

To:

Planning Applications

Rochford District Council

Email: planning.applications@rochford.gov.uk

Date: 07.10.2025

Re: Planning Application 25/00667/OUT — Outline planning application (with all matters reserved except vehicular access to the site) for up to 300 dwellings, associated landscaping, infrastructure, and access off Brays Lane

Dear Sir / Madam,

Ashingdon Parish Council (APC) wish to object to the above planning application. Our objection is based on the following grounds:

1. Inappropriate Scale and Loss of Rural Character

- A development of up to 300 dwellings is excessively large for a Green Belt site, especially given the availability of brownfield sites in the local area. Such a scheme would drastically alter the character of Ashingdon, Victory Lane, and Brays Lane, which are currently semi-rural in nature. The proposal would effectively urbanise the area, where narrow lanes and existing infrastructure—such as telegraph poles obstructing pavements—are already unsuitable for higher traffic and pedestrian volumes. The scale of the development appears disproportionate to neighbouring built-up areas and would pose a significant safety risk to pedestrians, especially school children, given the vicinity of the schools, the twisting nature of the lanes, lack of visibility on blind bends and the size of the HGV's coming from the docks.
- The proposal appears to conflict with the pattern of development, especially where housing density is lower. The transition from rural to built-up needs to be carefully managed; this outline application doesn't show detail, but the reserved matters are unlikely to mitigate all negative impacts of scale.

2. Impact on Local Infrastructure and Services

- The application does not appear to properly demonstrate that local services (schools, healthcare, green spaces, shops, public transport) have capacity to absorb the additional demand from up to 300 new homes. There is a risk of overburdening local schools or medical facilities and the Fire Brigade as we have only two retained stations, one in Hockley the other in Rochford.
- Transport infrastructure: Access is proposed off Brays Lane, which is likely to carry a lot of additional traffic. Brays Lane, Victory Lane and surrounding roads may not be suited to the traffic volumes arising from 300 homes: issues include congestion, safety (for pedestrians, cyclists, children), increased noise and pollution.

3. Impact on Environment, Ecology, and Landscape

- The site appears to be open land. It likely provides habitat, landscape value, amenity and contributes to local biodiversity. The application should show detailed ecological surveys, impact on species, habitat mitigation, retention of green buffer etc. From the outline, it seems these details are missing or insufficient.
- There is the loss of trees, hedgerows, wildlife corridors. Without detailed landscaping scheme, it's hard to know how these will be preserved or compensated for. Indeed, there will be a need to remove hedgerows and trees to make way for pavements, to improve the visibility for pedestrians
- Visual impact: A large housing development will alter views and may result in visual intrusion from key vantage points. It may reduce the rural/semi-rural buffer between Ashingdon / Brays Lane and more densely built-up parts of the district.
- As this is a currently a rural area, there is currently no piping for sewage, water and electricity and fibre is delivered by telegraph poles, therefore hedgerows, trees will need to be dug up, again affecting local wildlife and habitats.

4. Flood Risk, Drainage and Environmental Sustainability

- The application documents (based on what is publicly available) do not appear to adequately address surface water drainage, flood risk, or sustainable drainage (SuDs) solutions. Given local flooding history in parts of Essex, this is a serious omission. Sea levels are rising and an increase to the size of the wall at the River Crouch has not been mentioned. The proposed land to be built on is currently the flood plain for the Ashingdon village. The development would create a large impervious area, increasing surface water runoff and flood risk. Too many houses would leave the floodplain sealed and unable to absorb rainwater. The site would become heavily paved-over, drastically reducing natural drainage.
- There should be a clear plan for how runoff will be managed, especially with so much new impermeable surface. Without this, neighbouring areas may suffer flood risk.
- Climate change mitigation: the development should show credible commitments to sustainable design, low carbon measures, renewable energy, and landscaping / tree planting to offset carbon emissions.
- There is no mention of Air Quality. The road traffic survey was taken on one day in the summer, this is not representative of traffic use. Surveys of the Ashingdon Road show it to be one of the highest used road that is not an A or B road in Essex. Rochford, St Teresa's, Holt Farm, Ashingdon and Greensward Schools are all on the Ashingdon Road. King Edmunds and Plumberow schools are accessed via this road. No mitigation has been made to improve the air quality.
- There is no mention of solar panels, to reduce the use of electricity and make a cleaner living environment.

5. Highway Safety, Traffic Congestion and Access

- Access only off Brays Lane is proposed; this may concentrate traffic into a road network not designed for heavy flows. There are likely pinch points, narrow roads, limited visibility in places, risk of increased accidents.
- Pedestrian, cycle, and public transport links are not clearly shown. If the new homes are not well connected to schools / shops / public transport, then most journeys will be by car, compounding traffic, noise and air quality issues.
- Additional traffic through Victory Lane / surrounding roads could degrade the quality of life for existing residents.
- The low bridges at Hockley and Rochford railway stations restrict the HGV vehicles to certain roads, adding to the congestion and decreasing the air quality on the Ashingdon Road. The dock deliveries from Baltic Wharf mean they have to pass along Brays Lane.
- Traffic speed mitigation/pedestrian safety. The roundabout on Brays Lane does not reduce the speed of any vehicles coming from the docks. This is particularly dangerous with the articulated lorries.

6. Conflict with Local Plan / Policy

- The proposal appears to conflict with policies for managing growth, preserving open countryside/semi-rural areas, maintaining the identity and character of villages / parishes.
- Without seeing detailed layout, landscaping, density, and design, it's difficult to see how this scheme would comply with the relevant Local Plan policies (for example in relation to density, design, green infrastructure, sustainable development).
- The proposal does not appear to include affordable housing mix or provision clearly; local plan likely requires a certain % affordable / tenure mix which must be demonstrated.
- The area already lacks safe pedestrian crossings, and adding hundreds of new homes will make it even more dangerous for people walking to schools, bus stops, and local amenities. Lack of public transport will lead to more walking and cars leading to a decrease in pedestrian safety and in increase poor air quality.

7. Precedent and Cumulative Impact

- Allowing such a large scheme here may create precedent for further expansion, eroding green buffers, increasing urbanisation. The cumulative impact with other permitted or proposed developments needs proper assessment.
 - Loss of agricultural land / greenfield land should be weighed heavily unless there is no reasonable alternative, but the application does not sufficiently demonstrate that the need overrides these harms.
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Conclusion

For the reasons above, we consider that this proposal in its current form would be detrimental to the character, amenity, environment, infrastructure, traffic safety, and sustainability of the area. APC urge the Council to refuse the application, or at minimum to require:

- A significantly reduced number of dwellings.
- Full detailed assessments (traffic, ecology, landscape, flooding) and strong mitigation.
- Guarantees on affordable housing, design quality, public transport links, pedestrian / cycle connections.
- A robust scheme for green infrastructure / open spaces / biodiversity net gain.

We hope the Council will carefully consider all these aspects in deciding this application.

Yours faithfully,

Kath Parkin
Clerk to Ashingdon Parish Council

Please see the following below:

To:

Planning Applications
Rochford District Council

Date: 7th October 2025

Re: Planning Application 25/00667/OUT – Land East of Victory Lane, Rochford

Ashingdon Parish Council wish to object to this proposal (Outline for up to 300 dwellings, landscaping etc.; all matters reserved except vehicular access from Brays Lane) for the following reasons. APC concerns are founded both in the likely impacts of the scheme and in its inconsistency with relevant local and national planning policy. We ask that the Council refuse this application in its current form.

Objection on Policy Grounds (Local & National Policy)

Below are specific policy references which I believe the application conflicts with, or fails to adequately satisfy.

Policy / Document	Key Requirements	How the Application Fails / Raises Concern
Rochford Core Strategy (2011) (Rochford Council)	<i>Policy CP1 (Design & Character):</i> new development must be of high quality design, respect character of local area, landscaping, heritage etc. (Rochford Council) <i>Policy H4 (Affordable Housing):</i> requirement for a proportion of new dwellings to be affordable, in development schemes, with viability flexibility. (rochford.oc2.uk) <i>Policy H5 (Dwelling Types and Mix):</i> mix of dwelling sizes/types to meet local need. (Rochford Council) <i>Policy H6 (Lifetime Homes Standard):</i> some dwellings to be accessible to lifetime homes standard, or demonstrate viability if not. (Rochford Council) <i>Policies re: Transport & Accessibility:</i> CP1, plus policies under the Core Strategy to ensure new developments are accessible to services and community infrastructure. (Rochford Council)	• The outline application is vague on design, layout, densities etc., and may result in a scale and massing that harms local character; there is insufficient certainty that design will be high quality or that landscaping / buffers will adequately protect the amenity of existing neighbours. • No clear affordable housing schedule has been included (or insufficient detail): for 300 units, policy H4 expects a substantial proportion of affordable housing, unless viability demonstrates otherwise. • No information on the mix of dwelling types—if all (or most) are large market houses, this may conflict with policy requiring a range (including smaller units) to meet need. • No clarity whether any or how many homes will comply with Lifetime Homes or similar accessibility standards. • Services, facilities and accessibility are not demonstrated; the location may not be well-served by public transport / walking / cycling, so reliance on private cars could conflict with the policy objective to

Policy / Document	Key Requirements	How the Application Fails / Raises Concern
Rochford Development Management Plan (2014) (Rochford Council)	<i>Policy DM1 (Design of New Development)</i> : requires good design, respect to character, avoid adverse impact on residential amenity (privacy, overlooking, overbearing etc.). (Rochford Council) <i>Policy DM2 (Density of New Development)</i> : proposals to make efficient use of land; minimum densities expected, unless constrained. (Rochford Council) <i>Policies on Trees / Landscape / Biodiversity</i> under the “Environmental Issues” chapter: require protection of trees, hedgerows, and net gain for biodiversity. (Rochford Council) <i>Transport / Parking Standards</i> policy: development must meet adopted parking standards, demonstrate that the highway network can accommodate increased traffic safely. (rochford.moderngov.co.uk)	increase accessibility and reduce car use. • Without detailed layout, reserved matters could allow overly dense development that contrasts with neighbouring densities; risk of overdevelopment. • Potential harm to existing trees, hedgerows, wildlife; insufficient information about ecological impact or mitigation. • Highway safety: Brays Lane and surrounding network may lack capacity or safety; lack of clarity how traffic / parking will be handled; existing roads may be narrow or unsuitable. • Noise, overlooking, loss of privacy to existing residents if development not designed sensitively.
Emerging New Local Plan / Local Plan Update (Rochford New Local Plan) (rochford.moderngov.co.uk)	The New Local Plan (being prepared) sets higher expectations: more ambitious climate change / environmental policies; mandatory biodiversity net gain; high design quality; strong infrastructure delivery; balanced spatial strategy. (rochford.moderngov.co.uk)	The proposal (even though not yet governed by all new policies) appears to not demonstrate how it will meet these emerging higher standards; lacking detail on biodiversity net gain; sustainability; clarity on community and transport infrastructure to support scale.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	Sustainable development; ensuring new development contributes to	The application lacks sufficient detail to show

Policy / Document	Key Requirements	How the Application Fails / Raises Concern
	“well-designed places” (Chapter on design), avoiding development that causes unacceptable harm; ensuring infrastructure is provided; requiring use of brownfield land first (if applicable); and protecting valued landscapes. Also policies on flood risk, climate change.	compliance with “well-designed places”, adequacy of infrastructure (schools, health, roads), flood risk/drainage, sustainable travel; more evidence needed to show outweighing benefits.

Specific Technical / Detailed Concerns

Beyond broad policy conflict, here are more technical issues which the application either fails to address or which raise strong doubt as to whether the proposal can satisfy policy standards:

1. Density vs Character of Place

- Policy DM2 expects proposals to make efficient use of land (with minimum densities), but that must be tempered by compatibility with local character. The current proposal does not show how it will transition from rural/semi-rural areas. A large block of 300 homes may not be compatible unless carefully phased or designed.
- In particular, density expectations in nearby development / built-up areas may differ significantly; there is risk of overshadowing, loss of open space, harming views.

2. Affordable Housing & Housing Mix

- As per Core Strategy H4, a significant affordable housing component is expected. Without commitment, the scheme may fail to meet local housing needs—especially for smaller households, first-time buyers, social rent etc.
- The mix under H5 should include a variety of sizes and types: e.g. smaller dwellings, possibly starter homes or flats, not just large detached market housing.

3. Design, Layout, Landscaping & Amenity

- Reserved matters are being left open (except access), so the risk is that future design/layout / landscaping could be weak, harming visual amenity, loss of trees, insufficient buffers between existing residences and new housing.
- The scheme should be accompanied by a robust landscaping plan, preservation of hedgerows/trees, and buffer zones to retain existing amenity.

4. Highways, Traffic & Access

- Access only via Brays Lane: need evidence that this road, and its junctions, can accommodate traffic from 300 new households safely, without adverse congestion, pollution or harm to pedestrian / cycle safety.
- Public transport links / pedestrian & cycle connectivity are not set out; policies expect development to be well connected to services to reduce car dependency.

5. Environmental/ Ecological / Landscape Impacts

- There should be a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment, ecology surveys (protected species, habitats), landscape impact assessment. Without these, harm to ecology or landscape could result.
- Surface water flood risk / drainage: identification of flood zones, use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), mitigation so as not to exacerbate flood risk downstream.

6. Infrastructure & Community Facilities

- The proposal must demonstrate that local schools, health services, leisure, recreation, green/open space can cope, or that developer contributions (section 106 / CIL) will provide mitigation and expansion. Local plan requires adequate infrastructure.
- Access to shops, community services, public open space needs to be addressed to meet Core Strategy aim of increasing accessibility of services.

7. Sustainability & Climate Change Mitigation

- The proposals should include measures such as energy efficiency, possibly renewable energy, low carbon building standards, good orientation, green infrastructure, tree planting etc., in line with emerging plan aspirations.

Suggested Conditions / Requirements If Permission Is Granted (Mitigation)

If the Council is minded to grant permission, the following should be insisted upon (via conditions or S106 obligations) to ensure policy compliance:

- Clear affordable housing provision: % of total units, mix of tenure (social rent / shared ownership), occupied early in the development.
- Housing mix: specify a minimum number of smaller units (1-2 bed), plus accessible / adaptable / Lifetime Homes units.
- Minimum design quality standards: design code or masterplan for the site to control layout, landscaping, appearance, density, heights etc.
- Biodiversity net gain (e.g. 10% or more, as required under emerging policy), full ecological surveys, protection of existing trees and hedgerows.

- Full and robust drainage / flood risk assessment; require SuDS and sustainable water management throughout.
 - Transport assessment: junction capacity analysis, highways improvements if necessary, pedestrian / cycle connectivity, public transport provision or contribution.
 - Infrastructure contributions: education, health, community facilities, open space, recreation, etc.
 - Phasing & monitoring: ensure development is phased such that infrastructure keeps pace.
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Conclusion & Recommendation

In light of the above, APC believe this development, as currently proposed, is *not* in conformity with key adopted local policies (Core Strategy 2011, Development Management Plan 2014) and does not sufficiently demonstrate compatibility with emerging policy aspirations (for biodiversity, climate, design, sustainable infrastructure). The uncertainty over scale, design, infrastructure, and environmental impacts leads me to conclude that the harm is likely to outweigh the benefits.

Accordingly, APC respectfully request that the Council:

- **Refuse** the application in its present form; or
- If considering approval, impose robust conditions / obligations as per above to ensure compliance; or possibly
- Require a substantially reduced number of units, more detailed masterplan / design code, and clear commitments on affordable housing, environmental and transport mitigation before outline permission is granted.

Yours faithfully,

Kath Parkin
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