assessment comprises the early stages of the IDP process. It will be built upon as the Local Plan progresses, to identify the infrastructure required to support the growth set out in the preferred spatial strategy included in the plan.

Structure of the IDP

1.4 This IDP is structured as follows:

- **Chapter one** (this chapter) sets out the scope of the IDP, how it relates to national planning policy and guidance, the way in which it supports the local plan process and the assessment method.
- **Chapter two** outlines the development context of Rochford District, including a review of planned development and strategic infrastructure proposals in the surrounding areas.

- **Chapters three to six** describe the infrastructure baseline, the key infrastructure planning matters likely to arise in relation to the growth options being considered by the Council, and considers potential infrastructure opportunities and constraints for each of the key infrastructure areas
 - **Chapter three** covers transport
 - **Chapter four** covers education
 - **Chapter five** covers health and wellbeing
 - **Chapter six** covers utilities and flooding
- **Chapter seven** sets out a review of infrastructure funding opportunities.
- **Chapter eight** provides a summary and overall conclusions.
- **Appendix A** sets out details of the growth options being considered by the Council and a map showing the locations being considered.
- **Appendix B** sets out the high level infrastructure assumptions that have informed the assessment of potential infrastructure opportunities and constraints.
- **Appendix C** sets out the infrastructure providers who were contacted in order to inform this assessment.

Rochford overview

1.5 Rochford District is a predominantly rural district and home to approximately 85,600 people as of 2021. The District's population is dispersed across a number of moderately sized settlements; the three largest settlements, or combinations of settlements, being Rayleigh, Rochford/Ashingdon, and Hockley/Hawkwell. Hullbridge and Great Wakering lie directly below these settlements in the settlement hierarchy with the smaller settlement of Canewdon sitting below this. The District also contains several smaller villages, hamlets and dispersed settlements with little in the way of services.

1.6 Located immediately to the south of the District, Southend-on-Sea is the most populated area in Greater Essex and provides significant employment opportunities as well as access to services and facilities. The areas of Basildon, Castle Point, Chelmsford and Greater London are also important to the District's residents in terms of commuting.

National policy and guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

1.7 The current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) [\[See reference 1\]](#) sets out the Government’s planning policies and how these are expected to be applied.

1.8 Section 2 of the current NPPF sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development which has three overarching objectives, economic, social and environmental.

1.9 It goes on to describe (paragraph 11) what this means in terms of plan making, setting out that all plans should “promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; **align growth and infrastructure**; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects” (our emphasis in bold text).

1.10 At paragraph 20 the NPPF makes it clear that local planning authorities should include strategic policies which make sufficient provision for:

"b) infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat).

c) community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure).

d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation”.

1.11 Paragraphs 16 and 25 of the NPPF clearly highlight the importance of early and appropriate engagement with infrastructure providers in the development of a local plan. Paragraph 26 recognises the importance of joint working in relation to determining “where additional infrastructure is necessary”.

1.12 Paragraph 35 refers to development contributions and that, “plans should set out the contributions expected from development” which includes setting out the levels and type of affordable housing and the required infrastructure. This

infrastructure is likely to include education, transport, health, flood and water management, green and digital infrastructure.

1.13 Paragraph 56 refers to planning conditions and planning obligations. Planning obligations are requirements that councils can place on developers to ensure that they deliver the infrastructure required to mitigate the impact of their development. This is normally undertaken through the use of legal agreements, known as Section 106 (S106) and Section 278 (S278) Agreements, and through the use of planning conditions which are attached to the planning permission in the planning decision notice.

1.14 Paragraph 58 of the NPPF states that councils can only request and apply these planning obligations where they meet the three legislative tests which are set out in Regulation 122(2) of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010. This states that a planning obligation must be:

- a) Necessary to make a development acceptable in planning terms;
- b) Directly related to the development: and
- c) Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

1.15 Paragraph 77 of the NPPF further states the potential for large scale development to be related to 'existing or planned investment in infrastructure.'

1.16 Section 8 of the NPPF relates to 'promoting healthy and safe communities' including the provision of health facilities and section 9 on 'promoting sustainable transport' further emphasises the importance of providing for infrastructure needed to support sustainable development including walking, cycling and public transport provision.

1.17 Paragraph 98 seeks for provision to be made to provide social, recreational and cultural facilities for the communities. Community facilities include local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship and other local services that enhance the sustainability and cohesion of communities and residential environments

1.18 The NPPF requires Councils to prevent the unnecessary loss of facilities and services and to develop, enhance and modernise facilities whilst ensuring an integrated cohesive approach.

1.19 Paragraph 100 of the NPPF states that there is a need to ensure that there is a sufficient choice of early years, school and post-16 places available to meet

the needs of the pupils generated from the existing and new communities. Applicants for development proposals are encouraged to undertake pre-application engagement with the Local Education Authority in order to obtain the current educational position in terms of existing and required education capacity within the catchment area. Essex County Council is the Local Education Authority for the area.

1.20 Paragraphs 103-105 of the current NPPF relate to open space and recreation. They set out the need to ensure that developments have access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport, recreation and physical activity and this includes indoor leisure facilities.

1.21 Section 9 of the NPPF relates to the promotion of sustainable transport which includes walking, cycling, bus and rail. Paragraph 109 states that transport matters should be considered at the earliest stages of development proposals, using a vision-led approach to identify transport solutions that deliver well-designed, sustainable and popular places. Paragraphs 109 to 114 set out the main considerations for transport when assessing development proposals. The local highways authority is Essex County Council.

1.22 Paragraph 115 of the NPPF details the considerations for development proposals which include the following:

- a) Sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location.
- b) Safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users.
- c) The design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code.
- d) Any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree through a vision led approach.

1.23 Paragraph 117, in relation to transport and sustainable transport, goes onto state that applications for development should:

- a) Give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that

maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;

- b) Address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;
- c) Create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;
- d) Allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and
- e) Be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.

1.24 Paragraph 118 states that all developments that will generate significant amounts of movement will be required to provide a travel plan and a planning application will be required to be supported by a transport statement or transport assessment so that the impacts of the proposal can be assessed and monitored.

1.25 Section 10 of the NPPF is entitled 'Supporting high quality communications'. Paragraph 119 states, "Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections. Policies should set out how high quality digital infrastructure, providing access to services from a range of providers, is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time; and should prioritise full fibre connections to existing and new developments."

1.26 Section 14 of the NPPF is entitled 'Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change'. Paragraph 161 states that the planning system should support the transition to net zero by 2050. It should help to contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and it should support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

1.27 Paragraph 164 of the NPPF encourages measures to minimise climate change including the provision of green infrastructure and consideration of location, orientation and design. Sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government's policy for national technical standards.

1.28 Paragraph 165 of the current NPPF recognises the need to increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat including the provision of suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources including supporting infrastructure.

National Planning Practice Guidance

1.29 The Government has published a range of National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) documents which relate to specific subject areas. This documentation sits alongside the National Planning Policy Framework and sets out how the government envisages the day to day working of the planning system. This documentation is subject to frequent updates and revision.

1.30 Current NPPG documentation places further emphasis on the importance of engaging with key infrastructure providers during the production and consultation stages of the local plan, including statutory providers such as the highways authority, the local education authority and the infrastructure providers.

1.31 It should be noted that the Government stated within their Autumn 2024 Budget that they planned to review and update some of the NPPG over the following twelve months.

1.32 The current NPPG provides guidance on how strategic policy-making authorities can demonstrate that a plan is capable of delivering strategic matters, including the provision of infrastructure. Within the current NPPG on plan making it requires:

1.33 At an early stage in the plan-making process strategic policy-making authorities will need to work alongside infrastructure providers, service delivery organisations, other strategic bodies such as Local Enterprise Partnerships, developers, landowners and site promoters. A collaborative approach is expected to be taken to identifying infrastructure deficits and requirements, and opportunities for addressing them. In doing so they will need to:

- Assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure, and its ability to meet forecast demands. Where deficiencies are identified, policies should set out how those deficiencies will be addressed; and
- Take account of the need for strategic infrastructure, including nationally significant infrastructure, within their areas" [\[See reference 2\]](#).

10-Year National Infrastructure Strategy

1.34 In June 2025, the Treasury published a 10-year National Infrastructure Strategy [See reference 3] which identified a long term plan for transport, energy and social infrastructure. This is supported by at least £725 billion of Government funding over the 10-year period.

1.35 The 10-Year Strategy will be accompanied by the following:

- an ‘online infrastructure pipeline’ of projects which will inform spatial planning amongst other things;
- a ‘national infrastructure spatial tool’ which will be a single digital platform bringing together strategies, data and tools, including AI, to identify local infrastructure needs and constraints (e.g. energy, water and wastewater, transport, flood risk, digital telecoms) for housing, industrial growth and land use scenarios. It will provide local projections of infrastructure capacity and need for a range of systems and metrics up to 2035 and/or 2050.

1.36 Alongside the Strategy there will be a new delivery body which will combine the National Infrastructure Commission and the Infrastructure and Projects Authority, which will be called the National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (NISTA). This will bring infrastructure strategy and infrastructure delivery together.

1.37 The Strategy will be updated every two years.

Assessment of alternative options

1.38 The NPPG sets out that “the sustainability appraisal needs to consider and compare all reasonable alternatives as the plan evolves, including the preferred approach, and assess these against the baseline environmental, economic and social characteristics of the area and the likely situation if the plan were not to be adopted. In doing so it is important to:

- outline the reasons the alternatives were selected, and identify, describe and evaluate their likely significant effects on environmental, economic and social factors using the evidence base (employing the same level of detail for each alternative option). Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment are set out in schedule 1 to the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004;

- as part of this, identify any likely significant adverse effects and measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset them;
- provide conclusions on the reasons the rejected options are not being taken forward and the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of the alternatives.

1.39 Any assumptions used in assessing the significance of the effects of the plan will need to be documented. Reasonable alternatives are the different realistic options considered by the plan-maker in developing the policies in the plan. They need to be sufficiently distinct to highlight the different sustainability implications of each so that meaningful comparisons can be made.

1.40 The development and appraisal of proposals in plans needs to be an iterative process, with the proposals being revised to take account of the appraisal findings” [\[See reference 4\]](#)

1.41 Taking account of the policy and guidance set out above, this assessment will help the Council to determine:

- infrastructure constraints and opportunities in relation to each growth option considered; and
- which of the growth options are likely to perform best in terms of infrastructure provision (which in turn will help to inform the decisions on which options are to be preferred).

1.42 This report brings together the infrastructure baseline and potential issues with each of the growth options tested in relation to the ‘big ticket’ infrastructure items:

- Transport and public realm
- Education
- Health and wellbeing
- Utilities (including electricity, water supply and treatment and broadband and communications)
- Flooding and drainage.

1.43 The reason for the focus on these items at this stage of planning making is that most other items are not determinants of whether growth can be delivered sustainably and/or viably in a location. As the Rochford Local Plan is progressed, the focus of the IDP will be expanded to include infrastructure items relating to the topic areas of green infrastructure, open space and sports and

community. The IDP will also be further developed to account for the specific sites that are identified as part of the preferred growth option and will consider the infrastructure needs of proposed growth, how these will be delivered and by when.

Methodology

1.44 The key objectives of the assessment were to:

- Allow comparison and differentiation between different growth options for development;
- Be informed by relevant infrastructure providers.

1.45 In order to achieve these objectives, the methodology employed standardised assumptions for infrastructure provision, which were applied consistently across the growth options. These are set out later in this chapter, with more detail provided in Appendix B. To allow for a simple visual presentation of how each option performs the assessment also utilised a red-amber-green (RAG) assessment. This is also set out below.

1.46 Once a working list of site allocations for inclusion in the plan as part of the preferred spatial strategy are identified, more detailed infrastructure planning work will be undertaken.

1.47 The following text sets out the different stages of the method in more detail.

Scope of this assessment

1.48 This assessment forms a part of the overall IDP project in support of the emerging Rochford Local Plan. The infrastructure requirements tested through this report relate to the high level growth options currently being considered for development by the Council. These are the locations within which development sites could potentially be allocated to meet Rochford's housing needs as established in the most recent applicable standard methodology calculation for working out local housing need (i.e. 689 homes per annum) **[See reference 5]**. The options being considered do not constitute specific site options in their own right.

1.49 Furthermore, it is important to note that, as an interim and relatively high-level assessment, there are some infrastructure topics that cannot be fully

assessed now, because there is not sufficient detail about the site options which would come forward. Specifically, there is no detail about the layout of development, its phasing or mix of dwellings.

1.50 As described in relation to approach to the development of infrastructure baseline, this stage of the assessment is focussed on identifying 'big ticket' infrastructure constraints and opportunities relating to the growth options being considered.

1.51 The list of infrastructure types covered will be expanded at the Regulation 19 stage to be more comprehensive, including items such as green infrastructure, open space and sports, waste management, community and emergency services. The IDP prepared to support the Regulation 19 consultation will consider the specific sites proposed by the Council for allocation in the Local Plan for various types of development (including housing and employment).

High-level infrastructure assumptions

1.52 It is important to note that this element of work is being undertaken at an early stage of plan-making and therefore it is appropriate to undertake a relatively high-level assessment which will be further developed as the preferred spatial strategy is worked up in more detail in later stages of plan making.

Development assumptions

1.53 As the assessment considers relatively high-level growth options there are some important factors which have the potential to influence infrastructure provision which are not known due to the early stage of this assessment. In order to provide some clarity to the assessment, a number of assumptions have been made which are applied consistently to the alternative spatial strategy options. These are as follows:

- It is assumed that developer contributions are available to help fund infrastructure requirements, especially those which are required as a direct result of the development quantity proposed. For example:
 - Where cumulative development levels in the same settlement or new community justify new whole infrastructure assets, it is expected that the development will fund the full costs of these.
 - Where cumulative development levels in the same settlement or new community justify less than a whole new facility or expansion of an

existing infrastructure asset this is assumed to be funded by developer contributions in a manner which is reasonable and fairly related to the development – and as such it is likely to lead to a funding shortfall which would need to be met by other funding.

- It is assumed that land will be made available for new infrastructure provision within development sites (e.g. where new infrastructure items are required within development sites, land will be made available for effectively no cost for this infrastructure to be built upon).
- It is assumed that there will be no significant constraints to the required infrastructure coming forward once identified, i.e. there will be no issues obtaining planning permission or necessary environmental licencing.
- It is assumed that infrastructure will be delivered in a timely manner in order to ensure that it provides for the need as it arises.
- It is assumed that permanent, ongoing management of new or expanded infrastructure will be undertaken by either the relevant infrastructure providers or other appropriate organisation (for example town council or community trust).

Infrastructure-specific assumptions

1.54 In order to allow for a consistent comparison of the different options, a set of high-level assumptions for each infrastructure topic were produced (where possible). These relate to the following:

- Thresholds for the provision of new infrastructure;
- Catchment areas for infrastructure assets;
- Costs of infrastructure provision; and
- Delivery responsibilities.

1.55 The assumptions identified and the sources which informed them are set out in **Appendix B**.

Mapping the development locations using GIS

1.56 In order to assess the likely infrastructure implications of the different spatial strategy options, a desk-based methodology utilising Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and stakeholder engagement was prepared. The boundaries of the development locations and total amounts of development

were presented at a settlement area level (e.g. south west of Rayleigh, south east of Rayleigh, etc.).

1.57 At the Local Plan Regulation 18 stage where the Council is presenting options with potential for development (as distinct from allocations), this approach allows a focus on infrastructure opportunities and constraints across different parts of the settlements in the District, rather than specific sites for development. As the Council moves from the Regulation 18 to Regulation 19 stage, it will identify its preferred allocations. Once this stage is reached, the IDP work will change its focus to look at the specific sites proposed for allocation in the Local Plan.

1.58 The use of GIS in the IDP work enabled the assessment to understand the distance between development location options and infrastructure assets to be taken into account, in accordance with the high level infrastructure assumptions in relation to catchment areas.

1.59 **Appendix A** shows the development locations used to engage with stakeholders and infrastructure providers.

Red-Amber-Green assessment

1.60 In order to help create a report which can be easily interpreted visually a Red-Amber-Green (RAG) assessment is applied as part of this methodology. It should be noted that while the RAG approach is used for ease of interpretation to identify options that are likely to be more challenging to deliver in terms of infrastructure requirements, it does not preclude an option from further consideration through the plan making process.

1.61 The criteria for the RAG assessment are set out in below.

Red

1.62 The delivery of the infrastructure required to support growth is extremely challenging; for example this may be due to operational inefficiencies of expanding an existing facility beyond what can be reasonably managed, technical constraints, land availability lack of obvious funding mechanism and/or because of the overall cost.

Amber

1.63 It is highly possible that the infrastructure could be delivered to support growth, but it may not provide the optimum organisation of infrastructure assets (for example providing a primary school which is smaller than 420 places as these are not operationally efficient), or the infrastructure may incur a high cost that could require external (non-developer contribution) funding, e.g. from Central Government. There may also be unknown aspects of provision which require further assessment, e.g. provision outside the District.

Green

1.64 The likely infrastructure required to support growth can be provided and the funding can be expected to come forward. For example, some infrastructure elements would reasonably be expected to be funded by the developer, such as play equipment, without significantly risking the viability of the development.

1.65 It should be noted that the RAG approach explained above can be more easily applied to some infrastructure items than others. In particular, education planning undertaken by Essex County Council splits the district into planning areas which aggregate some of the locations being tested in this infrastructure assessment. Whilst the purpose of the RAG assessment should be to give a high level understanding of infrastructure needs, it is particularly important that flexibility is applied to the interpretation of the education assessment in terms of the infrastructure needs which are assigned to specific locations. For example, new secondary education provision may be made in one location but serve the needs arising from growth not only for that location but for other neighbouring locations (including those in neighbouring authorities) as well.

Stages of the assessment

1. Review of baseline infrastructure situation

1.66 This involves a high level review of the existing infrastructure issues experienced across the District, including within the existing settlements assessed. The current context for each infrastructure topic area is set out, including existing constraints.

2. Review of growth implications for infrastructure

1.67 This involves a review of the infrastructure implications of the various locations for growth. This sets out:

- Whether the scale of growth at each location is likely to generate the need for any whole new infrastructure facilities or capacity issues for existing infrastructure in accordance with the high level assumptions schedule in Appendix B.
- Whether the location of proposed growth causes any particular issues in relation to providing infrastructure in an efficient way (for example is new growth within an appropriate catchment area of existing infrastructure assets?).
- What the potential cost of infrastructure may be in accordance with the high level assumptions schedule (where applicable).
- Any foreseen deliverability issues.

1.68 The review of infrastructure implications is then summarised as a Red-Amber-Green indicator for each infrastructure type at each development location.

3. Summary

1.69 Text highlighting key issues in relation to infrastructure planning, which may not be apparent from the Red-Amber-Green (RAG) assessment alone is set out by topic area in Chapter 5. This considers whether there are significant constraints to infrastructure provision that would result through each of the growth options considered. The summary also considers the potential for cumulative issues that would occur within the District.

Supporting the emerging Rochford Local Plan

1.70 This document supports the emerging Local Plan by setting out the current baseline and the critical issues and implications which are likely to emerge over the plan period (to 2040) and beyond.

1.71 It is important to note that this document has been prepared at an early stage of the local plan development, and there are numerous topic-specific evidence bases which have been commissioned (but not completed) which will inform future iterations of this report. As such, future iterations of the IDP will

take account of these evidence bases, allowing a more detailed analysis and explanation of infrastructure issues and proposals.

1.72 As the spatial strategy for the plan emerges (specifically the sites which are likely to come forward and their scale) future iterations of the IDP will set out the infrastructure requirements relating to the specific site allocations proposed, how these will be funded, delivered and by what timescale.

Chapter 2

The Rochford IDP context and potential growth

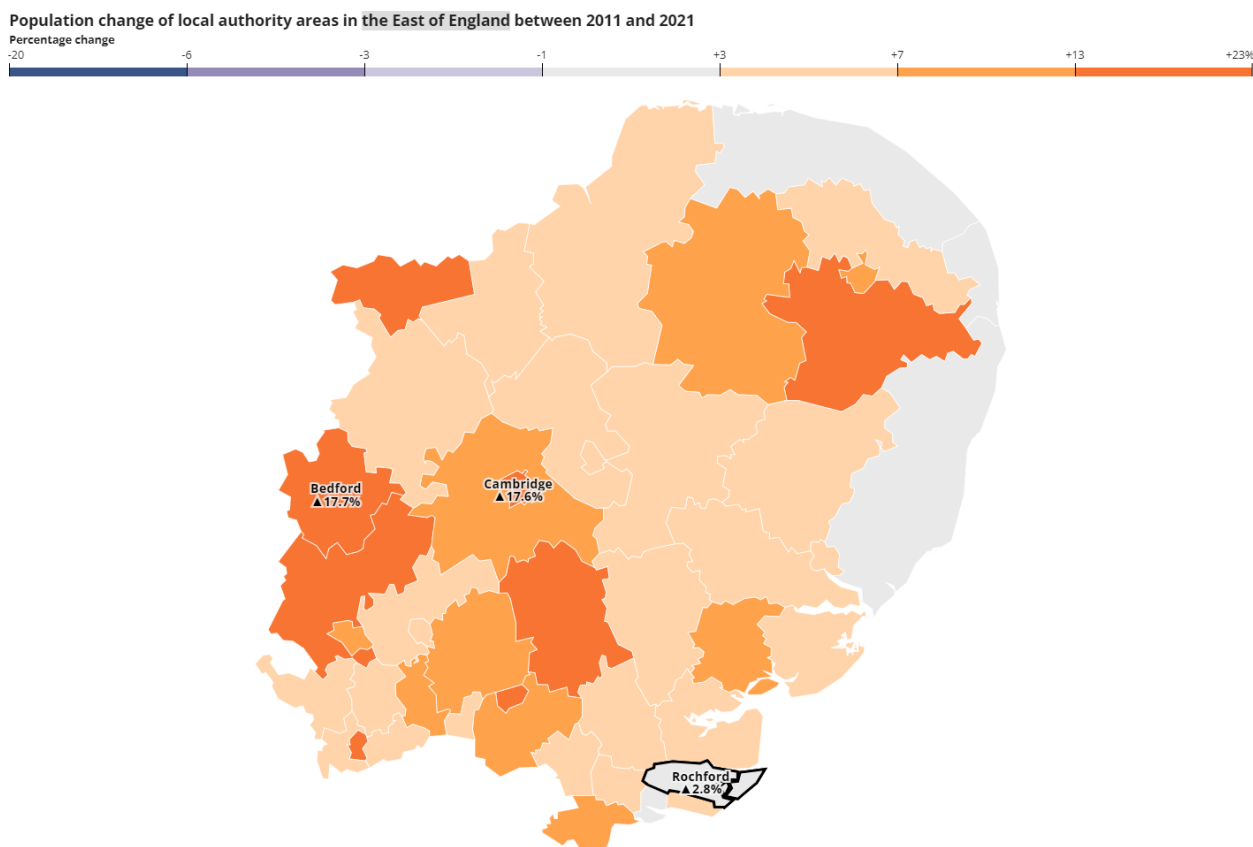
2.1 This chapter outlines the infrastructure planning context for Rochford District, including a strategic overview of growth proposed in the surrounding areas and key cross-boundary infrastructure projects.

Rochford context

Population

2.2 In 2021, Rochford District had a population of 85,661, with 44,157 (51.5%) females and 41,504 (48.5%) males. This is an increase of 2.9%, from just under 83,300 in 2011 and represents a smaller percentage increase than population growth in the of the East of England (8.3% increase) and England (6.6% increase). In 2021, Rochford District ranked 280th for total population out of 309 local authority areas in England, which is a fall of eight places in a decade. Nearby areas, such as Chelmsford and Basildon have seen their populations increase by around 7.8% and 7.5% over the same period, respectively. Others such as Southend-on-Sea (4.1%) and Castle Point (1.8%) observed smaller growth [See reference 6]. A comparison of population change of selected local authority areas in the East of England between 2011 and 2021 is shown below in **Figure 2.1**.

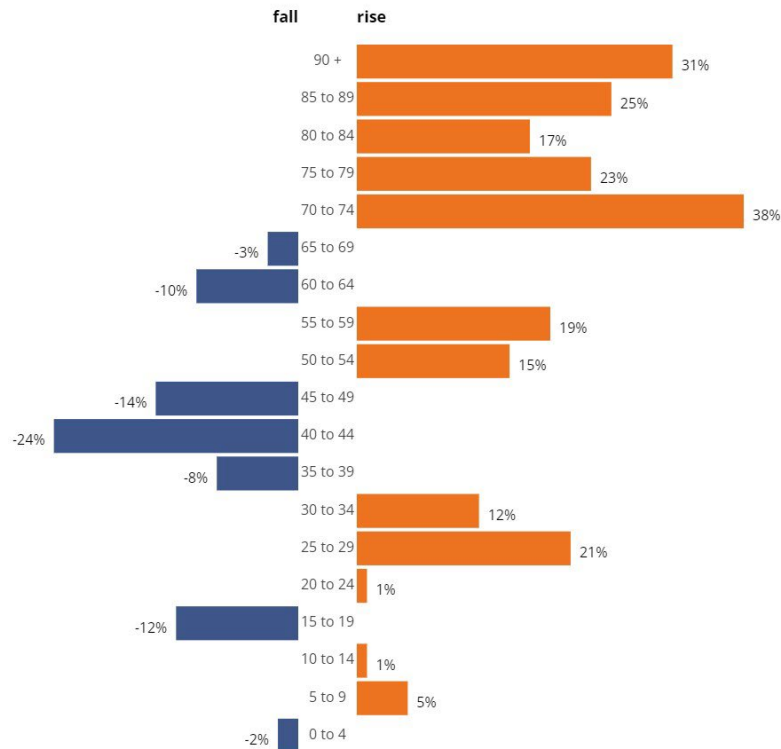
Figure 2.1: Population change of local authority areas in the East of England between 2011 and 2021 [See reference 7]



2.3 In 2021, 60.3% of the people in Rochford District were aged 15 to 64 years old. 16.4% were aged 14 and under and 23.3% aged 65 and over [See reference 8]. Between 2011 and 2021, there was an increase of 18.7% in people aged 65 and over, slightly below the average increase observed at the national level (20.1%). During this period, there has been a decrease of 1.8% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and an increase of 1.6% in children aged under 15 years. This compares to an increase of 3.6% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and an increase of 5.0% in children aged under 15 years at the national level. **Figure 2.2** below shows the population change by age group in Rochford District from 2011 to 2021 [See reference 9].

Figure 2.2: Population change (%) by age group in Rochford District, 2011 to 2021

Population change (%) by age group in Rochford, 2011 to 2021



2.4 Population projections for Rochford District suggest that by 2030, the population of the District will be 93,533, whilst by 2043 it will be 99,288 [See reference 10]. As of 2021, Rochford District is the 22nd most densely populated of the East of England's 45 local authority areas, with around four people living on each football pitch-sized area of land [See reference 11].

Deprivation

2.5 The English Indices of Deprivation measure relative deprivation in small areas in England called lower-layer super output areas (LSOAs). The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is the most widely used of these indices. The most recent date released for the IMD is from 2019. The Indices of Deprivation comprise of seven distinct domains of deprivation which, when combined and appropriately weighted, form the IMD 2019.

2.6 According to the English IMD 2019 [See reference 12], Rochford District ranked 286 out of 317 lower tier authorities in England. This means it falls in the upper 10% least deprived authorities nationally along with Brentwood and Uttlesford, which also lie within Essex. Compared to the IMD 2015 period the

average rank of Rochford District has improved by nine places. The rank change between 2015 and 2019 also moves the area from the 9th to 10th decile (top 10%) nationally for the first time.

2.7 The IMD 2019 shows that of the domains considered, Rochford District ranks lowest in terms of the Education and Skills domain. The District falls into the bottom 40% nationally with regards to its performance in relation to this domain, while all other domains fall into the top 50% or higher. The domain which has the highest ranking was Living Environment, where it is placed in the top 10% least deprived areas nationally.

2.8 In 2019 the number of Rochford District residents living in the most deprived 20% of areas was 1,539 people, equivalent to 1.8% of the total population of the area. This is lower than the Essex average (8.6%) and is the 7th highest proportion of residents out of the 12 lower tier authorities in Essex [\[See reference 13\]](#).

2.9 The Essex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) highlights varying levels of socio-economic impacts relating deprivation across Essex, including in Rochford. Access to services and facilities, including healthcare plays important role in addressing issues of deprivation. The Mid and South Essex Integrated Care System (ICS) which is responsible for the delivery of health and care services in Rochford, reported that in 2023, the percentage of people who feel that they have received enough support to help manage their health condition(s) was lower than the national level at 63%. The percentage of people who feel that the support they receive is adequate fell and is yet to fully recover across all areas in England following the COVID-19 pandemic. This is also the case for the percentage of people who have a good experience of their GP, including in relation to making appointments. Information is available at the sub-ICS level in relation to this measure, with the Castle Point and Rochford area within the Mid and South Essex ICS, reporting a small recovery in the percentage of people who had a good experience with their GP between 2022 and 2023. However, it is notable that the percentage for Castle Point and Rochford is still lower than that reported at the national level. The JSNA also shows that Rochford performs better than county and national levels in relation to access to screening for all types of cancers [\[See reference 14\]](#).

Economy

2.10 In the year ending December 2024, 82.1% of working age people in Rochford District (ages 16 to 64) were in employment. This is higher than the regional average for the East of England (80.3%) and also marks an increase

from the year ending December 2022, when the local rate was 77.0%. In December 2024, Rochford District had an unemployment rate of 3.0%, which is in line with the regional average for the East of England (3.6%) and slightly below the UK average (3.3%). This was a decrease compared to the year ending December 2023 when the unemployment rate in Rochford District was 3.8%.

2.11 The Claimant Count in Rochford District in March 2025 was 1,205, an increase from the 1,170 claimants reported in March 2023. Around 8,600 or about 17.1% of the population aged 16 to 64 years in Rochford District were "economically inactive" in the year ending December 2025, which is lower than 11,000 people or about 21.4% in the year ending 2024 [\[See reference 15\]](#).

2.12 Educational attainment remains relatively low in the District, with 39.0% of residents (aged 16-64) reaching Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) Level 4 (which is equivalent to the first year of a Bachelors degree) and above, compared to the regional average for the East of England (43.8%) and the UK average (47.6%). Despite relatively low educational attainment Rochford District's earnings are higher in terms of gross weekly pay for full time workers (£846.90) compared to the East of England (£763.50) and UK average (£729.80). The majority of employees in Rochford District work in wholesale and retail trade (15.2%), construction (9.8%), education (9.8%), human health and social work (9.8%), manufacturing (9.8%), and professional, scientific and technical activities (8.7%) [\[See reference 16\]](#).

Settlement pattern

2.13 Rochford District is largely rural with much of the existing development located towards its western portion. The District becomes more sparsely populated to the east away from the main settlements. In accordance with Census 2021 [\[See reference 17\]](#) the largest settlement and the main centre of population is Rayleigh, located in the south-west of the District. The parish of Rayleigh which takes in the main developed area of the settlement has a population of 32,200. The District's other main settlements are Rochford (with a parish population of 9,900 residents), Hockley (parish population of 6,500 residents), Ashingdon (parish population of 3,500 residents), Great Wakering (parish population of 6,000 residents), Canewdon (parish population of 1,700 residents) and Hullbridge (parish population of 6,600 residents). The District also contains part of London Southend Airport, which falls on the boundary with Southend-on-Sea and is an important employment provider for the area given its position as a regionally important airport.

2.14 The existing settlement pattern and less developed nature of the District influences infrastructure provision and how people access facilities. The three largest settlements of Rayleigh, Rochford/Ashingdon and Hockley/Hawkwell benefit from a range of services and facilities, as well as good access to public transport, including the railway line running from Southend Victoria to London Liverpool Street. Of these Rayleigh has the best access to services within the District. Rochford and Hockley contain local town centres catering for local needs. The large villages of Hullbridge and Great Wakering have a more limited range of services and access to public transport is relatively more limited. With the exception of Great Wakering, these settlements all lie within the more developed centre-west portion of Rochford District.

2.15 The small, rural settlement of Canewdon has few services and public transport provision is poor. Beyond these settlements, the District's rural settlements, including Stambridge, Paglesham and Rawreth, have little or no local services and residents are often completely dependent on the private car to access facilities.

2.16 Many residents in Rochford District must travel outside the settlements where they live to access services, facilities and employment opportunities. Due to the rural and dispersed nature of parts of the District and the current infrastructure provision, the quickest and most convenient way to do this currently is often by private car. Rochford District has high levels of car ownership with only 13.0% of households in the District not owning a car or van. As per data from the 2021 Census the proportion of residents travelling to work by car or van is 48.2%, which is higher than the national average of 44.5% [\[See reference 18\]](#). Furthermore, travel time to employment centres by car, bicycle and public transport and walking in the District are all substantial higher than the average for local authorities in England [\[See reference 19\]](#).

2.17 The most southern part of Rochford District borders Southend-on-Sea. Consequently, there is a strong relationship between Rochford District and Southend-on-Sea, with residents often crossing the District boundary to access services and facilities and employment opportunities. Workplace flow data from the 2021 census [\[See reference 20\]](#) shows that the largest movement of people out of Rochford District is towards Southend-on-Sea (5,372 people), accounting for 38% of people who travel to another area for work. The second and third largest movement of people out of Rochford District for work is to Basildon (2,062 people) and Castle Point (1,249 people). However, it is worth noting that there are commuter flows in the opposition direction from Southend-on-Sea into Rochford District with 3,589 people travelling in this direction. This flow of people accounts for just under 50% of people who commute into

Rochford District for work. Conversely, the largest movement into Rochford District was 3,589 people from Southend-on-Sea, followed by Castle Point (1,178 people) and Basildon (856 people).

2.18 The 2021 Census was undertaken at a time when COVID-19 restrictions and national lockdowns were in place. Reporting on travel habits for work and leisure during this period of time may present a slightly distorted view of long term patterns in the District. As such, it is worth considering longer term commuting patterns for the District. The 2011 Census [\[See reference 21\]](#) shows that most residents commuted out of Rochford District to Southend-on-Sea (8,466 people), followed by Basildon (3,209 people) and Westminster, London (2,936 people). Based on data from the 2011 Census, the amount of people commuting to London from Rochford District accounts for 12% of Rochford District residents who have a job.

2.19 To help address the climate emergency, the focus must be shifted away from the private car to more active and sustainable modes of travel. There is likely to be potential to reduce the need to travel in the District through alignment of growth and infrastructure and employment opportunities. Supporting the provision of higher internet speeds will also help to contribute to this aim, enabling remote and hybrid working. This point of particular relevance given that gigabit capable broadband is only accessible to 53.1% of Rochford District's residents compared to the national figure of 76.8% [\[See reference 22\]](#). For the journeys that must be made, it will be important to support the switch to more sustainable modes. Within the larger settlements and those near Southend Airport, existing and improved public transport has the greatest potential to support this shift. In smaller settlements, cycling, particularly with the use of e-bikes, is likely to offer significant potential to achieve the switch to more sustainable modes.

2.20 Through the Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy [\[See reference 23\]](#) and Green infrastructure Compendium [\[See reference 24\]](#) Essex County Council encourages opportunities to enhance and establish green infrastructure along sustainable transport and Public Rights of Way (PRoW) /cycle networks, including the integration of nature focused Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS); native hedgerows, tree and shrub planting; incidental 'play on the way' features / trails; informal sport (outdoor gym/fitness trails); and areas for seating to stop and rest. A key element of addressing the climate emergency is the provision of a nature recovery network, appropriate management of existing natural areas and provision of new green spaces. The Essex Green Infrastructure Standards [\[See reference 25\]](#) outlines the nine principles and standards for the protection, enhancement, creation, and management of green

infrastructure in Essex. The application of these principles and standards through development management and planning policy will help to ensure the delivery of multifunctional, accessible high-quality green infrastructure.

2.21 The Rochford Open Space Study identifies that much of the District benefits from being within walking distance of at least one publicly accessible open space. However, of the District's larger settlements, issues of access are identified at Great Wakering, Hullbridge, Rayleigh, Rochford Town and Ashingdon. Similar issues are also identified at a number of the smaller settlements in the District. At Great Wakering, Wakering Common is only accessible to those in the east of the settlement and residential streets in the west of Hullbridge are not within walking distance of any open spaces, although this is expected to be addressed through the completion of a new open space in the settlement. At Rayleigh (Church Road) and Rochford town (in the south of the settlement) residents are not located within walking distance of existing open spaces. However, open space to be delivered as part of development at Ashingdon Road in Rochford town will help to address access in the settlement. North Ashingdon similarly does not benefit from access to open spaces within walking distance. In some instances, nearby existing playing pitches display the character and benefit from facilities that is likely to help to mitigate the lack of access to nearby open spaces. The Study corroborates the findings of the Natural England ANGSt study, which found that approximately 75% of the urban area of the District is within a 300m (5 minute) walk of public open space **[See reference 26]**.

2.22 In summary, focussing growth in settlements with existing facilities and services, plus a significant shift towards funding new public transport, creating improved opportunities for cycling, including traffic free routes, will help to ensure that new development does not exacerbate the unsustainable travel movements associated with the current settlement pattern. Delivering development to support access to public open space within walking distance and joined up green infrastructure will further limit the need to travel by private vehicle and support climate change mitigation and adaptation in Rochford.

Key implications of Rochford's context

2.23 The analysis above does identify some important implications for the IDP and infrastructure provision:

- High car ownership coupled with large numbers of workers commuting within Rochford and to and from neighbouring districts raises the

importance of enhancing local public transport and active travel infrastructure.

- Similarly, a greater focus on growth in the larger existing settlements in Rochford District creates more opportunities to deliver sustainable transport.
- An ageing population has implications for health and social care provision but also increases the capacity for voluntary engagement in open space and social infrastructure.
- The high levels of accessibility to green spaces from the existing urban areas creates opportunities for development to enhance health and wellbeing.

Potential growth

The emerging development strategy

2.24 The first formal stage of consultation on the new Local Plan, Issues and Options, took place in late 2017/early 2018. This document set out a comprehensive range of issues and options relating to the future of the District, and how the planning system could help deliver new opportunities. A range of issues were raised through the consultation which have influenced the direction of the new Local Plan since, and which will continue to be explored, alongside further consultation feedback, through the plan-making process.

2.25 This was followed by the Spatial Options consultation which took place in Summer 2021. This consultation built on the feedback from the Issues and Options stage to set out further challenges and opportunities for how the District could change and grow in the next 20 years. It presented a range of 'Spatial Strategy Options' for feedback, exploring how different locations and patterns of development could fulfil the District's housing, economic and infrastructure needs in a sustainable way. The options presented were:

- Strategy Option 1: Urban Intensification
- Strategy Option 2: Urban Extensions
 - Option 2a: Focused on main towns
 - Option 2b: Dispersed to all settlements based on Settlement Hierarchy
- Strategy Option 3: Concentrated growth

- Option 3a: Focused west of Rayleigh
- Option 3b: Focused north of Southend
- Option 3c: Focused east of Rochford District
- Strategy Option 4: Balanced Combination

2.26 In December 2023, Rochford District Council provided LUC with seven growth scenarios being considered for the new Local Plan. These are set out in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Growth scenarios considered for Rochford District

Scenario	Description
1: Baseline only	The ‘do nothing’ scenario – i.e. all homes with planning permission, allocated without permission or on sites otherwise thought to be deliverable without a change in policy.
2: Baseline plus larger North of Southend area with modest growth in main settlements.	Assumes the North of Southend concept is the principal strategic allocation, delivers circa 250 dwellings per annum over a 12 year period, with small sites making up the shortfall in other locations.
3: Baseline plus smaller North of Southend area (East of London Southend Airport) with modest growth in main settlements.	Assumes the North of Southend concept is the principal strategic allocation, delivers circa 160 dwellings per annum over a 12 year period, with combination of small sites making up the shortfall in other locations.
4: Baseline plus a concentration of growth West of Rayleigh with modest growth in main settlements	Assumes the West of Rayleigh is the principal strategic allocation, delivers circa 160 dwellings per annum over a 12 year period, with combination of small sites making up the shortfall.
5: Baseline plus a concentration of growth East of Rochford District with	Assumes the East of Rochford District is the principal strategic allocation, delivers circa 160 dwellings per annum over a 12 year period, with combination of small sites making up the shortfall

Scenario	Description
minor growth in main settlements	
6: Baseline plus growth distributed to the largest three settlements based on existing populations	Assumes there is no single principal strategic allocation and instead housing needs are met through a series of distributed allocations.
7: Baseline plus growth proportionately distributed to largest five settlements based on existing populations	Assumes there is no single principal strategic allocation and instead housing needs are met through a series of distributed allocations across a larger range of settlements than Scenario 6.

2.27 For the purposes of the high-level assessment of infrastructure requirements at settlements through this stage of the IDP and to allow for more effective engagement for stakeholders and infrastructure provisions, this list of seven growth scenarios was simplified to three growth options. The growth options are set out in Table 2.2: Growth options by spatial location (spring 2024) by settlement. The growth options shown in this table (low, medium and high) were worked up for consideration of infrastructure requirements on a settlement-by-settlement basis and did not comprise the Council’s strategy.

2.28 These options were used by LUC to engage with providers and stakeholders to gain an understanding of infrastructure constraints and opportunities at a settlement level.

Table 2.2: Growth options by spatial location (spring 2024)

Location	Baseline development (excluding windfall, as of 1 st April 2023)	Low growth option	Medium growth option 2	High growth option 3
North of Southend*	0	0	2,000	3,000
Rayleigh	1,020	100	650	2,000

Location	Baseline development (excluding windfall, as of 1 st April 2023)	Low growth option	Medium growth option 2	High growth option 3
Rochford/Ashingdon	1,050	50	800	2,000
Hockley/Hawkwell	180	50	650	800
Hullbridge	230	50	100	300
Great Wakering	120	50	100	300
Windfall	630	-	-	-

*The high growth option for the North of Southend could potentially accommodate up to 5,000 new homes beyond 2040.

2.29 At this stage a Draft IDP was prepared by LUC. The document was not consulted upon. The introduction of the Government's revised 'standard method' for calculating minimum housing need for local authorities in England in December 2024, resulted in an increase in the housing figure for Rochford of approximately 94%.

2.30 Given this significant increase, the options previously considered through the IDP work would no longer meet the District's needs and therefore are no longer reasonable alternatives for consideration in relation to the plan. There was also a need to reconsider the infrastructure needs of the District based on the revised housing numbers for the plan area. Once the revised housing numbers were established, the Council provided LUC with an updated list of options that might be taken forward in the Local Plan. The options were again worked up to allow for a consideration of infrastructure constraints and opportunities at a settlement level.

2.31 LUC used the updated options to engage with infrastructure providers and stakeholders between July and September 2025. The growth options by spatial relation to the main settlements in the plan area in Table 2.3. Mapping for each option is set out in Appendix A.

Table 2.3: Growth options by spatial location (summer 2025)

Settlement: Location in relation to settlement	Homes during plan period	Homes post plan period, exclusive of homes during plan period
Hullbridge: North east	550	N/A
Hullbridge: South west	625	N/A
Hullbridge; South east	325	N/A
North of Southend	1,500	3,500
Great Wakering: South west	820	180
Great Wakering: South east	150	N/A
Rochford and Ashingdon: North east	250	N/A
Rochford and Ashingdon: East	1,975	500
Rochford and Ashingdon: South west	325	N/A
Rochford and Ashingdon: South east	275	N/A
Hockley and Hawkwell: North east	425	N/A
Hockley and Hawkwell: South east	450	N/A
Rayleigh: North	675	N/A
Rayleigh: North west	725	170
Rayleigh: North east	550	N/A
Rayleigh: South east	1,150	N/A
Rayleigh: South west	475	N/A

Settlement: Location in relation to settlement	Homes during plan period	Homes post plan period, exclusive of homes during plan period
Rawreth	1,500	500

South Essex Joint Strategic Plan

2.32 In 2017 the South Essex councils began a collaboration to develop a long-term growth ambition that would underpin strategic spatial, infrastructure and economic priorities across the sub-region. However, work on the Joint Strategic Plan is presently stopped with no confirmation from the Joint Committee of the South Essex Councils on its intention to continue the plan. Progression of Local Plans is currently the priority for the councils.

2.33 Local Government Reorganisation is underway, including in Greater Essex. It is proposed to replace the 15 local authorities in Essex (including Rochford District) with a smaller number of larger unitary authorities by 2028. In September 2025, Essex County Council put forward proposals to Central Government to split Greater Essex into three council areas – North, Mid and South Essex [See reference 27]. The new South Essex unitary authority would include Southend, Thurrock, Basildon, Castle Point and Rochford. One of their functions would be undertaking sub-regional strategic plan-making, with the expectation being that this would enable better planning, infrastructure and housing delivery.

2.34 Rochford District Council has also put forward its own proposals for a four-authority model which would see Rochford be part of a Central Essex area also comprising Brentwood, Chelmsford and Maldon [See reference 28].

Strategic overview of growth in the surrounding areas and key cross border infrastructure projects

Surrounding context

2.35 Infrastructure capacity and requirements within Rochford District will be influenced by housing and economic growth as well as the delivery of infrastructure in surrounding areas. Strategically, this includes:

- the influence and reach of Greater London;
- the A120 Haven Gateway growth corridor and the strategic ‘section one’ plan for the North Essex Authorities (adopted 2021), setting out significant growth ambitions;
- Chelmsford Garden Community (CGC) planned for the area northeast of Chelmsford to deliver around 10,000 new homes and a range of facilities and infrastructure, including a new railway station, schools and open space.
- Lower Thames Crossing, which will connect Kent and Essex through two tunnels beneath the River Thames. The new route will connect the A2 and M2 in Kent to the A13 in Thurrock and junction 29 of the M25 in the London Borough of Havering and almost double road capacity over the river east of London.
- Thames Freeport covers the ports of Tilbury and DP World London Gateway, as well as Ford’s Dagenham plant. It was designated as a Freeport tax site by the Government in December 2021. Within the Freeport businesses can benefit from tax reliefs to bring investment, trade, and jobs to regenerate regions across the country that need it most. The Thames Freeport is expected to draw £4.5 billion of new investment and create 21,000 skilled jobs.
- Dunton Hills Garden Community Brentwood planned for the area to the west of the town of Basildon will deliver around 3,700 homes, community and sports facilities, and four schools. It will also incorporate 55,000 sq metres of land for business use.

Growth in neighbouring council areas

2.36 The neighbouring local authority areas are at different stages of local plan preparation, with some councils having local plans which are more recently adopted than others. A summary of the local plans for the surrounding local authority areas is provided in the section below. Where the surrounding councils are currently working to prepare new plan documents, the number of homes set out in these is included under the heading ‘emerging housing requirement’ in the tables below.

2.37 It is acknowledged that the December 2024 Government update to the standard method for assessing local housing need is likely to have implications for the emerging housing requirement for each of the neighbouring council areas. However, the figure reported for each of these areas reflects the figure

included in the most recent version of the plan documents consulted upon where it has been included.

Southend-On-Sea Local Plan [See reference 29], [See reference 30]

2.38 The adopted Southend-on-Sea Local Development Framework comprises the Core Strategy, saved policies from the 1994 City Local Plan and the Development Management Development Plan Document and the Southend Central Area Action Plan. The Core Strategy provides the vision, objectives and overarching planning policies and strategy for the spatial development of the whole City of Southend-on-Sea until 2021.

2.39 Southend-on-Sea City Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan which will guide future development decisions over the next 20 years. From July to September 2025 Southend-on-Sea City Council consulted on their Regulation 18 ‘Preferred Approach with Options’ document. The Regulation 19 Consultation is scheduled to take place later in 2026.

Table 2.4: Southend-On-Sea Local Plan

Adopted and Emerging Plan period	Extant housing requirement	Emerging housing requirement	Extant employment requirement	Emerging employment requirement
Adopted: 2001-2021	6,500 homes	9,500 new homes	13,000 new jobs	7,500 new jobs
Emerging: 2020-2040				

Castle Point Local Plan [See reference 31], [See reference 32]

2.40 The current Castle Point Local Plan was adopted in November 1998. It was saved in its totality until September 2007. Since that date only certain policies are still in place as saved policies. The saved policies will be replaced by policies in the new Local Plan in due course. Policies setting out the housing and job requirement over the previous plan period are not saved. It should be noted that in 2022 Castle Point Borough Council made the decision to withdraw its submitted Local Plan that had been found sound at examination.

2.41 Work is currently underway on the new Castle Point Local Plan. Between October and December 2025 consultation is running on the Regulation 19 draft plan covering growth in the Borough up to 2043.

Table 2.5: Castle Point Local Plan

Adopted and Emerging Plan period	Extant housing requirement	Emerging housing requirement	Extant employment requirement	Emerging employment requirement
Adopted: 1986-2001 Emerging: 2026-2043	N/a	6,196 new homes	N/a	No additional land, but more focus on Strategic Employment Areas

Maldon District Local Development Plan [\[See reference 33\]](#)

2.42 Planning decisions in Maldon District are made in line with adopted Maldon District Local Development Plan. In February 2021 Maldon District Council made the decision to review its Local Development Plan. In September 2023 the decision was made for officers to work on evidence and modelling for three growth options for the Local Development Plan Review.

Table 2.6: Maldon District Local Development Plan*

Adopted and Emerging Plan period	Extant housing requirement	Emerging housing requirement	Extant employment requirement	Emerging employment requirement
Adopted: 2014-2029 Emerging: N/A	4,650 dwellings	Not yet available	Minimum of 2,000 net additional jobs	Not yet available

Basildon Local Plan [See reference 34], [See reference 35]

2.43 The current Basildon Local Plan was adopted in March 1998. In September 2007 the decision was made to save some of the policies in the Local Plan. The saved policies will be replaced by the new Local Plan when it is adopted. Policies setting out the housing and job requirement over the previous plan period are not saved. It should be noted that in March 2022 Basildon Borough Council made the decision to withdraw the Basildon Borough Revised Publication Local Plan 2014 – 2034 that had previously been submitted for examination.

2.44 From November 2024 to January 2025 Basildon Council held a period of consultation on its Draft Local Plan. A further period of consultation was undertaken in from March to April 2025 to consider the implications of changes arising from the most recently published version of the NPPF.

Table 2.7: Basildon Local Plan

Adopted and Emerging Plan period	Extant housing requirement	Emerging housing requirement	Extant employment requirement	Emerging employment requirement
Adopted: N/A Emerging: 2023 - 2043	N/A	27,111 new homes	N/A	65-82 ha of new employment land

Chelmsford Local Plan [See reference 36], [See reference 37]

2.45 Planning decisions in Chelmsford are made in line with the adopted Chelmsford Local Plan 2013-2036. The Local Plan is currently under review. Consultation on the Pre-Submission version of the Local Plan document was undertaken between February and March 2025.

Table 2.8: Chelmsford Local Plan

Adopted and Emerging Plan period	Extant housing requirement	Emerging housing requirement	Extant employment requirement	Emerging employment requirement
Adopted: 2013– 2036 Emerging: 2023-2041	18,515 dwellings	22,990 net new homes	16,675 new jobs	162,646sqm of new employment floorspace* *figure provided as employment space, not as jobs.

Key infrastructure coming forward in neighbouring districts

2.46 The infrastructure plans in surrounding local authorities have been reviewed in relation to strategic infrastructure which may have cross boundary implications affecting Rochford District. This is summarised in the following section. This is not an exhaustive list but includes the most strategic, high level schemes which have the greatest potential to affect residents and employees in Rochford District.

Southend-on-Sea

Transport

2.47 London Southend Airport (LSA): London Southend Airport and Environs Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP) [See reference 38] was adopted by Rochford District and Southend Borough Councils in December 2014 to provide the basis for coordinating the actions of a range of partners with an interest in the airport and its surrounding area, and to establish planning policies up to 2031. LSA is developing a Masterplan to set out the future development of the airport. It is anticipated that expansion could lead to the creation of a significant number of jobs. Given the importance of LSA for transport in Rochford District and its location on the boundary of Southend-on-Sea and Rochford, further details are

provided as part of the current transport infrastructure context for the District, which is set out in Chapter 3 of this report.

2.48 Bus improvements: In Southend, three companies are responsible for operating bus services: Arriva, First and Stephensons. The bus network in Southend is operated through an Enhanced Partnership (EP) with Southend-on-Sea Council. The partnership seeks to support a continuous process of improvement in local bus services. The approach to improving bus services in collaboration with service providers is set out in the Southend Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) [See reference 39], [See reference 40]. The plan involves making buses more reliable, quicker, improving the quality of buses, bus stops and accessibility of bus information.

2.49 Most bus services in Southend operate across the boundary between Southend and Essex (Castle Point and Rochford Districts), for which the local highway and transport authority is Essex County Council (ECC). Consequently, operational issues in Southend have a knock-on impact into Essex, and vice-versa.

2.50 Most of Southend's residents are within 400m (or 5 minutes walking distance) of a bus stop which has a frequent bus service (a bus service with four or more buses per hour). However, because bus services tend to be concentrated on the main corridors there are some notable gaps in this accessibility for areas that are off the main corridors but still quite densely populated. These include the border of Belfairs and Eastwood Park Wards, in the north-central part of Prittlewell Ward and in the southern parts of Milton and Chalkwell wards, bordering the sea front west of the city centre. However, this area has a high-frequency train service on the C2C line, with two rail stations (Westcliff and Chalkwell).

2.51 Other densely populated areas with gaps in the coverage of frequent bus services include Highland Park, the south-eastern part of Belfairs Ward (on either side of Belfairs Park) and the border of Blenheim Park Ward, and also the eastern part of St Luke's Ward. In some parts of these areas bus service levels are being increased - in some places with BSIP Phase 2 funding and in others at the operators' own commercial risk

2.52 A new bus route in Southend is being launched between Leigh and LSA. The bus will loop via two key locations - the Launch Pad at the Airport Business Park and the Holiday Inn bus stop at LSA. The route is designed to improve access for residents in St Laurence, Eastwood Park, Belfairs, Blenheim Park, Leigh, and West Leigh wards, offering vital transport links for commuters, families, and visitors [See reference 41].

2.53 A127 Corridor Engagement Group: The A127 forms the central corridor through the south of Essex, providing a key strategic link between London, South Essex, the city of Southend and connecting large centres of population and industry with LSA. An A127 Corridor Engagement Group (previously called the A127 Task Force) consisting of local MPs, council leaders and officers and other key partners was first established in 2018 to develop a long-term vision for transport along the A127 corridor and lobby for investment. The A127 Corridor Engagement Group has played an important role in highlighting the importance of the A127 in enabling economic growth across South Essex, as well as exploring current and future issues across the route and discussing dozens of potential longer-term improvement options. However, it is clear the local highways authorities will not be able to fund schemes of the scale required. The group has therefore been making the case for the A127 to be re-adopted as a trunk road. Proposals are being developed for improvements along the A127, with funding being pursued from the Government's Major Road Network (MRN) programme. The proposals being considered include straightening the Fortune of War junction, an additional eastbound lane, and a series of walking, cycling and bus improvement measures. In July 2024 ECC submitted a Strategic Outline Case for funding to the Department for Transport [\[See reference 42\]](#).

Green Infrastructure, open space and sports

2.54 South Essex Estuary Park (SEE Park): The park will be a single regional parkland system, encompassing 70,000 hectares of South Essex, with multiple benefits including flood risk management and climate change mitigation, featuring a continuous and accessible coastal path from Tilbury Fort to Shoeburyness. The provision of the park will aim to boost eco-tourism and biodiversity, support a green economic recovery and provide easy access for residents to high quality green space, restored marshlands and new woodland. The programme has been launched by the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) [\[See reference 43\]](#). While the scheme is included under the Southend-on-Sea heading, it is noted that it will extend to and have benefits for the wider South Essex sub-region beyond the boundaries of Southend.

2.55 Cinder Path: Improvements to the Cinder Path linking Leigh railway station/Old Leigh and Chalkwell Esplanade, which forms part of the strategic network to provide enhanced access for pedestrians and cyclists [\[See reference 44\]](#).

Health

2.56 Accident and Emergency improvements to Southend University

Hospital: Work on an £8.5 million scheme to help increase the size of the Emergency Department (ED) at Southend Hospital and improve patient waiting times started in June 2023. The phased expansion will see extra capacity, to support more rapid assessment, treatment cubicles and extra resuscitation space. This will support faster ambulance handovers. There will also be a separate dedicated children's emergency entrance to enable parents and children to have their own dedicated entry point away from the general emergency department. The phased development will help minimise disruption in the existing emergency department. The new facility is due to open in summer 2025. Additional bedspaces are planned for a second phase of development at the hospital [\[See reference 45\]](#).

Castle Point

Transport

2.57 Oikos Marine & South Side Development: The Oikos Marine and South Side project comprises the alteration of existing harbour facilities in Oikos Storage Terminal, Canvey Island. The scheme would involve the installation of additional import and export infrastructure and equipment on two of the Terminal's jetties to improve their operational efficiency together with the construction of new storage tanks and related services on the Terminal's land side. The project is at the pre-application stage and an application is expected to be submitted in 2025 [\[See reference 46\]](#).

Maldon

Utilities

2.58 Bradwell B new Nuclear Power Station: Bradwell B is a proposed new nuclear power station with capacity to generate 2.2GW of electricity at Bradwell-on-Sea in Essex. It is being progressed by joint partners CGN and EDF. The Bradwell B power station will generate low carbon electricity to power around four million homes, helping the UK to achieve its net-zero carbon commitments. The scheme will also help create low carbon, high quality jobs for over 60 years and significant business and training opportunities for the region. The project

reached pre-application stage in 2022 but has not progressed further since this time [See reference 47].

2.59 Maldon Battery Energy Storage System: The Energy Storage System has a 40MW/40MWh capability and is situated to the west of Maldon. It will support more renewable generation and increase the resilience of the UK electricity network. The battery is strategically located in a highly congested area of the UK network [See reference 48].

Basildon

Transport

2.60 A127 / A130 Fairglen Interchange: A proposed 'short-term' scheme has been developed to increase the capacity of the A127 / A130 Fairglen Interchange, reduce journey times, address existing safety concerns and improve pedestrian and cycling connectivity. The junction lies at the boundary of the districts of Basildon and Rochford. The scheme, which has been developed following feedback from road users and local people, will allow the interchange to handle current and estimated future traffic levels, enabling and supporting economic growth across South Essex.

2.61 Given the implications of the scheme for transport in Rochford District, further details are provided as part of the current transport infrastructure context for the District, which is set out in Chapter 3 of this report.

Health

2.62 Pitsea New Medical Centre: The new centre will be developed by Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust, with the aim of reducing waiting times for scanning and imaging facilities. It will include an eight-room endoscopy suite and offer x-rays, CT/MRI scans and blood tests. The centre will also be home to a redesigned Pitsea Library and new activity spaces used by Basildon Council. In February 2024 planning permission was granted for the facility [See reference 49], [See reference 50].

Chelmsford

Transport

2.63 Chelmsford North East Bypass: This will provide a key strategic missing link in the Essex road network on the A131, and will increase highway capacity and reduce journey times from Chelmsford to Braintree and onwards to Rochford District. Chelmsford North East Bypass will be delivered in phases [\[See reference 51\]](#). This includes:

- Section 1A connects Beaulieu Park Station and the A12, in the south, with the future Chelmsford Garden Community to the north. Section 1A is currently under construction with enabling works on site and further construction expected through until 2026.
- Construction of the remainder of the bypass (Sections 1B and 2) will take place in due course in the future when funding has been secured. Once all phases are complete, the new 4.6km single carriageway bypass (Sections 1A and 1B) will run through Bulls Lodge Quarry and join a new roundabout on the existing A131 at Chatham Green, with a 1.2km stretch of the existing A131 between Chatham Green and Deres Bridge also widened to a dual carriageway as part of the scheme (Section 2).

2.64 Beaulieu Park rail station: Beaulieu Park railway station was opened in October 2025 and provides access to the Great Eastern Main Line (GEML) [\[See reference 52\]](#). This will help to reduce the need to travel to and alleviate pressure at the current Chelmsford and Witham stations. The scheme includes a passing loop enabling trains to pass each other at the station to improve reliability of the whole GEML. A transport interchange is connecting to new and existing bus, footway and cycling networks, encouraging sustainable travel to the station and for onward travel.

2.65 A12 Chelmsford to A120 widening scheme: This was a committed and funded scheme in RIS 1 and 2 involving the widening the A12 between Chelmsford (junction 19) and the A120 Marks Tey interchange (junction 25) to three lanes including new and upgraded junctions [\[See reference 53\]](#). However, in August 2025 the project was cancelled by the Department for Transport.

2.66 Great Eastern Mainline Investment Programme: The Great Eastern Main Line Study (2019) further endorsed the Anglia Route Study (2016) recommendations regarding the need for the following projects to be further

investigated to potentially provide railway capacity improvements [\[See reference 54\]](#), including:

- upgrading overhead cables;
- Bow Junction reconfiguration;
- increase of line speeds between London Liverpool Street and Norwich;
- replacement of existing rolling stock to increase capacity (including on the Southminster Line);
- increases to track capacity north of Chelmsford.

2.67 This work is being undertaken by Network Rail at a cost of £476m and will also improve the infrastructure for Rochford District residents accessing London Liverpool Street.

Utilities

2.68 Longfield Solar Farm: Longfield Solar Farm is a new solar energy farm, co-located with battery storage, to help meet the country's need for low carbon energy. The scheme will have capabilities to provide energy to power over 96,000 homes every year. The site received planning consent in June 2023 [\[See reference 55\]](#) and site surveys and vegetation works were undertaken in early 2025 [\[See reference 56\]](#). The project is expected to be completed by 2027.

2.69 Norwich to Tilbury National Grid: The Norwich to Tilbury project will support the UK's net zero target through the connection of new low carbon energy generation and by reinforcing the region's transmission network. Norwich to Tilbury is a proposal by National Grid Electricity Transmission (National Grid) to reinforce the high voltage power network in East Anglia between the existing substations at Norwich Main in Norfolk, Bramford in Suffolk, and Tilbury in Essex, as well as connect new offshore wind generation. The scheme is proposing to build approximately 184 km of new electricity transmission reinforcement between Norwich and Tilbury. This will be made up mostly of overhead line and pylons, along with some underground cables and a new 400 kV substation. The proposals are part of The Great Grid Upgrade, the largest overhaul of the grid in generations. Norwich to Tilbury will play a vital role in delivering electricity efficiently, reliably, and safely and will support the UK's move to reduce carbon emissions [\[See reference 57\]](#). The proposals will involve the delivery of enhanced cabling within Chelmsford and Basildon in the areas surrounding Rochford District.

Chapter 3

Transport

Current context

3.1 Rochford District has a dispersed settlement pattern, with a network of relatively small settlements. The need to travel between settlements to access a range of services and employment opportunities results in higher levels of car ownership and use compared to the national average. The Census 2021 [See reference 58] shows that around 34,100 people work in Rochford District, including around 21,700 people who mainly work from home or have no fixed place of work, and around 5,000 who travel within the area for work. In total around 7,400 people travel from outside Rochford District to the District for work. The largest movement into Rochford District for work is from Southend-on-Sea (approximately 3,600 people), followed by Castle Point (approximately 1,200 people) and Basildon (approximately 900 people). Movements for work from Rochford District outside of the district outweigh those towards Rochford District with around 14,000 residents travelling elsewhere for work. Around 5,400 people travel to Southend-on-Sea, around 2,100 people travel to Basildon and around 1,200 people travel to both Castle Point and Chelmsford. There are also relatively strong commuter flows to London.

3.2 It should be noted that these statistics reflect the situation that was evident during the COVID-19 pandemic which impacted commuting patterns given the implementation of stay at home orders and advice against non-essential travelling. As such it is worth considering trends displayed in data from the 2011 Census [See reference 59]. This shows that 10,416 people commuted into Rochford District for work and 14,441 people commuted out of Rochford District for work. People commuted out of Rochford District mostly to Southend-on-Sea (8,466 people), followed by Basildon (3,209 people) and Westminster, City of London (2,936 people). The amount of people commuting to London from Rochford District accounted for 12% of Rochford District residents who have a job.

3.3 Based on Census 2021 data [See reference 60], 48.2% of people in Rochford District commuted by car or van, higher than the national and regional averages of 44.5% and 47.7%. Additionally, 36.1% worked mainly from home, surpassing the national and regional averages of 31.5% and 31.9%. Train commuters accounted for 4.6%, higher than the national and regional averages

of 2.0% and 2.3%, while 4.3% commuted on foot, below both the national and regional averages of 7.6% and 7.3%.

3.4 From 2011 to 2021, there was a significant shift towards remote work considering the COVID-19 pandemic, with only 5.1% working from home in 2011 compared to 36.1% in 2021. This shift coincided with a decrease in commuting by car or van (62.6% in 2011), by train (15.8% in 2011), and on foot (5.8% in 2011) [\[See reference 61\]](#).

3.5 33% of the District's residents currently travel 0-5km to work, which is comparable to Braintree (31%), but much lower than Colchester (49%), Tendring (40%) and Chelmsford (44%). However, 30% of residents travel to work within the 5-10km bracket, which is approximately double other areas in Essex [\[See reference 62\]](#). This results in Rochford District having the 2nd highest proportion of Essex residents travelling under 10km to work (63%). Therefore, whilst hyper-local commuting journeys are not common, the majority of trips are short-distance. As noted earlier in this section the COVID-19 pandemic strongly affected patterns of population movement reported in Census 2021, however, the patterns reported provide an indication of the main cross boundary movements into and out of the District and the types of journeys residents are prone to take.

3.6 Residents of Rochford District mainly travel to work by foot and train in the north, east and south of the District, while car travel dominates in the south east given the more limited public transport links in this location. It is also notable that the lower population in the south east may impact upon the viability of public transport improvements in this part of the District.

3.7 There are few strategic road links within Rochford District. The A130 and A127 route runs along the District's southern and western borders. The A130 runs north-south, connecting with Chelmsford in the north and Canvey Island in the south.

3.8 The A127 runs west-east through South Essex, from Gallows Corner to Southend-on-Sea. It runs along the southern edge of the District from the Fairglen Interchange to the boundary with the Southend-on-Sea. It is a dual carriageway for the majority of the route. The A127 connects Rayleigh with Southend-on-Sea but does not establish direct links to Hockley or Rochford. The A127 connects to the A13 to the west, and provides onward connections to London via the M25 and A12. The road can be accessed from the A1245 and the A129 in the south-west of Rochford District or via the B1013 in the south of the District. The B1013 provides connections between Rayleigh and Hockley and towards Southend-on-Sea. The B1017 runs through Great Wakering and

provides access to the road network at towards Little Wakering. Beyond this, the road network in Rochford District comprises lower order roads [\[See reference 63\]](#).

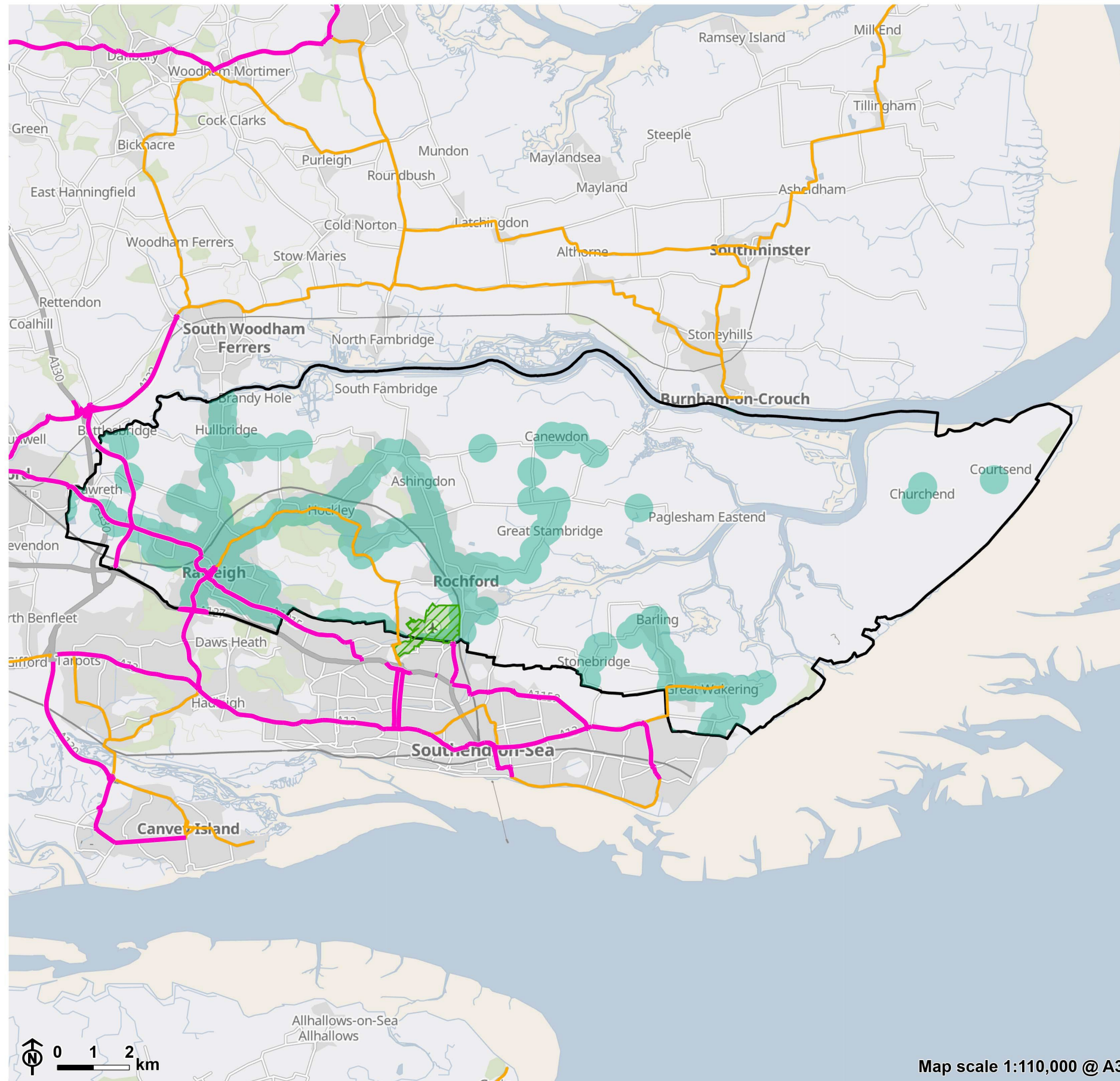
3.9 The Fairglen Interchange, where the A127 and A130 intersect at the boundary of Basildon and Rochford, plays a vital role in South Essex's road network. The interchange also connects to the A1245 which connects to the western part of the District and to the A129 and towards Rayleigh. Recognised for its existing capacity constraints, upgrading of the interchange is expected to be progressed from 2025 to 2027. Funding has been secured from the Department for Transport for the project in addition funding made available by ECC [\[See reference 64\]](#).

3.10 The 'short-term' scheme to increase the capacity of the interchange, has been developed to reduce journey times, address existing safety concerns and improve pedestrian and cycling connectivity. The scheme has been developed following feedback from road users and local people. The scheme includes:

- A new 'Southend Link Road' linking the A130 southbound to a new signalised junction on the A1245, where traffic must turn right (southbound)
- Widened slip roads on the eastern arms of the Fairglen Roundabout
- Additional and longer slip lanes on both A127 on-slip roads
- Improvements at the Rayleigh Spur Roundabout, including new traffic lights at two arms of the junction and an additional lane on the roundabout itself
- An additional traffic lane southbound between Fairglen Roundabout and Rayleigh Spur Roundabout
- A new bridge for pedestrians and cyclists, linking to existing routes alongside the A127 [\[See reference 65\]](#).

3.11 A long-term option for the interchange has also been prepared in the event of increased traffic as a result of higher levels of future growth in the area. The short-term solution is fully compatible with the long-term option should that need to be implemented in the future. **Figures 3.1a, 3.1b and 3.1c** set out the locations of transport infrastructure within the District.






Figure 3.1(a-c): Transport – Bus Network, Road and Rail Network and Location of Airport Infrastructure and Existing Recreation



Rochford Infrastructure Delivery Plan
Rochford District Council



Figure 3.1a: Transport - Bus Network

-  Rochford District Council boundary
-  Within 400m of a bus stop
-  A road
-  B road
-  London Southend Airport

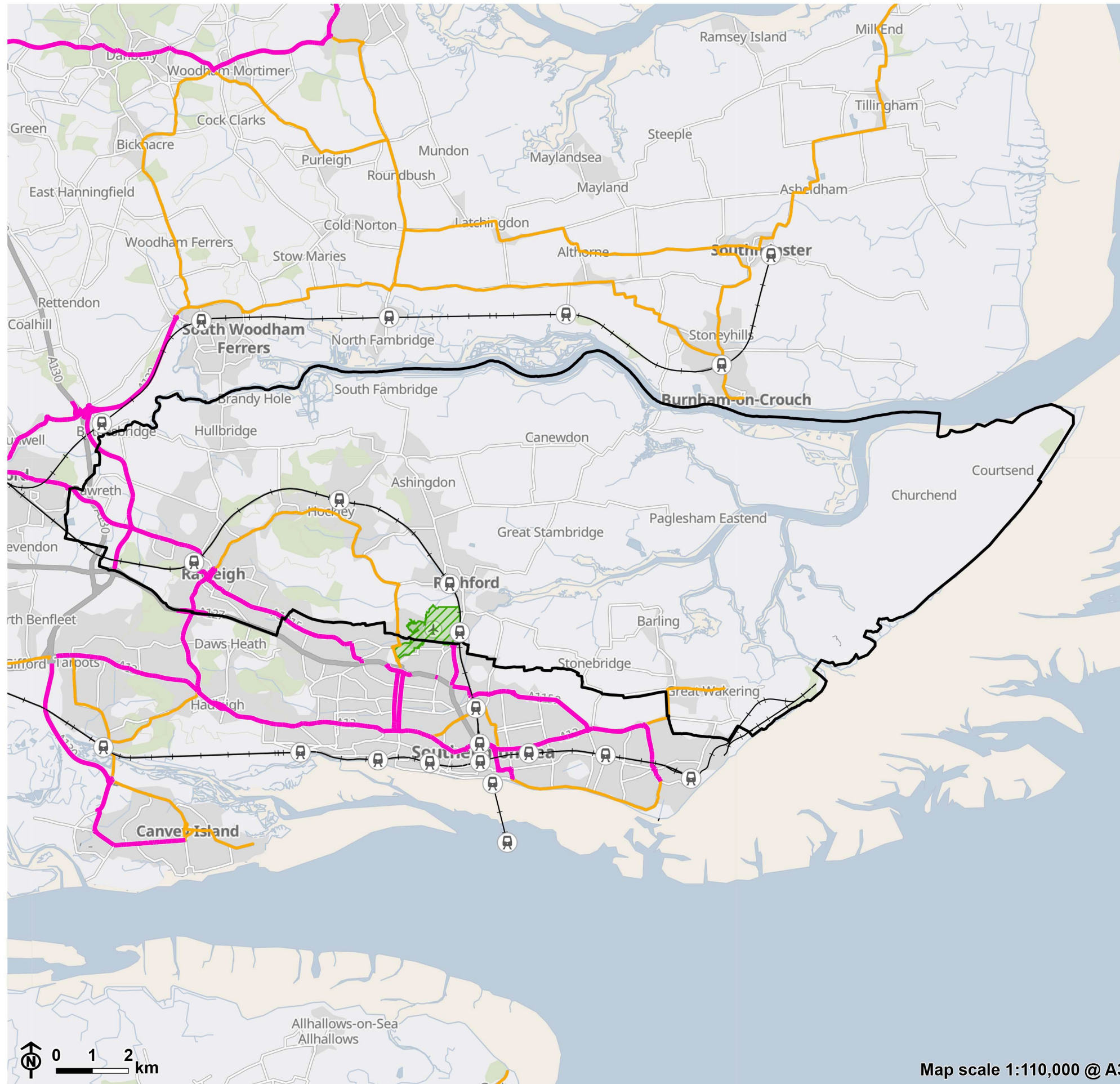
Naplan. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2025. Ordnance Survey licence number AC0000811374. Contains data from OS Zoomstack

Map scale 1:110,000 @ A3

12571_Rochford_2025_Update 03/10/2025



Figure 3.1b: Transport - Road and Rail Network and Location of Airport Infrastructure



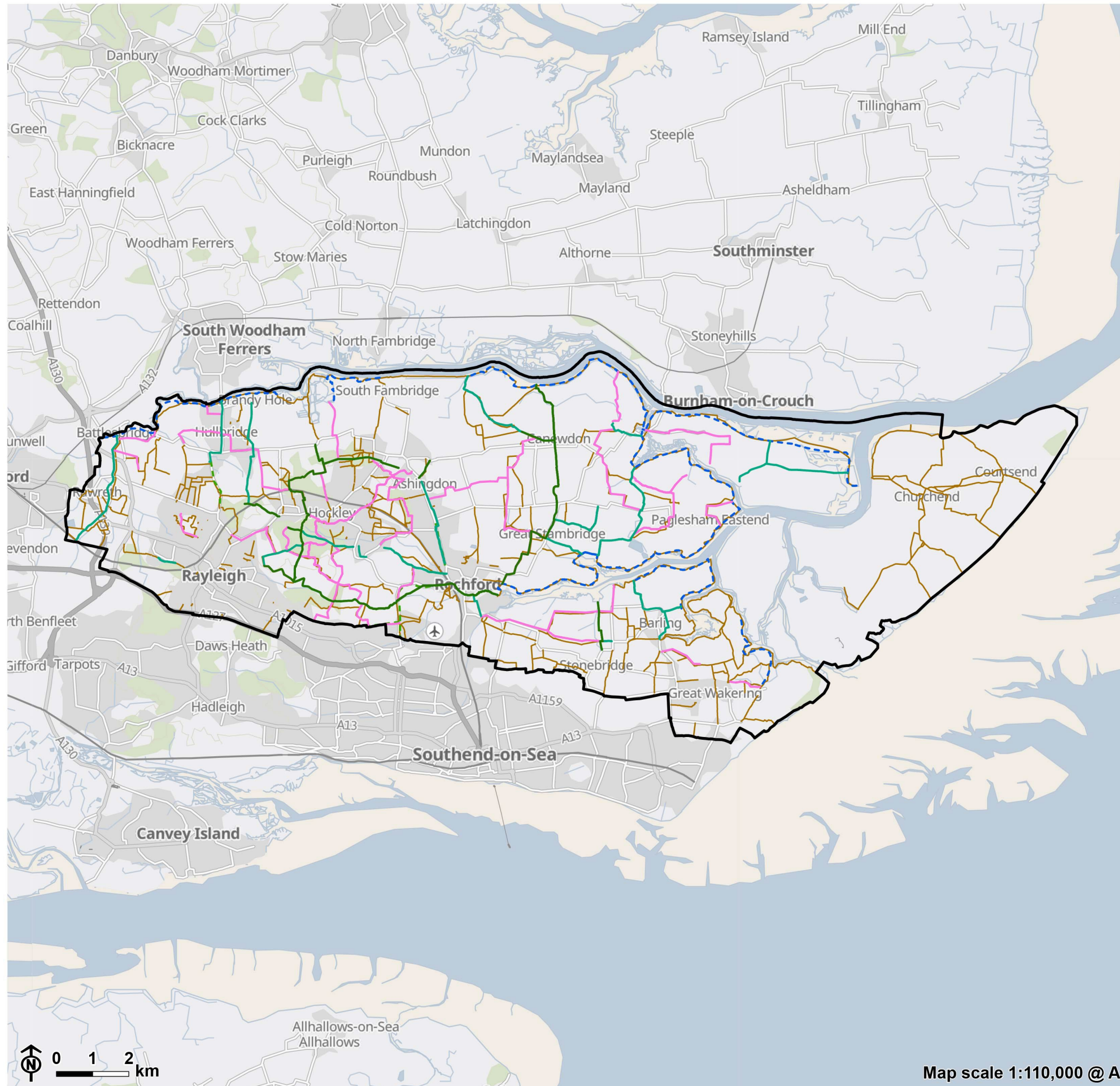
- Rochford District Council boundary
- Railway station
- Railway track
- A road
- B road
- London Southend Airport

Map scale 1:110,000 @ A3

12571_Rochford_2025_Update 10/07/2025



Figure 3.1c: Transport - Existing Recreation



- Rochford District Council boundary
- Existing green loop
- - Existing greenway
- Existing trail network
- - Existing England coast path
- ... Existing Cycle Routes
- Public Right of Way

Map scale 1:110,000 @ A3

12571_Rochford_2025_Update 10/07/2025

Air travel

3.12 London Southend Airport (LSA) is predominantly located within Rochford District; however, it is of local economic importance to both Rochford and Southend-on-Sea with significant implications for complementary transport infrastructure. The principal signed route for highway access is via the A127 through Rochford District and Southend-on-Sea.

3.13 LSA is located adjacent to the railway line between Shenfield and Southend Victoria and a railway station (Southend Airport Station) was opened in 2011 to improve access to the airport. It is served by three trains per hour frequency of service to / from London. Connections to other services can be made at Shenfield or Stratford.

3.14 London Southend Airport and Environs Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP) [See reference 66] was adopted by Rochford District and Southend Borough Councils in December 2014 to provide the basis for coordinating the actions of a range of partners with an interest in the LSA and its surrounding area, and to establish planning policies up to 2031.

3.15 The JAAP [See reference 67] allocated land for new business parks redevelopment of existing industrial estate at Aviation Way. Transportation related policies within the JAAP included the following transport projects:

- An access road from Cherry Orchard Way;
- Modified and upgraded junction at intersection of Eastwoodbury Lane and Aviation Way (and public realm and road improvements on Aviation Way);
- A new access to the proposed Saxon Business Park from Cherry Orchard Way;
- The establishment of a segregated route for walking and cycling to the north of the JAAP area linking to Hall Road funded through Saxon Business Park Areas 1 and 3;
- Improving cycling and walking linkages between Cherry Orchard Way and Nestuda Way funded by Saxon Business Park Areas 1 and 3;
- Improve walking and cycling by enhancing accessibility, providing secure cycle storage and changing facilities for workers and visitors and appropriate training for cyclists; and

- Towards a network of routes, agreed between all relevant Councils and identified in the emerging transport strategy, including an extension of the National Cycle Network from Stock.

3.16 The proposed junction capacity improvements in the JAAP for the strategic road network (A127) have been completed. Capacity improvements on key junctions on the local road network were also listed in the JAAP, which include:

- Southend/Sutton Road (the Ann Boleyn Roundabout);
- the Sutton Ford bridge scheme capacity enhancements to cope with forecast PM peak demand;
- Ashingdon Road/West Street Roundabout; and
- minor improvements required to the Hall Road / Cherry Orchard Way junction to accommodate forecast flows.

3.17 The JAAP and existing planning controls (09/01960/FULM) allow for 53,300 air traffic movements per annum (ATMs) at the airport, including for both commercial flights and other general aviation (mostly smaller planes; private charters; helicopters, flying school, etc). The JAAP envisaged this would facilitate no more than 2 million passengers per annum (mppa) during the plan period to 2031. However, the 2 mppa was achieved through 37,000 ATMs in 2019/20. This is due to the increasing capacity of aircraft facilitated as part of the runway extension so many more passengers can now be moved per plane.

3.18 The airport contributes substantially to the economy of the District and its surroundings. In 2019 the airport and businesses located at it supported approximately 1,500 jobs, bringing considerable economic benefits to the local economy, with a proportion of these being highly skilled. A further 2,200 jobs are supported indirectly in supporting the Airport. Expansion of the Airport would increase the economic impacts; for example, if the Airport reached the capacity of the existing consent (between 6 - 8 million passengers) this would result in around 4,000 jobs, plus an estimated additional 5,000 more with links to the airport. The Council is considering updating policies relating to the airport, which will supersede the JAAP. This is subject to further engagement with the LSA and the Southend-on-Sea City Council in respect of future growth of the airport.

3.19 The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted operations at the airport including passenger numbers and jobs. However, since that time passenger numbers and flights are beginning to increase again. Figures remain lower than pre-COVID-19 levels with 1.5 million passengers reported in 2018-18, 2.1 million in 2019-20, 0.15 million in 2020-21, 0.09 million reported in both 2021-22

and 2022-23 and 0.17 million reported in 2023-24. LSA reports that passenger numbers are expected to exceed pre-COVID levels by 2026-27, by which time it is expected that 2.3 million passengers will make use of the airport [See reference 68]. The airport has also recently changed ownership and the change is accompanied by evolving growth ambitions. Additionally, in May 2024 EasyJet announced that it would reopen a base at the airport for the first time since before the COVID-19 pandemic. [See reference 69]. In February 2025 the company announced that it would add three new routes from the airport, supporting around 1,200 jobs [See reference 70].

3.20 LSA has hosted significant freight operations in the past (e.g. during COVID) and that there remains the potential to do so in the future. In addition to limiting the total number of ATMs per annum to 53,300, LSA's S106 Planning Agreement limits the number of freight flights which can operate each year, to 5,330 or 10% of the total ATMs in a quota year. The latest information release from LSA indicates that the number of freight flights anticipated in the next 12 months is below this figure [See reference 71].

3.21 LSA is developing a Masterplan that will be subject to public consultation. The Masterplan will identify the level of flights that the existing runway can accommodate; what additional physical facilities will be required and how environmental impacts such as noise can be managed. It is anticipated that expansion could lead to the creation of a significant number of jobs, with up to 6,600 employed at the airport and a significant number of jobs linked to the airport [See reference 72].

The rail network

3.22 The existing Essex rail network is primarily radial from London, running northwards to Norwich. There are a number of branch lines that connect to the line that runs from London. Rochford District is served by the Shenfield-Southend Victoria Line, operated by Greater Anglia [See reference 73]. The Essex Thameside rail line/franchise connects Southend and the Thames Estuary to London and is separate to the network that runs between London and Norwich.

3.23 Passenger services are provided by private sector operators, under franchises agreed with the Strategic Rail Authority and the Department for Transport [See reference 74].

3.24 The four train stations in the District are Rayleigh, Hockley, Rochford and London Southend Airport. These run on the Southend Victoria to London

Liverpool Street line which is serviced by Greater Anglia. Direct trains to London from these stations operate up to three times an hour and take between 40-60 minutes. The latest performance figure released by the operator indicates that the Greater Eastern Services across Essex continues to deliver the highest levels of punctuality amongst the East Anglia services (as updated of September 2023) [See reference 75]. Shenfield rail station, located in the Borough of Brentwood, is a key interchange for journeys from Rochford District on the Great Eastern Main Line towards London Liverpool Street, Braintree and Southend Victoria. Further to this, the Elizabeth Line opened in November 2022 and provides a direct service from Shenfield to London Paddington and west London including Heathrow Airport Terminals 2 & 3. The service makes train connections from parts of London to Rochford and Southend Airport much quicker than the previous services.

3.25 The Great Eastern Railway study from 2019-2020 offers a pre-COVID-19 evaluation of the rise in rail demand during peak hours towards London Liverpool Street. It predicts a substantial increase in rail travel on this route by 2039. Network Rail has indicated that an update to this study is expected in late 2024/2025, and this is likely to set out changes rail demand in the plan area with potential implications for Greater Eastern Services throughout Essex.

3.26 Greater Anglia has a direct contract with Central Government to operate trains on the Greater Anglia network until September 2026.

3.27 c2c operates the Essex Thameside railway contract [See reference 76]. This corridor is a key rail route into London on the north Thames estuary, serving key towns such as Southend-on-Sea, Basildon, Grays and Tilbury, as well as large catchments in East London in areas such as Barking and Dagenham. In some cases, its stations are the most readily commutable from the District (e.g. Shoeburyness or Thorpe Bay for Great Wakering) and better connections to these could help enable development in some areas of the District.

The bus network

3.28 ECC is the local transport authority covering Rochford District. Bus transport is deregulated in Essex, meaning that commercial operators decide in the first instance which routes to operate based on financial viability. ECC's role is to commission and subsidise additional services that would not be financially viable but are socially necessary.

3.29 Bus services in Rochford District are provided both commercially and with financial support from the councils and developer contributions. However, it is important to note that bus services were seriously affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and have received significant public funding to maintain the financial position of operators.

3.30 32 bus routes are operated by five licensed bus operators across the District, with 10 also operating into neighbourhood Essex districts. 24 of these routes are operated as commercial only services. These are:

- Routes 1 and 9 (operated by Arriva).
- Route 20, 25, 625, 825, 94B and X30 (operated by First).
- Route 51 and 63 (operated by NIBS Bus)
- Routes 503, 504, 513, 515, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 815 and 816 (operated by Stephensons) [\[See reference 77\]](#).

3.31 Analysis of bus connectivity undertaken by ECC categorised Rochford District as a 'rural' area in the context of the wider Essex County area. Within this rural area connectivity by bus was noted to be worse than semi-urban and rural areas. For example, within the rural areas 32% of people live within 30 minutes of a frequent bus service to a health provider, compared to 53% in semi-urban areas and 61% in urban areas [\[See reference 78\]](#).

3.32 ECC identifies the key urban bus corridors for the County area. Key routes within Rochford District are limited to Rayleigh emphasising its mainly rural character. The key urban corridors in the District are as follow [\[See reference 79\]](#):

- Little Wheatleys – Town Centre
- Eastwood – Town Centre
- Hockley – Town Centre
- Town Centre – Thundersley
- Hullbridge – Town Centre

3.33 The fact that the majority of the District is rural makes it difficult to deliver commercially viable and attractive bus services to all settlements where there is currently low demand. It also means that many residents have to make less direct bus journeys, with interchanges.

3.34 The presence of LSA creates demand for high frequency rail and bus services in the south of the District. Benefiting from a designated airport bus service and train station, LSA effectively acts as a local transport hub in Rochford District. However, the frequency of bus services is comparatively much lower in other areas of the District, as would be expected in the mostly rural hinterland. Aside from LSA, Rayleigh and Rochford offer the greatest potential for interchange.

3.35 The UK Government published the national bus strategy, 'Bus Back Better', in March 2021 [See reference 80]. This makes it clear that better bus services are seen as a key part of the Government's 'levelling up' agenda by improving public transport outside London. Amongst other things the strategy asks local transport authorities to commit either to setting up 'enhanced quality bus partnerships' or adopt bus franchising and to make a statement to that effect.

3.36 In response to Bus Back Better and following ECC Cabinet discussions [See reference 81], ECC prepared a BSIP [See reference 82] to cover the period 2021 to 2026 and set out standards for the bus industry in the ECC area.

3.37 In order to help deliver the BSIP, ECC set out the intention to create an Enhanced Partnership (EP) Scheme. This is a statutory partnership between ECC and the bus operators that sets out how they will identify and deliver improvements to bus services. Following a significant period of negotiation and discussion, ECC and the commercial bus operators in Essex agreed a final form for the Countywide EP for 2022 to 2027, that was duly published in March 2022. The area covered by the countywide EP is contiguous with that of BSIP and does not cover the Southend or Thurrock Unitary Authorities. The EP is linked to the objectives of the BSIP. Given this is a statutory agreement, the arrangement will provide more control to ECC over the management of the bus network in the ECC area, compared to the previous situation.

3.38 The BSIP in Essex is aligned with the equivalent plan in Southend-on-Sea and this allows for a wider network coverage across both Transport Authority Areas. The same bus operators that work in administrative Essex run services in Southend. Southend-on Sea-City Council and their EP board have requested that they be allowed to join the TravelEssex brand and asked ECC to lead on implementing the brand on all bus services and marketing materials [See reference 83].

3.39 Agreeing this approach will mean that residents of Essex will see one brand: 'TravelEssex' for the whole of the Essex and Southend bus operation zone and that operators will only need to employ a single brand on buses

operating in Essex or Southend, removing duplication of effort, confusion and differing quality standards in neighbouring areas receiving the same bus services. The proposal will include the following elements:

- TravelEssex Marketing Launch Campaign - launching the TravelEssex brand to the residents of Southend.
- Annual TravelEssex Marketing Support - articles in the TravelEssex newsletter, monthly content on our social media pages, blogs on the website promoting specific services in Southend.
- The TravelEssex website will include Southend updates for Go-Live on static webpages, Discover Buses, and Live Bus Map functionality, plus accessibility checks and Search Engine Optimisation (SEO).
- TravelEssex App updated to include Southend's authority area and all bus services in the area.
- Ad-hoc marketing campaigns (additional funding would be provided for each).

3.40 Successful implementation will require the agreement of both the bus operators, Southend-on-Sea City Council and ECC in principle and for the relevant funding from Southend-on-Sea City Council City Council to be agreed. While this is expected it cannot be guaranteed at this stage.

3.41 The Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMoTS) [\[See reference 84\]](#) details ECC's efforts to enhance accessibility for all to places of employment, education, and various neighbourhood services. This encompasses retail, leisure and health services, delivering health, social and economic benefits to individuals and their communities. Community Travel System [\[See reference 85\]](#) in Rochford District aims to provide transportation to those unable to access regular public transport.

3.42 Furthermore, as per the ECC Education Transport Policy [\[See reference 86\]](#), free school to home transport is available for some children of compulsory school age in the County. The qualifying distance criteria is outlined below:

- Mainstream primary education:
 - Children in year 0 (Reception) to year 3 can get free home to school transport if they attend their nearest school and live more than 2 miles away.
 - Children in year 4 to year 6 can get free home to school transport if they attend their nearest school and live more than 3 miles away.

- Children from low income families in year 4 to year 6 can get free home to school transport if they attend their nearest school and live more than 2 miles away.
- Mainstream secondary education:
 - Children aged 11 to 16 (school years 7 to 11) can get free home to school transport if they attend their nearest school and they live more than 3 miles away.
 - Children from low income families can get also free home to school transport if they attend one of their three nearest qualifying schools and the school is between 2 and 6 miles from their home address.

3.43 In January 2023, ECC published their first BSIP Annual Review [\[See reference 87\]](#). Following the BSIP and EP, ECC have progressed with developing, procuring and rolling out a single TravelEssex portal to offer a one stop portal for all Essex-wide bus information. Area-based reviews have also been conducted of the bus networks across Essex, one for each the twelve districts including Rochford [\[See reference 88\]](#).

3.44 The specific Area-based review for Rochford [\[See reference 89\]](#) identifies a series of barriers to passenger growth, connectivity and accessibility. In summary these are:

- Operational hours – services not being available early enough in the morning or late enough in the evening and not coordinating with rail timetables.
- Timetable information – there is a lack of real time passenger information (RTPI) in Rochford.
- Reliability – congestion delays buses and the potential to increase journey times is restricted due to the absence of on-street bus priority infrastructure and limited scope for bus lanes.
- Ticketing and fares – perception that fares are expensive but also that tickets cannot be used across different modes, i.e. bus and rail.

3.45 The Annual Review highlights recommended improvements to the network and infrastructure while outlining mechanisms for delivery. While the review sets out that Rochford District benefits from a number of higher frequency corridors which link the larger urban settlements within and adjacent to the District, it also identifies that there are many residential areas, particularly in fringe urban or rural areas, where frequent bus services are not available, where operational hours are shorter, and where services are only available on certain days of the

week. There is a general difficulty in travelling in a north-south direction in the District, particularly for residents in Hullbridge or in eastern Rayleigh. Undeveloped green belt land south of Hockley and south of Rayleigh has the potential to limit the viability of regular bus services in a north-south direction.

3.46 Access by bus is noted to be particularly poor (i.e. a journey time of up to 60 minutes) to hospitals, major employment locations and rail stations from Great Wakering, while parts of Rayleigh and much of Hullbridge and Hockley/Hawkwell have poor access by bus to higher education, hospitals and major employment locations. Whilst it would not improve journey times, one of the identified issues was the need to improve provision of RTP1 in areas with regular service reliability issues, including Great Wakering and Hullbridge.

3.47 Across the District, bus access is noted to be the relatively poor to key hospitals in Basildon, Southend and Chelmsford, outlying villages such as South Fambridge and key developments and facilities including the new housing development at Stroud Green, Cherry Orchard Way and Airport Business Park (all in Rochford) and the new Arterial Business Park west of Rayleigh. Furthermore, it is noted that there is limited frequency of service running to the Asda supermarket on Rawreth Lane in Rayleigh and limited direct services to the Tesco supermarket on Prince Avenue in Southend-on-Sea which lies just to the south of the District.

3.48 Congestion and associated impacts on bus reliability are also identified as key issues for bus services in Rochford District. Particular issues are identified within Rayleigh town centre where the multiple interchanges (such as the A129 Rayleigh Weir interchange) often cause traffic to build. There are also a number of junctions associated with higher levels of congestion in the Rochford town area (including South and Street and West Street) where the narrow roads and one-way systems can also act to restrict the traffic flow. Ashingdon Road which passes into Rochford town from the north is also noted to experience high levels of congestion. Furthermore, high levels of congestion are also a frequent issue between Rochford town and LSA and Southend Centre along Southend Road, particularly at Anne Boleyn roundabout. Hockley Spa Road, Southend Road and Great Eastern Road are also notable congestion points for buses in Hockley.

3.49 In September 2024 ECC published a review of the BSIP [\[See reference 90\]](#) which retained the headline targets from the 2021 BSIP:

- For reliability to meet the target of 95% of services operating within the statutory window.

- For passenger numbers to see a return to pre-COVID-19 levels of patronage of 40.7 million journeys.
- For customer satisfaction to maintain at least an 86% overall journey satisfaction rating (equivalent to 2019 levels) over what is expected to be a volatile time for the network.

3.50 The plan is a working document which will be improved over time in accordance with the requirements of Bus Back Better. The 2021 BSIP sets out funding for improvements to key bus services across Essex. In Rochford District, £21,000 of funding has been proposed to:

- provide improvements to the Bull Lane bus stop in Rayleigh;
- provide a new bus stop opposite Rayleigh Library and ensure bus priority at Rayleigh Rail Station forecourt; and
- improve access to Rawreth Lane in Rayleigh.

3.51 The 2024 review of BSIP sets out several smaller bus infrastructure schemes, many of which have been agreed and can be funded from the £100,000 set aside from ECC's capital funding. In Rochford District this includes design solutions for High Road in Rayleigh to provide a new bus stop, repurpose highway Traffic Regulation Orders and enable buses to avoid town centre congestion. The review of the BSIP also identifies a number of larger longer term projects, which are proposed by ECC for the allocation of funding to develop to feasibility or preparatory stage over 2024/25. Within Rochford District this includes the consideration of a north/south two-way bus lane at Weir Roundabout in Rochford to improve access for buses.

The road network

3.52 As the strategic highway and transport authority in Essex, ECC is responsible for the Essex Local Transport Plan which is set out to guide investment in transport improvements and highway maintenance across the County. Local Transport Plan 3 (2011) [See reference 91] remains the statutory plan for Essex. However, consultation on a new Local Transport Plan for the County [See reference 92] was undertaken from August to September 2024.

3.53 As the highways authority most roads in Rochford District are managed and maintained by ECC. The exception to this is the A130 between the A12 and A1245. This section of the A130 is managed and maintained on behalf of ECC by CountyRoute.

3.54 The roads at London Southend Airport are managed as part of the airport. Transport East is the Sub-national Transport Body for Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock. As a partnership of key transport organisations, this provides leadership and strategy about regional transport matters.

3.55 As highlighted previously in this chapter, the A127 serves as the primary southern highway corridor, linking London, South Essex, and Southend. Positioned south of Rayleigh, it lacks direct connections to the majority of the key centres within the District. An A127 Engagement Group has been established to co-ordinate transport requirements within the A127 corridor, formed by ECC and partners (including LPAs in South Essex (Brentwood, Thurrock, Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford and Southend-on-Sea, London Borough of Havering and Highways England/National Highways, London Borough of Havering and Highways England/National Highways). The A130 traverses the western edge of the District providing north-south access and extends from Chelmsford to Canvey Island in the south [\[See reference 93\]](#). The A1245 also runs north-south within the District from Battesbridge, through Rawreth towards Rayleigh where access is provided by the A129. In the south, it connects to the A127 and the A130 which connect to London via the M25.

3.56 The Fairglen Interchange is of strategic importance to the existing and future transport movements in South Essex (including the A13, A127 and A130; with linkages to A12, M25 and Lower Thames Crossing, as well as the A1245). As highlighted earlier in this chapter improvements are expected at the A127/A130 Fairglen Interchange up to 2027. These include the development of a new link road between the A130 and the A1245, a left-turn lane from the A1245 southbound to the A127 eastbound, improvements to slip roads and a new pedestrian and cyclist bridge. It should be noted that the new pedestrian and cyclist bridge is on the southern carriageway and it is uncertain whether it will benefit the north side towards Rochford District [\[See reference 94\]](#).

3.57 The Lower Thames Crossing was granted development consent in March 2025, as a new road crossing connecting Kent and Essex. It will connect the existing road network from the A2/M2 to the M25 with two tunnels (one southbound and one northbound) running beneath the River Thames. Construction is expected to be completed during the new Local Plan period [\[See reference 95\]](#). The project is planned to ease congestion at Dartford (presently the only road crossing of the Thames east of London) by almost doubling road capacity across the Thames east of London. National Highways expects that it will make tens of millions of journeys quicker, safer and more reliable every year [\[See reference 96\]](#). Construction of the crossing will have

an impact on traffic patterns and volumes on the strategic road network in Rochford and the surrounding areas (A13, A127 and A130). It also has the potential to increase the number of vehicles passing through the Fairglen Interchange connecting the A127 to the A130 given its proximity, adding higher demand on the interchange and its capacity [See reference 97]. Further work is required to fully understand the impacts of the Lower Thames Crossing and whether construction provides an opportunity to make a case for early investment in the A13, A127 and A130 (including any further improvements to the Fairglen Interchange scheme). The issues of congestion highlighted in relation to bus travel in Rochford District are also applicable to travel by private vehicle. Other notable pinch points identified in the District, include Purdeys Industrial Estate (Sutton Road) at Rochford, the A127 Rayleigh Weir and Rawreth Lane at Rayleigh.

3.58 The Essex Electric Vehicle Charge Point Strategy [See reference 98] sets out Essex Highways' commitment to integrating electric vehicle (EV) Infrastructure with wider transport to deliver a step change in sustainable travel across the County. The strategy sets out the ambition that by 2030, residents, businesses, and visitors to Essex will be able to use electric vehicles and be assured there is an accessible, reliable, easy-to-use, safe, and fairly priced charging network.

3.59 A priority for the strategy will be to help deliver charge points for residents who do not have access to off-street charging. Essex Highways will also support the provision of charge points at destinations across Essex, by liaising with local authority partners, to make public car parks available for the installation of chargers. It is anticipated that off-street rapid charging hubs will predominately be provided by the commercial sector, however the council and partners will look to provide land where appropriate to facilitate this provision.

3.60 In support of the expansion local charging infrastructure, in May 2025 Essex Highways announced that more than 5,000 electric vehicle charging sockets would be installed across Essex. The expansion of infrastructure will be supported by £8.3 million awarded to ECC from the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund [See reference 99].

Walking/cycling

3.61 There is very limited cycling infrastructure in Rochford District. There are currently no routes on the National Cycle Network that run through the District. The Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (formerly Sustrans) has undertaken feasibility work on potential National Cycle Network Route 135 (NCR 135) which would run

from Stock, Chelmsford in the west to Southend in the east, and pass through Rochford District for about 7 miles between Hullbridge in the north-west and Cherry Orchard Way in the south. The current off-road provision for cycling is mostly located north and west of Rochford rail station and along Cherry Orchard Way and the boundary with London Southend Airport. To the west of the airport there is cycle infrastructure along Cherry Orchard Way and at the Airport Business Park, however, this does not provide direct links to the main airport terminal or connections from the airport to Rochford District or Southend. A further small section of cycle network is located towards Priory Chase in north west Rayleigh. In addition, immediately to the south of the District there is a cycle route along most of the A127 and into Southend from the District via Nestuda Way. However, the A127 acts as a barrier to a north-south movement due to limited crossing points.

3.62 Just 0.7% of the journeys to work in Rochford District are made by bicycle, lower than the Essex average of 2.1% [\[See reference 100\]](#). A key reason for this may be that there is very little dedicated cycling infrastructure in Rochford District, which has resulted in low levels of participation when compared with other Essex Boroughs / Districts [\[See reference 101\]](#). The Essex Cycle Strategy [\[See reference 102\]](#) seek to promote a sustained increase of cycling in Essex including in Rochford District, by establishing it in the public's mind as a 'normal' mode of travel, especially for short 'a-to-b' trips. Rochford District Council and Essex County Council prepared draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) for Rochford District. This was subject to consultation from November 2024 January 2024 alongside LCWIP consultations covering neighbouring boroughs of the Basildon and Castle Point. Rochford District and Witham areas. The consultation was to gain an understanding of views on the network of routes in these areas but not in relation to specific infrastructure. The Essex Cycling Strategy [\[See reference 103\]](#) commits to establish a coherent, comprehensive and advantageous cycle network in every major urban area. The strategy also commits ECC to produce a Rochford Cycling Action Plan [\[See reference 104\]](#). The action plan sets out a number of District-specific aims relating to cycling including to prioritise funding for new cycling schemes in the District, to create a useable, high-quality cycle network that connects residential areas with key employment locations, rail stations and town centres and to create opportunities to increase recreational cycling in Rochford District.

Key delivery organisations

- Transport East

- National Highways
- Network Rail
- Walk Wheel Cycle Trust
- ECC – Local Transport Authority / Local Highway Authority
- London Southend Airport
- Arriva Buses
- Stephenson's of Essex Ltd Buses
- Rochford Community Travel
- First Buses

Funding

3.63 Funding for aviation improvements at London Southend Airport are raised by the Civil Aviation Authority. Aviation is generally commercially operable and therefore development contributions are not collected for improvements to airport infrastructure (although may be for other forms of travel that link to the airport, such as buses). However, growth of the Airport has also historically assisted with the case to secure government funding for improvements, including to junction capacity along the A127.

3.64 Funding for rail improvements is provided by the UK Government and is allocated based on the priorities identified in the Anglia Route Study [[See reference 105](#)].

3.65 Funding for buses comes from a mixture of sources but the predominant sources include the bus operators as part of their business model, ECC's local transport plan allocation and developer contributions.

3.66 Funding for highways comes from a range of sources. There are no roads within Rochford District managed and funded by National Highways. Local highways managed by ECC are funded through the Council's maintenance budget (which is largely funded by the government) and local transport plan budget. Developer contributions are also an important element of funding for highway improvements.

3.67 Funding for new cycling and walking infrastructure predominantly comes from ECC local transport plan funding and developer contributions.

3.68 As set out above, developer contributions are required for transportation improvements in Rochford District where these can be justified in accordance with the relevant tests for planning obligations [See reference 106], and are secured through Section 106 and Section 278 agreements [See reference 107]. The Essex Developer's Guide to Infrastructure Contributions [See reference 108] sets out that developers are expected to contribute towards the following types of transport infrastructure:

- Highway improvements to facilitate access or anticipated road safety implications of development.
- Supporting public transport by funding diversions to existing routes (if this can be achieved whilst maintaining the overall attractiveness of the service) or new services. For developments of 1,000 or more new homes a full integrated travel package is required.
- Diversions to public rights of way, if necessary and acceptable in accordance with relevant legislation.

Rochford infrastructure planning approach

3.69 Most new development has some impact on the transport network. Hence, improvements to existing transport networks, or provision of new transport projects is likely to be required in order to mitigate the impacts of development. Depending on the circumstances, these may be provided through a developer contribution.

3.70 In the case of transport mitigation being required, this would be scoped taking account of the ECC's Developers' Guide for Infrastructure Contributions [See reference 109]. Parking requirements for developments in Essex (including for cycles and electric vehicles) are set out in the Essex Parking Guidance (Part 1): Parking Standards Design and Good Practice [See reference 110] and Essex Parking Guidance (Part 2): Garden Communities and Large Scale Developments [See reference 111].

3.71 ECC is Rochford District's local highway authority and is therefore responsible for the management and maintenance of the adopted highway network within the District (apart from trunk roads which are managed by National Highways). All new development in the District may be required to offer either financial or 'in-kind' contributions to mitigate the transport impacts of any development. This is to support the delivery of necessary infrastructure and service improvements, for example facilitating travel by sustainable modes and / or enhancing the strategic road and rail networks.

3.72 The threshold, level, and type of contribution sought by the Council is determined on a case-by-case basis, owing to mitigation requirements being site and development specific. In addition to local transport mitigation, development contributions will be required for strategic transport schemes related to cumulative growth.

Key infrastructure planning matters arising from potential development

3.73 At this stage in the IDP process, the assessment of transport infrastructure needs in relation to proposed growth has been focussed at the settlement level. The findings presented are at a high level given that the transport assessment work commissioned by Rochford District Council to support the emerging Local Plan is not yet available to inform the IDP findings. As the transport assessment work is developed, it will be reflected in the later stages of the IDP. Once the transport assessment work is undertaken further engagement with ECC and other infrastructure providers/stakeholder will be undertaken to inform the assessment of infrastructure requirements for the preferred allocations set out in the plan.

3.74 The main transport challenge for the District will be to minimise the need to travel, both in terms of the number of trips and their distance. Compared to the majority of the surrounding local authority areas, the proportion of residents who regularly travel 5km or less to their place of work, is relatively low. Furthermore, the proportion of residents who regularly travel to work by car or van in the Rochford District is higher than the national and regional levels and although travel to work by rail is relatively high, the proportion of residents who travel to work by foot is lower than the national and regional averages. Congestion is noted to be an issue in and around Rayleigh and Rochford town centres as well as within Hockley. Travel from Rochford Town towards and LSA and Southend Centre is also affected by congestion.

3.75 It will be important to help ensure that where journeys are required they can be made using more sustainable modes (i.e. via public transport and active modes). This may be achieved by delivering new housing where existing services and facilities and employment opportunities are in close proximity and existing sustainable transport infrastructure provisions can be enhanced and extended to accommodate new growth without overburdening the network. Making most efficient use of existing infrastructure will also help to improve development viability by not creating a demand for new infrastructure in some instances. The delivery of new employment growth and a range of services and

facilities as well as supporting infrastructure to complement the delivery of new homes will further help to limit the need to travel by car in Rochford District.

3.76 Minimising the need to travel is also likely to be supported by ensuring residents have access to high-speed internet connections. This facilitates residents' access to services and facilities and potential employment opportunities without the need to travel. Examples include online shopping, remote work, leisure activities and innovative delivery models such as virtual GP services.

3.77 Car ownership and use is very high, whereas the use of public transport, walking and cycling are particularly low in Rochford District. Significant effort to create improved and new cycle routes should be made, alongside travel planning, educational and other support measures to deliver this transition. Electric scooters and electric bikes powered by renewable energy can be a key tool in encouraging people not to use their car and are cited as one of the key steps to reaching net zero by 2050 in the Essex Climate Action Commission report [\[See reference 112\]](#). The rural nature of much of the District is likely to mean the predominance of travel by private vehicle will be difficult to limit as development occurs. As such further support for the integration of charging infrastructure for EVs, as set out in the Essex Electric Vehicle Charge Point Strategy [\[See reference 113\]](#) will be of continued importance.

3.78 Moreover, the VeloCity [\[See reference 114\]](#) concept whereby a cluster of villages 'share' their services and are linked by high quality cycling infrastructure which connects to railway stations and high frequency bus services, may help to support a transition towards more sustainable travel.

3.79 The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have accelerated a transition to more flexible working patterns particularly home working. This has resulted in significantly reduced commuting, resulting in less pressure on transport links. Whilst this has resulted in less congestion, the use and viability of public transport has fallen dramatically. It is unclear whether working patterns that have become more prominent in the wake of the pandemic and associated effects relating to transport and congestion will remain in the longer term. As trends become more apparent, these will inform the need and requirement for new transport infrastructure.

3.80 New developments offer the greatest potential to change travel behaviours for residents and should be designed so as to facilitate the use of more active and sustainable modes of travel from a very early stage in that development. Designing large scale developments in accordance with the principles of '20-minute' neighbourhoods will help to achieve this.

3.81 Engagement with infrastructure providers has helped to identify some potential key headlines in terms of transport opportunities and constraints at the settlements in the District. This will be kept under review and updated with the outcomes of the Transport Assessment work that is to be developed. The initial headlines are as follows:

- Many of the commuter flows out of the District are towards Southend, Chelmsford and London with potential for congestion to the west of the District.
- Rayleigh, Rochford/Ashingdon and Hockley/Hawkwell lie on the Shenfield to Southend line, benefiting from access to train services to London Liverpool Street and Southend Victoria.
- The northern part of Southend has strong bus and rail linkages, due to its close proximity to the LSA. However, there are existing cross boundary pressures on the road network towards Southend, much of which is associated with school traffic.
- Parts of the settlements of Hullbridge, Rayleigh and Hockley lack access to bus services that provide north-south links.
- Great Wakering, parts of Rayleigh and much of Hullbridge and Hockley/Hawkwell lack good access to certain services and facilities and major employment locations by bus.
- There are existing issues of congestion at Rayleigh town centre, Rochford town and Hockley as well as between Rochford town and LSA and Southend City Centre which cause issues for buses and motorists alike.
- Cycling infrastructure provision is limited in the District beyond existing elements in Rochford, Rayleigh and close to the boundary with LSA. It is notable that the cycling infrastructure close to LSA does not provide direct connections to the main airport terminal or between the airport and Rochford or Southend.
- Engagement with Network Rail and Greater Anglia indicates that the primary issues arising from the growth tested relates to railway stations outside Rochford district. Growth North of Southend will be supported by primarily services from Prittlewell station in Southend-on-Sea. Currently the station does not offer step-free access between platforms, instead relying on Passenger Assist taxi services to stations like Shenfield or Southend Victoria that have full level access. Greater Anglia considers this to be a priority to enable the station to support growth. This growth would

also be supported by improvements to the accessibility of Southend Airport station.

- Similarly, growth at Rawreth and Hullbridge is likely to attract new rail passengers from Wickford station in Basildon district. Again, the station does not offer step-free access between platforms and Greater Anglia considers this to be a priority.
- Improvements to provide step-free connectivity between platforms at Rayleigh, Hockley and Rochford stations would also benefit growth close to these locations.
- Engagement with LSA indicates that the height of any future development and construction equipment across the District will need to be considered in relation to ensuring no impact on LSA Obstacle Limitation Surfaces (OLS) and LSA Instrument Flight Procedure (IFP). Consideration should also be given to glint and glare associated with photovoltaics and lighting schemes at new developments and proposals that might attract bird and wildlife (e.g. through the construction of a body of water or planting scheme) in the context of aircrafts taking off from and landing at LSA. Development proposals should also ensure the technical safeguarding of LSA navigation aids. Noise associated with airport uses and the transport implications of proposals that might result in adverse impacts on access to the airport should be considered through appropriate design choices. Of the development options considered only South East of Rochford is close to a Public Safety Zone within which development would be restricted to minimize the risk of aircraft accident during take-off or landing. These points considered, engagement with LSA did not result in the identification of the need for any infrastructure to support any of the options considered.

3.82 The assessment of transport infrastructure in relation to the development options considered by settlement is set out below. Where a 10% increase or decrease in the housing number at each location could result in a change to the infrastructure requirements at each location, this is set out in the text below the table.

Table 3.1: Summary of transport infrastructure assessment

Settlement: Location in relation to settlement	Rating
Hullbridge: North east	R

Settlement: Location in relation to settlement	Rating
Hullbridge: South west	R
Hullbridge; South east	A
North of Southend	A
Great Wakering: South west	A
Great Wakering: South east	R
Rochford and Ashingdon: North east	A
Rochford and Ashingdon: East	R
Rochford and Ashingdon: South west	A
Rochford and Ashingdon: South east	A
Hockley and Hawkwell: North east	A
Hockley and Hawkwell: South east	A
Rayleigh: North	A
Rayleigh: North west	A
Rayleigh: North east	A
Rayleigh: South east	A
Rayleigh: South west	A
Rawreth	A

3.83 Engagement with National Highways indicates that the development options considered across Hullbridge and Rawreth and the development option to the North and North West of Rayleigh may have a cumulative impact on A12 junctions 17-19. Furthermore, the development options considered at Rayleigh

may have a cumulative impact on the A13 trunk road and/or M25 Junction 29 and the development option considered at Rawreth may impact on M25 junction 29 and/or A13, which may require mitigation.

3.84 An amber effect is recorded for the proposed level of growth at North of Southend. Although this location benefits from strong existing public transport links and there is potential for new residents to access existing services and facilities in relatively close proximity in Southend, growth at this scale is likely to increase pressure on the road network on the boundary with Southend, where congestion is already an issue. It is also recognised that there could also be a substantial amount of development beyond the southern District boundary within Southend. While this option could result in substantial increases in cross boundary movements, the relatively strong service provision and potential for the scale of growth to achieve a level of self-containment means that impacts relating to transport might be more limited. Development of this scale could also potentially support extended and improved transport links to the east of the District and towards Great Wakering, however this would be dependent upon the specifics of any proposals for sites at this location.

3.85 An amber effect is likely for Rayleigh, Rochford/Ashingdon (north east) and Hockley/Hawkwell given that each of these settlements benefit from a train station but also recognising the existing issues with bus services and congestion within these settlements. At Rayleigh and Rochford/Ashingdon there may be particular issues relating to accommodating improved bus services to serve the new development given the presence of a number of interchanges, narrow roads and one-way systems in parts of both settlements. For this reason the high level of growth tested east of Rochford has been given a red rating. There is the potential that the existing road network may need to be reconfigured in order to address congestion in and around the settlement.

3.86 The growth at Rawreth is close to Rayleigh but being located to the west close to the A130 and A127, is well served by strategic transport links. Whilst it would increase traffic levels towards the A127/A130 Fairglen Interchange, proposed improvements to the interchange will help to address issues at this location. Such road links and improvements have the scope to accommodate significant improvements to bus services. This location is also close to both Rayleigh and Wickford rail stations. For these reasons the growth tested has been given an amber rating. For growth beyond the plan period, more significant improvements are likely to be needed. However, this would require more detailed testing to understand the nature and scale of such requirements.

3.87 The growth options tested at Hullbridge and Great Wakering are sensitive to the scale of growth in each location. Both settlements are of a relatively small scale and lack a train station and good access by bus to certain types of services and facilities and major employment sites. It is therefore anticipated that anything other than a very modest level of growth would result in some impacts and therefore an amber rating. This is because development could result in greater increases in private car use than might be the case in other locations and more substantial improvements to existing bus provisions may be required. It is noted that the relative proximity of Hullbridge to both Rayleigh and South Woodham Ferrers may present increased opportunities for sustainable transport improvements than is likely to be case at Great Wakering which is more isolated from the nearest settlements in Rochford District. Great Wakering is reasonably close to Shoeburyness, to the east of Southend-on-Sea. There may be potential for residents of Great Wakering to make use of services and facilities in Shoeburyness, however, existing sustainable travel links are relatively poor with more than one bus journey needed to access the local centre and railway station to the south east of the town. For these reasons, the largest growth options tested in both Hullbridge (north east and south west) and Great Wakering (south west) have been given a red rating.

Chapter 4

Education

Current context

4.1 ECC has duties under the Childcare Acts of 2006 and 2016 to ensure that there are sufficient sustainable and high-quality childcare places for children aged 0-19 and their families. In addition, duties under the Education Act 2011 require ECC to provide sufficient school places for 4-16 year olds. As such, education is in the most part provided for by ECC. Free Schools and Academy Schools are outside local authority control but are still influenced by potential growth and are therefore considered in pupil place planning.

4.2 Private schools and home schooling also contribute to education in the district, but these are not considered as part of this IDP, for private schools this is because they operate on a different demand model and are not responsible for ensuring all children have a place, and for home schooling because there are minimal infrastructure implications.

4.3 The Education Act 2011 requires all those up to the age of 18 to be involved in some form of education, which can include apprenticeships.

4.4 In England, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision includes those up to the age of 19. If a young person has achieved the outcomes in their Education Health Care plan by age 19, then no further special educational provision should be required after that age.

4.5 The Children and Families Act 2014 places a statutory requirement upon ECC as the appropriate body for provision in Rochford District, to use best endeavours to secure special education provision. This includes the designation of an appropriate member of staff within a state-maintained school or nurse as a SEND coordinator, responsible for pupils with those needs.

4.6 The Equalities Act 2010 further requires that schools do not discriminate current or prospective students on grounds of their disability and seeks to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made by education providers where possible to allow children with disabilities the ability to participate in education.

4.7 In Rochford District the population is not distributed evenly between age groups 0-19. The most prominent age group is 10-14 which constitutes 27.7% of the 0-19 population. The second most populous age group is those aged 0-4

(24.9%). This indicates a variable demand for early years and childcare and schools across the age ranges **[See reference 115]**.

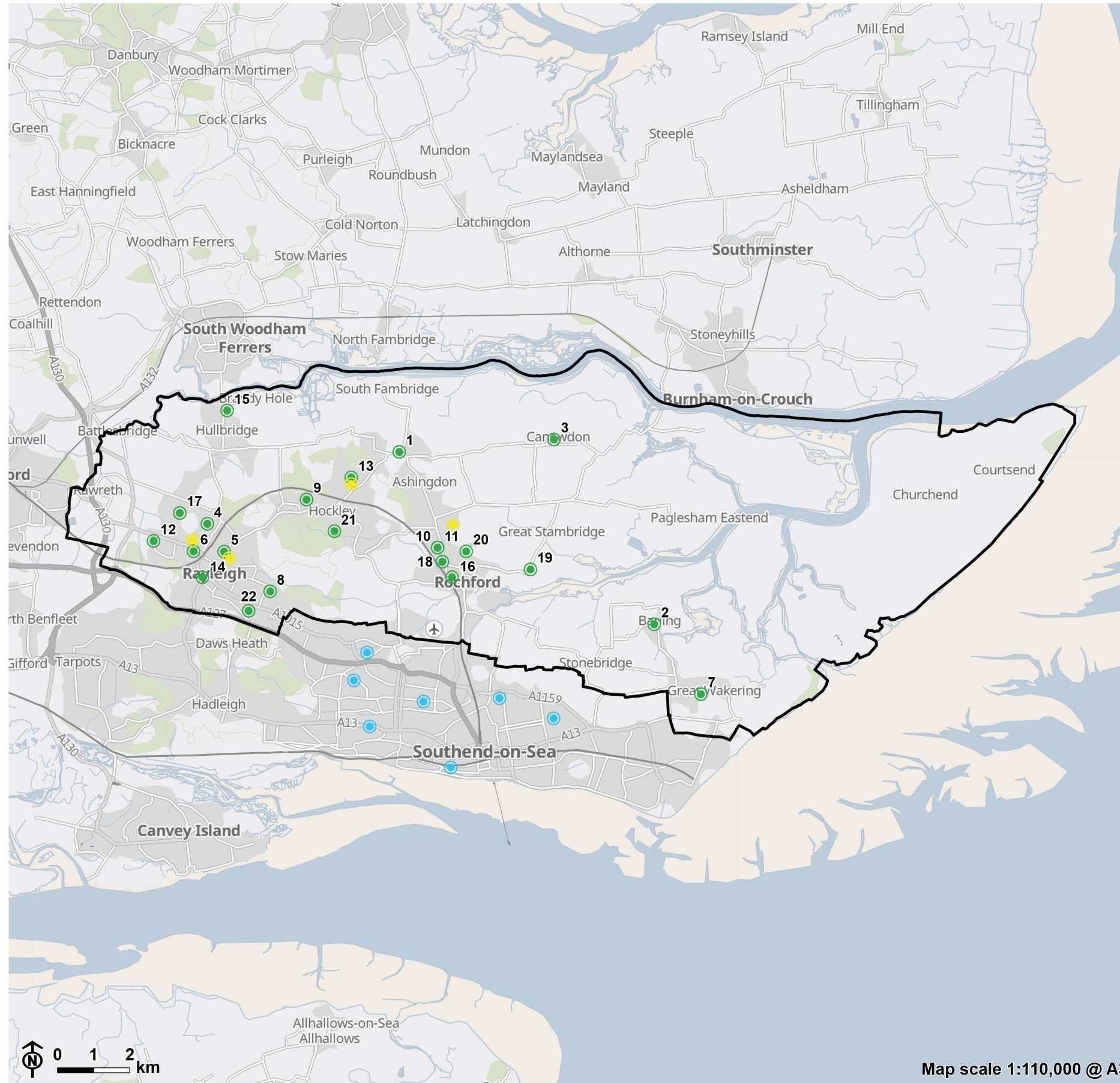
4.8 Figures 4.1a to 4.1c set out the location of educational facilities within Rochford District.

Figure 4.1(a-c): Primary, Secondary and Special Educational Needs and Disability Education



Figure 4.1a: Primary Education

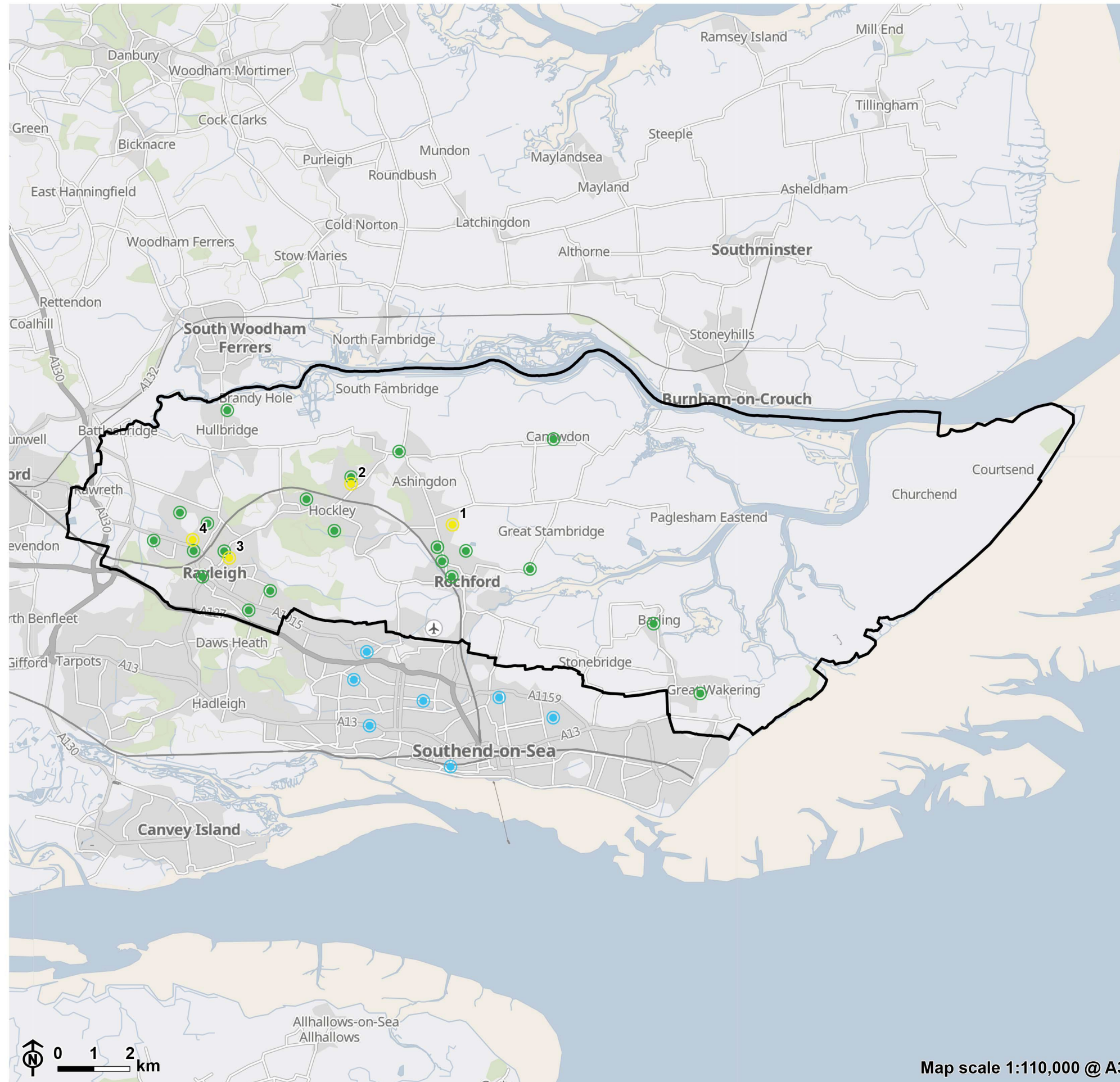
- Rochford District Council boundary
 - Special Educational Needs and Disability schools
 - Secondary Education
 - Primary Education**
1. Ashingdon Primary Academy
 2. Barling Magna Community Primary School
 3. Canewdon Endowed Primary (Voluntary Controlled) Church Of England School
 4. Down Hall Primary School
 5. Edward Francis Primary School
 6. Glebe Primary School
 7. Great Wakering Primary School
 8. Grove Wood Primary School
 9. Hockley Primary School
 10. Holt Farm Infants School
 11. Holt Farm Junior School
 12. Our Lady Of Ransom Roman Catholic Primary School
 13. Plumberow Primary School
 14. Rayleigh Primary School
 15. Riverside Primary School
 16. Rochford Primary And Nursery School
 17. St Nicholas Church Of England School
 18. St Teresa's Roman Catholic Primary School
 19. Stambridge Primary School
 20. Waterman Primary School
 21. Westerings Primary Academy
 22. Wyburns Primary School



Map scale 1:110,000 @ A3

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Figure 4.1b: Secondary Education



- ▭ Rochford District Council boundary
- Special Educational Needs and Disability schools
- Primary Education
- **Secondary Education**
 1. The King Edmund School
 2. Greensward Academy
 3. The Fitz Wimarc School
 4. The Sweyne Park School

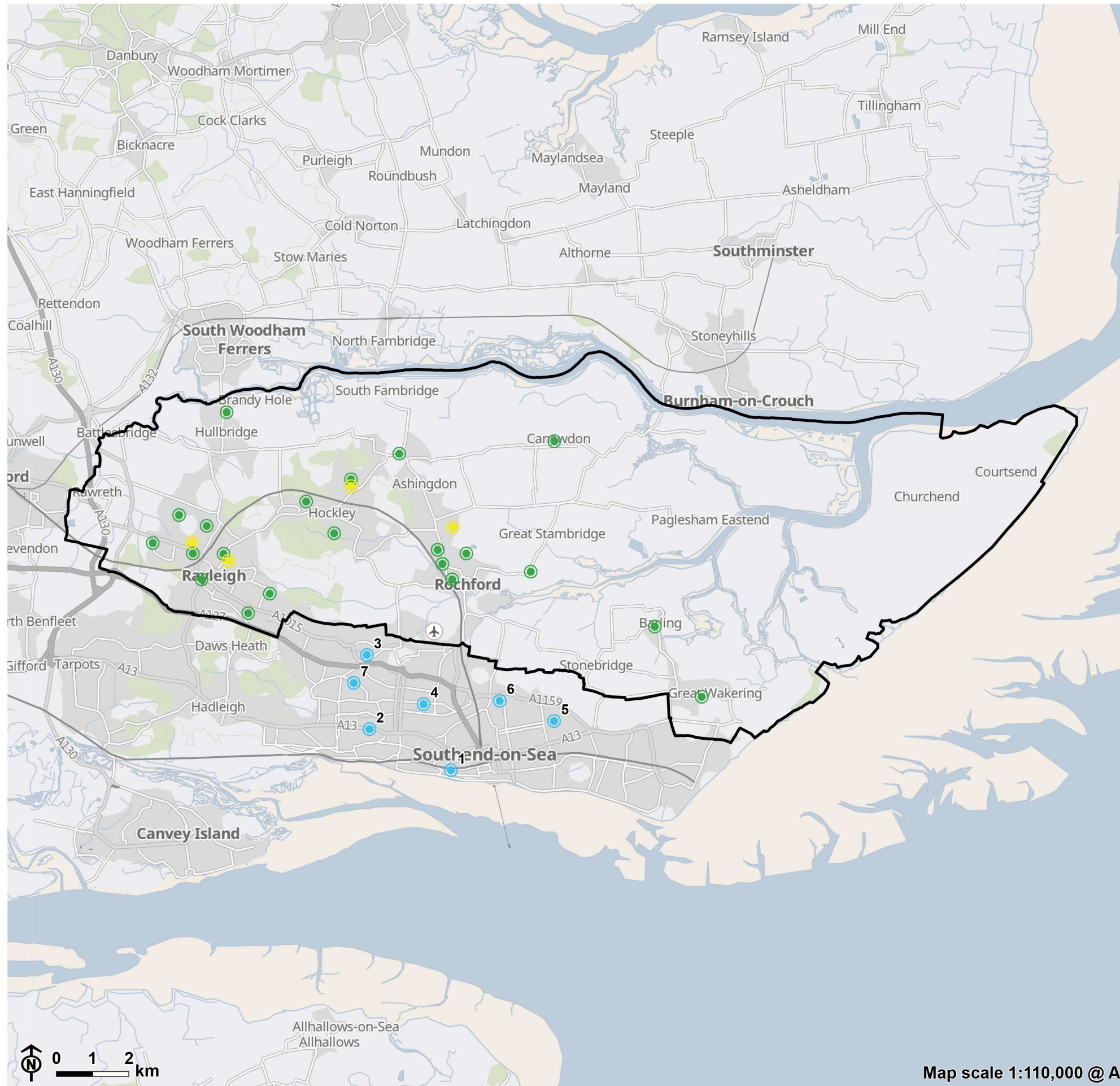


Map scale 1:110,000 @ A3

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Figure 4.1c: Special Educational Needs and Disability Education



- ▭ Rochford District Council boundary
 - Primary Education
 - Secondary Education
 - **Special Educational Needs and Disability schools**
1. Compass Community School Boleyn Park
 2. Estuary High School
 3. Kingsdown School
 4. Lancaster School
 5. St Nicholas School
 6. Sutton House Academy
 7. The St Christopher School

Map scale 1:110,000 @ A3

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4.9 Provision of new secondary schools is more challenging than for primary schools due to the scale of population needed to support them. As such, new secondary school provision is generally focussed on existing schools, unless there is a strategic opportunity to provide a new facility. This is the approach set out in the ECC's Developers' Guide [\[See reference 116\]](#), Garden Communities and Planning School Places [\[See reference 117\]](#) and Essex County Council Local and Neighbourhood Planners Guide to School Organisation [\[See reference 118\]](#).

4.10 The ECC's Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions also highlights that financial contributions sought will be used to extend existing facilities wherever possible or provide a new facility. Larger development proposals (upwards of 250 dwellings) are most likely to trigger the need for a new facility and in such circumstances a land contribution will also be required. Where demand is of such a scale, a new facility will be sought, either co-located with a new primary school or as a stand-alone facility. The guide sets out that where there is a requirement for a new primary and secondary school then the land for these uses should be co-located to facilitate an all-through school (i.e. ages 5 to 16) and in a similar vein, Early Years and childcare facilities are often preferably co-located with primary schools. Where a new primary school is required in the area, it should be co-located with a 56-place early years and childcare nursery where there is capacity to do so. This aligns with the approach set out in the Department for Education guidance Securing Developer Contributions for Education [\[See reference 119\]](#).

4.11 Since the start of 2020 ECC has commissioned all school expansion projects to include renewable energy solutions as a contribution towards combatting climate change. This enhances already highly energy-efficient building specifications. ECC is actively investing in net-zero energy design for new school buildings to be the standard. This work complements a programme of energy efficiency upgrades and other works being planned for existing school buildings [\[See reference 120\]](#). ECC has a policy to transform its own estate to net zero by 2030. An example of this policy is Sweyne Park School in Rayleigh which has become the first in the county to have a net zero carbon building.

Early Years and childcare (EYCC)

4.12 Early years and childcare (EYCC) provision in Rochford District includes:

- **Pre-schools (including playgroups and nursery schools)** - These offer play and early education for children under five years old. This can be

sessional or all day and is usually provided in term time for children aged between two and five years old. They are registered and inspected by Ofsted. All early years and childcare settings have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice 2014 to be inclusive and meet the needs of children with SEND.

- **Day nurseries** - These provide full or part-time care and early education for babies and children up to five. Some may also provide care for older children before or after school, and during school holidays. They are usually open from 8am to 6pm and operate all year, including school holidays. They are registered and inspected by Ofsted
- **School nursery classes** - School nursery classes are attached to an infant or primary school. They provide early education and childcare to children under five between school hours in term time. Schools run them, and they provide funded early education places. In some cases, they may charge a fee. Teachers are responsible for no more than 13 children at any one time. If a child attends a school nursery class, there is no automatic guarantee that they will secure a place in the school.
- **Academy nursery provision** - Academy nurseries are similar to school nursery classes and are on the site of the academy. Classes are not required to have a qualified teacher and can be led by suitably qualified staff who will be responsible for no more than eight children at any one time.
- **Independent schools** - These are usually run by private or voluntary organisations and will charge a fee. Some independent schools have nursery classes which offer funded places. Only some will allow parents to take just the free entitlement without taking extra hours, which they will have to pay for.
- **Childminders** - Childminders provide care and education for children in their own home. They often offer flexible hours and provide a wide range of learning opportunities in and out of the home. They are registered by Ofsted and are suitably qualified to deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- **Out of school care (wrap around)** - These provide care and activities to fit around school hours for school-aged children. Out-of-school care includes breakfast clubs, after-school clubs (hours may vary between providers) and holiday play schemes during school holidays. They are registered and inspected by Ofsted.

4.13 These education needs are delivered through mainly private, independent and voluntary organisations and any change in demand for childcare can have a detrimental effect upon the sustainability of the different business models.

4.14 Under the Childcare Act 2006, ECC must ensure that there is sufficient high quality and accessible early years and childcare places within the local area. Section 6 of the Act defines 'sufficient childcare' as sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in the area who require childcare in order to enable them to take up, or remain in, work or undertake education or training which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work. Unlike education, parents can choose to access childcare away from their home area, for example near to a place of work or training.

Current provision

4.15 EYCC settings in Essex provide a service to approximately 84,500 children aged 5 years and under (based on GP registration data) and approximately 46,000 families (based on child benefit data). The County Council has statutory duties that must be met regarding Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) and childcare:

- Free early education entitlement funding for 2-year-olds
- Free early education entitlement funding for 3- and 4-year-olds
- 30 hours free childcare for 3- and 4-year-olds
- All working families with children up to the age of 14 (18 for children with special education needs and disability) can expect the local authority to ensure there are sufficient childcare places available for their children to ensure they are able to continue to work.

4.16 The Chancellor of the Exchequer's Autumn 2023 statement as implemented in April 2024 has significantly changed the approach to the provision of and demand for in early years and childcare provision. This is shown through commitment to providing an extra £4.1 billion for childcare by 2027-28 to facilitate the expansion of the new funded hours offer, which will bring total investment in childcare to over £8 billion. All eligible families in England will be able to access up to 30 hours of funded childcare per week over 38 weeks, or pro-rata over a maximum of 52 weeks per year from the term after their child turns 9 months old, to when they start school.

4.17 Essex Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2022-2027 sets out ECC's approach to improving the experiences and outcomes of young children living in Essex [See reference 121].

4.18 The 2023 Childcare Assessment Sufficiency Summary reported by ECC [See reference 122] found the following in relation to childcare provision in the County:

- Rochford has the sixth highest rate of 2 year old take up in Essex with 86.2% of the eligible parents accessing funding, representing a decrease of 9.5% from 95.7% in Summer 2022.
- Rochford has the highest rate of 3 and 4 year old take up in Essex, with 100% of families making use of funded early education entitlement above the Essex average of 93.5%.
- There are a total of 101 childcare providers in Rochford. 91.7% of those funded by ECC, and that have been inspected, received a judgement of Good or Outstanding. This is a decrease from the 98.4% reported in the previous year.
- Rochford has the fourth highest rate of childcare occupancy in Essex with 86.1% of funded childcare places taken (with 300 vacancies). This represents an increase of 4.0% on the same period last year. This is slightly higher with an average of 84.5% occupancy reported across Essex as a whole.
- Rochford's providers consist predominantly of childminders (43.6%), followed by pre-schools (22.8%) and day nurseries (14.9%). The ratio of funded providers to non-funded providers is 72.3% which is more than the overall Essex figure of 65.3%.
- Rochford has 11 wrap-around care providers. Of these providers, 11 offer a breakfast club, with a total of 64 places available as at the end of June 2023. Furthermore, ten providers offer after school clubs whilst three offer holiday provision, with 39 and 13 places available respectively.

Primary schools

Current provision

4.19 Of the 26 schools located in Rochford District, 22 are for infant, junior or primary stage up to and including the school year when pupils turn 11.

4.20 ECC's 10-year plan [See reference 123] sets out that the increase in demand for primary school places across Essex as a whole is predicted to continue. The 10-year plan is updated yearly and the numerical demand is updated year-on-year with updates provided on the ECC school organisation and place planning webpage [See reference 124]. The 10-year plan sets out that there will be a small expansion of up to one form of entry at St Nicholas CE Primary School in Rawreth in the Hullbridge and Rayleigh area and a half form entry expansion in the East Rochford area. It is important to note that the requirement for new school provision is likely to increase subject to the Council's decision on its emerging spatial strategy.

Secondary schools

Current provision

4.21 Four secondary schools are provided for pupils aged between 11 and 18:

- The Fitzwimarc School and The Sweyne Park School in Rayleigh;
- The King Edmund School in Rochford; and
- Greensward Academy in Hockley.

4.22 The 10-year plan [See reference 125] sets out there are no planned increases to capacity in secondary schools.

4.23 Additional development which comes through the emerging Local Plan is likely to increase the need for secondary place provision.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

4.24 There are seven special schools located in South Essex. However, there are no special schools in Rochford. Schools in the region are at maximum capacity. This means that SEND pupils are required to travel outside of the District to attend school. Cross border movements to access SEND schools are limited towards Southend with increased movement recorded towards Castle Point.

4.25 There are two Hearing Impaired Enhanced Provisions in Rochford; one for primary (Glebe) and one for secondary (Sweyne Park). However, these are highly specialist units for deaf pupils.

4.26 Forecasting requirements for school provision for children with SEND is more complex than projecting mainstream places. This is because the needs of children with SEND often do not manifest themselves until the child has been in the school system for some time. The additional needs presented are varied and include visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical disability, moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties, autism or social emotional and mental health needs. Indeed, some children have more than one need to be met. ECC therefore seeks to ensure that provision is available to meet a range of needs in each geographic area of the County.

4.27 ECC have created a forecasting mechanism to predict the growth in the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) population in area, need and type of provision. The forecast is predicting that over the next 5 years, Rochford's EHCP population is to increase by 16% to 724 pupils. The forecast does not yet factor into specific new housing developments and the impact of the SEND population. However, the number of children likely to present with SEN can be roughly calculated as follows (the following statistics applied at the 2020 SEN2 return to the Department for Education):

- 15% of the Essex school population has some sort of SEN.
- 3.4% of the child population currently has an Education, Health and Care Plan (this is now closer to 3.9% as of 2024). Of this, 2.1% has a plan and are educated in mainstream schools, including specialist SEN units in mainstream schools, and 1.3% are educated in a special school.

4.28 Where new housing development comes forward, ECC will work to establish the impact on SEND capacity and expect housing developers to work with ECC as infrastructure provider to ensure new development supports provision of SEND capacity. The overall level of growth set out in the Local Plan is likely to require additional SEND provision, however, smaller scale sites are unlikely to be big enough on their own to warrant Section 106 funding for a new SEND school or expansion of an existing school site. This reflects the approach set out in the ECC's Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions [See [reference 126](#)] which requires that any development of 20 or more dwellings is assessed and contributions towards education special needs provision requested as necessary.

Post-16

4.29 Access to education for post-16 year-olds plays a key role in skills development and assists both residents and businesses progression into, and through, sustainable employment, including apprenticeships.

4.30 Young people have a choice at key stage 4 (year 11) as to how they continue in education or training post-16, which could be through:

- full-time study in a school, college or with a training provider
- full-time work or volunteering (20 hours or more) combined with regulated part-time education or training (about one day per week)
- an apprenticeship or traineeship.

4.31 There are currently no colleges within Rochford District itself although the four secondary schools all have post-16 (sixth form) provision. A significant portion of post-16-stage pupils are commuting into Southend city for college or apprenticeships.

4.32 As stated above for secondary education (ages 11-16), the 10-year plan [\[See reference 127\]](#) sets out there are no planned increases to capacity in secondary schools. This extends to sixth form provision.

4.33 Additional development which comes through the emerging Local Plan is likely to increase the need for secondary place provision. Where there is a need for additional sixth form provision, this would be co-located with a secondary school.

4.34 As per the ECC's Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions [\[See reference 128\]](#) large scale developments (those delivering 50 dwellings or more) are required to include employment skills plans that engage with schools and apprenticeship providers. Future developments in Rochford District may also lead to the need to contribute towards further education provision. This may include potential financial contribution towards further education provision and/or specific employment and skills strategic priorities.

4.35 The Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) was produced in 2023. The plan captured skills needs of the labour market and local employers across the whole of Essex and identified action based solutions required to enable local colleges and skills providers to effectively meet those needs. The Essex Chambers of Commerce prepared a Progress Report for the LSIP in June 2025. The report set out that numerous objectives have been achieved since the adoption of the plan. This includes the creation of 100 new teaching and learning facilities (including workshops or classrooms refurbished or fitted out with industry standard equipment), delivery of eight new Level 4 courses, training or CPD upskilling of 500 staff and developing of soft skills for 2,213 learners [\[See reference 129\]](#).

Adult learning

4.36 Adult Community Learning (ACL) in Essex is the largest provider of adult education in the county. The aim is to provide learners with as many ways to flourish as possible, to be there in communities across Essex and to make a difference to residents and businesses so they can make a difference for themselves and to the places that they live in.

4.37 Through ACL Essex, Rochford residents and business are entitled to access post-16 apprenticeships and 19+ funded skills, qualifications and employment training programs such as GCSE English, Maths and digital skills, vocational courses and skills bootcamps. The ACL Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025 **[See reference 130]** sets out the impact of the high-quality learning offer that makes a positive difference to the lives of residents and businesses of Essex. The ACL provision is focussed on themes covering: communities and families; economy; health, wellbeing and independence; and the environment.

4.38 ACL's offer is currently provided online and in community outreach venues and schools which have shared spaces to enable the service delivery. Access to this provision is impacted by lack of a permanent physical ACL centre in Rochford District and a lack of available suitable outreach venues.

Key delivery organisations

- ECC – Education
- Education Skills Funding Agency (EFSA)

Funding

4.39 As outlined in the ECC's Developers' Guide (2024) **[See reference 131]**, development of 20 or more dwellings will be assessed and could generate a request for a contribution towards early years, childcare and/or primary and secondary education.

4.40 The cost of providing a SEND place is much higher than that of a primary or secondary place. The capital cost per child of a special needs school varies with the type of need to be addressed. However, ECC has undertaken a review of the cost of delivering a SEND place based on projects it has commissioned since 2016. It is on this basis that contributions are sought either per pupil or per house/flat.

4.41 For post-16 provision, financial contributions will be required from sites of 50+ dwellings (the need in any area will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, so that contributions are only required where necessary). Revenue funding for all post-16 education is provided via the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and covers academic and vocational learning. Investment is limited on a case-by-case basis and not guaranteed. Developer contributions would make up any funding requirement not met from other sources.

Rochford infrastructure planning approach

4.42 As set out above, ECC has a statutory responsibility to ensure sufficient school and childcare places are available for local children and younger people. The NPPF (paragraph 100) also sets out that sufficient choice for school places should be available to meet the needs of existing and new communities, to which a proactive, positive, and collaborative approach should be taken by planning authorities to meet this requirement.

4.43 Where a need for additional school places as a direct result of housing development is identified, the expectation is that the land and cost of providing additional places will be met in accordance with the requirements set out in ECC's Developer's Guide to Infrastructure Contributions and Garden Communities and Planning School Places Guide [\[See reference 132\]](#).

4.44 For early years and childcare, ECC predicts child yield from new development proposals on the assumption that there are twelve children per one hundred qualifying houses (0.12 per dwelling). Financial contributions sought from development are used to extend existing facilities wherever possible. For example, for early years and childcare, the cost per pupil for extensions is set at £20,245. Where development is of a scale that could trigger the need for a new school, the cost per pupil for a new facility is set at £24,171 (Q1 2025 prices). The pupil yield per dwelling and cost multipliers for early years and childcare, primary and secondary education stages are set out in the table below. For SEND provision, the ECC Developer's Guide to Infrastructure Contributions has established a financial contribution figure per pupil of £102,697, with a required contribution of £1,951 per new house and £976 per new flat. This is summarised in **Table 4.1**.

Table 4.1: Pupil yield per dwelling and cost multipliers for early years and childcare, primary and secondary education

Education stage	Pupil yield per dwelling	Expected contribution per pupil - extensions	Expected contribution per pupil – new build
Early years and childcare	0.12 (0.06 for flats)	£20,450 (Q1, 2025)	£24,416 (Q1, 2025)
Primary	0.3 (0.15 for flats)	£20,245 (Q1, 2025)	£24,171 (Q1, 2025)
Secondary	0.2 (0.1 for flats)	£27,845 (Q1, 2025)	£29,283 (Q1, 2025)
Post-16	0.04 (0.01 per one bed flat, 0.02 per 2+ bed flat, 0.04 per 2+ bed house)	£27,492	£28,865

4.45 The expected contributions to meet the costs of additional education provision are shown in Table 4.1. They are based on the costs provided by the DfE National Scorecard as at the first quarter of 2025. Any future contributions will be index linked with the Government's Price Index of Public Sector (PUBSEC) Building Non-housing Index (PUBSEC).

Key infrastructure planning matters arising from potential development

4.46 Assessment of education infrastructure needs in relation to proposed growth has been supplied by the ECC Education Team. This has been based on the sites making up the broad growth locations. It has also taken into account existing permitted sites and allocations which are yet to be delivered. It should be noted that place planning for primary and secondary education is based on bespoke primary and secondary school groupings. By contrast, place planning for Early Years and childcare is based on ward geographies. Neither of

these geographies directly align with the growth locations being tested in the IDP, therefore judgements have had to be made where there isn't an obvious alignment.

4.47 The outcome of the assessment is summarised below.

Early Years and childcare, primary and secondary

4.48 Table 4.2 summarises the RAG assessment relating to the need for EYCC provision.

Table 4.2: Summary of Early Years and childcare assessment (RAG)

Settlement: Location in relation to settlement	Rating
Hullbridge: North east	A
Hullbridge: South west	A
Hullbridge; South east	A
North of Southend	G
Great Wakering: South west	G
Great Wakering: South east	G
Rochford and Ashingdon: North east	G
Rochford and Ashingdon: East	G
Rochford and Ashingdon: South west	G
Rochford and Ashingdon: South east	G
Hockley and Hawkwell: North east	G
Hockley and Hawkwell: South east	G
Rayleigh: North	A

Settlement: Location in relation to settlement	Rating
Rayleigh: North west	A
Rayleigh: North east	G
Rayleigh: South east	G
Rayleigh: South west	A
Rawreth	G

4.49 Table 4.3 summarises the RAG assessment relating to the need for primary education provision.

Table 4.3: Summary of Primary Schools assessment (RAG)

Settlement: Location in relation to settlement	Rating
Hullbridge: North east	R
Hullbridge: South west	R
Hullbridge; South east	G
North of Southend	G
Great Wakering: South west	G
Great Wakering: South east	G
Rochford and Ashingdon: North east	G
Rochford and Ashingdon: East	G
Rochford and Ashingdon: South west	G
Rochford and Ashingdon: South east	G

Settlement: Location in relation to settlement	Rating
Hockley and Hawkwell: North east	G
Hockley and Hawkwell: South east	G
Rayleigh: North	R
Rayleigh: North west	R
Rayleigh: North east	G
Rayleigh: South east	G
Rayleigh: South west	R
Rawreth	G

4.50 Table 4.4 summarises the RAG assessment relating to the need for secondary education provision.

Table 4.4: Summary of Secondary Schools assessment (RAG)

Settlement: Location in relation to settlement	Rating
Hullbridge: North east	G
Hullbridge: South west	G
Hullbridge; South east	G
North of Southend	G
Great Wakering: South west	G
Great Wakering: South east	G
Rochford and Ashingdon: North east	G

Settlement: Location in relation to settlement	Rating
Rochford and Ashingdon: East	G
Rochford and Ashingdon: South west	G
Rochford and Ashingdon: South east	G
Hockley and Hawkwell: North east	G
Hockley and Hawkwell: South east	G
Rayleigh: North	G
Rayleigh: North west	G
Rayleigh: North east	G
Rayleigh: South east	G
Rayleigh: South west	G
Rawreth	A

4.51 The assessment of education infrastructure in relation to the options considered by development location is set out below.

North of Southend and Great Wakering

- Early Years and childcare (Great Wakering): The growth tested at Great Wakering would create demand for 108 places. Based on present available capacity, this would reduce to 59 places. ECC would seek one 56-place setting. Given that the requirement for additional primary school capacity is likely to be capable of being delivered at the existing Great Wakering Primary School site, it is unlikely that the EYCC provision could be co-located with the primary school. This may necessitate stand alone provision (requiring 0.18 hectares) unless provided alongside new primary school provision North of Southend. Beyond the plan period, a further 30-place setting (0.11 hectares) would be required.

- **Early Years and childcare (North of Southend):** The growth tested at North of Southend would create demand for 160 places. ECC would seek two 72-place settings which should be co-located with new primary schools if possible. Beyond the plan period, a further 3,500 homes would generate need for an extra 374 places. ECC would seek five 72-place settings which could be co-located with new primary schools or provided as stand alone facilities (requiring 0.22 hectares) as necessary.
- **Primary:** The demand for school places in Rochford District is influenced by cross-border pupil movement as it borders Southend-on-Sea. There is school-run traffic between Rochford District and Southend, which means that any development at North of Southend will need to consider cross-border implications. The potential for cross boundary movements is partly influenced by the division of secondary schools in Southend-on-Sea between grammar schools and non-selective schools. Pupils who are not successful in their application to the grammar schools in Southend often seek to attend comprehensive schools in the wider Essex area, including in Rochford District. The development considered at North of Southend is of a scale that could support the delivery of new primary and co-located EYCC facilities. The proposed growth would require a 2.18 hectare site to deliver both primary and EYCC provision in a single setting. Beyond the plan period, a further two sites would be required to support the total level of growth proposed North of Southend. This will leave approximately 1FE of further capacity to be added in Great Wakering. Great Wakering Primary School has sufficient site area to allow this expansion, if required.
- **Secondary:** Land would be required to accommodate new secondary school provision. With development also likely within Southend's area, cross border solutions may be appropriate. If it is assumed that around 3 forms of entry (FE) of the demand created during the Plan period will be managed in this way, there is still at least a further 3FE of demand that may need accommodating. Due to its reliance on a detached playing field, Greensward Academy has little expansion potential. Work is required to establish King Edmund School's expansion potential, but it is likely to require additional land which could potentially come forward if development east of Rochford were taken forward as an allocation.

Rayleigh/Hullbridge/Rawreth

- **Early Years and childcare (North and North West Rayleigh and Rawreth):** The growth tested at North and North West Rayleigh and at Rawreth would create demand for 354 places. Based on present available capacity,

this would reduce to 338 places. ECC would seek three 72-place EYCC settings on larger sites and a further two 56-place settings. It is suggested that two of the 72-place settings would be appropriate to be located at Rawreth on the Dollymans Farm site (which generates a need for 160 places in its own right). One of these could be co-located with new primary school provision on the site, with the second being a stand alone facility (requiring 0.22 hectares). Given the need for a further two 2FE primary schools in Rayleigh and Hullbridge, one should be co-located with a 72-place setting. This would not affect the amount of land required for a co-located facility (2.18 hectares). Land for the two 56-place settings will need to be found. As the Primary Education assessment explains below, a lack of large sites in Rayleigh and Hullbridge means that provision of the co-located primary school and EYCC facilities will be extremely challenging. A stand alone facility would require 0.18 hectares. Beyond the plan period, a further 30-place setting (0.11 hectares) would be required.

- Early Years and childcare (Hullbridge): The growth tested at Hullbridge would create demand for 123 places, taking into account existing spare capacity. ECC would require two 56-place EYCC provisions. As stated above, there is a need for two new primary schools and if one of these were in Hullbridge, then it should be co-located with one of the 56-place EYCC settings, with the other setting being provided as a stand alone facility (requiring 0.18 hectares). If neither are provided as co-located facilities with any new primary school, then both will need to be provided as stand alone facilities.
- Early Years and childcare (North East, South West and South East Rayleigh): The growth tested at North East, South West and South East Rayleigh would create demand for 221 places, taking into account existing spare capacity. ECC would require one 72-place, two 56-place and one 30-place setting. Where possible, the 72- and 56-place facilities should be co-located with new primary school provision. If this is not possible then they will have to be provided as stand alone facilities. They would require 0.22 hectares and 0.18 hectares respectively. A 30-place setting would require 0.11 hectares.
- Primary (Rayleigh and Hullbridge): The growth tested at Hullbridge and Rayleigh would create demand equivalent to an extra 7FE. There is an ageing population within Rayleigh and there has been surplus capacity of school places in recent years, partly as a result of low birth rates post COVID-19. As such, just over 1FE of proposed growth can be absorbed into existing facilities. With up to one form of entry of growth planned at St Nicholas CE Primary School, a further 5.5FE needs to be identified across

the area. With no large growth areas being put forward in this area, there is no potential to deliver a new primary school as part of a residential site allocation. Therefore, either a dedicated site for a new school needs to be found or existing schools expanded. Based on its site area and DfE guidelines [See reference 133], Down Hall School in Rayleigh could potentially be expanded by 0.5FE. Wyburns School in Rayleigh and Riverside School in Hullbridge both have large sites and could be expanded. However, less than 1FE of the demand from new development would come from the Wyburns area and Riverside is already a 2FE school (which is seen by ECC, as Education Authority, as the optimum size for primary schools). If no expansion is used to address these requirements then there will be a need to deliver two 2.18-hectare primary school sites which would both include EYCC provision. Given the lack of potential site allocations where these education facilities could be located, this will be extremely challenging.

- Primary (Rawreth): The growth option at Dollymans Farm lies closest to a primary school in Wickford (Basildon district). The assessment undertaken by ECC indicates some unfilled capacity in this area but this is likely to be required to meet Basildon Council's own growth. The growth tested would likely be sufficient to create the need for a 2.18 hectare site to deliver both primary and EYCC provision in a single setting.
- Secondary (Rayleigh, Hullbridge and Rawreth): If growth required is below 6FE then it is not certain that a new school would be needed. In such a scenario, ECC would look to expand existing schools. The growth option at Dollymans Farm (Rawreth) lies closest to Beauchamps School which is in Wickford (Basildon district). Having already been expanded, Beauchamps School does not have sufficient land to offer a further significant expansion option. Bromfords School in Wickford does have the potential to expand but is on the wrong side of Wickford to serve the growth in Rawreth. Both of the secondary schools in Rayleigh are already operating with more pupils than indicated by their site capacity when applying the DfE guidelines. Therefore it would be more appropriate to secure a new school. If this also supported growth in Basildon district, then it would be likely to reach the minimum threshold of 6FE that ECC would require to deliver a new school. Allocating 10.1 hectares of land for provision of a new secondary school is therefore the only reasonable option for this area. If co-located with a primary school, this could create the potential for an all-through school.

Rochford and Ashingdon/Hockley and Hawkwell

- Early Years and childcare (South East and South West Rochford): The growth proposed at South East and South West Rochford would create demand for 95 places. Based on present available capacity, this would reduce to 66 places. ECC would seek one 72-place EYCC setting which should be co-located with a new primary school if there is potential (noting that the proposed growth in this location is not likely to generate the need for a new primary school).
- Early Years and childcare (East of Rochford): The growth proposed East of Rochford would create demand for 160 places. ECC would seek two 72-place EYCC settings. The requirement in this location for a new primary school creates the opportunity to co-locate this with one of the 72-place settings. The other would have to be provided as a stand alone facility (requiring 0.22 hectares). Beyond the plan period, proposed growth would create demand for a further 53 places. ECC would seek one 56-place EYCC setting on the site. If this was provided as a stand-alone facility then it would require 0.18 hectares.
- Early Years and childcare (South East, North East and Central Hockley): The growth proposed at South East, North East and Central Hockley would create demand for 113 places. Based on present available capacity, this would reduce to 89 places. ECC would seek one 72-place setting and contributions for the remaining places generated. Given current provision, the new setting would best be located in Ashingdon at the current time. If this was provided as a stand-alone facility then it would require 0.22 hectares.
- Primary: The growth proposed in Ashingdon and Hockley is expected to generate the need for approximately 1FE of additional provision. Lower birth rates affect Rochford/Ashingdon and if this continues then around 0.5FE of need is likely to be capable of being accommodated within existing facilities. Three of the four primary schools serving this area have generous sites, which can each potentially accommodate a further 1FE if expansion is needed. In Rochford, taking into account existing unfilled capacity, development could require an additional 4FE of capacity. Land east of Rochford can be expected to generate a need for in excess of 2FE (including pupils beyond the Plan period) and should therefore accommodate 2.18 hectares for a new primary school incorporating EYCC provision. This could be co-located with any new secondary school delivered in the same location. In addition, Waterman Primary School has a substantial site which could facilitate expansion and there are options for

some smaller expansions at other schools to accommodate any remaining additional pupils.

- Secondary: The position is the same as for North of Southend, with land likely to be required to accommodate new secondary school provision. With development also likely within Southend’s area, cross border solutions may be appropriate. If it is assumed that around 3FE of the demand created during the Plan period will be managed in this way, there is still at least a further 3FE of demand that may need accommodating. Due to its reliance on a detached playing field, Greensward Academy has little expansion potential. Work is required to establish King Edmund School’s expansion potential, but it is likely to require additional land which could potentially come forward if development east of Rochford were taken forward as an allocation.

SEND

4.52 Table 4.5 summarises the RAG assessment relating to the need for SEND provision.

Table 4.5: Summary of SEND assessment (RAG)

Settlement: Location in relation to settlement	Rating
Hullbridge: North east	R
Hullbridge: South west	R
Hullbridge; South east	R
North of Southend	R
Great Wakering: South west	R
Great Wakering: South east	R
Rochford and Ashingdon: North east	R
Rochford and Ashingdon: East	R

Settlement: Location in relation to settlement	Rating
Rochford and Ashingdon: South west	R
Rochford and Ashingdon: South east	R
Hockley and Hawkwell: North east	R
Hockley and Hawkwell: South east	R
Rayleigh: North	R
Rayleigh: North west	R
Rayleigh: North east	R
Rayleigh: South east	R
Rayleigh: South west	R
Rawreth	R

4.53 The SEND assessment has identified the potential for an additional 152 pupils requiring an EHCP in mainstream schools and a further 94 requiring a special school placement. This would be significant enough to warrant new provision within a mainstream school and the expansion of an SEN school within the district via a satellite provision.

4.54 For growth beyond the plan period, this would mean a further 43 pupils in mainstream schools with an EHCP and 27 pupils with an EHCP in special schools which amplifies the need for additional capacity both in existing or new mainstream schools and the creation of a satellite special school.

4.55 As stated earlier, currently no mainstream schools in Rochford district host an Enhanced Provision. Any child or young person who requires such provision will have to travel to a school in another district. Any new mainstream school built in Rochford would require dedicated space for its own EHCP cohort drawn from the local population. However, the number of children and young people generated as a result of the overall growth tested (152 pupils in mainstream settings) would make it essential that enhanced provisions to meet the most prevalent presenting needs – autism, learning difficulties and social, emotional

and mental health needs – are developed within the district. Capacity in provisions in other districts is likely to be under greater pressure as a result of the growth in developments elsewhere. The space required for a resourced provision within a mainstream school will depend upon the type of need being met (e.g. autism, provision for deaf children) and their key stage. Primary resourced provision at present is typically between 8-15 children and provision at secondary schools would be a minimum of 15 children and young people. The facilities required will also depend upon whether the provision will be integrated (the children and young people spend more than 50% of their school day in mainstream lessons) or whether the provision is largely delivered in separate classrooms.

4.56 A resourced provision, as a minimum, would require an adaptive SEN classroom, resources/small sensory room, large sensory room, accessible hygiene room with toilet and shower, separate ambulant toilet, toilet with changing facilities, cleaners store and plant room. Recently delivered projects elsewhere in Essex have included remodelling of existing space as well as new build.

4.57 As stated earlier, there is currently no special school in Rochford district. A new special school for children and young people with severe learning difficulties is being developed in Rayleigh (at Wolsey Park, with a second site in South Woodham Ferrers) which has been planned for 252 pupils based on current requirements. The additional special school yield of 94 children and young people as a result of the overall growth tested could not all be accommodated at the new school (Wolsey Park including the second site). This is both due to their needs (the new school will not be appropriate for children and young people with moderate learning difficulties or social, emotional and mental health needs) and capacity. The physical capacity of the site in Rayleigh is sufficient only for the current requirements for the new school; there is no room for further expansion. Schools in neighbouring districts (particularly Glenwood in Castle Point and Pioneer in Basildon) are also at maximum site capacity.

4.58 It will be important that Rochford District Council works closely with Basildon, Castle Point and Southend-on-Sea Councils in order to establish the cumulative impact of the development in their emerging local plans against current and future SEN cohorts. As there is no physical capacity to expand existing schools it would be necessary for Rochford to identify a site for a new satellite special school to meet forecast need. The number of children and young people with an EHCP likely to be generated by the new developments in Rochford will not in themselves be large enough to warrant a new school but

will generate significant growth across the 3-19 cohort typically educated in special schools. Additional pupil yield from neighbouring boroughs combined with the lack of capacity in existing special schools (either in present buildings or on the site to accommodate an expansion) will mean a site to develop a satellite special school is necessary if ECC is going to be able to meet its statutory duties.

4.59 The size and site requirements for a new special school will depend upon the type of need being met. At present the greatest pressure being placed on capacity in Essex special schools is for children and young people with severe learning difficulties with provision for profound and multiple learning difficulties; this is likely to be a combination of ambulant and non-ambulant children and young people. The secondary special school being developed at South Woodham Ferrers is for 102 pupils (based on typical class sizes of 8). The school will be made up of classrooms, therapy space, group rooms, medical, staff room, library, dedicated educational learning rooms i.e. Food Tech, Drama, Music rooms, social areas and kitchen, administration offices, hall, and storage areas. In addition, there will be a need for outdoor spaces and car parking.

4.60 The minimum space requirements for special schools are set out in the Department for Education's Building Bulletin 104 [\[See reference 134\]](#) which recommends a minimum gross area via a formula. To illustrate: the internal space required for the 102-place school at South Woodham Ferrers is 2,690sqm; external areas will depend upon whether space for games is included in the design.

4.61 The current estimated budget required for a 100-place secondary special school is approximately £20 million.

Post-16

4.62 As explained earlier, with no post-16 colleges in Rochford district, many students commute to Southend to access this provision. With no specific post-16 provision identified in Rochford, it is expected that such provision will continue to meet the demands of Rochford residents. Contributions will be sought to address improvements to further education provision and/or specific employment and skills strategic priorities.

Adult learning

4.63 As explained earlier, ACL Essex provides all adult learning opportunities in Rochford district. It does so predominantly online, with a lack of outreach venues on Rochford limiting the ability to provide in-person learning. It will be important that new buildings such as schools can be designed so that they can act as suitable outreach venues.

Chapter 5

Health and wellbeing

Current context

Primary Care (GP) Services

5.1 Integrated care systems (ICSs) are partnerships that bring together NHS organisations, local authorities and others to take collective responsibility for planning health services, improving health and reducing inequalities across geographical areas for their local population. Integrated care boards (ICBs) are NHS organisations responsible for planning and commissioning health services. These were created following the dissolution of the clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) in July 2022. The ICS responsible for GP practices in Rochford District is the NHS Mid and South Essex Integrated Care System [**See reference 135**]. This replaced the five CCGs that previously existed, and serves a population of 1.2 million people, living across Braintree, Maldon, Chelmsford, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend, Thurrock, Basildon and Brentwood.

5.2 Nationally, GP practices have come together in groups of five or six to form Primary Care Networks (PCNs). In Castle Point and Rochford there are four PCNs. These are found in four locality areas – Benfleet, Canvey, Rayleigh, and Rochford. Within the wider South-East Essex area there is a total of eight PCNs, with the other four PCNs lying within Southend.

5.3 The practices in Rochford District are listed below in accordance with the PCN they lie in [**See reference 136**]. As of June 2024, primary care capacity, as informed by engagement with the Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB), is reported to be currently below the accepted national standards at all practices operating in the District. The capacity of practices in Rochford District provided by Mid and South Essex ICB in June 2024 are as follows:

Table 5.1: Capacity of practices in Rochford District

Surgery Name	PCN	Patients (weighted list size) [See reference 137]	Capacity (m²) [See reference 138]
The Puzey Family Practice	Rochford PCN	19,528	-866
Great Wakering Medical Centre	Rochford PCN	10,002	-65
Ashingdon Medical Centre	Rochford PCN	4,950	-89
Essex Group Practice	Rochford PCN	4,528	-55
Downhall Park Surgery	Rayleigh and District PCN	3,158	-75
Church View Surgery	Rayleigh and District PCN	13,037	-641
Audley Mills Surgery	Rayleigh and District PCN	19,007	-431
William Harvey Surgery	Rayleigh and District PCN	3,695	-52
The Greensward Surgery	Rayleigh and District PCN	6,605	-126
Riverside Medical Centre	Rayleigh and District PCN	7,324	-28

5.4 Figure 5.1 sets out the locations of GP surgeries within the District. Please note that a number of the practices referred to in the table above are split across a multiple sites meaning that the number of practices included in the

table do not match the number of sites shown in Figure 5.1. These practices are:

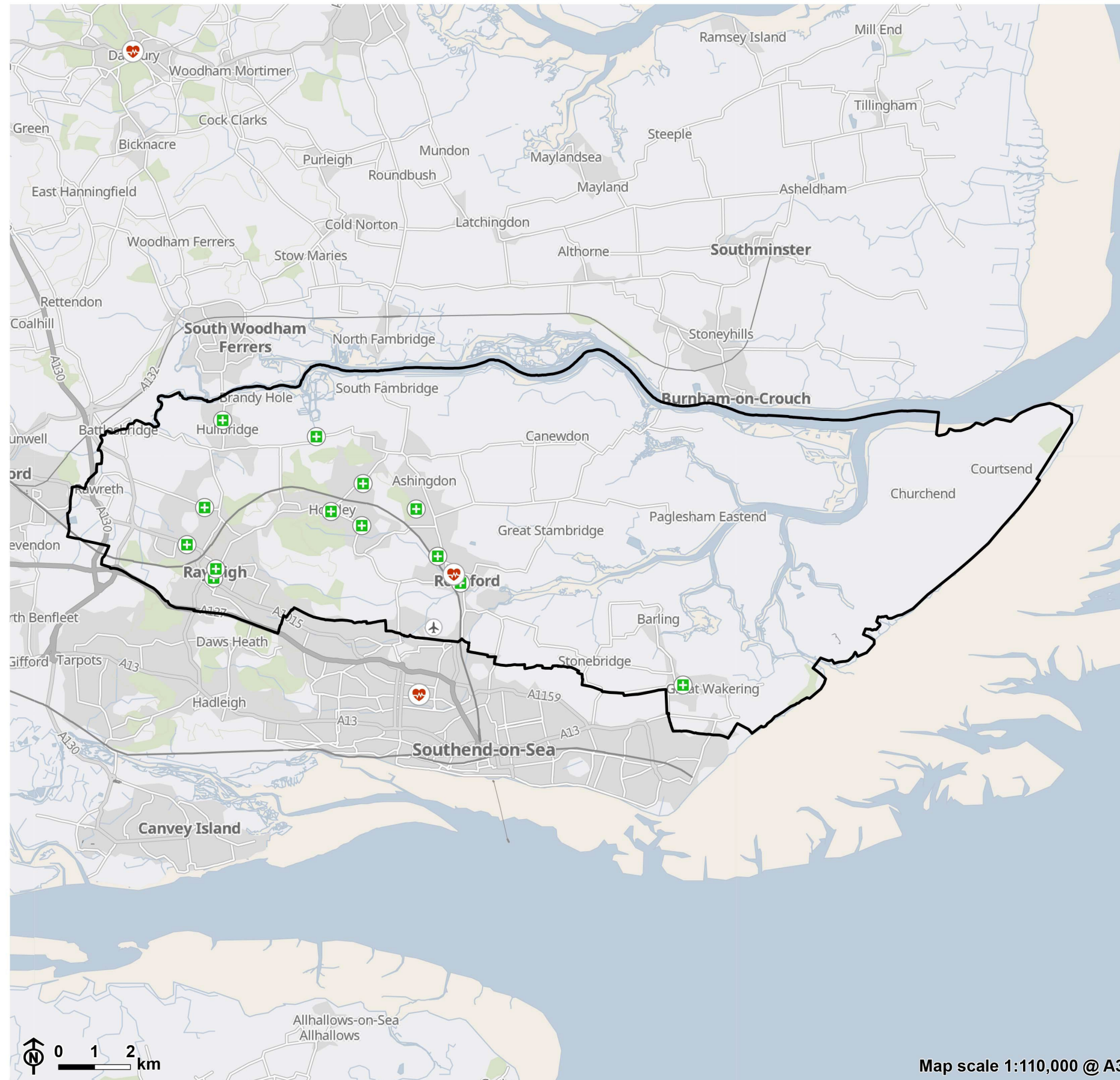
- Essex Group Practice which comprises Essex Group Practice, The Practice, Hawkwell; and Essex Group Practice, The Practice, Leecon Way, Rochford.
- Ashingdon Medical Centre which comprises Ashingdon Medical Centre, Main Surgery in Ashingdon; and Ashingdon Medical Centre, Dome Branch Surgery to the north of Hockley.
- Church View Surgery which comprises Church View Surgery, Rayleigh; and Church View Surgery, Hockley.

Figure 5.1: Health and wellbeing



Figure 5.1: Health and Wellbeing

- ▭ Rochford District Council boundary
- 🏥 Hospital
- 🏠 GP Surgery



5.5 The Mid and South Essex ICS Integrated Care Strategy 2023-2033 [\[See reference 139\]](#) recognises that local health and care systems are operating beyond capacity. The strategy states that what have been typically regarded as ‘winter pressures’ are now evident year-round, with demand for health and social care services increasing exponentially, outpacing funding provided from Central Government to both the NHS and local authorities. It further states that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and workforce pressures have created unprecedented waiting lists. In many areas, such as consultant-led referrals and cancer diagnosis and treatment, it has caused significant backlogs and consequential impacts on quality of life for individuals. The strategy considers that pressure on primary care, children’s and adult social care, and urgent and emergency services is ‘extreme’.

5.6 The strategy recognises a mismatch between demand and capacity, with an aspiration to invest in early intervention and prevention being hindered by requirements to prioritise urgent and emergency care and support and a desire to give equal value to all system players hindered by the dominance of key system players such as the NHS or adult social care [\[See reference 140\]](#).

5.7 The Mid and South Essex ICS have also published a Primary Care Strategy [\[See reference 141\]](#). The strategy states that there are currently around 3,500 staff working within primary care in mid and south Essex (December 2020 data). Of these 23% are GPs (including Registrars and Locums), 13% Nursing, 10% Direct Patient Care and 54% Admin staff. Under the ARRS, a further 477 full-time equivalents (FTEs) are planned to be employed by 2024. This is the local contribution to the national commitment of 26,000 additional FTEs by 2023/24 in General Practice. Whilst the additional roles will strengthen the primary care workforce there are a number of challenges facing the current workforce.

5.8 The Mid and South Essex Health and Care Partnership has one of the most significantly challenged primary care workforces in the country with approximately one third of GPs forecast to retire in the next five years which is significantly higher than the national average of 22%. In addition, 43% of Nurses, 33% of Direct Patient Care staff and 48% of admin staff could retire over the next 10 years.

5.9 December 2020 data showed that only 69% of permanent GPs in mid and south Essex are Partners and these numbers were in decline with a decrease of 6 GPs (3 FTEs) between June and September 2020 [\[See reference 142\]](#). This point is important to consider given that Partners will invest in a practice whereas salaried GPs will not. More recent data shows there has been a slight

improvement in GP numbers across mid and south Essex with the numbers of GPs (including trainee GPs) increasing from 635 full-time equivalents in April 2023 to 656 in February 2024 [\[See reference 143\]](#).

Hospitals

5.10 The only hospital located in Rochford District is Rochford Community Hospital, which is managed by the Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust. There are, however, a number of hospitals located in neighbouring districts which serve Rochford District residents in the following locations:

- Westcliff-on-Sea: Southend University Hospital
- Chelmsford: Broomfield Hospital
- Basildon: Basildon University Hospital
- Braintree: Braintree Community Hospital, St Michael's Hospital, and William Julien Courtauld Hospital; Halstead Hospital.

5.11 In addition to hospital care, The Urgent Community Response Team (UCRT) is part of the Mid and South Essex Community Collaborative, a partnership between Provide CIC, North East London NHS Foundation Trust and Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust. It is a community team that will help patients stay at home when they are feeling unwell, rather than be transferred to hospital. The UCRT service is designed with a 'home first' ethos and will provide specialist, nurse-led care in people's own homes [\[See reference 144\]](#).

5.12 GP services and hospitals will need to reconfigure their care infrastructure to cope with pressures that healthcare systems face. The Mid and South Essex ICS identify the following as key issues that change must address [\[See reference 145\]](#):

- Population growth by 14.7% over the 15-year period to 2039.
- The gap in life expectancy in some areas is as much as 12 years between the wealthiest and most deprived neighbourhoods.
- Life expectancy varies from 78.3 years if you are male living in Thurrock to 84.7 years if you are female living in Brentwood.
- Demand for health and care services has grown faster than the funding provided from central government.

- An ageing population with one in seven people aged over 75 by 2039.
- Increasing demand for services, including more people needing GP services, A&E and social care.

Dentists

5.13 There are a number of NHS and private dental practices listed by the NHS in the District. These are Bupa Dental Care and Lee and Associates in Rayleigh, Oak Dental Care in Rochford and Hockley Dental Care and Mr. Schnell in Hockley.

5.14 The Primary Care Strategy states PCNs will support collaboration amongst organisations, groups and individuals who positively impact on their population's health and wellbeing. As well as primary medical services and general practice, this includes other significant incumbent providers of health and care, education providers, major employers, the third sector and community groups. PCNs are seen as a vehicle to bring together the wider network of primary care providers including community pharmacists, optometrists and dentists.

Community pharmacies

5.15 There are a number of community pharmacies listed by the NHS in Rochford District [[See reference 146](#)]. These include:

- Rowlands Pharmacy, Great Wakering;
- C Percy Ltd, Hockley;
- Chemicrest Pharmacy, Hockley;
- Hockley Pharmacy, Hockley;
- Elmswood Pharmacy, Hockley;
- Patient Choice, Hockley;
- Ferry Pharmacy, Hullbridge;
- Boots, Rayleigh;
- Audley Mills Pharmacy, Rayleigh;
- Grange Pharmacy, Rayleigh;
- Hambro Pharmacy, Rayleigh;

- Yardley Chemist, Rayleigh;
- WELL, Rochford;
- Rochford Pharmacy, Rochford;
- Golden Cross Pharmacy, Rochford and
- Nutan Pharmacy, Rochford.

5.16 As well as being able to dispense prescriptions, sell over-the-counter medicines and give advice and treatment for everyday health conditions to Rochford District residents, in January 2024 their community pharmacy powers were expanded by the Rochford District PCN's Pharmacy First initiative, which allows patients to get treatment for seven common conditions directly from their local pharmacy, without the need for a GP appointment or prescription [See reference 147]. This new service was launched to give patients quick and accessible care and ease pressure on GP services. Notably however, in July 2023 the Health and Social Care Committee commissioned a review of the evidence for the effective implementation and appropriateness of the Government's policy commitments relating to pharmacy services in England. Evidence shows that demand for community pharmacy services has increased significantly with community pharmacies struggling to deliver services within the existing funding model, or even to remain open [See reference 148]. These findings may have significant implications for community pharmacy services in Rochford District.

Social care

5.17 Social care for both adults and children is provided by ECC who also has responsibility for making specific provision towards built infrastructure for care services such as extra care.

5.18 City, Borough and District Councils in Essex are responsible for securing contributions from developers towards affordable housing but ECC has responsibilities for housing some vulnerable groups and will work with local authorities on how these responsibilities can best be met. In order to deliver its aims and duties, ECC seeks to develop a range of supported living options and to commission services to support people to remain living independently for as long as possible [See reference 149].

5.19 ECC's overarching commitments for the County from 2021 to 2025 are set out in Everyone's Essex. This includes in relation to housing as well as children's social care and residential social care [See reference 150]. The

approach to housing in the County is set out in the ECC Housing Strategy 2021-2025 [\[See reference 151\]](#). In light of ageing population in Essex the strategy seeks to ensure that new housing growth is:

- designed to be accessible;
- adapted to become accessible to meet the changing needs of residents, especially as they age; and
- has support and care available for those who need it, provided by people and technology.

5.20 The approach to ensuring that the right type of care is available to help prevent, reduce and delay care and support needs, enable people to access information and advice about available services, and ensure that there is a range of high-quality care and support services to choose from is set out in ECC's Adult Social Care Business Plan 2024-2030 [\[See reference 152\]](#). The plan aligns with the approach of the Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy [\[See reference 153\]](#) which seeks to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes for people of all ages in the County.

5.21 Furthermore, the Essex Design Guide [\[See reference 154\]](#) includes guidance to address the promotion of healthy lifestyles, including the through the provision of healthcare provision within new communities and encouraging developments to employ the principles of Building Regulations Part M4 Category 2 (Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings) so as to promote independent living.

5.22 The specific strategic approach to addressing problems for children, young people and facilities is set out in the Essex Children and Young People's Plan [\[See reference 155\]](#). The approach is organised under three key priorities: parenting; children and young people with SEND; and emotional wellbeing and mental health. The County also benefits from a Co-Parenting Strategy [\[See reference 156\]](#) to support children in care as well as those who have left care.

5.23 ECC's Adult Social Care Market Shaping Strategy 2023-2030 [\[See reference 157\]](#) sets out ECC's market shaping responsibilities and the approach to shaping and supporting the care market to meet the needs of Essex residents. The vision for the strategy seeks to enable people to be able to live their lives to the fullest, maximise their independence, wellbeing, choice and control and to have access to a place called home and opportunity to engage in meaningful activities. The Adult Social Care Market Position Statement [\[See reference 158\]](#) sets out how ECC sees demand for care and

support changing in the next few years and the service provision required to meet this demand.

5.24 The strategy finds that there is an increasing trend for people to be supported at home, in their community and this is expected to continue. There are fewer people choosing residential and nursing care, with those who do move into a care home having higher levels of complexity later in life. Demand for supported living and extra care housing therefore is increasing.

Retirement/sheltered and extra care housing

5.25 ECC commissioned the Housing Learning and Improvement Network (LIN) in 2024, in relation to housing need forecasting research for people who meet the Care Act criteria and those who do not, but may do so in the future. The Supported and Specialist Housing and Accommodation Needs Assessment 2025 (SSHANA) provides insights in relation forward forecasting housing need data by cohort, tenure, and specialist and supported housing type [See [reference 159](#)].

5.26 The SSHANA 2025 identifies that there are 8,866 older people aged 65+ who draw on adult social care support from ECC as of September 2024. This is just under 2% of the whole population aged 65+ in Essex. The majority (61%) are living at home, while 39% reside in residential or nursing care. By 2044, the SSHANA forecasts that this number will rise to 11,790 people aged 65+, an increase of 33%.

5.27 ECC's aim is to keep these people living in their own homes for as long as possible, with this proportion increasing by 6% in 2023 and 10% in 2024 (source: SSHANA 2025). This can be in the following types of specialist and supported housing:

- Retirement/sheltered housing: Housing restricted to older residents, though ECC is not a developer, provider or commissioner of such accommodation. Sheltered housing is provided by social and not-for-profit landlords such as housing associations at social or affordable rents. Retirement housing is the equivalent to sheltered housing provided usually by private for-profit companies where residents purchase a leasehold property or pay a market rent. Residents in sheltered schemes will typically have a lower level of support need, but may be supported by carers in their family, privately funded carers or ECC commissioned carers under an agreed personal care package.

- Extra care housing: Housing which provides 24/7 access to on-site care and support for adults, many of whom may also have care and support needs met by Adult Social Care as part of ECC's duties under the Care Act 2014. This can also be known as 'assisted living' or 'retirement villages' by private sector providers.

5.28 The SSHANA 2025 states that there is the following provision of supported and specialist housing and accommodation in Rochford:

- Retirement/sheltered housing – 1,152 units (7% of Essex total)
 - For sale/shared ownership – 466 units (40% of Rochford district total)
 - Social/affordable rent – 686 units (60% of Rochford district total)
 - New over-55s housing (63 units) and sheltered apartments (34 units) are under construction in Rochford (Rocheway).
- Extra care housing – 30 dwellings (3% of Essex total)
 - Social/affordable rent - 100% of Rochford district total
 - A new 60-unit scheme is under construction in Rochford (Rocheway).

5.29 The SSHANA has used national data to model the estimated additional need for retirement/sheltered housing and extra care housing by 2039 (one year short of the end of the plan period) in Rochford district:

- 757 retirement/sheltered housing units (78% market housing, 22% affordable/social housing). This is an increase of 66% on current provision.
- 460 extra care housing units (73% market housing, 27% affordable/social housing). This is a more than 15-fold increase on current provision.

5.30 For affordable extra care housing, ECC expects schemes to be a minimum of 60 apartments up to a maximum of 100 apartments.

5.31 Based on the delivery of a scheme in North Essex in 2024, the indicative cost of construction of an extra care scheme per unit is £266,667 at 2024 prices. This is based on a 60-apartment scheme, of which 90% meets Part M4(2) (accessible and adaptable dwellings) and 10% meets Part M4(3) (wheelchair accessible) of the Building Regulations, costing £16 million.

Care homes

5.32 There are two main types of care home, residential care and nursing care. Nursing care homes have at least one registered nurse on site 24/7, and can

therefore cater for people with needs that require nursing attention. Residential homes will call in routine and emergency medical support from other agencies (e.g. GPs or district nurses) as required. Some care homes provide both residential and nursing care. All care homes provide accommodation, 24-hour personal care, meals, meaningful social and wellbeing activities. Care homes can be for older adults and/or working age adults.

5.33 Care home provision is market-led and is not run or owned by the public sector. Many care homes do not accept ECC-funded older people. Indeed, care homes with vacancies often draw people from outside the area. As stated earlier, the minority of people drawing on adult social care from ECC live in care homes.

5.34 There are currently 9 care homes in Rochford district. Of these, 7 are residential care homes providing 342 beds. The other two are nursing care homes, providing 71 beds. The SSHANA identifies that, as of March 2025, 68% of Rochford district's capacity was filled (recognising that there should always be a 10% allowance to meet fluctuating local needs such as varying hospital discharge rates). Whilst this percentage is lower than all other districts in Essex, ECC's Market Position Statement acknowledges that there is an over-supply of registered residential care homes in the market [\[See reference 160\]](#). Since 2019 a total of 24 care homes have closed in Essex, although none have closed in Rochford district.

5.35 Across Essex, the SSHANA identifies a clear increase in nursing care use and a corresponding decline in residential placements by ECC. The SSHANA expects this increase in the proportion of nursing care beds compared with residential care beds to continue over the plan period. It considered that in Rochford district there will be a need for a further 70 residential care beds and 119 nursing care beds by 2039.

Day centres

5.36 Day centres are an important part of the provision of adult social care in Essex. Day opportunity sessions offer people who need care or assistance the chance to continue to pursue their passions or discover new ones, stay as physically active as they can and engage in meaningful social interactions and activities. Day opportunities can be provided in or use a centre/building as a base for activities as well as in the wider community.

5.37 There are currently 6 day opportunity providers/centres in Rochford district.

5.38 Commissioners are at present reviewing day centre provision for adults and older people across Essex, as buildings are having to meet increasingly complex needs. A focus of the work includes opportunities for co-location with other services, be this either refurbishment of existing buildings or new build. Many existing properties are small and potentially not suited to conversion to meet modern needs.

5.39 It would be expected that large scale new development would include provision for new community buildings. This would create the opportunity for co-location of services which could include day opportunities.

5.40 At the present time, the precise needs for day centre provision are not available and it will be necessary to update this in future iterations of the IDP.

Mental Health

5.41 Residents of Rochford District are able to access mental health services through a referral from their GP [[See reference 161](#)]. Local services recommended by Rochford District Council also include Therapy For You, a free NHS counselling and talking therapy service for people in south Essex and South East and Central Essex Mind. The Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUT) also provides a range of mental health support services within Rochford District and neighbouring districts, enabling residents to be treated by community and the inpatient mental health team. ECC has commissioned a Mental Health Supported Accommodation model and pathway across North East and West Essex and also Mid and South Essex. As the findings of the model are made available, detail will inform future iterations of the IDP.

Key delivery organisations

- GP surgeries (Rochford District Primary Care Network)
- Day centres
- Mid and South Essex Integrated Care System
- Essex County Council (youth services, public health and adult social care)
- NHS England - Midlands and East (East)
- NHS Property Services Limited
- South Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust

- Southend University Hospital
- Basildon University Hospital
- Rochford Community Hospital

Funding

5.42 Funding for GPs currently comes from the Improvement Grant – a nationally allocated grant based on evidence of need submitted by GPs. This covers 66% of the cost of the improvements, with the GPs having to resource the remainder from their own funds or fundraising. Developer contributions can be used where these are justified, for example where large-scale new development is being provided such as a new town.

5.43 Funding for hospitals and mental health services is allocated on a national basis by the NHS.

5.44 Funding for dentists is generally private, with support from the NHS.

5.45 Funding to help address homelessness largely comes from Rochford District Council as well as charities and voluntary organisations.

5.46 Developer contributions can be used to deliver specialist and supported housing and grants may also be available through Homes England to support the delivery of specialist and supported housing where these are provided as affordable housing units.

Rochford infrastructure planning approach

5.47 NHS Mid and South Essex ICB will assess planning applications for the effect they have on primary healthcare provision within the healthcare catchment of the proposed development. The capacity of a general practice (whether there is a surplus or a deficit) is a factor of the net internal area in square metres (m²) occupied by the practice and the size of the practice list.

5.48 If an enhancement of existing facilities or new provision is deemed to be required related build costs must also be factored in, such as:

- Base build cost.
- Externals allowance.
- Preliminaries.

- Risk allowance such as general price and design risk.
- Construction risk allowance.
- Contractor's overheads and profit.
- Fit out allowance such as general equipment/ IT/ data.
- Professional fees.
- Contingencies.

5.49 Engagement with the ICB indicates that from recent experience a new primary care surgery with a net internal area of 1,000m² serving around 15,000 patients costs in the region of £4,000,000. However, this figure will vary from site to site and over time.

5.50 The Essex Design Guide Healthier Places Guidance provides the Essex Planning Officers' Association Health Impact Assessment guide information [\[See reference 162\]](#) on what broadly needs to be considered for healthy placemaking. Sport England Active Design principles are embedded throughout the guidance. Applicants should utilise Health Impact Assessments and submit these with planning applications to offer a greater understanding of what considerations their scheme has had for health, wellbeing and the environment as part of their development proposal. This will ensure there is a wider focus on health and well-being rather than just on primary healthcare provision and general practice.

5.51 New residential development will be expected to contribute towards the provision of additional health care infrastructure generated by its population growth where there is insufficient existing capacity, this must be well located to serve the development. This may include financial contributions and/or the provision of land and buildings to enable the provision of GP surgeries and other health facilities to serve the local population, or the upgrading or extension of existing facilities in some locations.

5.52 Where new residential development will generate a need for care and support, ECC's preference is large-scale development to deliver a proportionate provision of supported and specialist housing for predicted care and support needs arising. Where new accommodation cannot be provided on-site, ECC will liaise with LPAs to secure financial contributions that enable capital funding for new SSH accommodation on alternative sites. ECC currently has a focus on development of specialist supported living schemes for adults with complex learning disabilities and autism and development of new extra care schemes primarily for older people. Essex Housing LLP, wholly-owned by ECC, has an

active development programme and growing pipeline for such schemes [See reference 163].

5.53 Other health and wellbeing services are, generally, not funded through developer contributions although there may be some cases where a development can deliver benefit to health and wellbeing services which is not through direct funding (such as replacement of a building).

Key infrastructure planning matters arising from potential development

Primary care services

5.54 Engagement with infrastructure providers has provided some key headlines in terms of the opportunities and constraints arising from different magnitudes of growth at each settlement with existing capacity issues presently identified at all settlements in the District.

5.55 The actual cost of providing new GP floorspace will depend on the specific project costs which would need to be investigated.

Table 5.2: Summary of primary healthcare infrastructure needs assessment (RAG)

Settlement: Location in relation to settlement	Rating
Hullbridge: North east	R
Hullbridge: South west	R
Hullbridge; South east	R
North of Southend	A
Great Wakering: South west	A
Great Wakering: South east	A
Rochford and Ashingdon: North east	R

Settlement: Location in relation to settlement	Rating
Rochford and Ashingdon: East	R
Rochford and Ashingdon: South west	R
Rochford and Ashingdon: South east	R
Hockley and Hawkwell: North east	A
Hockley and Hawkwell: South east	A
Rayleigh: North	A
Rayleigh: North west	A
Rayleigh: North east	A
Rayleigh: South east	A
Rayleigh: South west	A
Rawreth	A

North of Southend and Great Wakering

5.56 For growth north of Southend, primary care infrastructure capacity does not exist to accommodate the demand from new homes. Acute care capacity is also stretched. Increased capacity will be needed over the Plan period and beyond. The growth during the plan period (1,500 dwellings) would generate the need for approximately 257m² of GP surgery space at a current estimated cost of £1.1m. For the scale of growth beyond the plan period (3,500 dwellings), this would generate the need for 600m² of GP surgery space at a current estimated cost of £2.6m. Therefore the total growth of 5,000 dwellings would require 857m² of surgery space at a cost of £3.7m.

5.57 Extending existing surgeries will not achieve the capacity increase that is required. A new health centre will therefore be required. To be viable, new health centres usually have a minimum net internal area (NIA) of 700m², although it is preferable that they either have an NIA of 1,000m² or are capable

of being extended from 700m² to 1,000m². Such health centres can serve residents from around 4,000 and 6,000 homes respectively. As such, the growth during the plan period would be insufficient to justify the provision of a new health centre. However, if this growth were to be accommodated through extensions to existing surgeries, the growth remaining beyond the plan period may be insufficient to justify the provision of the new health centre. Therefore, the identified need for a health centre reflects the growth North of Southend during and beyond the plan period.

5.58 It should be noted that if it were proposed to expand existing GP surgeries to support growth North of Southend, a large part of this area would be outside the catchment of any existing GP surgeries in Rochford. It is therefore possible that such an approach would require expansion of GP surgeries in Southend-on-Sea City. In this regard, development at this location should be considered together with development in Southend. The scale of cumulative growth during the plan period could support the provision of a new surgery to serve new residents in both areas.

5.59 Growth in Great Wakering is currently served by a single surgery, the Wakering Medical Centre. This is operating with 82m² less space than the recommended standard. Acute care capacity is also stretched. The 970 dwellings being tested in Great Wakering during the plan period would create a need for around 169m² of new GP surgery space. With the further 180 dwellings beyond the plan period, this would increase to 200m². The cost of providing these additions would be approximately £840,000.

5.60 The scale of growth proposed is well short of that required to justify provision of a new medical centre. There is potential to extend Wakering Medical Centre but any form of extension to the premises would reduce car parking. The deliverability therefore of a suitable scheme would need to be investigated further and would need to take into account both the proposed growth and the existing shortfall in space, i.e. a total growth of 282m².

Rayleigh and Rawreth

5.61 Sufficient primary care infrastructure capacity does not exist to accommodate the demand from new homes in Rayleigh and Rawreth. Acute care capacity is also stretched. At present, the GP practices in the Rayleigh and Rawreth area have 1,149m² less space than the recommended standard.

5.62 In total in Rayleigh and Rawreth, 5,155 dwellings have been tested over the plan period. This would create a need for approximately 883m² of GP

surgery space at a current cost of £3.8m. For the scale of growth beyond the plan period (670 dwellings), this would generate the need for 115m² of GP surgery space at a current estimated cost of £491,000. Therefore, the total growth of 5,825 dwellings would require 998m² of surgery space at a cost of £4.3m.

5.63 There may opportunities to expand existing premises but given the large scale of development a new healthcare facility is likely to be required. Indeed, the growth during the plan period would be sufficient to merit provision of a new medical centre, albeit this could be affected by the phasing of the sites making up the growth in this location. The growth beyond the plan period would be sufficient to merit an extension to any new medical centre. although whilst this would likely prove more cost efficient, it may be challenging to secure the contributions from developments coming forward after the plan period if that were a source of funding such provision.

5.64 For growth in Rawreth (1,500 dwellings during the plan period and 500 dwellings beyond the plan period), development at this location should be considered together with development in Basildon district. The scale of cumulative growth during the plan period could support the provision of a new surgery to serve new residents in both areas.

Hullbridge

5.65 In Hullbridge, the catchments of four GP practices include one or more of the proposed development sites. The combined capacity of their surgeries is currently 562m² below the recommended standard. There is therefore no existing capacity to cater for development. The conversion of a former estate agents to a branch surgery for the Riverside Medical Centre is planned and if successful, will add 137m² NIA. This will reduce the existing space deficit to 425m² but will not achieve excess capacity to accommodate growth.

5.66 In total in Hullbridge, 1,500 dwellings have been tested over the plan period. This would create a need for approximately 257m² of GP surgery space at a current cost of £1.1m. This is well short of the minimum requirement to deliver a new medical centre. However, the existing surgeries do not present obvious opportunities for expanding capacity. Further work will be needed to identify options to address the needs arising from growth.

5.67 It should be noted that, when combined with the existing shortage of space, the new requirements would total 819m² and would therefore justify provision of a new medical centre. However, developer contributions could not

be sought from new development towards the cost of addressing the existing deficit in provision.

Rochford and Ashingdon

5.68 In Rochford and Ashingdon, the four GP practices serving the area have 1,132m² less space than the recommended standard. Acute care capacity is also stretched. There is therefore no existing capacity to cater for development.

5.69 In total in Rochford and Ashingdon, 2,925 dwellings have been tested over the plan period. This would create a need for approximately 501m² of GP surgery space at a current cost of £2.1m. For the scale of growth beyond the plan period (500 dwellings), this would generate the need for 86m² of GP surgery space at a current estimated cost of £365,000. Therefore, the total growth of 3,425 dwellings would require 587m² of surgery space at a cost of £2.5m.

5.70 All existing primary care sites in this area are constrained and so a new surgery is likely to be required to meet the needs of additional patients from the dwellings proposed. The total amount of space, including growth beyond the plan period would normally be insufficient to justify such provision. However, the lack of potential for expansion of existing GP surgeries, coupled with the existing shortfall in provision (requiring 1,132m² to meet recommended standards) would clearly justify provision of a new medical centre. It should be noted though, that developer contributions could not be sought from new development towards the cost of addressing the existing deficit in provision.

Hockley and Hawkwell

5.71 Sufficient primary care infrastructure capacity does not exist to accommodate the demand from new homes in Hockley and Hawkwell. Acute care capacity is also stretched. At present, the GP practices in the Hockley and Hawkwell area have 1,474m² less space than the recommended standard.

5.72 In total in Hockley and Hawkwell, 975 dwellings have been tested over the plan period. This would create a need for approximately 167m² of GP surgery space at a current cost of £712,000.

5.73 The scale of growth proposed is well short of that required to justify provision of a new medical centre. There may be potential to expand existing premises but this would need to be investigated further. However, taken together, addressing the needs arising from growth and the existing shortfall

would justify the provision of a new medical centre. It should be noted that developer contributions could not be sought from new development towards the cost of addressing the existing deficit in provision.

Chapter 6

Utilities and Flooding

Utilities

Current context

Water supply

6.1 Essex and Suffolk Water (ESW) is responsible for providing Rochford District with fresh drinking water. ESW resource water from four Water Resource Zones (WRZs), of which Rochford District falls into the Essex WRZ. Water in this WRZ comes from local rivers such as the Chelmer, Blackwater, Stour, and Roman River which support winter storage reservoirs at Hanningfield and Abberton and treatment works near Maldon, Stratford St. Mary, Chelmsford, and Colchester. In a drought year, only 33% of the water supplied to Rochford District comes from within the Essex WRZ, with the rest being transferred in from outside the area.

6.2 ESW is deemed by the Environment Agency to operate in an area of serious water stress. Serious water stress is defined in the Water Industry (Prescribed Conditions) Regulations 1999 as where ‘the current household demand for water is a high proportion of the current effective rainfall which is available to meet that demand; or, the future household demand for water is likely to be a high proportion of the effective rainfall which is likely to be available to meet that demand’. Local authorities can use the water stress determination to inform whether they can require a stricter standard of 110 litres per head per day in new developments. Notably, the Future Homes Hub’s Water Ready [\[See reference 164\]](#) working group has recommended a roadmap for future standards for litres per person per days as being between 80 and 90 litres per head per day from 2025 to 2035 in seriously water stressed areas. This approach reflects the direction of travel and trend towards tighter standards mapped out through the Environment Improvement Plan [\[See reference 165\]](#) and Plan for Water [\[See reference 166\]](#).

6.3 Engagement with the Environment Agency indicates that groundwater abstraction to meet current needs of the population is already in some cases causing ecological damage to Water Framework Directive (WFD) designated

waterbodies (including chalk streams where applicable). There is a risk of causing deterioration in the ecology if groundwater abstraction increases.

6.4 The Water Strategy for Essex 2024 [See reference 167] brings together respective water supply and management information and strategies, at a countywide level as recommended in the Essex Climate Action Commission Report [See reference 168]. This is to provide a holistic view of water management across the county for the next 5 to 10 years. The focus is on reducing demand for water, changing land use for water and future water supply options. ECC anticipate that the strategy could be used by Rochford District Council in relation to the water scarcity issues, with recommended actions to inform preparation of the Local Plan. It is noted however that the Strategy does will not replace the need for the preparation of a Water Cycle Study to inform the new Local Plan.

6.5 ESW's Water's Revised Water Resource Management Plan 2024 (WRMP24) [See reference 169] sets out how they will make sure they can continue to deliver clean, clear drinking water over the next 25 years and beyond, even in the most extreme of droughts, while protecting and enhancing the environment. The WRMP24 focuses on managing demand (leakage reduction, metering and improving water efficiency), protecting and enhancing the environment and increasing supply. To increase supply, the Plan outlines schemes to increase the supply of water available to the Essex region. While these schemes sit outside of the study area, they remain relevant to the District.

- Southend Water Reuse Scheme – ESW would purchase wastewater from Anglian Water. Once treated this would discharge very clean water from the water recycling plant into Hanningfield Reservoir where it would mix with reservoir water before being taken into water treatment works (WTWs) to be made clean as normal and safe to drink. This scheme is only needed if customer demand, known as Per Capita Consumption (PCC), does not come down in the coming years as quickly as ESW are forecasting. ESW will review PCC every June and decide in 2026 whether this scheme is needed.
- Linford Water Treatment Works – ESW will build a new WTW to treat water from both an existing and a new borehole. A borehole is a deep, narrow well that taps into naturally occurring underground water. This scheme will be complete by 2030.
- Langford and Langham Nitrate Removal – ESW will build a new nitrate removal process at Langham and Langford WTWs in Essex. This is because the nitrate concentrations in river water during the autumn and

winter are staying elevated for longer. Nitrate is a naturally occurring compound formed from nitrogen and oxygen atoms. It occurs naturally in all surface water and ground water although higher concentrations tend to occur only where fertilisers are used on neighbouring land. To make sure ESW can continue to meet the very strict drinking water quality standard for nitrates, they seek to install new processes to remove it.

- Langford WTW Upgrade – In addition to the nitrate removal scheme, ESW are planning to build a new process using clarifiers (settling tanks generally used to remove solid particles from liquid) to help treat water from the Abberton reservoir. ESW will also install UV (Ultra Violet) to eliminate cryptosporidium which is present in river water.

6.6 The Water Cycle Study for South Essex [See reference 170], conducted in 2011, revealed that 18% of surface waters in the Anglian River Basin District achieved a minimum of ‘Good’ status. The majority of the remaining 82% (681 water bodies) failed to achieve ‘Good’ status due to high phosphate levels. With regards to groundwater bodies 65% achieved ‘Good’ status with the remainder being rated as ‘Poor’. However, it should be noted that this evidence is considered to be out of date and requires updating.

6.7 Rochford District lies within the Essex Combined Management Catchment (Crouch and Roach Operational Management Catchment), which contains eight main water bodies categorised as rivers, canals and surface water transfers. However, four are of relevance to Rochford District [See reference 171]:

- Eastwood Brook
- Noblesgreen Ditch
- Prittle Brook
- Roach

6.8 In terms of water quality, these water bodies achieved moderate ecological water quality and failed to achieve good chemical water quality status [See reference 172]. Five sectors were identified as the principal reasons for not achieving good status: agriculture and rural land management, urban and transport, local and central government, water industry and ‘other’.

Wastewater treatment

6.9 Wastewater services in Rochford District are provided by Anglian Water. The Anglian Water Integrated Plan [See reference 173] sets out the key issues

arising in relation to the treatment of water. These include increased water usage per capita as more people are working from home and a higher number of pollution incidents than Government targets provide for. The high number of pollution incidents reflects the ageing infrastructure in place and the company's pollution incident reduction plan sets out significant ambitions to improve infrastructure in order to reduce leaks. A pollution incident task force has been set up to specifically address this issue [\[See reference 174\]](#).

6.10 There are three main Water Recycling Centres (WRCs) in Rochford District. The sewer catchments for these are contained within the district. These slightly cross into Southend. The main WRCs are Rochford, Rayleigh East and Rayleigh West which cover a number of larger settlements in Rochford District:

- Rochford WRC covers Rochford, Hawkwell, Hockley, Ashingdon and Great Wakering.
- Rayleigh East WRC covers east of Rayleigh and the area north of Southend.
- Rayleigh West WRC covers west of Rayleigh and Hullbridge.

6.11 There are also smaller centres in Rochford District at Foulness Church End and Paglesham East End.

6.12 The following centres in neighbouring local authorities are also of relevance in relation to the potential cross boundary implications of development:

- South Woodham Ferrers (Chelmsford District);
- Burnham on Crouch (Maldon District);
- Wickford (Basildon Borough);
- Southend (Southend-on-Sea)
- Basildon (Basildon Borough); and
- Benfleet (Castle Point District).

6.13 Anglian Water's Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan [\[See reference 175\]](#) sets out how wastewater systems, and the drainage networks that impact them, are to be maintained, improved and extended over the next 25 years to ensure they are robust and resilient to future pressures. The plan acknowledges the role SuDS and other traditional strategies can play in relation to removing surface water from the sewerage system. Further detail is provided in relation to SuDS in the 'Flooding and drainage' section of this report. The

plan also sets out the strategic direction for water recycling and the main WRCs relevant to Rochford District:

- Rochford WRC - By 2035 (medium term plans) Rochford WRC seeks to increase its capacity. By 2050 (long term plans), it seeks to utilise proactive maintenance and increase surface water removal by 10%.
- Rayleigh East WRC – By 2035 Rayleigh East WRC seeks to incorporate a mixed strategy with a main solution of SuDS (it is noted that Anglian Water are keen to use nature-based solutions where possible - in line with the SuDS Design Guide for Essex [See reference 176] - so catchments will use SuDS and traditional infrastructure). By 2050, it seeks to increase surface water removal by 10%. Further to this, ECC as the lead local flood authority (LLFA) is seeking the implementation of separate SuDS schemes in town centres in Rochford to move away from the reliance on combined sewers.
- Rayleigh West WRC – By 2035 Reyleigh West WRC seeks to incorporate a mixed strategy with a main solution of SuDS. By 2050, it seeks to increase its capacity and increase surface water removal by 25%.

6.14 The Environment Agency has overall responsibility for setting limits to, monitoring and regulating discharges to watercourses from WRCs.

Electricity

6.15 Electricity is distributed nationally by National Grid through high voltage transmission lines and infrastructure (at 275 and 400 kilovolts [kV]). Local electricity distributors distribute from national grid infrastructure to properties using lower voltage lines (typically 33kV overhead or 11kV underground). Electricity in Rochford District is distributed by UK Power Networks.

6.16 National Grid's high voltage electricity overhead transmission lines / underground cables within Rochford District that form an essential part of the electricity transmission network in England and Wales include the following [See reference 177]:

- 4VB line - 400kV route from Braintree substation in Braintree to Rayleigh substation in Rochford
- ZT line - 132kV route from Bradwell substation in Maldon to Rayleigh via Rayleigh substation in Rochford
- PJA line - 132kV route from Rayleigh substation in Rochford to Rayleigh

- PJB line - 132kV route from Rayleigh substation in Rochford to Rayleigh

6.17 Rochford District is served by Rayleigh substation – 400kV and 132kV. From here, further transmission infrastructure distributes electricity to premises.

Gas

6.18 National Grid distributes gas around the UK at high pressure. This is distributed on a local basis by eight different distribution networks, some of which are owned by National Grid. Rochford District is served by National Grid Gas Distribution Ltd.

Broadband and telecoms

6.19 A Digital Strategy for Essex [[See reference 178](#)] was launched in 2022 aiming to boost digital connectivity and tackle digital exclusion across the county. It identifies four goals to achieve by the end of 2025. These include:

- Superfast speeds available at all premises in Essex.
- Gigabit-capable services available at more than 85% of premises in Essex.
- 4G services available across 99% of the Essex geography.
- 5G services available at all key employment locations and in identified priority areas.

6.20 High speed internet is provided either through cables or masts (for example mobile phone masts). Telecoms provided through cables are defined as ‘fixed’ telecoms whilst the network of transceivers mounted on masts or tall buildings is often categorised as ‘mobile’ telecoms.

6.21 Fixed telecoms are provided by commercial suppliers. In Rochford District, broadband providers include Sky, BT, PlusNet, EE, NOW Broadband, TalkTalk and Vodafone, and there will also be other commercial operators. These companies supply individual premises with connections however due to legacy issues relating to the infrastructure which is already in place and when this installed data speeds can often be lower in some areas than others.

6.22 The House of Commons Library publishes information about broadband coverage and speeds at the constituency level. This shows that as of January 2024, in the east of the District (covered by the constituency Southend East and Rochford) there is a significantly higher percentage of properties capable of

receiving services that deliver speeds of 1 gigabit per second (94.2%) than in the west of the District (covered by the constituency Rayleigh and Wickford, where the figure is 66.0%). Average download speeds in the east of the District (151.8 Mbps) are slightly higher than the national average 151.3Mbps, while those reported in the west are lower at 129.1Mbps. Both parts of the District are reported to have a lower percentage of lines that receive speeds lower than 10Mbps (2.8% in the east and 2.2% in the west) than the national average of 3.6% [\[See reference 179\]](#).

6.23 CityFibre, the UK's largest independent full fibre platform and third-largest network provider in the UK, after Openreach and Virgin Media, has recently delivered a multi-million-pound investment in Rochford and Rayleigh's digital infrastructure. In all CityFibre invested £25m in a new network for the area to bring fast and reliable full fibre-enabled internet services within reach of almost every home and business in the Rochford District. There may be future investment in the area in future and in May 2024 City Fibre acquired another broadband provider called Lit Fibre to expand its coverage and become a stronger competitor in the market. City Fibre's future build plans in the area in and around Rochford are fluid for the foreseeable future.

6.24 Digital Essex (previously called the Superfast Essex Programme) ensures that new, faster services, delivered by gigabit-capable or 5G technology, reaches everyone in Essex. Currently it is forecasted that the commercial rollout of fixed line gigabit-capable broadband will only reach 80% of Essex, with potential for the hardest-to-reach areas to be left behind. Digital Essex is collaborating with the Government through Project Gigabit [\[See reference 180\]](#). This is a national plan with £5 billion funding behind it to deliver fixed line gigabit capable broadband across the country. Through the programme ECC aims to exceed 85% gigabit coverage by 2025 and achieve superfast speeds at all premises in the County. The Project Gigabit programme is now focusing on the hard-to-reach communities. Building of fibre connectivity to these harder to reach premises is expected to start in June 2025 with completion by the end of 2030.

6.25 The South Essex Councils (SEC) Digital Programme has also secured funding from Highways England to deliver a SEC-wide Internet of Things (IOT) long range wide area network (LoRaWAN). This will fully leverage SEC digital infrastructure and its connectivity into public sector buildings across the region [\[See reference 181\]](#).

6.26 Delivery of a SEC IOT LoRaWAN is likely to attract significant investment into the region. It will provide a digital platform to:

- support delivery of public services through the deployment of sensors and collection of data across SEC;
- enable SEC to share data with local businesses.

6.27 A Dark Fibre (DF) network is essentially unused fibre optic cables with no service or traffic running on it – an unlit Point-to-Point connection. DF is being rolled out across South Essex, including to Rochford District. The DF network will provide lanes for investment and avenues for other fibre carriers. The cost of getting into Rochford District is otherwise prohibitive as carriers would alternatively have to build a network. Dark fibre also plays an important role as a motorway to attract wider investment from private operators.

6.28 In Rochford District there are four licensed operators that delivery mobile connectivity: VMO2, EE (acquired by BT), Vodafone and Three. These operators have rooftop sites, shared sites and individual sites but operators' masts deliver different coverage.

6.29 Mobile coverage in the east of Rochford District is poorer than in other parts of the District [[See reference 182](#)]. Whilst there is 5G coverage in Rochford District by VMO2, EE, Vodafone and Three it is noted that this is coverage not capacity. There is no 5G capacity in the District and 4G capacity is more limited in its eastern areas. Typically, 4G expansion into new areas is delivered through the installation of additional large masts but in partial coverage or high traffic areas mobile network operators are seeking to add more radios to densify their networks; densification is predominantly happening in more urban areas. 5G coverage expands through the installation of 5G radios onto existing network assets. It should be noted that 5G coverage has a much smaller footprint than 4G and therefore 5G networks require much denser provision of radios to deliver services.

6.30 Notably, there is a shortfall of reliable data for mobile coverage UK-wide. Mobile coverage (referring to the area where a device can obtain network access) is based on desktop projections and largely used as marketing material rather than reliable and utilisable data. This data does not include capacity (it refers to the amount of traffic a network can handle and its corresponding speeds). It is obtained from mobile operators and is not considered to be reliable for informing policy or new development.

6.31 Generally, all new residential, commercial developments and other appropriate developments / uses must be served by a gigabit broadband connection to the premises and 4G / 5G mobile connectivity [[See reference 183](#)]. Connectivity should include the installation of appropriate cabling within

the homes or business units (or other buildings) as well as a fully enabled connection of the developed areas to at least one open access network provider, enabling future occupiers to subscribe to gigabit broadband services without the need for further engineering work. Where connectivity is not currently available suitable ducting that can accept gigabit-cable broadband and/or 5G connectivity should be provided to the public highway or other suitable location.

6.32 Additional consideration in and around Rochford District should be given to ensuring that new dwellings have access to 4G and 5G mobile services. Unlike fixed line broadband this will require the Council to undertake early engagement with the mobile network operators (Vodafone, EE, VMO2 and Three) to ensure that they provide the necessary mobile mast infrastructure with supported planning permission by the local authority. This approach is likely to be more successful than trying to secure planning after the builds are completed. When considering 4G/5G mobile services, adding additional premises is likely to increase the demand from residents for the existing mobile network capacity. Without new mast infrastructure existing connectivity for all in the region may deteriorate. It is generally expected that mobile network operators will deliver new infrastructure in response to market demands as new developments are planned, delivered and occupied.

Delivery organisations

Water supply and wastewater treatment

- East and Suffolk Water
- Anglian Water

Electricity and Gas

- National Grid
- UK Power Networks

Telecoms

- Gigaclear
- CityFibre
- Various commercial providers

- Essex Superfast Broadband

Funding

Water supply and wastewater treatment

6.33 Funding for water supply and water treatment processes comes generally from the commercial operations of the relevant water companies. Where new development comes forward the expectation is that the development will provide for the cost of new infrastructure. Anglian Water and ESW maintain schedules of connection charges applicable to developments [See reference 184], [See reference 185]. For non-household growth there may be additional charges if investment is needed to accommodate non-domestic flows in the Anglian Water networks or at WRCs.

6.34 Engagement with Anglian Water (wastewater treatment) has revealed that processes are mainly funded by water bills and funding from developers for trade effluence connections. Developers also pay for modelling and upgrades to the WRC.

Electricity and Gas

6.35 Funding for electricity and gas infrastructure comes generally from the commercial operations of the relevant companies and from government funding for major upgrades. Where new development comes forward the expectation is that the development will provide for the cost of new infrastructure [See reference 186], [See reference 187].

Telecoms

6.36 Funding for telecoms generally comes from the commercial operations of the relevant companies, although national and local government funding is also used to deliver services which are less viable to reach (such as the Superfast Essex programme).

6.37 Where new connections are needed as a result of development, a connection charge is usually applied. These are different across the service providers.

6.38 Enhancing mobile network coverage is affected by funding is made by the mobile network operators in response to market forces. The business case for expansion is harder to make in rural areas where there are fewer resident customers. Growth must be of a very significant scale (usually developments of over 5,000 residential units) to guarantee engagement from at least one of the mobile network operators. Direct investment into coverage that might otherwise help to address gaps in existing coverage is subject to stringent subsidy control monitoring due to the highly competitive nature of the mobile market in the UK.

Rochford infrastructure planning approach

6.39 The ECC's Developer's Guide to infrastructure contributions sets out that applicants are expected to contribute to the certain types of infrastructure required to mitigate their development impacts.

Water supply and wastewater treatment

- The funding of infrastructure will come from the commercial operations of the relevant companies and from government funding for major upgrades. New development will be expected to provide for the cost of new infrastructure. Each potential development site will require a water supply and treatment infrastructure assessment during the planning stage.
- Increased home working in the District may be reflected in per capita water consumption. Water efficiency measures in new developments are therefore increasingly important.

Electricity and Gas

- The growth in the emerging Local Plan may have impacts on the area's electricity grid, with contributions being sought for any required upgrades to grid infrastructure resulting from development.
- Reinforcement associated with demand growth as a result of development set out in the plan will be attributable to UK Power Networks following Ofgem's requirements for RIIO-ED2. The RIIO-ED2 sets the outputs that the 14 electricity Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) need to deliver for their consumers and the associated revenues they are allowed to collect for the five-year period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2028. The costs would account for extension and sole use assets only in respect of the specific infrastructure required for each individual connection to the network.

Broadband and Telecoms

- Market forces can result in new developments being fitted with broadband but the emerging Local Plan can improve access to gigabit speed broadband by including planning requirements for development proposals. The Essex Design Guide SPD contains guidance on planning for 5G and digital connectivity (focussed on fixed line broadband connections) and states that planning policies should seek to ensure the:
 - provision of digital connectivity;
 - flexibility to adapt to changing technologies for residential, commercial, leisure, and community properties.

Key infrastructure planning matters arising from potential development

Water supply and wastewater treatment

6.40 The key issue in relation to water supply is the over-abstraction of ground and surface water which already occurs. The Environment Agency is undertaking a review of abstraction licences across the country in order to help address these issues [See reference 188]. Whilst the water company plan sets out that the district can be supplied by bringing in water from elsewhere, this is partly dependent on abstractions in surrounding districts, many of which are facing the same issue, or upon infrastructure which does not yet have consent and will not be available for 15 years. Further discussions will be held with the water companies to ensure that long term supplies, during and beyond the plan period, are robust.

6.41 The assessment of water supply infrastructure in relation to the low, medium and high growth options considered by development location is set out below.

Table 6.1: Summary of water supply infrastructure needs assessment (RAG)

Settlement: Location in relation to settlement	Rating
Hullbridge: North east	G

Settlement: Location in relation to settlement	Rating
Hullbridge: South west	G
Hullbridge; South east	G
North of Southend	G
Great Wakering: South west	G
Great Wakering: South east	G
Rochford and Ashingdon: North east	R
Rochford and Ashingdon: East	R
Rochford and Ashingdon: South west	G
Rochford and Ashingdon: South east	G
Hockley and Hawkwell: North east	A
Hockley and Hawkwell: South east	A
Rayleigh: North	R
Rayleigh: North west	R
Rayleigh: North east	R
Rayleigh: South east	G
Rayleigh: South west	G
Rawreth	G

6.42 Engagement with ESW indicates that the growth options in Hullbridge, Great Wakering, south east and south west Rochford, North of Southend, south east and south west Rayleigh and Rawreth would not create any fundamental issues. The level of growth tested at north east Hullbridge is close to a threshold

– if there were 10% more housing proposed in this location then this would require ESW to upgrade the distribution mains due to the velocities nearing the internal threshold of 1m/s.

6.43 In Hockley and Hawkwell, issues of insufficient capacity have been identified and the delivery of the infrastructure required is considered challenging given that it would trigger a reduction of pressures in the existing network. Whilst mains upgrades would be required, these are considered to relate to a scale of growth that merits an amber assessment.

6.44 In north east and east Ashingdon/Rochford, there are low pressures in the existing network, necessitating mains upgrades due to the velocities and headloss exceeding the recommended level. Given the scale of growth, these upgrades would be likely to be significant, therefore a red rating has been given.

6.45 The growth in north, north west and north east Rayleigh requires upgrades to the strategic mains and existing pump sets in order to guarantee adequate pressures. This warrants a red rating. Moreover, the scale of growth tested is close to a threshold – a 10% increase in growth in these locations could result in a drop in the reservoir level, potentially necessitating additional storage.

6.46 ESW has noted that these scales of growth in the most sensitive locations potentially create the need for a larger reservoir at Stevens Farm.

Waste Water Treatment

6.47 In terms of treatment, the key issue is the reduction of pollution events which the relevant water companies are already taking action on.

6.48 Engagement with Anglian Water indicates that there is sufficient headroom in Rochford District's three main WRC (Rochford East, Rayleigh and West Rayleigh) to accommodate the high, medium and low growth options being considered. The existing WRCs accommodate existing developments in Rochford District and have capacity to accommodate the range of different growth options assessed.

6.49 The assessment of wastewater infrastructure in relation to the low, medium and high growth options considered by development location is set out below.

Table 6.2: Summary of wastewater infrastructure needs assessment (RAG)

Settlement: Location in relation to settlement	Rating
Hullbridge: North east	G
Hullbridge: South west	G
Hullbridge; South east	G
North of Southend	A
Great Wakering: South west	G
Great Wakering: South east	G
Rochford and Ashingdon: North east	G
Rochford and Ashingdon: East	A
Rochford and Ashingdon: South west	G
Rochford and Ashingdon: South east	G
Hockley and Hawkwell: North east	G
Hockley and Hawkwell: South east	G
Rayleigh: North	G
Rayleigh: North west	G
Rayleigh: North east	G
Rayleigh: South east	G
Rayleigh: South west	G
Rawreth	R

6.50 Engagement with Anglian Water indicates that carbon efficiencies of four to ten times relating to the operation of facilities associated with wastewater treatment can be achieved by delivering growth at scale. Schemes delivering over 2,000 homes (estimated as supporting a population of 5,000) can achieve such efficiencies compared with developments below this quantum. In addition, larger growth schemes have opportunities to deliver strategic green/blue infrastructure and overall betterment in terms of minimising flood risk (particularly arising from surface water run-off) and enhancing biodiversity (to align with Local Nature Recovery Strategy ambitions), resulting in improved resilience. That said, this does not mean that all large scale options are given a green rating and all smaller scales of growth an amber or red rating. As shown in the table, all development options in Hullbridge, Great Wakering, Hockley and Hawkwell and Rayleigh are recorded as green, given that the infrastructure required to support growth can be provided. Also, all growth in Rochford and Ashingdon with the exception of the eastern option have also been assessed as green. All such developments may require a sustainable point of connection (SPOC) to the Anglian Water network in order to avoid hydraulic overloading which would otherwise could lead to adverse impacts on the environment and local amenity.

6.51 The growth option at North of Southend lies within or adjacent to two WRCs (Rochford and Southend). The quantum of growth within and beyond the plan period, available capacity at the WRCs and the most feasible SPOC will all be significant factors in determining the most appropriate foul drainage strategy for the site. In terms of Southend WRC, capacity would need to be considered alongside the growth being proposed in the emerging Local Plan for the Southend-on-Sea City Council. An achievable solution is considered to be likely but based on the uncertainty as to what is required and the importance of planning for long term, i.e. post-plan period, growth, the option has been assigned an amber rating.

6.52 The eastern option in Rochford and Ashingdon lies within the Rochford WRC catchment. There is currently capacity to accommodate growth in the short/medium term but depending on which WRC catchment the site North of Southend connects into, a future growth scheme at Rochford WRC may be required. For this reason it has been assigned an amber rating.

6.53 For growth at Rawreth, the closest WRC catchment is Wickford WRC which currently has no capacity to accommodate growth. To achieve this growth, more land is required. There was no funded growth scheme in AMP8 (2025-30) as Wickford WRC was removed from the list of WRC growth schemes in the Anglian Water Business Plan by Ofwat at the Final

Determination stage. Anglian Water is working constructively with Basildon Borough Council to explore opportunities for funding of infrastructure at Wickford WRC to support growth. Given this uncertainty, it has been assigned a red rating.

Electricity and Gas

6.54 There are a number of pressures on the electricity infrastructure arising from the presence of more and smaller generating stations, such as solar farms and even micro-generation on homes and other premises. As such, electricity distributors are already investing in more dynamic grid infrastructure to account for this.

6.55 Another key issue will be the anticipated move away from gas as an energy source, which is likely to result in increased demands on the electricity network. The implications of increased home working arising from the COVID-19 pandemic are also likely to result in more resources being utilised than previously.

6.56 Electric vehicles are likely to result in greater demand for electricity, smart charging will be vital to ensure that such peaks are reduced but it is still anticipated that the demand for electricity will increase [\[See reference 189\]](#).

6.57 The assessment of electricity infrastructure in relation to the development options considered by settlement is set out below. Where a 10% increase or decrease in the housing number at each location could result in a change to the infrastructure requirements at each location, this is set out in the text below the table.

Table 6.3: Summary of electricity infrastructure needs assessment (RAG)

Settlement: Location in relation to settlement	Rating
Hullbridge: North east	G
Hullbridge: South west	G
Hullbridge; South east	G
North of Southend	G

Settlement: Location in relation to settlement	Rating
Great Wakering: South west	G
Great Wakering: South east	G
Rochford and Ashingdon: North east	G
Rochford and Ashingdon: East	G
Rochford and Ashingdon: South west	G
Rochford and Ashingdon: South east	G
Hockley and Hawkwell: North east	G
Hockley and Hawkwell: South east	G
Rayleigh: North	G
Rayleigh: North west	G
Rayleigh: North east	G
Rayleigh: South east	G
Rayleigh: South west	G
Rawreth	G

6.58 Engagement with UK Power Networks indicates that electricity infrastructure would not constitute an obstacle regardless of the growth option being considered. Any future works on UK Power Networks need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis depending on specific requirements being considered at each site. Once Rochford District Council is able to confirm the specific supply requirements, UKPN will undertake formal reinforcement works within the works within the required timeframes to allow network capacity to be available when needed.

6.59 Gas use is expected to decline in Rochford District as with the rest of the UK, as consumers transition to more sustainable forms of energy. The UK

Government considers that hydrogen may be a replacement for gas and has set out its hydrogen strategy. The key implications of this for Rochford District are to ensure that 'hydrogen ready' technology is used where new or replacement equipment such as boilers are installed, potentially by 2026. In future the current gas transmission network may be used for hydrogen, but changes are likely to be required before this can occur. The timescales for this are unclear.

Telecoms

6.60 Higher speed telecoms are essential in helping to address the key issues of climate change by offering people the opportunity to access services and employment from home, and also to make sure that businesses in Rochford District can operate nationally and globally if desired.

6.61 The rural nature of Rochford District which results in a dispersed settlement pattern creates difficulties in delivering high speed internet to commercial operators. While some Government funding is being leveraged by Digital Essex, it will be important for additional funding to be secured so that the prompt rollout of higher speeds can be progressed to support growth in the plan area.

6.62 Connectivity to fixed infrastructure telecoms and broadband is higher than the national average across Rochford District. Furthermore, the proportion of premises capable of receiving services delivering speeds of 1 gigabit per second is significantly higher in the east of the District. There is also a lack of reliable data on mobile coverage nationwide and within Rochford District which impedes accurate planning and resource allocation. Mobile coverage in the east of Rochford District is noted to be poorer than in other parts of the District.

6.63 Given the scale of development considered for each option, it is anticipated that the majority will be viable for higher speed internet through market providers, alongside proposals under the Digital Essex Strategy. Engagement with ECC indicates that developers should ensure gigabit fibre connectivity from at least one supplier, preferably more to offer choice to new residents. It is expected that this would be achieved by developers as part of their build programme.

6.64 In relation to mobile phone coverage, new development across the District may need to be supported by mobile infrastructure and additional mobile mast(s) to allow for increased coverage and/or capacity. Funding for enhancing mobile network coverage and capacity is made by the mobile network operators in response to market forces.

6.65 Given that all options are expected to be viable for higher speed internet and mobile coverage and capacity will be most influenced by market forces, individual assessment of the options considered is not presented.

Flooding and drainage

Current context

6.66 Responsibility for flood risk management and drainage in Rochford District is shared between ECC, the Environment Agency, the wastewater treatment company (Anglian Water) and Highways England. As LLFA, ECC is a statutory consultee and responsible for coordinating the management of flood risk across Rochford District from flood sources arising from surface water, ground water and ordinary watercourses. The Environment Agency has a responsibility for the condition of the main rivers that are situated within the District, as well as responsibility for managing flooding associated with these rivers. Anglian Water and Thames Water are responsible for addressing flooding impacts from the sewerage system. Given its role as highways authority and LLFA, Southend-on-Sea City Council is the neighbouring flood risk management authority to the south of Rochford District. There is a need for close partnership working between Rochford District Council and Southend-on-Sea City Council in relation to flood risk, given the cross-boundary flows.

6.67 The District is located on the coast in the Anglian River Basin District (RBD). The Anglian RBD comprises land that is within three management catchments in Rochford District: Anglian Groundwater (GW), Anglian Transitional and Coastal (TraC) and Essex Combined.

6.68 There are 31 operational catchments in the Anglian GW, with Essex Gravels being the one Rochford District water body in this catchment which has poor overall status. The Essex Gravels groundwater body is not used for public water supply but does support a number of uses including a significant number of small domestic supplies. It is classified as secondary aquifer.

6.69 The Anglian TraC management catchment has eight operational catchments. The Essex water body and Crouch water body are two of nine water bodies in the Essex TraC operational catchment that falls within Rochford District. These two water bodies have moderate ecological status.

6.70 The Essex Combined management catchment has five operational catchments within its area. Crouch and Roach operational catchment is the

operational catchment that falls within Rochford District. This catchment contains eight water bodies, all of which are of moderate ecological status. Water bodies that fall within Rochford District and form part of this catchment are the Roach, Noblesgreen Ditch, Eastwood Brook and Prittle Brook.

6.71 River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) are required under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and must document the baseline classification of each waterbody, the objectives, and a programme of measures to achieve those objectives. A primary WFD objective is to ensure 'no deterioration' in environmental status, therefore all water bodies must meet the class limits for their status class as declared in the Anglian RBMP [\[See reference 190\]](#). Another equally important objective requires all water bodies to achieve good status. Future development needs to be planned carefully so that it helps towards achieving the WFD and does not result in further pressure on the water environment and compromise WFD objectives.

6.72 In 2011 Rochford District Council prepared a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Level 1 and 2 Final Report [\[See reference 191\]](#). Parts of the District are at significant residual risk of flooding from tidal sources. In addition, fluvial systems also pose a risk to parts of Rochford District. Mapping in the SFRA and any updates being undertaken as part of the new Local Plan can be used by the Council to continue to inform and update the development of Emergency Response and Evacuation Plans for the existing development and occupants throughout the District. The results from the increased scope Level 2 SFRA confirmed that the District is at risk of flooding from tidal sources.

6.73 The South Essex Level 1 SFRA report (2018) was produced to inform risk of flooding at the sub-regional level [\[See reference 192\]](#). This confirmed that tidal and fluvial flooding pose the most significant flood risk to the Rochford District. Risk of tidal flooding is present along the shoreline with the North Sea and the River Crouch estuary. Furthermore, large areas of Flood Zone 3 (covering 44% of the total District area) are present in the east of the District as well as along the Rivers Crouch and Roach. This means that land to the east and north of Great Wakering as well as land to the north of Hullbridge and to a lesser extent Hockley and Ashingdon is constrained by areas of high flood risk. While the areas at risk are protected by the presence of defences, these areas are still at residual risk of flooding if the defences were to fail or to be overtopped. Modelling for climate change allowances at 25%, 35% and 65% shows a minimal increase in the flood outline near to Rochford Station, to the south of the Hawkwell Brook, south of the Hockley Brook, the western edge of Noblesgreen Ditch to the north of Rayleigh and the western part of the Eastwood Brook to the south of Rayleigh. Surface water flood risk in the

Rochford District is predominantly located around the watercourses located within the District.

6.74 The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) [\[See reference 193\]](#) sets out ECC's aims and actions to reduce the impact of local flooding to local communities. This includes mapping local routes for water and building flood defences. The 2012 South Essex Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) [\[See reference 194\]](#) presents an overview of surface water flooding, risk to existing properties, risk to future development and an action plan for the area in relation to key actions. The plan presents a summary in relation to these topic areas for Rochford District. The results of modelling for the SWMP were used to identify Critical Drainage Areas (CDAs) to denote an area or catchment where multiple or interlinked sources of flood risk cause flooding during a severe rainfall event, affecting dwellings, businesses and/or infrastructure and where mitigation measures may be implemented to reduce the impact of flooding. Information on the coverage of CDAs in South Essex (including Rochford District) was subsequently updated by information presented in the 2020 Sustainable Drainage Systems Design Guide for Essex [\[See reference 195\]](#). The guide identified 11 CDAs in Rochford District which represent large areas, some of which extend beyond the ECC administrative boundary into the Southend-on-Sea City Council area. The CDAs are supported by the South Essex Surface Water Management Plan Action Plan [\[See reference 196\]](#) which identifies LLFA actions for each CDA.

6.75 An overview of surface water flooding in Rochford District is provided as follows:

- Surface water flooding is driven predominantly by the topography relating to the river channels of the River Roach, River Crouch and tributaries of these. Areas of localised flooding can in most cases be attributed to local topographic depressions or obstructions in the flow of surface water; in particular where discharge of fluvial systems conveying surface water (main rivers and ordinary watercourses) is limited by tide locked conditions and/or limited pumping capacities.
- There are a number of main rivers that flow through Rochford District. These are mainly tributaries of the Tidal River Roach and the Tidal River Crouch. As a result, a large proportion of the District falls within the Environment Agency's fluvial and tidal Flood Zones 2 and 3. Flood risk is notably greater within the eastern parts of the District. Many areas including Watery Lane, Great Stambridge and Ashingdon are vulnerable to surface water flooding as well as fluvial and tidal flooding combined [\[See reference 197\]](#).

- There are several incidences where transport infrastructure obstructs the overland flow paths of the surface water causing the accumulation of surface water behind the structures.
- The historical flood records suggest that the recorded surface water flooding incidences are mainly due to inundation of the surface water drainage systems and under-capacity of ordinary watercourses during high intensity rainfall events.
- The greatest surface water flood hazard is associated with the steep sloping topography from the area of high elevation passing through the western boundary of the administrative area, and the lowest elevations where surface water flooding depths are considerable.

6.76 The Sustainable Drainage Systems Design Guide for Essex [See reference 198], in line with the national CIRIA SuDS Manual, provides the LLFA's design standards for developers, designers and consultants to comply with the LLFAs requirements in the design of sustainable surface water drainage in Essex. It provides details of the standards and guidance on the planning, design and delivery of attractive and high-quality sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) schemes which should offer multiple benefits to the environment and community.

6.77 The delivery of SUDs can benefit green infrastructure and nature recovery including biodiversity net gain, in addition to providing support for water management and quality. Paragraph 182 of the NPPF is clear that SuDS should provide multifunctional benefits wherever possible, through facilitating improvements in water quality and biodiversity, as well as benefits for amenity [See reference 199]. The range of potential benefits associated with multifunctional SuDS are set out in the NPPG [See reference 200] and include:

- Amelioration of urban heating and air pollution
- Replenishment of groundwater resources
- Contribution to biodiversity net gain targets
- Capture and re-use of rainwater
- Carbon storage
- Reduction of the need for carbon-intensive construction techniques and pumped systems
- Releasing capacity in combined sewerage systems and at wastewater treatment works

- Creation and connection of valuable areas of blue-green infrastructure

6.78 ECC LLFA is a partner in the Essex Local Nature Recovery Partnership to ensure that there is linkage between the provision of green and blue infrastructure and nature-based flood and water management solutions (including water scarcity). The approach to green infrastructure in Rochford District is set out through the South Essex Strategic Green and Blue Infrastructure Study [See reference 201] which is supported by the Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy [See reference 202] and Green Infrastructure Compendium [See reference 203]. The standards set out in these documents can be applied to education, sports, outdoor facilities and transport as well as flood and water management.

6.79 In January 2023 Defra set out a review into the implementation of Schedule 3 of The Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The review set out the creation of a parallel SuDS Approval Body (SAB) process assigning this role to local authorities; the requirement for mandatory SuDS on all new developments of two houses or more; and a framework for SuDS approval and national standards [See reference 204]. Defra will be consulting on the next steps, with the related provisions not yet in force. The recommendations are to reduce the risk of surface water flooding, pollution by alleviating pressures on traditional drainage and sewerage systems, to ensure implementation of SuDS to help mitigate and adapt to climate change, future growth and development with multiple benefits of reducing flood risk, improve water quality and grey water harvesting, to meet future needs.

6.80 As set out in the wastewater section, both Thames Water and Anglian Water have recorded pollution incidents (i.e., localised flooding) on their networks which are in excess of the Environment Agency standards. Both organisations have set out ambitions to improve infrastructure to significantly limit these pollution incidents. Where intensification is proposed in town centres ECC as the LLFA requires new development to separate out surface water management from combine sewers. This approach which supports the provision of SuDS in new development can assist in reducing the risk of flooding and pollution by alleviating pressures on the sewerage systems. As alluded to in the previous paragraph, this approach can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change with multiple benefits relating to reducing flood risk, improving water quality and rainwater harvesting.

6.81 Coastal areas of Rochford District are covered by the Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan (SMP8) [See reference 205]. The District contains land that falls within the Crouch and Roach Estuaries 'H' and

Foulness, Potton and Rushley Islands 'I' subsections. At most locations covered by the SMP, the approach is to hold the current shoreline throughout the plan period. At locations along the Rover Crouch and River Roach, in the medium term, it is identified that new defences will be required to protect some communities, including at Paglesham Churchend. Engagement with the Environment Agency indicates that flood defences should be maintained in the Rochford District. The hold the line policy is advocated by Environment Agency with partnership funding potentially required to maintain flood defence infrastructure.

Delivery organisations

- ECC – Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)
- Environment Agency
- Anglian Water
- Essex and Suffolk Water (Northumbrian Water)

Funding

6.82 The majority of funding for flood risk management infrastructure schemes comes from either Environment Agency or ECC based on the outcomes of cost-benefit analysis. Where large or strategic schemes are required, government funding can also be collected. If new development will benefit from such a scheme, developer contributions may also be collected towards it. ECC can advise that where new development is located within a CDA, opportunities should be taken to deliver betterment over existing greenfield rates to reduce flood risk to existing residential properties where this is practical to do so, in accordance with the paragraph 182 of the NPPF and Essex Sustainable Drainage Systems Design Guide [\[See reference 206\]](#). It is acknowledged that there is only a requirement to mitigate against the impacts of new development, however ECC encourage developers to work with the LLFA on identifying opportunities to identify flood risk to existing communities and to seek advice from them on what grant funding might be available.

6.83 The ECC's Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions [\[See reference 207\]](#) highlights that SuDS are a requirement of the NPPF for major developments and all developments in a flood risk area. There is also a need to ensure that there is a viable option for the maintenance of SuDS and to ensure

that SuDS can be implemented and do not fall into disrepair which may result in flooding.

6.84 ECC advises that, where possible and in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations, they will seek developer contributions to support the delivery of flood mitigation schemes within CDAs.

Rochford infrastructure planning approach

6.85 In accordance with the NPPF, developments must mitigate flood risk arising from all sources within their site and ensure no increase in off-site flood risk for surrounding areas. As LLFA, the ECC will need to be involved in discussions surrounding flood risk as set out within the Sustainable Drainage Systems Design Guide for Essex and the Developer's Guide to Infrastructure Contributions.

Key infrastructure planning matters arising from potential development

Flooding and drainage issues within Rochford

6.86 SFRA work for the District highlights significant tidal and fluvial flood risks. There is a risk of surface water flooding mostly associated with watercourses. Land to the west of Great Wakering, as well as land within and surrounding the settlements of Rayleigh, Rochford/Ashingdon, Hockley/Hawkwell and Hullbridge falls within CDAs. Furthermore, some of the land at the North of Southend location also fall within a CDA.

6.87 Engagement with ECC drainage officers indicates that there are specific areas, such as that surrounding Eastwood Brook and parts of the east of the District, that require drainage enhancements. Developments in Rochford District should mitigate on-site flood risks and prevent increased flooding in surrounding areas. Green infrastructure solutions are also advocated to address flooding and enhance water quality.

6.88 The assessment of flooding and drainage infrastructure in relation to the development options considered by settlement is set out below. Where a 10% increase or decrease in the housing number at each location could result in a change to the infrastructure requirements at each location, this is set out in the text below the table.

Table 6.4: Summary of flooding and drainage assessment (RAG)

Settlement: Location in relation to settlement	Rating
Hullbridge: North east	G
Hullbridge: South west	G
Hullbridge; South east	G
North of Southend	G
Great Wakering: South west	G
Great Wakering: South east	A
Rochford and Ashingdon: North east	G
Rochford and Ashingdon: East	G
Rochford and Ashingdon: South west	A
Rochford and Ashingdon: South east	A
Hockley and Hawkwell: North east	G
Hockley and Hawkwell: South east	G
Rayleigh: North	G
Rayleigh: North west	G
Rayleigh: North east	G
Rayleigh: South east	G
Rayleigh: South west	G
Rawreth	G

6.89 The new Rochford Local Plan will direct new development away from areas of higher flood risk through its consideration of sites for allocation and any development management policies. It is expected that the design and layout of sites can be achieved to help minimise and mitigate the potential for risk of flooding from fluvial sources and surface water. Engagement with ECC as the LLFA identified that developments should incorporate a suitable SuDS strategy, that will need to be approved by the LLFA. The strategy will need to reduce site runoff to greenfield rates and maintain the existing water quality in accordance with the Essex SuDS Design Guide, 2020.

6.90 Considering the options at the settlement level, it is clear that there is potential for development within CDAs at all locations, apart from Great Wakering and Rawreth. Given the extent of fluvial risk in the east of the District and the potential for flooding associated with the confluence of the Eastwood Brook and the Rivers Crouch and Roach, there is potential for flood risk to act as a more notable constraint to the south of Rochford/Ashingdon and to the east of Great Wakering. Therefore options to the south east and south west of Rochford and Ashingdon and to the south east of Great Wakering are recorded as amber reflecting the potential need for increased infrastructure provision to address flood risk.

Chapter 7

Infrastructure funding

7.1 Funding is a critical element of infrastructure delivery and there are a variety of funding opportunities which are available, or likely to become available, to support infrastructure delivery. This chapter reviews potential funding mechanisms which may be used to deliver infrastructure.

Developer Contributions

The current regime

7.2 Infrastructure needed to support new development can be funded from a variety of sources. Typically, local planning authorities seek developer contributions, through the provisions of S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and S278 of the Highways Act 1980 in order to provide for associated infrastructure (without which there would be planning objections). It is important to note that the pooling restriction previously applied to s106 agreements no longer applies, as amended by the Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2019. A community infrastructure levy (CIL) can also be used to fund infrastructure more generally.

7.3 CIL is not currently charged in Rochford District although the current Local Development Scheme, published in September 2025 [\[See reference 208\]](#), sets out that the Council intends to pursue its introduction. The timetable is to publish a draft CIL charging schedule for consultation in Winter 2027, with Examination in Spring 2028 and adoption in Autumn 2028.

7.4 In Rochford District, guidance on how S106 and S278 agreements can be used to mitigate the impact of development is set out in the ECC's Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions [\[See reference 209\]](#). The most recent applicable version of the Guide was published in 2024. An updated draft of the Guide was consulted upon by ECC up to 30th May 2025. ECC are currently working to consider any consultation comments received after which the final version of the document will be published.

7.5 In addition to developer contributions, other funding sources are available, as set out below.

Alternatives to developer funding

7.6 There has traditionally been a range of alternative funding sources to developer contributions, particularly for strategic scale developments. Currently, however, many of the Central Government funding programmes have ended their current rounds. Whilst the expectation is that new funding will be made available - given the Government priority to deliver housing and growth generally - the specific type and scale of funding is not yet in the public domain.

7.7 On the basis that many of the core programmes which have supported infrastructure growth in the recent past are likely to be continued, even if in an amended form, the opportunities are as follows.

General infrastructure funds

7.8 In the recent past the Central Government Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) has been used to fund major strategic infrastructure projects that are required to support the delivery of growth. In particular, this has focused on funding infrastructure required to unlock sites at an early stage. As a result, it has most commonly been used to fund major transport projects, usually in their entirety.

7.9 Related to this – and a source of funding that is still currently open – is the Central Government Home Building Fund – Infrastructure Loans scheme. This is targeted at developers and landowners requiring loan finance to unlock strategic housing sites. This includes loans for on- and off-site transport infrastructure, education facilities, community facilities and ‘Section 106-required’ infrastructure (excluding affordable housing). Loans can be up to £250 million. Clearly this can only be accessed by a developer or landowner and these stakeholders are likely to engage with such opportunities when sites are at a more advanced stage, i.e. confirmed allocations with emerging plans/permissions.

7.10 Revenue funding has previously been available for commissioning and undertaking infrastructure studies to support growth. For example, Capacity Funding totalling £2.7m was secured to fund technical studies and ‘dedicated specialist support to plan ahead for the longer-term transport solutions’ of the Manydown Garden Community near Basingstoke.

7.11 The Government has launched a British Infrastructure Taskforce which will explore different options to support the government’s infrastructure goals to drive growth for the whole of the nation, in line with its commitment to

"turbocharge" infrastructure investment across the width and breadth of the UK. Invitees have been selected to ensure a wide range of experience and expertise in UK infrastructure. This marks a significant shift in approach, with key businesses and stakeholders invited to work with the government to support the delivery of its infrastructure agenda.

7.12 The Government has published a 10 Year Infrastructure Strategy [See reference 210] which sets out a long-term plan for how the government will invest in infrastructure and ensure that funding is spent effectively and efficiently, marking a new approach to how projects are planned and delivered. These plans are backed by at least £725 billion of government funding over the coming decade, from which at least £9 billion will be allocated in 2025-26 to address the maintenance needs of health, education and justice estates, rising to over £10 billion per year by 2034-35. The 10 Year Infrastructure Strategy is part of the Government's broader 'Plan for Change' [See reference 211], which outlines a number core objectives towards 'a decade long national renewal' including 'kickstarting economic growth', 'building an NHS fit for the future' and 'making Britain a clean energy superpower'. The 10 Year Infrastructure Strategy will support the 'Plan for Change' by unlocking new investment into infrastructure in the following areas:

- **Housing:** supporting delivery of 1.5m new homes this Parliament, through the 10-year Affordable Homes Programme and with investment from the National Housing Bank
- **Transport:** Transport for City Regions (TCR) settlement, capital funding to progress work on the Lower Thames Crossing and a new Structures Fund to repair major structures on the road network.
- **Water:** Water companies to quadruple investment in new water infrastructure over the next five years, including developing 9 new reservoirs.
- **National Wealth Fund:** helping crowd in private investment and drive growth across the UK.
- **Clean Energy:** including investment by GB Energy, the UK's first regional hydrogen transport network and store, strategic electricity transmission network investment and electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- **Nuclear energy:** investment to enable one of Europe's first Small Modular Reactor programmes and for nuclear fusion, alongside Sizewell Company.

- **Schools:** deliver rebuilding projects at over 500 schools within the existing School Rebuilding Programme and provide funding certainty out to 2034-35, enabling a further 250 schools to enter the programme.
- **Hospitals:** delivering 35 hospitals in England via the New Hospital Programme.
- **Essential maintenance:** providing funding certainty up to 2035 for schools, colleges, prisons, courts and hospitals maintenance programmes.
- **Digital connectivity:** continuing investment in high-speed internet access via Project Gigabit
- **Flood resilience:** ensuring long term readiness via the 10-year flood defence investment programme.
- **Justice:** three new prisons in England by 2031.
- **Defence:** committing to 2.6% of GDP by 2027 on NATO qualifying defence spending.

7.13 Of relevance to Rochford, funding will be provided for the following schemes:

- **East West Rail:** This rail project aims to connect Oxford and Cambridge, passing through Bedford and Milton Keynes. While it will not operate in Rochford, improved connectivity in the region could have indirect benefits for Essex.
- **School Rebuilding Programme:** This programme will rebuild schools across Essex, which could directly benefit Rochford by improving educational facilities in the District.

Local government funding

7.14 Whilst it has been an option for local authorities to provide funding in the form of loans, this approach has been used very infrequently to fund strategic growth. Reductions in Council budgets coupled with increases in competing priorities has meant that financing of such opportunities has been very challenging. Some local authorities will also borrow money to pay for infrastructure in advance.

Infrastructure bank

7.15 The UK Infrastructure Bank was set up in June 2021 [See reference 212]. It is a UK Government-owned bank, seeking to provide £22bn of infrastructure finance. The bank is wholly backed by HM Treasury and operated across a range of sectors, including clean energy, transport, digital, water and waste.

7.16 In October 2024, it was confirmed by the Chancellor that the UK Infrastructure Bank would become the National Wealth Fund (NWF) [See reference 213].

7.17 The NWF will have a broader mandate than the Infrastructure Bank, extending beyond infrastructure to support delivery of the wider industrial strategy in areas where there is an undersupply in private finance. The NWF will stimulate private sector investment, with £5.8 billion of the capital focussed on sectors announced in the manifesto; green hydrogen, carbon capture, ports, gigafactories and green steel.

Sector Specific Funding

Highways

7.18 ECC allocates capital funding for the road network, but this is mainly limited to small scale local projects including road safety, walking, cycling, public transport, traffic and speed management, local environmental projects and public rights of way.

7.19 The Department for Transport is developing an integrated strategy which will set the high-level direction for how transport should be designed, built and operated in England over the next 10 years. It will set out a single national vision which will:

- put people who use transport and their needs at its heart
- empower local leaders to deliver integrated transport solutions that meet the needs of their local communities

Cycling and walking

7.20 The Department for Transport (DfT) has an Active Travel funding programme. This is a capital grant programme which focuses in particular on

cycling and walking. Funds awarded to Essex County Council would typically be used to prepare Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) which would then lead into the provision of physical improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure. In 2024/25, ECC received £1,799,829 from the final allocation cycle, a reduction on the £5,270,000 received in 2022/23 (nothing was received in 2023/24) [\[See reference 214\]](#). Spending priorities and locations within Essex are to be confirmed.

Bus Infrastructure

7.21 Investment is made by the bus companies on a case-by-case basis. This will be based on a threshold being reached for new services to be commercially viable.

7.22 The Department for Transport (DfT) provides Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG), which is a discretionary grant to both community transport operators and commercial operators to help them recover some of their fuel costs. The grant also aims to help operators keep fares down and to enable organisations to run services that might otherwise be unviable and be cancelled.

7.23 The DfT also provides Bus Service Operators Grant Plus (BSOG+). This is a discretionary grant for commercial bus services. The grant aims to support the reform and consolidation of bus funding and develop long-term sustainability in bus funding for the sector [\[See reference 215\]](#).

Health

7.24 There is currently no NHS England Capital Funding available for improving or increasing capacity for primary care premises. Alternative funding sources have previously been available but would depend on the specific nature of the infrastructure required.

Utilities/Low Carbon

7.25 The government's Heat Networks Investment Project (HNIP) is a £320 million capital funding programme aimed at increasing the number of district heat networks being built. It is aimed at developers and their partners (often local authorities) to support the delivery of energy improvements for both existing and new developments. Funding can be provided in the form of loans as well as grants but will only be available once a site has a developer and

outline planning permission. A relevant example was the award of a £3.8m grant to Durham County Council to support the commercialisation and construction of a low carbon heat network at Seaham Garden Village. Ultimately it will supply heat to over 1,500 homes, a school and a health centre.

Infrastructure Funding Statement

7.26 Rochford District Council is required to provide an Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) each calendar year, as set out in the CIL (Amendment) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2019 [See reference 216] in order to improve transparency and accountability on developer contributions.

7.27 The IFS provides a summary of financial contributions the Council has secured through Section 106 (S106) agreements from new developments for off-site infrastructure works and affordable housing, in addition to highway works completed as part of new developments through section 278 (S278) agreements.

7.28 It is important that the next iteration of the IFS links closely with the emerging output from the IDP process. Alongside the core requirement to detail what contributions have been collected and how they have been spent, the IFS should identify:

- which sites in the Submission Local Plan are expected to contribute to which types of infrastructure provision;
- whether existing contributions secured can be used to address the infrastructure needs identified in the emerging IDP.

Summary

7.29 There are numerous sources of infrastructure funding. In order to make use of these it is important to properly define infrastructure schemes and work up bids and secure the necessary consents. As such it is a key recommendation of this report that infrastructure projects are defined and developed at an early stage in order to support timely delivery of infrastructure alongside new development.

Chapter 8

Conclusion and Summary

8.1 Rochford District Council have commissioned LUC to prepare an IDP to support the Council's emerging Local Plan, which is currently at Regulation 18 stage. The new Local Plan will set out the amount of housing and employment development and supporting infrastructure required. It will identify the main locations where the Council consider this development should take place.

8.2 The IDP is a living document, set at a point in time and will be subject to change. This report provides an initial high level description of the existing infrastructure provision in Rochford District and defines the key infrastructure planning issues and opportunities arising from the potential growth locations, based on literature review and consultation with infrastructure providers. It is part of the evidence base which supports the Regulation 18 Local Plan. This position will be subject to change as plan preparation progresses including the outcomes of local plan evidence and refinement of options and further information.

8.3 It is important to note that planning for infrastructure across all topic areas is dynamic – the context changes constantly due to new evidence, changing priorities, changes to available funding streams and available technologies. This report should be seen as a 'snapshot in time' and future iterations of this report will take account of any relevant changes to the Local Plan and updated information from infrastructure providers and new evidence bases.

8.4 Rochford District Council will engage further with infrastructure and service providers as the evidence emerges to inform the preparation of the Local Plan. This will give providers further opportunity to engage on the IDP outputs as the evidence base of the Local Plan is progressed.

Appendix A

Growth options considered as part of the IDP

A.1 A map showing the growth options considered as part of this stage of assessment for the IDP is set out below (**Figure 1**).

A.2 Please note that the Council have not yet decided if any of the options considered will form part of the emerging spatial strategy for the new Local Plan. The options considered form part of early testing of the alternatives for the plan that might be used as the direction of travel of the distribution of growth to be set out.

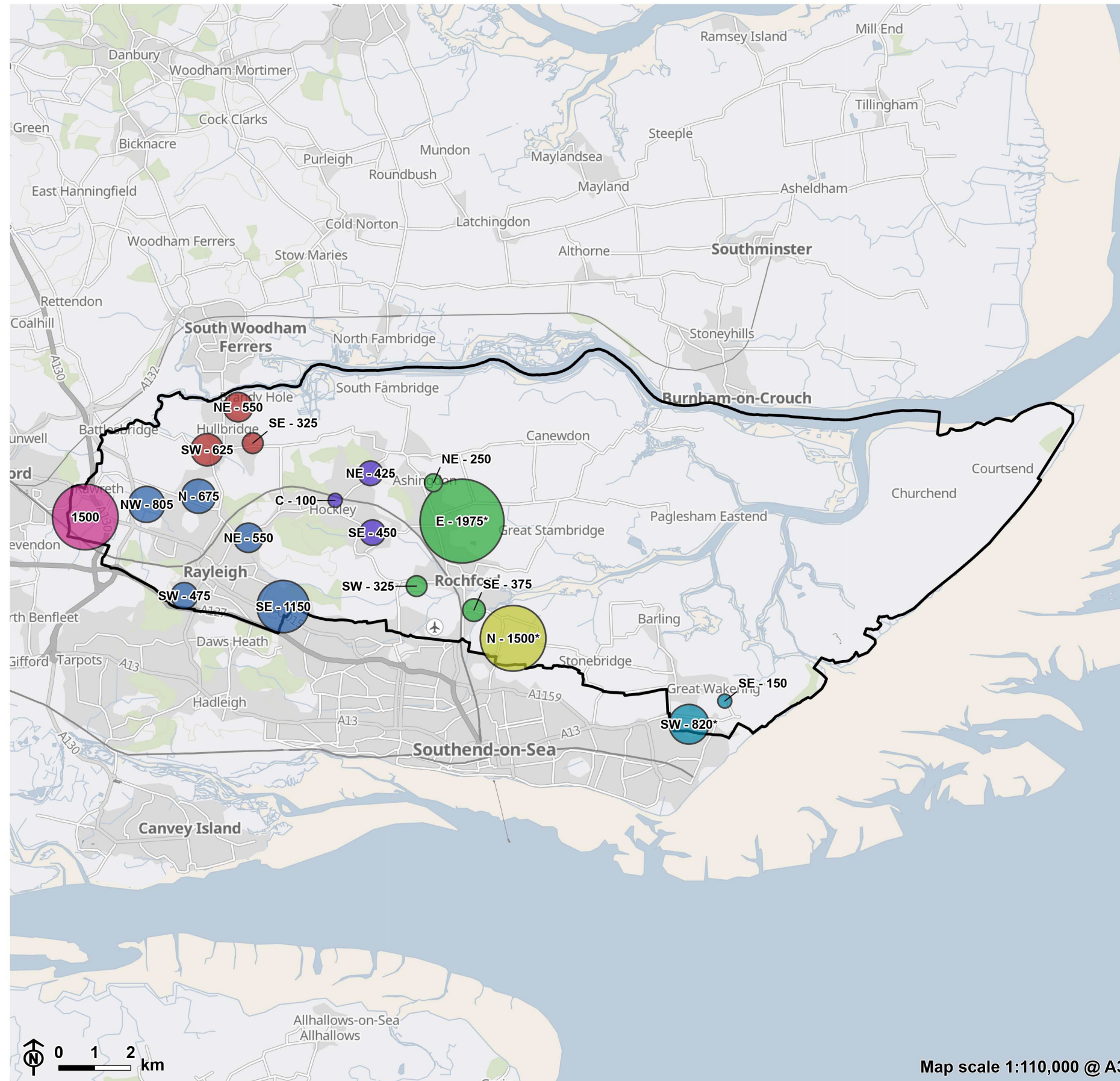
Figure A.1: Development options (District wide)



Figure 1: Development options (District wide)

- Rochford District Council Boundary
- High-level development options by settlement**
- Great Wakering (including land adjacent to Southend)
- Hockley and Hawkwell
- Hullbridge
- North of Southend
- Rawreth
- Rayleigh
- Rochford and Ashingdon

Note - *Indicates locations at which it is expected that post Local Plan housing delivery would occur.



Map scale 1:110,000 @ A3

Appendix B

High-level infrastructure assumptions

B.1 The high level infrastructure assumptions used to inform this assessment are set out below. The assumptions have been informed by engagement with providers and ECC's Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions [See reference 217].

B.2 Note that the IDP is prepared in a moment of time and that the assumptions will be subject to change as plan preparation progresses and there are changes in the relevant contributions required for different type of infrastructure.

Education

B.3 It is assumed that 9% of dwellings will be delivered as flats with the remainder delivered as houses. Pupil generation is expected as follows:

Table B.1: Expected pupil generation by dwelling type

Dwelling Type	Primary	Secondary	Early years	SEND	Post -16
Flats	0.15	0.1	0.06	Bespoke	0.01 (1 bed) 0.02 (2+ bed)
Houses	0.3	0.2	0.12	Bespoke	0.01 (1 bed) 0.04 (2+ bed)

B.4 The requirement for contributions towards facility extensions and new build facilities is set out below:

Table B.2: Requirement for contributions towards facility extensions and new build facilities

Service Area	Trigger for contribution	Extension - expected contribution per pupil	New build - expected contribution per pupil
Early years and childcare	20 dwellings +	£20,450*	£24,171*
Primary	20 dwellings +	£20,245*	£24,171*
Secondary/Post 16	20 dwellings +	£27,845*	£29,283*

*Price index linked to the Price Index of Public Sector (PUBSEC) Building Non-housing Index. Costs reflect a base date of Q1 2025.

B.5 The contribution for SEND provision has been established as £1,951.24 per house and £975.62 per flat (Q1 2025 prices).

B.6 A development of 1,400 dwellings is likely to generate around 420 primary school pupils, which is sufficient for a new 2fe primary school. ECC supports this approach and, thereby, when considering new primary school sites an area of 2.18 hectares will usually be sought as a minimum. This is in line with DfE guidance set out in Building Bulletin 103 and this land size provides space for commensurate Early Years and Childcare provision.

B.7 ECC will look to establish new secondary school facilities only where demand for a minimum of six forms of entry has been established (supported by approximately 4,500 dwellings). For school provision of this size, an area of 10.1 hectares is usually sought by ECC, including sixth form provision.

Health and well-being

B.8 ICN assume that 2.5 patients will be generated from each dwelling. Their feedback indicates that 6,000 to 15,000 patients are required for a new practice to be delivered and around 1,000 sqm is required for new premises. Rural surgeries may require less patients but this is only applicable in more isolated locations and not applicable for most locations in Rochford District.

B.9 A new primary care surgery with a net internal area of 1,000m sqm serving around 15,000 patients costs in the region of £4,000,000. However, this figure will vary from site to site and over time and so should be used cautiously.

Appendix C

Organisations consulted

C.1 The infrastructure providers who were engaged with to inform this assessment are set out in Table C.1

Table C.1: Stakeholders and infrastructure providers consulted to inform the assessment

Topic	Consultee
Transport	Network Rail
Transport	National Highways
Transport	Essex County Council
Education	Essex County Council
Health and Wellbeing	NHS Mid and South Essex Integrated Care System
Utilities - Wastewater	Anglian Water
Utilities - Water	Essex and Suffolk Water
Utilities - Water	Environment Agency
Utilities - Electricity	National Grid
Utilities - Electricity	UK Power Networks
Utilities - Broadband	South Essex Digital Programme Board
Utilities - Broadband	Essex County Council
Flooding and Drainage	Environment Agency
Flooding and Drainage	Essex County Council

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