

REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES TO COUNCIL

1 REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE

Draft Corporate Plan 2014-2017

- 1.1 This item of business was referred by the Executive on 16 July 2014 to Full Council with a recommendation on the revised draft Corporate Plan. An extract of the key elements of the report of the Chief Executive is attached at Appendix A.
- 1.2 It is proposed that Council **RESOLVES** that the revised draft Corporate Plan 2014-2017 be approved. (CE)

Use of iPads for Council Business

- 1.3 This item of business was referred by the Executive on 16 July 2014 to Full Council with recommendations on the use of iPads for Council business. An extract of the key elements of the report of the Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services to the Executive is attached at Appendix B.
- 1.4 It is proposed that the Council **RESOLVES**:-
- (1) That, apart from the issuing of hard copy summons and the making of separate arrangements where necessary to accord with equalities/disability discrimination legislation, all Members of the Council receive business documentation via email links. Specifically that:-
 - Agenda pages only (not associated reports) be posted out first class via the Royal Mail or made available at the Council offices to appointees only in accordance with legislative requirement. Separately, all Members (including appointees) to receive an email link to all agendas and reports as they are published.
 - Email links to the various business documents identified in paragraph 3.6 of the officer report be issued to all Members of the Council.
 - Any ad hoc Member correspondence received at the Council offices be posted out first class via Royal Mail as appropriate.
 - (2) That it be noted that a Government Order providing that, where a Member consents, a summons can be sent to an electronic address in electronic form, is imminent.

- (3) That the Portfolio Holder for People and Technology, in consultation with officers, monitors the new arrangements and addresses any issues that arise. (HLEMS)

If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.

DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2014-2017

1 DECISION BEING RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 To recommend to Council that the revised Corporate Plan for 2014-2017 be approved.

2 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The format and content of the Corporate Plan has continued to be reviewed and updated each year. The latest draft plan attempts to build on the format and content of the 2013-2018 Corporate Plan and the feedback received from staff.
- 2.2 The draft before Members tonight reflects the decisions taken as part of the 2014/2015 budget process.

3 SALIENT INFORMATION

- 3.1 A copy of the revised Corporate Plan for this year is attached as appended. It is a three year plan. It brings together the Council's main priorities and picks up the key elements from the 2014/15 budget. Subject to Member consideration and comment the Plan, once approved, will be one of the main reference documents for the Council.
- 3.2 The Corporate Plan is a working document which, along with the Annual Report (which will include a look back at performance and is finalised prior to the summer recess), explains what the Council is about, what it is focusing on and what it is aiming to do over a period. The Plan is seen as a key element in cementing linkages between service planning and the budget process and, in particular, the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2014/15 – 2018/19 which covers the same period.
- 3.3 This year the Corporate Plan was drafted jointly by senior managers and middle managers. Three working groups were established to define the content for each of the identified themes of Place, Homes and Economic Growth. The work of these groups fed directly into the drafting of the Plan.
- 3.4 The Corporate Plan has been subject to a four week internal staff consultation period, during which all service areas made comments.

4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Corporate Plan is the guiding document for the Council. Failure to approve the Corporate Plan may prevent a clear direction being adopted for the medium term.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The content of the Corporate Plan is in line with the decisions taken as part of the budget process.
- 5.2 The preparation of the Corporate Plan impacts upon and will continue to require senior officer time as it is produced and reviewed.

6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Corporate Plan takes into account the equality and diversity processes undertaken by the respective service areas in delivering the work that is outlined in the action plans.



Corporate Plan

2014/17





Contents

Contents 2

Foreword from Leader / Chief Executive 3

Vision, Values and Behaviours 4

What is the Corporate Plan?. 5

Long Term Themes. 6

Place. 6

Homes 9

Economic Growth 12



Foreword from Leader / Chief Executive

Rochford is a District located in south east Essex. We live in a beautiful, scenic area bounded by the River Crouch to the north and the urban areas of Southend and Castle Point to the south. We see the District as a place that has many strengths; a diverse environment characterised by substantial areas of attractive countryside; a rich heritage which includes many iconic buildings; strong and vibrant communities; a local economy that is growing in stature assisted by the development of London Southend Airport; and a crime rate that is among the lowest in the East of England.

This plan sets out the priorities for the Council and outlines how we will address the challenges ahead over the next three years. We are committed, along with our partners, to work with residents, community groups and businesses to overcome these challenges and seize upon opportunities to ensure we improve the quality of life for local communities.

Along with other public sector organisations, the Council has and continues to face significant financial challenges. Consequently, we have had to achieve savings whilst maintaining our range of services to our residents. Elected Members, partners and staff have worked hard to approach this challenge innovatively and, as a result, we have achieved this aim in the majority of cases. Going forward the challenge is to continue to innovate as a Council and continue to work collaboratively with our partners. For example, there is a need as an organisation to become more commercially minded which will, in turn, reduce our reliance on Government grant.

Despite these challenges, the Council continues to perform well. Highlights include:

- Regaining the top recycling Council in the Country accolade;
- Rochford Arts Trail being named the East of England overall winner at the Towns Alive 2013 Awards;
- The Revenues and Benefits Team retaining their Customer Service Excellence Standard, following an annual review;
- Retaining Investors In People (IIP) Gold status; and
- Member Services retaining the Charter Award for Elected Member Development

Building on these achievements, over the next three years we will concentrate our efforts on delivering innovative and high-quality services under three key priorities:-

Place, Homes, and Economic Growth.

The Council has historically achieved a high level of resident satisfaction with our services and the expectation is that this Plan will set the ambition, vision and outcomes to allow this to be maintained in the years to come.



Cllr Terry Cutmore
Leader of the Council



Amar Dave
Chief Executive

Vision, Values and Behaviours



The Council has adopted a 'vision' which will inspire the organisation to continue to deliver its services to the high standards that have been set.

To achieve this vision we will focus on three key themes, Place, Homes and Economic Growth.

We will work to the following set of values which we consider to be important for the District:

- Rising to the challenge
- Delivering in unity
- Committed to the community

The Council's behaviour enables it to meet its values and both drive the culture of the Council to achieve its overall objectives.

The behaviours (shown in purple, with the values shown in green and the vision in yellow) are to think commercially, take up challenges, learn, deliver, be proactive and innovative.

What is the Corporate Plan?

The Council's Corporate Plan sets out our priorities for the next three years. The Plan is linked into, and complements, the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and budget process. The MTFS sets out a clear framework for our financial decision making.

The Corporate Plan and its delivery is reviewed and updated annually. It takes into account national, regional, county-wide and local priorities. We use a range of information and intelligence to set priorities, including the results of internal and external consultation exercises.

Internally, the Corporate Plan is underpinned by Divisional Plans and individual staff and team priorities are picked up through our Performance Review process. The Corporate Plan is not a list of all the things we do. Instead, it sets out the 'headline' themes and provides clarity around where we intend to concentrate our activity. The Plan should be read in conjunction with our Annual Report, which is published in July, and gives details of how we have performed over the past year.



Long Term Themes

Over the next three years we will continue to improve our services to local communities and enhance the difference we can make to the local economy and the environment. Three themes have been identified which will act as the focus for this improvement – Place, Homes and Economic Growth. The three themes are intended to complement each other. For example, housing growth in the area will have a positive impact on the local economy. Conserving the District's high quality local environment will ensure the District is a place people both want to live and invest in.

Place

We want a District that is vibrant, inclusive, safe and sustainable which retains the essential characteristics of its market towns, villages, open countryside, woodland, rivers and salt marshes.

We are committed to our communities. We intend to raise the profile of the District by working with partners to develop a distinctive programme of events, targeted at residents and visitors alike. Our District has a unique heritage which should be showcased. We also want to keep our District clean and tidy by promoting a positive street scene ensuring that our streets, roads and verges are well maintained.

Knowing that feeling safe is an important priority for our residents the Castle Point and Rochford District Community Safety Partnership will be supported to continue to deliver one of the lowest crime rates in the East of England. We will also ensure that statutory public safety duties are carried out to a high standard and that the District is as safe as possible when emergency situations occur.

We want to help our residents to develop and maintain active and healthy lifestyles. The Council is committed to providing a wide range of leisure activities and facilities for all ages and ensuring its open spaces are accessible to all for recreational activities.

The District has a unique and beautiful environment which should be protected and enhanced. Future development needs to be carefully managed and, at the same time, open spaces protected for the benefit of both residents and visitors.



Wallasea looking across to Burnham-on-Crouch



Rochford Hall



Southend Airport Railway Station

Place

What we will do	How we will achieve it	Timescale
Protect and enhance the District's character and heritage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure new development respects the District's local character through the development management process. Maintain a list of the District's heritage assets and ensure these are protected from inappropriate alterations. Ensure up-to-date plans and policies are in place that protect the District's heritage and characteristics whilst accommodating the District's development needs. 	<p>As and when planning applications are made.</p> <p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Draft New Local Plan complete by March 2016. Final version adopted by September 2017.</p>
Protect and enrich our local environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective management of contributions from developers towards community infrastructure. Ensure joined up approach across service areas and partners to development. 	Review current arrangements by December 2014. Revised arrangements in place by March 2015.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and deliver a vision for the Upper Roach Valley enhancing the biodiversity of the area. 	January 2015.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain effective environmental regulation. 	Review March 2015.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declare Rayleigh Air Quality Management Area. This is designed to improve air quality. 	Autumn 2014.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect recycling material and meet obligations. Materials Recovery Facility contract awarded. 	May 2015.
Promote and enhance a sense of pride in our District.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with commercial partners to enable a series of events across the District. Develop a calendar with partners. 	First event August 2015. Annual Review.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote a positive 'Streetscene'. Maintain clean and tidy roads and verges. 	Campaign in place from April 2014.
Ensure that the community feels safe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-ordinate the activities of the Castle Point & Rochford Community Safety Partnership ensuring its objectives are delivered. 	Annual plan implemented from April 2014.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of the Health & Safety and Food Safety Plans. 	Approved by June 2014.

Place

What we will do	How we will achieve it	Timescale
Develop an active and healthy community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Essex County Council, Sustrans (a charity promoting sustainable transport) and Southend on Sea Borough Council to develop a network of cycle paths across the District and around the airport. 	Feasibility study by September 2014
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work in partnership with Active Rochford, Castle Point & Rochford Health and Wellbeing Board and Clinical Commissioning Group to address identified priorities. 	Annual Plan in place from April 2014 reviewed annually.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a wide range of high quality facilities, activities and services through the leisure contract. 	Annual Review.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver an Open Spaces Strategy to clarify our aims in managing such areas. 	Approved by July 2014. Annual Review.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refresh the Ageing Population Strategy to fully reflect the work the Council undertakes to support older residents. 	Complete by September 2014.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through membership of the South East Essex Children's Partnership Board, work with County Council, Castle Point Borough Council, Health Service, Police, Schools and the Voluntary Sector to ensure that quality services and provision are in place to meet the needs of children and young people in the District. 	Attendance at the quarterly meetings of the Children's Partnership Board and input into the work included in the Essex Children, Young People and Families Plan.
Work with partners to improve the infrastructure of the District.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of current working arrangements with Essex County Council Highways to achieve improved outcomes for the District in respect of all highway issues, from major infrastructure improvements to issues such as pot holes. 	Delivery by March 2015.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a Community Infrastructure Levy for the District, which will require developers to make financial contributions towards infrastructure. 	Community Infrastructure Levy adopted by March 2016
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce a Transportation Strategy Supplementary Planning Document that will clearly state to infrastructure providers (including the Highways Authority) the Council's transport priorities. 	Transportation Strategy Supplementary Planning Document adopted by January 2016.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the emergency plans for the District to ensure we work with other partners in order to help and support those affected. 	September 2014.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a Surface Water Flood Forum to work closely with other key organisations and the community to find cost effective, innovative solutions to surface water flooding problems in the District. 	Forum in place. Local schemes under development.

Homes

The Council has ensured the appropriate planning framework is in place through the production of its Core Strategy and accompanying planning documents. The focus must now transfer from plan and policy to delivery as well as ensuring plans are kept up to date.

In the March 2014 budget statement, the Government restated its commitment to build additional homes. The provision of new homes in the District will have positive short-term impacts on the local economy and must be managed to protect the District's environment and character. We will work with partners to provide a range of quality new housing for our communities, including affordable homes for those residents unable to buy or rent in the private market. We will ensure new developments respect the District's character and environment and are accompanied by the appropriate infrastructure to support them. We will continue to provide advice and assistance to residents who need help to find suitable solutions to their housing issues, and support the housing needs of the most vulnerable members of our community.



Homes

What we will do	How we will achieve it	Timescale
Provide new homes to meet local need, including additional affordable homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage/support developers to deliver homes on sites with planning consent. 	From commencement of individual planning applications.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure up-to-date, viable plans are in place to manage future development appropriately; and take a positive pro-active approach to delivery of those plans, including monitoring of delivery. 	Draft New Local Plan complete by March 2016; final version adopted by September 2017. Delivery of current plans ongoing. Development delivery reported annually.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partners to identify housing requirements in terms of number, type and location. 	December 2014.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement policies in relation to requirements for affordable housing on new development sites. 	Ongoing in response to planning applications.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Council and other public organisation owned land to identify development opportunities. 	March 2015.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the potential for the Council to develop land either alone or in partnership. 	March 2015.
Ensure new housing developments are high quality environments in which people want to live, and which respect the District's environment and existing character.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure up-to-date plans and policies are in place that guide housing development to the most sustainable locations and protect less sustainable areas from inappropriate development. 	Core Strategy and Allocations Plan already in place. Draft New Local Plan complete by March 2016; final version adopted by September 2017.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure up-to-date plans are in place to manage design of development and to ensure development does not adversely affect the District's character or environment. 	Development Management Plan adopted by September 2014.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work positively with developers to ensure developments meet the standards set by the Council. 	In response to planning applications and pre-application enquiries.

Homes

What we will do	How we will achieve it	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with local residents to ensure public participation in the planning process so that future development accounts for the views of the community. 	Integral to preparation of Council plans and in consideration of individual planning applications.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take enforcement action against unauthorised development where appropriate. 	On response to unauthorised development.
Minimise the number of Empty Homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective monitoring of Council tax discounts and exemptions. 	Reviewed annually.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the Thames Gateway South Essex Empty Homes Scheme. 	Reviewed annually.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an Empty Homes Strategy. 	December 2014.
Reduce homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review homeless prevention and housing advice services. 	July 2014.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the use of bed and breakfast accommodation. 	Commencing July 2014; increasing through to 2016.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the supply of self-contained temporary accommodation units. 	First additional units July 2014; further additional units continuing to be provided through to 2016.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the Council's housing allocation scheme. 	March 2015.
Promote energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify fuel poverty. 	December 2014.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partners to improve home energy efficiency. Promote the Council's home improvement grant scheme; ensure the scheme is targeted at those most in need, and assists the most vulnerable members of the community. 	Already in place. To be reviewed annually.

Economic Growth

Economic Growth is crucial to the vitality of the District, and key to ensuring the right balance between essential development and preservation of the environment.

We will rise to this challenge through our Economic Growth Strategy. This sets out plans for business support, helping businesses to grow; support for new business start-ups; promoting inward investment opportunities and funding sources; and to show how we will be driving economic development forward to make the most of the opportunities that the District has to offer. Plans for the development of significant new employment sites are in hand (London Southend Airport and Environs Joint Area Action Plan – JAAP) and we are committed to supporting our town centres through adoption of Town Centre Action Plans. We will also link in with plans put forward by the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership.

Economic growth and prosperity is linked to new housing provision and we will be reviewing our adopted Core Strategy to roll forward planning policies for housing and employment to 2031. We want to ensure that people have the opportunity to both live and work in the District reducing reliance on commuting out of the District.

We will deliver a Tourism Strategy for the District with actions to show how we can increase the duration of time that short term visitors will spend in the District, how we can increase the range of attractions available to visit, and how we can promote environmentally friendly tourism where we encourage schemes that positively protect the environment but which are, at the same time, tourist attractions. Other initiatives will include preparing a series of guided walks to showcase our attractions, encouraging bed and breakfast provision through positive planning policies and, seeking improvements to the footpath and cycling networks.



The Spa Public House, Hockley



Baltic Wharf, Paglesham

Economic Growth

What we will do?	How we will achieve it	Timescale
Help grow new and existing businesses by ensuring the right conditions are in place to attract employment and development. We will work with our partners to deliver infrastructure improvements that serve businesses' needs, and increase visitor numbers in the town centres across the District.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formation of 'Town Teams' to promote the Districts' town centres. 	Creation of new Town Team for Rayleigh is underway – Proposals for Rochford and Hockley to be progressed – December 2014.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage business start ups and make it as easy as possible to locate a business in the District. 	Business Summit to ensure we are providing the services needed by local businesses and to build good relationships with the entrepreneurial community. Action plan to be prepared by July 2014. Following summit with businesses in Autumn 2014.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the costs of operating business in the District through targeted schemes and incentives. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage entrepreneurial talent 	Targeted events to be organised including school visits through March 2015.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advance the business development aspects of the town centre plans. 	Work with Council's Planning Team on plan implementation 2014-17.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and develop the business park as part of the Joint Area Action Plan, as well as additional employment land in the District. 	JAAP – adoption in autumn 2014. Partnership with Southend Council to progress implementation – 2014-2017.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support rural businesses. 	Support rural businesses through flexible planning policies for development; prepare a rural business support strategy by September 2014.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and deliver an Empty Shops Strategy. 	Prepare Empty Shops Strategy by September 2014.
Develop tourism. Attract as many visitors to the District as possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Tourism Strategy in collaboration with Visit Essex to include Wallasea Island Wild Coast project. 	Tourism Strategy December 2014.
Implement the Thames Gateway South Essex Economic Growth Strategy to enable funding for new infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partners to seek financial resources from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). 	The SELEP funding programme runs for 6 years from 2014.



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Corporate Plan

Appendices
2014/17

Housing, McCarthy Stone

Peter Paul Church, Hockley

River Crouch, Kendal Park, Hullbridge

Bluebells, Hockley Woods

Skateboard Park

9.1.19

Appendix 1

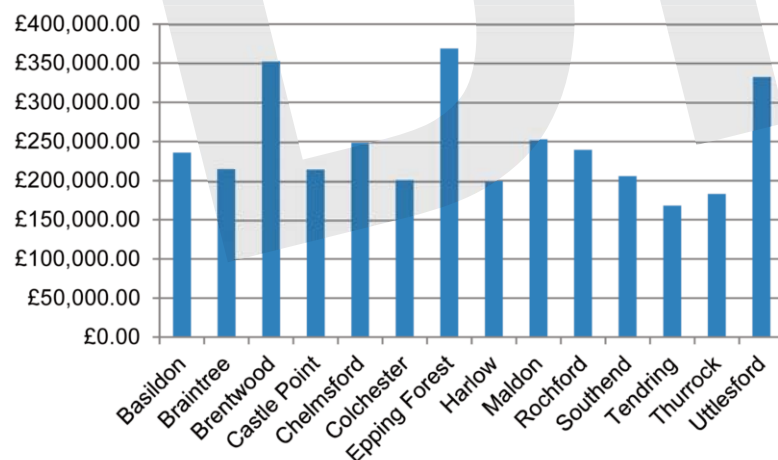
The Rochford District in Figures

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) population estimates showed Rochford District as having a population of 83,900 in 2012. The area is relatively affluent, ranking 299 out of 326 authorities nationally, where 1 is the most deprived and 326 the least deprived.

Owner occupied homes constitute 84% of households, 8.5% of homes are privately rented and 7.5% are social rentals.

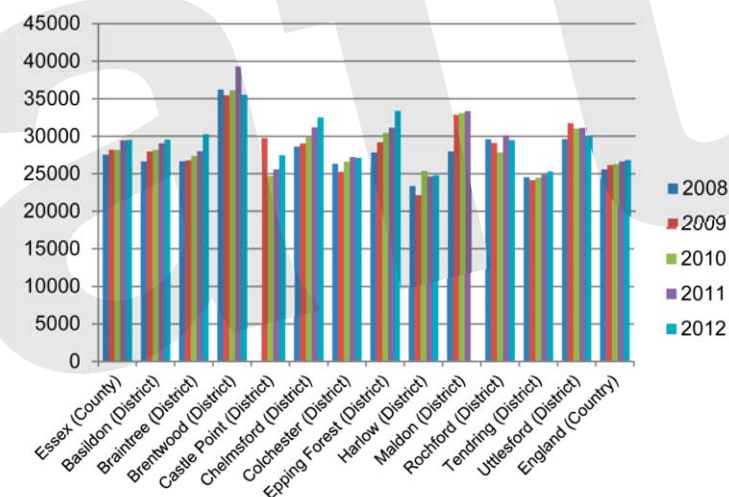
Average house price are below both the County and National average, but 6th highest in Essex (Based on Band D – 3 bed Semi).

Average Price



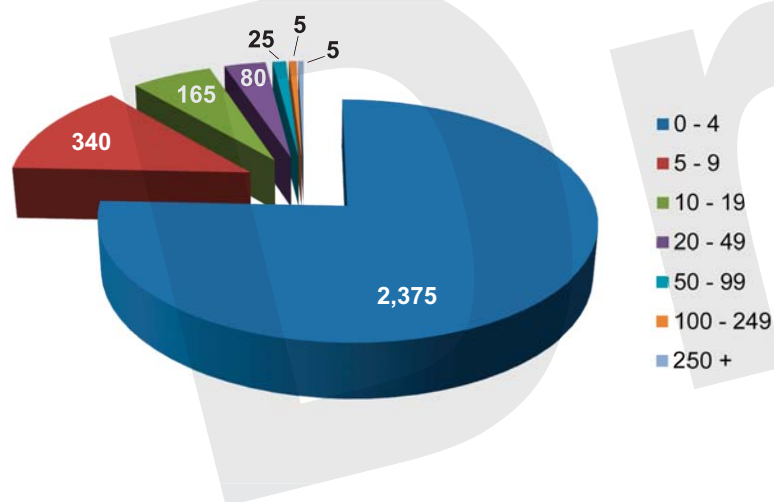
We have good levels of employment in the District with 79% of residents in employment compared to the regional figure of 75% Annual Gross Pay – resident based (*source Essex Insight*)

Annual Gross Pay



By far our largest sector by number of employees are small businesses employing between 1 to 4 people; 79 per cent of businesses are in this category, as opposed to 0.33 per cent employing 100+ staff. The District's largest numbers of employees are in wholesale, retail and repair of motor vehicles with education and manufacturing the next biggest employers.

Rochford 2012 Size of companies by employment size Band



Source: Essex Insight & Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR) Office for National Statistics



9.1.21

Rayleigh High Street

Appendix 2

Our Council:

We employ 207 full-time equivalent staff, with some key services contracted to the private sector, for example, refuse collection, recycling, street cleansing, grounds maintenance, leisure management and the IT service.

We have 39 elected Members and currently a Conservative administration.

We follow the 'strong leader' model of government, with the Leader appointing eight members to the Executive and allocating portfolios to those members.

Our Services:

Local Government in Essex is structured into what is commonly termed as a 'three-tier' structure, with responsibilities and service provision shared between District, Parish and County Councils.

For the District of Rochford, Essex County Council, Rochford District Council and the Town and Parish Councils work together with other partners to provide a large range of services to the public.

The functions of Rochford District Council include:

Chief Executive Services: Human Resources, policy development, partnerships, health and safety, emergency planning and business continuity, internal and external communications, staff engagement and elections.

Community Services: Leisure and Culture, Benefits, Council Tax, Community Safety, Strategic Housing and Customer Services.

Environmental Services: Refuse Collection, Recycling, Street Cleansing, Public Open Spaces & Woodlands, Environmental Health and Licensing.

Finance: Audit, Financial Services, Performance Management and Information and Support Services.

Legal, Estates and Member Services: Member Services, Legal, Asset Management, Land Charges and Burials.

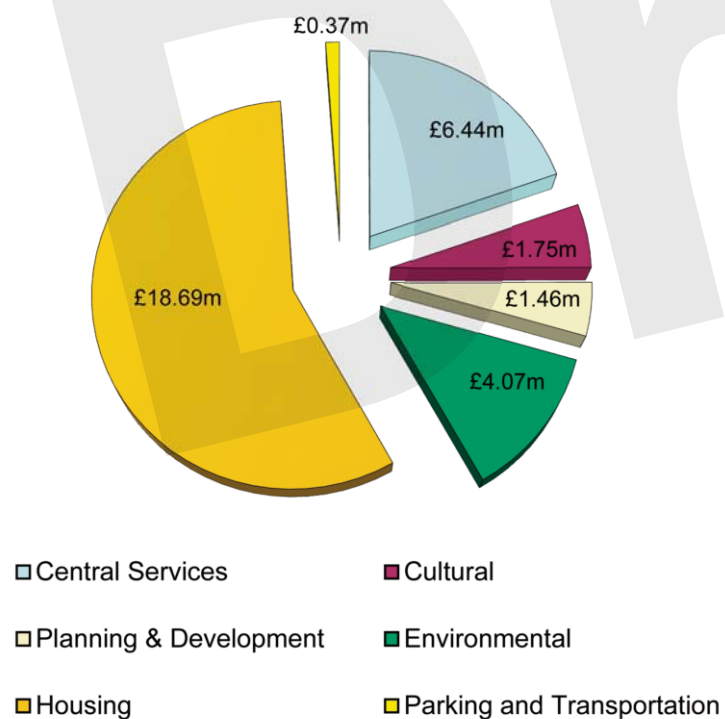
Planning & Transportation Services: Development Management, Building Control, Spacial Planning Policy, Planning Enforcement, Taxi Licensing, Car Parking, Economic Development and Regeneration, and Information and Communication Technologies.

Our Finances:

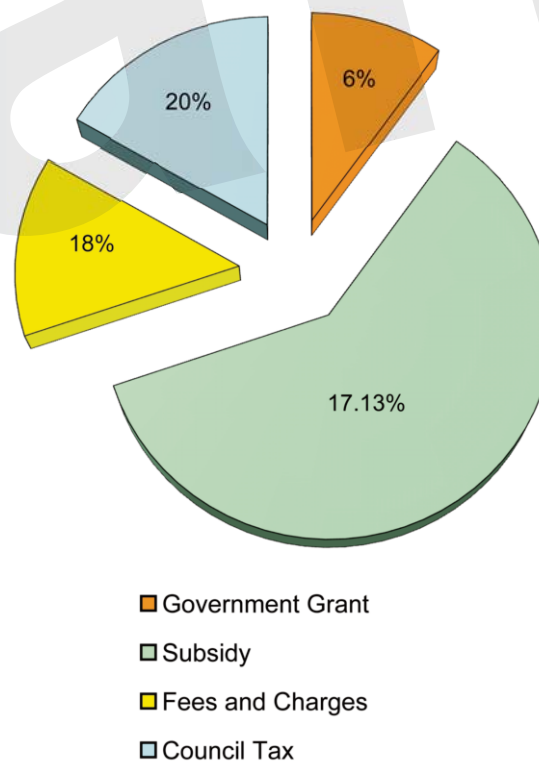
The future funding of local authorities has changed significantly over recent years. The tables below indicate where the Council's funding comes from and how it is spent:

Our Medium Term Financial Strategy sets out the approach to investing in services and meeting the challenges of continuing cuts in Government funding and reducing our dependency on Revenue Support Grant. We will continue to drive down costs and generate income through efficient working, working with other organisations and managing our assets.

Planned Expenditure 2014/15



Sources of Income 2014/15



Appendix 3

Partnership Working

The Council cannot deliver a prosperous and brighter future on its own; this will only be achieved by working with other organisations in partnership. At the local level the Castle Point and Rochford Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) is a non-statutory multi-agency partnership which brings together the different parts of the private, public, community and voluntary sectors. This Plan complements the overall priorities of the LSP.



Boatyard

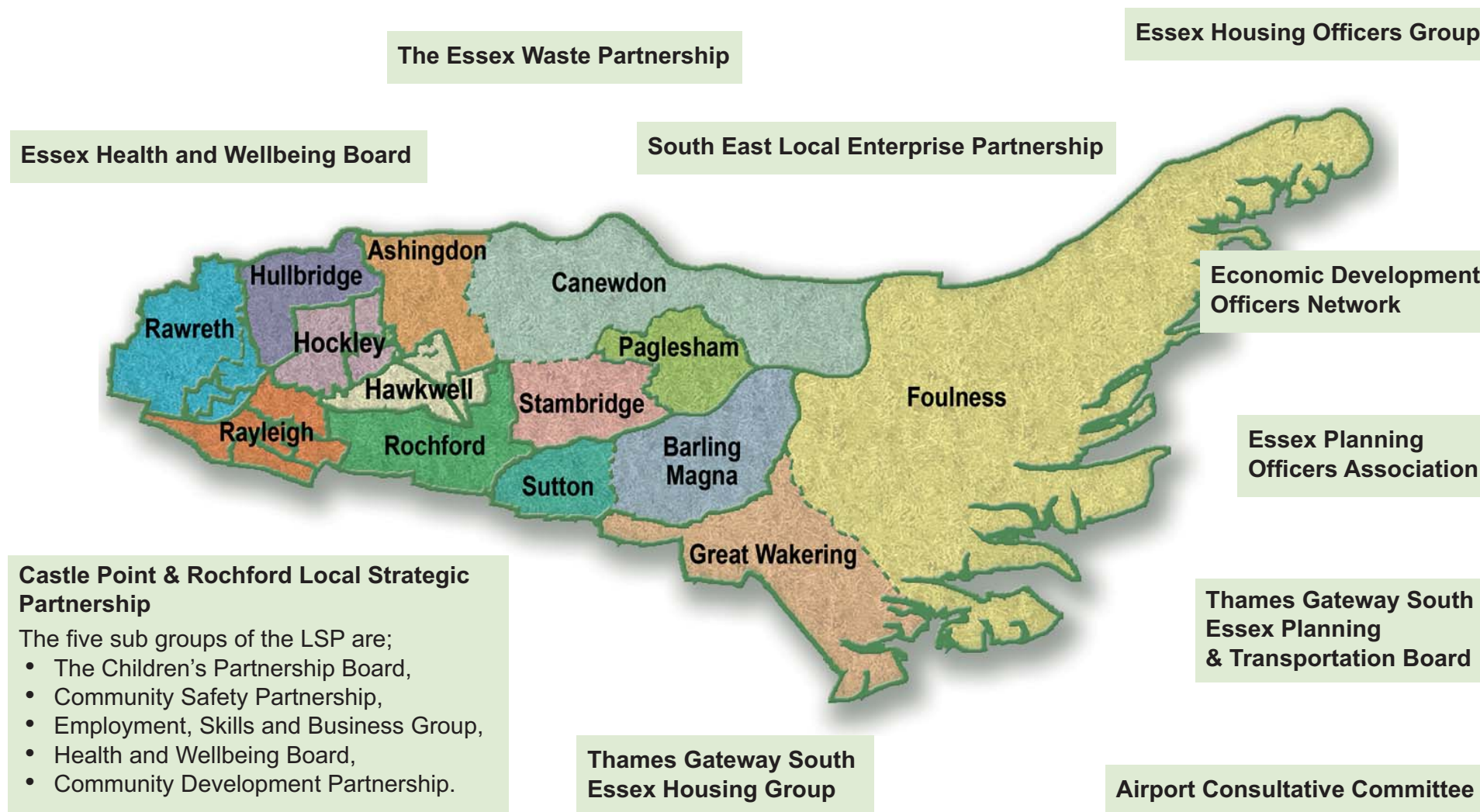


London Southend Airport



Cherry Orchard Country Park, Rochford

Other key partnerships that are central to the Council's long term priorities include:



Draft



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USE OF IPADS FOR COUNCIL BUSINESS

1 DECISIONS BEING RECOMMENDED

That it be recommended to Council:-

- 1.1 That, apart from the issuing of hard copy summons and the making of separate arrangements where necessary to accord with equalities/disability discrimination legislation, all Members of the Council receive business documentation via email links. Specifically that:-
 - Agenda pages only (not associated reports) be posted out first class via the Royal Mail or made available at the Council offices to appointees only in accordance with legislative requirement. Separately, all Members (including appointees) to receive an email link to all agendas and reports as they are published.
 - Email links to the various business documents identified in paragraph 3.6 below be issued to all Members of the Council.
 - Any ad hoc Member correspondence received at the Council offices be posted out first class via Royal Mail as appropriate.
- 1.2 That it be noted that a Government Order providing that, where a Member consents, a summons can be sent to an electronic address in electronic form, is imminent.
- 1.3 That the Portfolio Holder for People and Technology, in consultation with officers, monitor the new arrangements and address any issues that arise.

2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Each Member has use of a Council provided iPad to accord with ICT Security Policy and Practice. It had always been the intention that, once the iPads were in use for the purpose of emails, the opportunity for broadening out usage for other Council business papers, such as the receipt of agendas, minutes and reports, would be explored.

3 SALIENT INFORMATION

- 3.1 From a review of possibilities it is clear that, subject to according with certain legislative requirements, the iPads could facilitate a significant move away from the provision of hard copy paper documentation.

Meeting Agendas

- 3.2 In terms of meetings legislation, the only business documentation required to be in hard copy form are Council, Committee and Sub-Committee agendas (not the associated reports or, indeed, the Minutes). The agenda pages form

the summons which must be sent to every appropriate Member at their usual residence. There is, however, provision within the Local Government Act 1972 for a Member to give notice in writing to the Proper Officer for summonses to be sent to an alternative address to the Member's usual residence. The summons must specify the business to be transacted at a meeting in sufficient detail.

- 3.3 At the current time all Members receive copies of the agendas plus reports for all meetings. This ensures that all Members are aware of Council business and also proves of value at forums such as group meetings where it is useful for all attendees to have sight of all Council business paperwork.
- 3.4 In terms of moving to a more paperless approach and reducing dispatch costs, hard copies of agendas (and not the associated reports) could be posted out via Royal Mail to the Members of the body in question only (to meet legislative requirements) and, at the same time, links to the agenda and reports could be emailed out to all Members to be accessed via the Member iPad. Members could also give notice in writing to the Proper Officer that summonses should be sent to either the Civic Suite or the Council Offices in Rochford, saving on postage costs. There would remain a need to have some hard copies of agendas, reports and minutes available given a legal obligation that these are open for inspection by the public and the value of having some spares for the public at meetings.
- 3.5 In association with this subject Members should be aware that a Government Order providing that, where a Member consents, a summons can be sent to an electronic address in electronic form is imminent.

Other Business Documentation

- 3.6 As with agendas and reports, there is no reason why the other documents associated with Member business cannot be linked to an email sent to Member iPads. Specifically, these documents would be: the Weekly list; the Parish list; the Members' Bulletin; Notices of Executive Decisions and the Key Decisions Document. It is also considered that the Members' diary and filofax pages can be issued electronically via the Member iPads. Some documentation, such as exempt Committee reports, communication on Member Allowances and the Members' Bulletin will, in time, be linked to a bespoke intranet location rather than the Council's Committee Management Information System.
- 3.7 An appropriate exemption to electronic issue would be copies of certain planning applications issued to specific Ward Members. Given their size, at the current time it would be appropriate for some of these to be provided in hard copy form. The possibility of providing all planning applications via iPads is under consideration.

General Post

- 3.8 Whilst many residents post letters direct to their Councillor's address, there are occasions when correspondence for individual Members is received at the Council offices. Such ad-hoc correspondence could be posted out first class to Members.

Way Forward

- 3.9 A key question is whether a position that all Members utilise the iPad facility for Council business purposes should be taken, or whether there should be an opt out arrangement. In terms of meetings law, a Member cannot opt out of hard copy deliveries of the agendas (summons) relating to bodies to which they are appointed. By the same token, a Member cannot rely on meetings related legislation to insist upon physical delivery of any document other than the agenda (summons) of bodies to which they are appointed. Resource implications can be associated with any part arrangement. Notwithstanding the above, there can be circumstances where a Member has a disability or condition which may require the Council to consider alternative arrangements (see equalities section below).
- 3.10 In preparation for moving forward the Portfolio Holder, Cllr Mrs G A Lucas-Gill, has been trialling the electronic receipt of business paperwork on iPads with Member colleagues. The trial has been successful and we are now in a position whereby electronic delivery can be rolled out. A benefit of the trial has been that Members have assisted each other with questions. Separately, specific Member training has been held on the use of Topnotes software which allows Members to annotate electronic documents, and to navigate quickly through large, electronic documents and to file electronic documents in individual folders that can be easily accessed for meetings. The Portfolio Holder, in consultation with officers, could monitor new arrangements and address any issues that arise.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Should there be a full move to electronic delivery it is estimated that the issue of hard copy agendas and elements of correspondence to Members via first class post would be approximately £2,981.16 over the period of a year. This figure would reduce if Members opted to have summons left at the Council offices. The cost of using a courier under the current arrangements is approximately £7,504 per annum.
- 4.2 Notwithstanding electronic means of delivery, occasions may still arise when use of a courier would be applicable.
- 4.3 In terms of in-house activity, assuming all Member involvement, a move from issuing hard copy documentation to issuing electronic links to all Members is unlikely to involve much change.

5 EQUALITIES

- 5.1 There may be cases where a Member has a disability or condition which requires the Council to consider alternative arrangements for providing business papers. In such circumstances, following receipt of a request, the Council will arrange for an assessment to be carried out to identify an appropriate suitable alternative to ensure compliance with the Council's duties under the Equalities Act 2010 and Disability Discrimination Act 1995.