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## **ANNUAL REPORT 2008/09**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report presents a document setting out the Council's performance indicators for 2008/09 and a draft Annual Report for Members' consideration. Both of these documents will be sent under separate cover.
- 1.2 The Annual Report presents financial information that has already been approved by the Council and is based on the performance indicators.
- 1.3 In order to improve the reporting to residents and other stakeholder on the achievements and performance of the Council, an Annual Report was introduced in 2008. It provides an easy to read summary of the finances and performance of the Council over the last financial year. It is also a useful document to give to external inspectors as it summarises the Council's achievements.

### **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 At the meeting on 30 June 2009, Council approved the detailed draft Financial Statements.
- 2.2 In previous years, the Council has published a Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) but the legal requirement for this was removed last year. The performance indicator document replaces the BVPP and will be available on the Council's website but not published as a separate document.
- 2.3 In order to develop the contents and format of the Annual Report, a consultation was carried out in 2008. Due to a limited response rate, this survey has not been repeated this year. Research conducted by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants which examined the results of consultations carried out by other Authorities has been utilised. This contained examples of best practice around the country. The standards set by the Use of Resources Annual Assessment were also considered in deciding on the contents.

### **3 CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 Whilst officers have identified areas to be included in the Annual Report, Members may wish to add to or remove some of these.

### **4 PUBLICATION**

- 4.1 The draft Annual Report will be formatted to improve its layout and to follow clear print guidelines issued by the Royal National Institute for the Blind.
- 4.2 The financial information is currently unaudited as the external audit will not be completed until mid September. It is, therefore, proposed that the Annual Report be published on the website initially, with hard copies available on request. Once the financial information has been audited, a copy of the

information presented in the Annual Report will be included in the pages of the Autumn edition of Rochford District Matters to give it as wide an audience amongst residents as possible. Hard copies of the Annual Report will be available on request, sent to the libraries, the media and be available at Area Committees and on reception. It is not proposed to have a wider circulation because of the cost.

## 5 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Failure to report on our performance means that we are missing the opportunity to let residents and interested organisations know about what the Council has delivered and achieved during the year.

## 6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Developing reporting on sustainability issues will demonstrate to interested organisations and residents that this Council is responding to this important issue.

## 7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 By restricting production of the Annual Report to website and Rochford District Matters, with hard copies limited to public buildings and requests, the costs will be kept to a minimum and are mainly the officer time involved in pulling the report together.

## 8 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 It is proposed that Council **RESOLVES** that, subject to any suggestions for changes to the content of the Annual Report made during the meeting and changes arising from the audit of the accounts, the Annual Report be agreed for publication.

Yvonne Woodward

Head of Finance, Audit & Performance Management

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### Background Papers:-

None

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If you would like this report in large print, braille or another language please contact 01702 546366.



# Annual Performance Indicator Report 2008/2009

## Appendix One

## Our Vision

To make Rochford District a place which provides opportunities for the best quality of life for all who live, work and visit here

## Our Key Objectives

- Making a Difference to Our People
- Making a Difference to Our Community
- Making a Difference to Our Environment
- Making a Difference to Our Local Economy

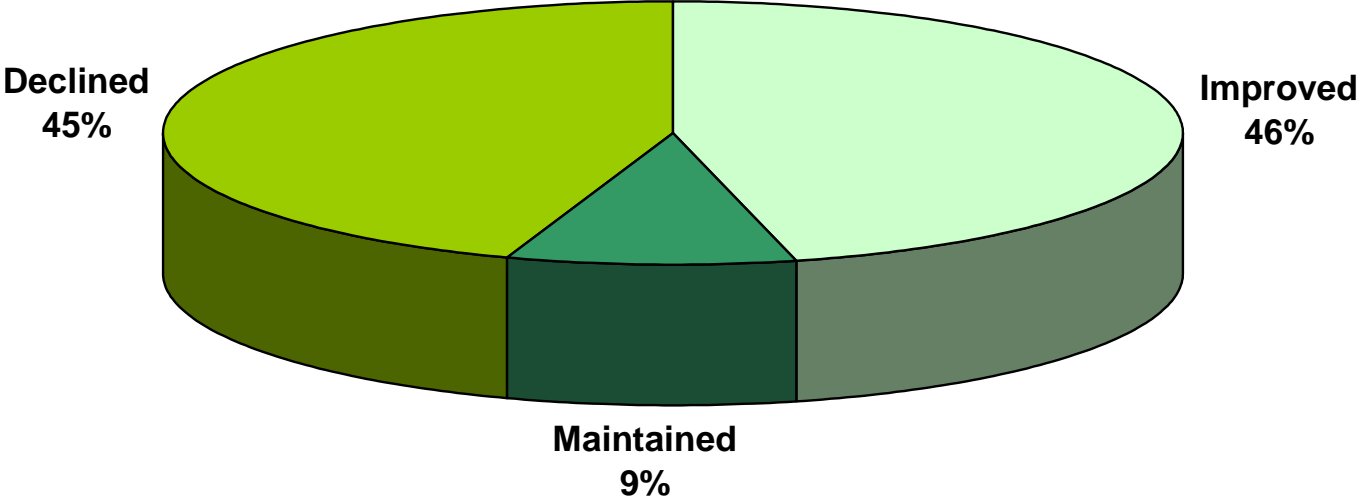
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This report details the performance for National Indicators, former Best Value Performance Indicators and Local Indicators. Best Value Performance Indicators were replaced by National Indicators at the end of the 2007/08 reporting year.

# How we performed in 2008/2009

2008/9 Vs 2007/8 Ex Best Value Performance Indicators and Local Performance Indicators



Corporate Objective One: Making a difference to Our People							
No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets			Notes
		2007/8	2008/9	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	
	Satisfaction with the way the Council runs things	62.00%	55.59%	Not Set	Not Set	Not Set	Source: Place Survey 2008 Results shown for 2007/8 are from the General Satisfaction Survey conducted in 2006
	Percentage who agree local council provides value for money	51.00%	43.70%	Not Set	Not Set	Not Set	
NI 5	Overall/general satisfaction with local area	82.00%	89.70%	Not Set	Not Set	82.00%	Source: Place Survey 2008 Results shown for 2007/8 are from the General Satisfaction Survey conducted in 2006 Target set in the Local Area Agreement 2008-2011
NI 6	Participation in regular volunteering	New for 2008/09	17.50%	Not Set	Not Set	Not Set	Source: Place Survey 2008 Target set in the Local Area Agreement 2008-2011
NI 14	Avoidable contact: the proportion of customer contact that is of low or no value to the customer	New for 2008/09	19.10%	Not Set	Not Set	Not Set	
NI 119	Self-reported measure of peoples overall health and wellbeing	New for 2008/09	78.40%	Not Set	Not Set	Not Set	Source: Place Survey 2008
NI 156	Number of households living in temporary accommodation	New for 2008/09	29	Not Set	29	20	Target set in the Local Area Agreement 2008-2011
BV 183b	Average number of weeks spent by households which include dependent children or a pregnant woman (and which are unintentionally homeless and in priority need) in hostel accommodation	8.00	8.42	12.00	12.00	12.00	This figure is dependent on the historical profile of homeless applicants.

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Corporate Objective One: Making a difference to Our People							
No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets			Notes
		2007/8	2008/9	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	
BV 213	Number of households seeking housing advice where housing advice casework resolved their situation (per 1,000 households)	1	1	1	1	1	
Local 9.3a	Proportion of homelessness applications on which the authority makes a decision and issues written notification to the applicant within 33 working days	97.60%	85.53%	90.00%	95.00%	95.00%	The process is being revised to allow for more time to resolve complex cases.
Local 9.3b	Proportion of homelessness applications on which the authority makes a decision and issues written notification to the applicant within 25 working days	New for 2008/09	50.00%	40.00%	50.00%	55.00%	
Local 9.3c	Proportion of homelessness applications on which the authority makes a decision and issues written notification to the applicant over 40 working days	New for 2008/09	7.89%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	



Corporate Objective One: Making a difference to Our People							
No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets			Notes
		2007/8	2008/9	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	
BV 2a	Level of the Commission for Equality Standard for Local Government to which we conform	Level 2	Level 3	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Achieved Level 4 in May 2009
BV 2b	Extent to which duty to promote race equality meets defined criteria	57.89%	78.95%	68.00%	78.95%	84.00%	
BV 11a	Proportion of the top 5% of earners that are women	29.27%	27.66%	N/A	28.17%	28.17%	Any increase in numbers for these categories is dependent on vacancies and the suitability of applicants.
BV 11b	Proportion of the top 5% of earners who are from an ethnic minority	0.00%	0.00%	N/A	0.00%	0.00%	
BV 11c	Proportion of the top 5% of earners who have a disability	9.76%	9.22%	N/A	9.39%	9.39%	
BV 12	Number of working days lost to sickness absence per employee	5.29	7.49	5.00	6	5	See also Local Indicator 11.6 relating to sickness absence excluding long-term sickness.
Local 11.6	Number of working days lost to sickness absence per employee (excluding continuous sickness of more than 4 weeks)	3.93	3.82	3.30	5	4	

Corporate Objective One: Making a difference to Our People							
No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets			Notes
		2007/8	2008/9	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	
BV 16a	Proportion of staff declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act Disability definition.	2.22%	1.95%	3.00%	2.00%	2.50%	
BV 16b	The percentage of economically active disabled people in the authority area	11.26%	11.26%	11.26%	11.26%	11.26%	This figure is based on 2001 census data and will remain unchanged
BV 17a	Proportion of our employees from ethnic minority communities	1.33%	1.50%	1.30%	1.30%	1.70%	
BV 17b	The percentage of economically active population from ethnic minority communities in the area	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%	This figure is based on 2001 census data and will remain unchanged
Local 11.3	Percentage of permanent staff turnover	14.00%	6.93%	15.00%	10.00%	10.00%	
Local 11.4	Percentage of permanent appointments filled by internal promotion	14.29%	14.63%	15.00%	20.00%	20.00%	Achievement of this target will be dependent on vacancies and the suitability of applicants
Local 11.5	Percentage of permanent appointments filled by internal appointment at same grade	2.38%	4.88%	3.00%	3.00%	4.00%	Achievement of this target will be dependent on vacancies and the suitability of applicants

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Corporate Objective One: Making a difference to Our People							
No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets			Notes
		2007/8	2008/9	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	
Local 11.7	The percentage of all PDR's completed and submitted to HR of all PDR's due	98.93%	97.46%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	
Local 11.8	The percentage of all interim PDR's completed and submitted to HR of all interim PDR's due	64.86%	81.31%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	
Local 1.5	Percentage of telephone calls answered by our switchboard within 15 seconds	93.00%	92.38%	91.00%	91.00%	91.00%	

Corporate Objective Two: Making a difference to Our Community							
No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets			Notes
		2007/8	2008/9	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	
NI 1	Percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area	69.00%	86.50%	Not Set	Not Set	Not Set	Source: Place Survey 2008 Results shown for 2007/8 are from the General Satisfaction Survey conducted in 2006
NI 2	Percentage of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood	New for 2008/09	67.00%	Not Set	Not Set	Not Set	Source: Place Survey 2008
NI 3	Civic participation in the local area	New for 2008/09	7.60%	Not Set	Not Set	Not Set	Source: Place Survey 2008
NI 4	Percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality	29.00%	23.80%	Not Set	Not Set	Not Set	Source: Place Survey 2008 Results shown for 2007/8 are from the General Satisfaction Survey conducted in 2006
NI 8	Adult Participation in sport and active recreation	New for 2008/09	21.00%	Not Set	Not Set	24.70%	Provisional result shown, confirmed result due for release December 2009 by Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (DBERR). Target set in the Local Area Agreement 2008-2011

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Corporate Objective Two: Making a difference to Our Community							
No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets			Notes
		2007/8	2008/9	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	
NI 15	Number of most serious violent crimes per 1,000 population	New for 2008/09	14	Not Set	Not Set	Not Set	
NI 16	Number of serious acquisitive crimes per 1,000 population	New for 2008/09	556	277	Not Set	Not Set	Detailed targets shown in the Crime Disorder Reduction Partnership Strategy.
NI 17	Perceptions of anti-social behaviour	New for 2008/09	13.90%	Not Set	Not Set	15.00%	Source: Place Survey 2008 Target set in the Local Area Agreement 2008-2011
NI 20	Assaults with injury crime rate	New for 2008/09	215	247	Not Set	241	Target set in the Local Area Agreement 2008-2011
NI 21	Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues by the local council and police	New for 2008/09	31.30%	Not Set	Not Set	Not Set	Source: Place Survey 2008
NI 27	Understanding of local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues by the local council and police	New for 2008/09	27.00%	Not Set	Not Set	Not Set	Source: Place Survey 2008
Local 10.4	Percentage reduction in crime measured by comparing the reported crime for 12 months ending March 2009 with 12 months ending March 2008	New for 2008/09	8.94%	5.00%	Discontinued	Discontinued	Discontinued from 2009/10. Detailed targets shown in the Crime Disorder Reduction Partnership Strategy.

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Corporate Objective Two: Making a difference to Our Community							
No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets			Notes
		2007/8	2008/9	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	
NI 22	Perceptions of parents taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children in the area	New for 2008/09	32.00%	Not Set	Not Set	Not Set	Source: Place Survey 2008
NI 23	Perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and consideration	New for 2008/09	18.30%	Not Set	Not Set	Not Set	Source: Place Survey 2008
NI 41	Perceptions of drunk or rowdy behaviour as a problem	New for 2008/09	22.50%	Not Set	Not Set	Not Set	Source: Place Survey 2008
NI 42	Perceptions of drug use or drug dealing as a problem	New for 2008/09	21.70%	Not Set	Not Set	Not Set	Source: Place Survey 2008
NI 37	Awareness of civil protection arrangements in the local area	New for 2008/09	13.50%	Not Set	Not Set	Not Set	Source: Place Survey 2008
NI 138	Satisfaction of people over 65 with both home and neighbourhood	New for 2008/09	87.00%	Not Set	Not Set	Not Set	Source: Place Survey 2008
NI 139	The extent to which older people receive the support they need to live independently	New for 2008/09	29.00%	Not Set	Not Set	Not Set	Source: Place Survey 2008
NI 140	Fair treatment by local services	New for 2008/09	81.70%	Not Set	Not Set	Not Set	Source: Place Survey 2008

Corporate Objective Two: Making a difference to Our Community							
No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets			Notes
		2007/8	2008/9	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	
NI 179	Value for money – total net value of ongoing cash-releasing value for money gains that have impacted since the start of the 2008-09 financial year	New for 2008/09	£426,000	£208,000	Not Set	Not Set	Target was the estimate of potential savings for the year, made in October 2008.
NI 180	The average number of changes of circumstances which affect customers' Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit within the year	New for 2008/09	888.20	Not set	Not set	Not set	Reported figure represents number of changes per 1,000 caseload. Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) now suggesting local targets are set using management reporting systems to estimate the number of changes processed within a given timeframe. Work in progress to address this recommendation.
NI 181	Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events	New for 2008/09	14.6	Not set	15.0	15.0	Provisional result shown, confirmed result due for release by DWP, date to be confirmed.
BV 9	Council Tax collected	98.88%	98.85%	98.90%	98.90%	98.90%	
BV 10	Business rates collected	98.57%	97.53%	99.00%	98.00%	98.00%	
BV 76b	Number of fraud investigators per 1,000 caseload	0.41	0.40	0.85	Discontinued	Discontinued	Measure discontinued from 2009/10 onwards.
BV 76c	Number of fraud investigations per 1,000 caseload	37.81	38.03	56.00	45.00	51.00	
BV 76d	Number of prosecutions and sanctions per 1,000 caseload	7.85	7.96	12.00	9.00	10.00	

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Corporate Objective Two: Making a difference to Our Community							
No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets			Notes
		2007/8	2008/9	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	
BV 78a	Average time for processing new claims (days)	22.6	23.0	22.0	23.0	23.0	
BV 78b	Average time for processing notifications of change of circumstances	9.50	12.3	11.00	12.00	12.00	
BV 79bi)	Percentage of recoverable housing benefit overpayments made and recovered in the year	64.22%	58.78%	70.00%	60.00%	60.00%	
BV 79bij)	Percentage of housing benefit overpayments recovered compared with total debt	27.03%	27.99%	30.00%	30.00%	30.00%	
BV 79biii)	Percentage of housing benefit payments written off compared with total debt	4.22%	4.10%	4.00%	4.00%	4.00%	
Local 2.2a	Percentage using direct debit for payment of Council Tax	77.06%	77.19%	76.00%	77.5%	78.00%	
Local 2.2b	Percentage using direct debit for payment of Business rates	60.53%	60.77%	62.00%	61.50%	62.00%	
Local 2.20	Percentage of housing benefit claims processed within 14 days.	86.48%	75.33%	80.00%	80.00%	80.00%	
Local 2.22	Response time to counter enquiries	74.05%	79.94%	80.00%	82.00%	84.00%	

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**APPENDIX ONE**



Corporate Objective Two: Making a difference to Our Community							
No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets			Notes
		2007/8	2008/9	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	
Local 2.34	The percentage of new rent allowance claims paid within 7 days of a decision being made	87.94%	59.01%	92.00%	92.00%	93.00%	
Local 2.35	Percentage of applications for reconsideration/revision actioned and notified within 4 weeks	58.59%	49.00%	92.00%	70.00%	70.00%	
NI 182	Satisfaction of business with local authority regulation services	New for 2008/09	77%	Not set	Not set	Not set	
NI 184	Food establishments in the area which are broadly compliant with food hygiene law	New for 2008/09	NYA	75.00%	75.00%	80.00%	Result due for release by Food Standards Agency (FSA), date to be confirmed.
BV 8a)	Undisputed invoices paid within 30 days	95.70%	98.66%	98.00%	98.00%	98.00%	
Local 8b)	Undisputed Local Business invoices paid within 10 days	New for 2008/09	New for 2009/10	98%	98%	98%	
Local 8c)	Percentage of payments made by BACs	New for 2008/09	86.68%	87%	88%	89%	
BV 174	Number of racial incidents recorded by us per 100,000 population	0	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	
BV 175	Percentage of racial incidents that resulted in further action	N/A	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A	

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**APPENDIX ONE**

Corporate Objective Two: Making a difference to Our Community							
No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets			Notes
		2007/8	2008/9	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	
BV 202	Number of people sleeping rough on a single night within the area of the local authority	0-10	0-10	0-10	0-10	0-10	
BV 225	Score against a checklist of domestic violence best practice covering availability of information, support and protection for victims, and partnership working	90.91%	90.00%	90.00%	Discontinued	Discontinued	No longer a nationally reported statistic.
Local 3.15	The number of planning decisions delegated to officers as a percentage of all decisions.	95.42%	94.69%	N/A	N/A	N/A	Not targeted
Local 3.17b	Number of planning representations received electronically	42.50%	64.19%	50.00%	N/A	N/A	Not targeted
Local 8.4	Standard land searches carried out in 10 working days	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	Time standard reduced from 10 working days to 5 working days from 2009/10.
Local 3.16	Total number of hours car parking assistants spend patrolling as a percentage of total hours worked	65.06%	64.52%	62.00%	65.00%	65.00%	
Local 3.19	Percentage of planned Taxi Licensing enforcement hours achieved	92.49%	117.07%	97.00%	98.00%	98.00%	

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Corporate Objective Two: Making a difference to Our Community							
No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets			Notes
		2007/8	2008/9	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	
Local 9.2	The percentage of food premises inspections which were planned to be carried out that were completed	100%	99.02%	99.00%	99.00%	99.00%	
Local 9.4	The percentage of health and safety inspections which were planned to be carried out that were completed	100%	100%	99.00%	99.00%	99.00%	
Local 9.5	Percentage of valid license applications received which were determined/notified within target	97.79%	100%	98.00%	98.00%	98.00%	
Local 9.6	Percentage of valid license applications requiring a hearing for which a hearing was held within the target time	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	
Local 9.7	Percentage of determined applications for which licenses were issued within target time	100.00%	100.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	
Local 9.9	Percentage of licensed premises inspections, which were planned to be carried out that were completed.	56.38%	123.08%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	

Corporate Objective Three: Making a difference to Our Environment							
No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets			Notes
		2007/8	2008/9	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	
Local 9.13a	The percentage of service requests that were completed in the quarter initial response within 5 working days	New for 2008/09	100%	99%	99%	99%	This indicator currently relates to activities within the Commercial Regulation and Licensing Team and will be rolled out to all Environmental Services shortly.
Local 9.13b	The percentage of service requests that were completed in the quarter resolved within 6 weeks.	New for 2008/09	100%	95%	95%	95%	This indicator currently relates to activities within the Commercial Regulation and Licensing Team and will be rolled out to all Environmental Services shortly.
NI 185	Percentage of CO2 reduction from local authority operations	New for 2008/09	NYA	Not Set	Not Set	Not Set	Result due for release August 2009 by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC)
NI 186	Percentage reduction of the per capita CO2 emissions in the local authority area	New for 2008/09	NYA	Not Set	5%	Not Set	Result due for release by DECC, date to be confirmed.
NI 188	Planning to adapt to climate change	New for 2008/09	Level 0	Not Set	Level 3	Level 3	Provisional result shown, confirmed result due for release June 2009 by Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Target set in the Local Area Agreement 2008-2011
NI 194	Air Quality - % reduction in NOx and primary PM10 emissions through Local Authority's estate and operations	New for 2008/09	NYA	Not Set	Not Set	Not Set	Result due for release August 2009 by DEFRA
NI 189	Percentage of agreed actions to implement long term flood and coastal erosion risk management plans that are being undertaken satisfactorily	New for 2008/09	NYA	Not set	Not set	Not set	Result due for release July 2009 by DEFRA.

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Corporate Objective Three: Making a difference to Our Environment							
No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets			Notes
		2007/8	2008/9	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	
NI 191	The number of kilograms of residual household waste collected per household	753	453	Not set	Not set	679	Provisional result shown, confirmed result due for release August 2009 by DEFRA. 2007/8 results derived from superseded BVPI's.
NI 192	Percentage of household waste arisings which have been sent by the authority for reuse, recycling, composting or anaerobic digestion	19.47%	50.00%	35.00%	65.00%	32.00%	NI 191/192 targets set in the Local Area Agreement 2008-2011 and are currently under review.
NI 193	Percentage of municipal waste which is sent to landfill	New for 2008/09	50.00%	Not set	Not set	Not set	NI 193 target will be set once the Inter Authority Agreement is signed in September 2009.
BV 86	Cost of waste collection per household	£44.41	£72.04	£68.00	£67.30	£69.00	
BV 91b	Percentage of households served by a kerbside collection of at least two recyclables	97.41%	97.09%	99.00%	99.00%	99.00%	
	Satisfaction with keeping public land clear	77.00%	66.83%	Not set	Not set	77.00%	Source: Place Survey 2008
	Satisfaction with household waste collection	88.00%	85.36%	Not set	Not set	85.00%	Results shown for 2007/8 are from the General Satisfaction Survey conducted in 2006
	Satisfaction with doorstep recycling	71.00%	83.81%	Not set	Not set	85.00%	

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Corporate Objective Three: Making a difference to Our Environment							
No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets			Notes
		2007/8	2008/9	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	
NI 195	Percentage of relevant land and highways that is assessed as having deposits that fall below an acceptable level of the following:						
	a) Litter	New for 2008/09	11.00%	16.00%	Not Set	11.00%	Provisional result shown, confirmed result due for release August 2009 by DEFRA.
	b) Detritus	New for 2008/09	18.00%	16.00%	Not Set	16.00%	
	c) Graffiti	1.00%	1.00%	2.00%	Not Set	2.00%	
	d) Fly-posting	0.00%	0.00%	1%	Not Set	1.00%	
NI 196	Improved street and environmental cleanliness – fly tipping	New for 2008/09	NYA	Not Set	Not Set	Not Set	Result due for release August 2009 by DEFRA.
BV 218a	Percentage of new reports of abandoned vehicles investigated within 24 hours of notification	93.51%	88.10%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	
BV 218b	Percentage of abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours from time we are legally entitled to remove the vehicle	92.86%	100.00%	95.00%	93.00%	93.00%	

Corporate Objective Three: Making a difference to Our Environment							
No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets			Notes
		2007/8	2008/9	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	
Local 5.5a	Average time (days) taken to remove fly-tips for which external agencies are responsible (hazardous waste)	2.53	1.50	4.00	Discontinued	Discontinued	
Local 5.5b	Average time (days) taken to remove fly-tips for which RDC is responsible	1.13	1.40	1.50	Discontinued	Discontinued	
Local 5.5c	Average time (days) taken to remove fly-tips	N/A	1.40	N/A	1.50	1.50	New measure for 2009/10 onwards. 2008/9 result derived from 5.5a and 5.5b.
Local 9.10	The percentage of Industrial Pollution Prevention and Control inspections which were completed	100.00%	100.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	
Local 9.11	The percentage of required Air Quality Reports that were completed and submitted on time	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	

Corporate Objective Three: Making a difference to Our Environment							
No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance			RDC Targets		Notes
		2007/8	2008/9	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	
Local 9.12a	The percentage of Housing standards inspections which were planned to be carried out that were completed of caravan sites	100.00%	83.33%	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%	
Local 9.12b	The percentage of Housing standards inspections which were planned to be carried out that were completed of HMO's	10.00%	70.00%	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%	



Corporate Objective Four: Making a difference to Our Local Economy							
No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets			Notes
		2007/8	2008/9	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	
NI 154	Net additional homes provided	New for 2008/09	NYA	Not Set	250	250	Result due for release February 2010 by Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Target set in the Local Area Agreement 2008-2011
NI 155	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	New for 2008/09	NYA	Not Set	Not Set	Not Set	Result due for release January 2010 by DCLG.
NI 157	Percentage of planning applications determined within:						
	13 weeks for Major applications	94.76%	97.06%	80.00%	85.00%	80.00%	
	8 weeks for Minor and Other applications	89.33%	88.10%	89.00%	90.00%	90.00%	
	13 weeks for all County Matter applications	98.77%	98.02%	96.00%	97.00%	98.00%	
NI 159	Supply of ready to develop housing sites	New for 2008/09	NYA	Not Set	Not Set	Not Set	Result due for release January 2010 by DCLG.
NI 170	Previously developed land that has been vacant or derelict for more than 5 years	New for 2008/09	NYA	Not Set	Not Set	Not Set	Result due for release September 2009 by DCLG.
BV 106	Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land	76.54%	99.13%	70.00%	60.00%	60.00%	The availability of previously developed land is limited and targeting is therefore unreliable
BV 204	Percentage of appeals allowed against the authorities decision to refuse planning applications	28.60%	42.5%	30.00%	30.00%	30.00%	The small number of appeals means that results for this indicator can fluctuate.

To make Rochford District a place which provides opportunities for the best quality of life for all who live, work and visit here



**Rochford District Council**

Council Offices South Street  
Rochford Essex SS4 1BW

Telephone: 01702 546366

Facsimile: 01702 545737

Website: <http://www.rochford.gov.uk>

If you are interested in finding out more detailed information about the Council's performance or our plans for 2008/09 onwards, this can be found in the following documents:-

- Corporate Plan 2009-2013
- Financial Statements 2008/09
- The Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2021 for Rochford District Council

These documents are available on our website <http://www.rochford.gov.uk>

The Council's Budget Book and Medium Term Financial Strategy are also available on our website.

Any of these documents can be obtained by contacting:

Contact: Financial Services  
Email: [financial.service@rochford.gov.uk](mailto:financial.service@rochford.gov.uk)  
Writing to: Council Offices  
South Street  
Rochford  
Essex  
SS4 1BW  
Telephone: 01702 318028

If you would like this information in large print, Braille or another language, please contact 01702 546366

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## 1 Introduction

We are pleased to introduce this report which will set out both our financial performance for 2008/09 and tell you how we performed against the targets we set for last year and in comparison to other authorities.

This Annual Report provides an overview of the Council’s performance, spending and financial position for the year. It also aims to show what has been achieved in terms of service delivery and outcomes for our residents.

The last year has been a difficult one due to the economic downturn and we have seen a drop in many of our income streams, namely, planning, building control, car parking, land charges and investment income. We are, however, committed to providing an excellent service to our residents and partners.

We hope you find the content of this Annual Report useful and informative and we look forward to another successful year.



**Terry Cutmore**  
Leader of the Council



**Paul Warren**  
Chief Executive

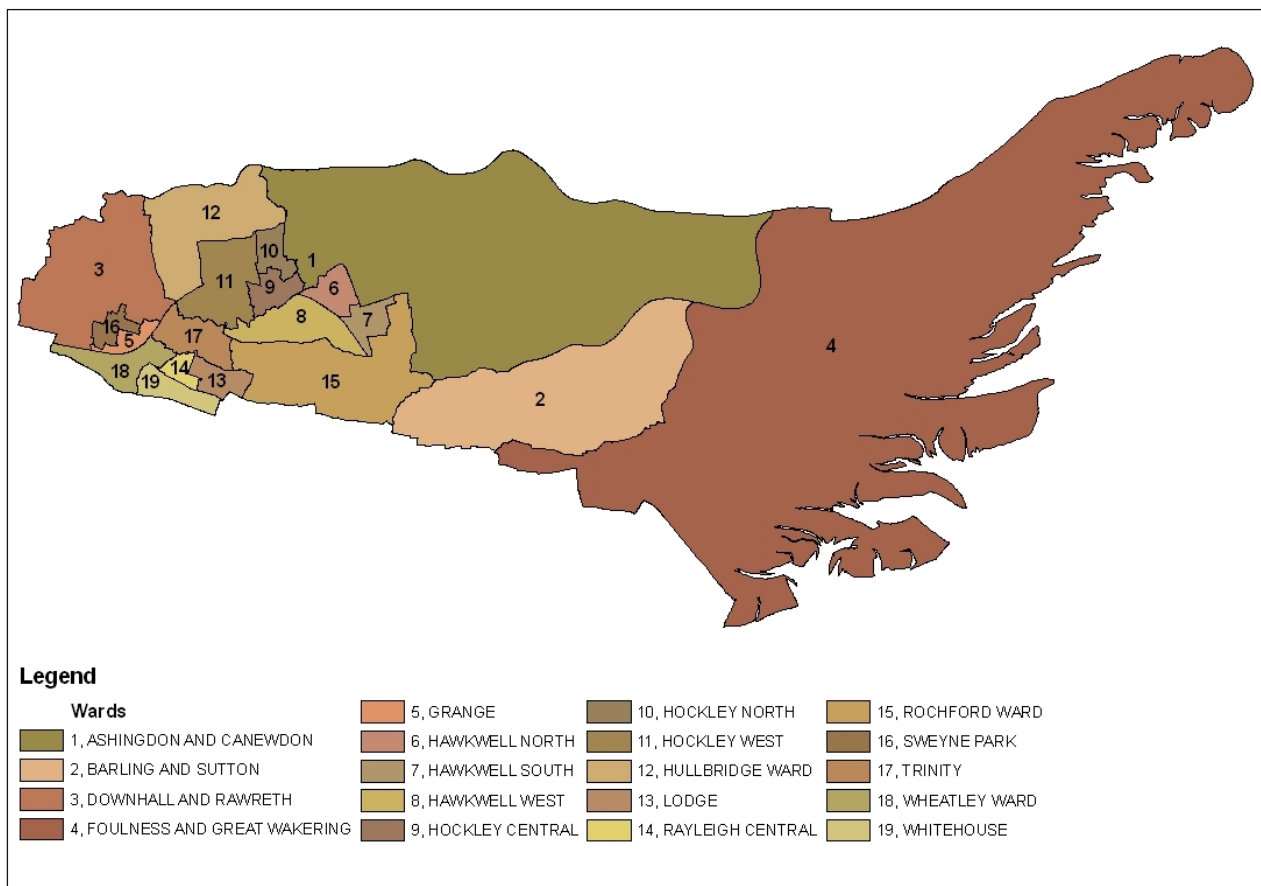


## 2 Facts and Figures about Rochford District Council

The District Council’s responsibilities include:-

- Community Development
- Economic Development
- Licensing
- Environmental Health
- Housing
- Leisure & Arts
- Local tax collection and benefits
- Parking
- Planning
- Refuse collection and recycling
- Local Elections

Population:	82,100
Households:	33,700
Council Tax base:	31,324
Annual Revenue Budget:	£13m
Number of staff	231



### 3 How have we performed?

Our vision is:

*“ to make Rochford District a place which provides opportunities for the best quality of life for all who live, work and visit here ”*

We want to create an environment that is vibrant, inclusive, safe, sustainable and modern whilst retaining the essential characteristics of the salt marshes, rivers, woodland, open countryside, villages and market towns that make Rochford what it is today. We see the District as a place with high quality natural and built environments that retain their distinctiveness, foster civic pride and where all have access to quality accessible services.

A recent Quality of Life survey by the Halifax Bank plc showed Rochford as the 7<sup>th</sup> most pleasant place to live in the UK.

In achieving this vision we carry out our work in accordance with a set of values which we think are important. We will:-

- Be an open, accountable, listening, responsive Council.
- Put the customer and citizen at the heart of everything that we do, delivering services in a caring and sensitive manner.
- Coordinate the management of resources with an emphasis on sustainability.
- Value the contribution of partners, employees and citizens, trusting each other and working collaboratively.

In 2008 the Council was subject to a Comprehensive Performance Assessment by the Audit Commission and we were judged to be a 'good' Council. This was a huge achievement and was a vast improvement on our previous inspection in 2004.

---

### **Rochford District and the District Council have again been rated by residents as amongst the best in the country.**

The Place Survey is a national questionnaire which asks a broad range of questions to local residents relating to their levels of satisfaction with the local area. The results of the latest survey have shown that Rochford is rated very highly in a number of areas by its residents.

The District Council scored highly in giving its residents value for money and in the way it deals with residents' enquiries respectfully and considerately.

When it comes to being a cleaner greener place to live, Rochford residents are particularly satisfied with doorstep recycling, refuse collection and local household waste recycling centres which enable them to recycle more than 50% of their rubbish, as well as public land being kept clear of litter and refuse.

The survey indicates that local people are satisfied with their local area as a place to live and they feel they belong in their local neighbourhood. The perception of crime is also low with respondents saying they don't feel there is a particular problem with drunk and rowdy behaviour or drug use and drug dealing.

With the area boasting some beautiful parks and open spaces such as Hockley Woods, Sweyne Park and Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park, it was no surprise that residents were satisfied with parks and open spaces. They also said they were satisfied with local libraries and local sport and leisure facilities.

However the Council is not complacent and is taking action on the points where residents felt there is room for improvement. The survey indicates that residents feel they have not been sufficiently involved in decisions in their local area and also feel unable to influence these decisions. The Council has introduced three local Area Committees to address this and will be looking to increase participation in these meetings and other consultations.

The respondents also indicated they would like to see more done for museums and galleries and theatres and concert halls.

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During 2008/9, the Council revised its corporate objectives to focus on:

- Making a difference to our people
- Making a difference to our community
- Making a difference to our environment
- Making a difference to our local economy

And, over the past year, the Council has delivered the following achievements against these objectives:



## Objective 1 – Making a difference to our people

A key challenge for the Council has been to continue to improve and meet the increasing and changing expectations of our customers. Many of them have no choice but to use the services offered by the Council and therefore, it is important to us that we deliver an excellent and cost effective service.

- A new affordable housing scheme has been developed in Great Wakering in partnership with Circle Anglia. The new properties will be available to buy on a New Build Homebuy basis where the purchaser buys a share (45%) and rents the rest from Circle Anglia. So far 10 of the units (four 3-bed houses and 19 2-bed flats) are under offer.
- The Council implemented a Play Strategy last year and, with help from the £200,000 funding received from the Big Lottery, the Play Ranger service commenced in the summer holidays and will continue for the next two years. In addition, new play equipment was installed in various areas.
- The temporary ice rink was a great success with around 1,650 skaters enjoying the free facility at the various locations around the District.
- Rochford District Health Walks Scheme was awarded accreditation by Walking the way to Health, a joint initiative between Natural England and the British Heart Foundation. The scheme successfully demonstrated that we met the required criteria. This included offering led walks for beginners, meeting the 'Walking the way to Health' safety and insurance standards for all walks and collecting basic monitoring information.
- As part of Virgin Active's continuing commitment to its successful leisure partnership with Rochford District Council, Clements Hall Leisure Centre has now completed an extensive refurbishment to its wetside changing room facilities. There are new male and female changing cubicles, new family cubicles, new shower and toilet facilities, new vanity areas and a completely new wetside floor.
- The speed of processing new benefit claims stayed at 23 days during the year despite a 21% increase in the number of new claims. 2008/9 saw a 61% increase in change of circumstances and so performance dropped to an average of 12.3 days (from 9.5 in 2007/8) but a recovery plan was implemented in October and so an average of 9.4 days was reached in the last quarter.
- By making a difference to our people we include our staff, their health and wellbeing are important if we are to continue to provide an excellent service. Our staff sickness levels are still amongst the best nationally and the average number of days lost per employee due to short term sickness was reduced to 3.6 days.
- We totally revamped our website in order to put the customer at the centre of everything. Users are now able to customise the homepage giving them direct access to the information they want.

- The Equality Standard for Local Government was developed as a means of judging the progress local authorities are making in mainstreaming equalities into delivery of services and employment. We have been awarded Level 4 and are working towards the final level of 'Excellence' in 2010. Particular examples of what has been done include:
  - Development of a Home Visiting Policy
  - Use of an interpretation and translation service and the Council have six members of staff who speak a language other than English who are willing to act as interpreters if necessary
  - Birthday cards are sent to all 18 year olds to encourage them to register to vote
  - Council Tax bills can be viewed online
  - A number of Revenues & Benefits roadshows were held and were well attended.
  - Development of a new Corporate Single Equality Scheme.
- We aim to provide a first class service to our residents and other customers, whether they use the phone, email, letter or prefer to contact us in person. We have combined the main Rochford reception and the planning reception to provide an improved experience for residents seeking to access our services in person by locating services in a single place. We have also separated the tasks of switchboard from reception duties

at Rochford, thereby providing an improved service for both telephone callers and personal visitors.

- The Environmental Protection Unit was awarded 28 'Crystalmark' accreditations by the Plain English Campaign for all their advice and information leaflets. The leaflets contain advice on a range of topics from smoky bonfires to pest control. You can see the leaflets on line at our website  
**<http://www.rochford.gov.uk>**
- The speed of planning decisions is much improved with the proportion of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks now at 93% and 91% of minor applications determined within eight weeks. These results placed the Council amongst the best 25% of English District Councils and a recent benchmarking report placed us 13<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> respectively out of all planning authorities.



## Objective 2 – Making a difference to our community

In order to achieve the Council's vision, we recognise that we must have an inclusive community where residents are not only safe but where they feel safe. The Council appreciates the link between high levels of community involvement and the feeling of safety and is therefore keen to promote this.

Also important, is the caring aspect and we aim to progress services and initiatives which deal with the more vulnerable sections of our community.

- We continue to give around £80,000 per year to the Citizens Advice Bureau who provide essential assistance and advice from their offices in Rayleigh and Rochford.
- Eight weddings took place at the Windmill during 2008/9, however, its popularity is building and for 2009/10 there are already 16 bookings and there is even a booking already for 2010/11. In addition, the Windmill itself has reason to celebrate since it will be turning 200 years old. Using a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Council and its partners will be organising a range of activities and events to celebrate this.
- Reducing crime is still the primary objective of the Council's Community Safety Team and since 2004 there has been a significant decrease in offences. In 2008/9 Rochford District Council had the highest percentage decrease in overall crime compared to the other Authorities in the Eastern Region for the second year running (a fall of 33% since 2004 and a further year on year drop of 8.9% for 2008/9).

Ongoing Council initiatives included 'no cold calling' zones, the handyman/gardening scheme which reduces opportunistic crime, targeted schemes to reduce car and bike theft, working with the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) to reduce anti social behaviour and arranging activities for young people.

- The average length of stay in hostel accommodation reduced significantly from 27 to eight weeks in 2008 and that level was maintained for the year. However we are starting to see an increase in demand for temporary accommodation due to the effect of the economic situation.
- Since the transfer of our housing stock to the Rochford Housing Association (RHA) we have continued to hold liaison meetings with them so that we can ensure promises made at the time of transfer have been upheld. So far the RHA have carried out work on the sheltered housing schemes and installed door entry systems and has promoted the installation of door chains and spy holes at no extra cost to residents. Investment has been made to ensure aids and adaptations to homes are done. Contractors have been appointed to ensure that all homes meet the Decent Homes Standard within five years of transfer. Regular estate inspections are carried out and officers are available for tenant enquiries. Further refurbishment programmes will continue in future years.

### Objective 3 – Making a difference to our environment

- The new waste recycling scheme has been a resounding success. Following a random survey of 1000 residents, 93% of respondents said they now recycle more. Around 98% of households now have kerbside recycling and this includes flats which have communal recycling facilities. The participation rate for the District is 97.68% for recyclables and 87.2% for compostables. The increased proportion of waste recycled, with the final figure from 2008/9 at 50% is a considerable improvement on the 2007/8 result of 19%. We now rank as one of the top performing authorities in the country.
- In November, the Food Standards Agency carried out an audit on the Council's use of contractors to conduct food hygiene inspections. No issues were raised and a very complimentary report was received. We continue to take robust action and have recently successfully prosecuted a local restaurant and shut it down whilst action was taken to improve its hygiene standards.
- We have again continued our focus on investigating and removing abandoned vehicles. Although we do not get many, we successfully removed all of them within 24 hours of being legally entitled to do so.
- The first phase of the Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park development and expansion was completed in 2007. This work included a significant increase in the bio-diversity of the area with 6 different woodlands now in place, a 300m lake established and new bridleways. The next phase, following the acquisition of land, will be to improve access to this new facility.
- Last year we told you of our plans to make use of land at Sweyne Park for junior and mini football pitches and link it to the new Rayleigh Leisure Centre. The contractor has now been assigned and the works for the car park and toilets have gone out to tender. It is envisaged that the new football pitches will be brought into use during the 2009/10 season.
- Although the Council has an important part to play in influencing businesses and residents to reduce their energy usage, we also have a responsibility to reduce the Council's impact on the environment.
- The Council has been working with the Carbon Trust to find out how we can reduce our environmental footprint. The Carbon Trust was set up by the government in 2001 to accelerate the move to a low carbon economy by working with organisations to reduce carbon emissions and develop commercial low carbon technologies. The Trust carried out an audit of the Council's energy usage in order to identify potential energy saving measures.
- In 2008/9, our carbon footprint was 569 tonnes which included 467 tonnes for the SITA contract and so we can now put together some measurable targets which will aim to reduce this figure next year.

- The Council has developed its own Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy for the period 2008-2013 in an effort to identify the risks and opportunities it faces. The resulting action plan – Climate CO<sub>2</sub>de – was adopted in May 2009. The code sets out the Council's priority actions to address climate change internally as well as across all sectors of our community.
- The Council has set ambitious targets to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide by 30% in five years. Some actions have already been implemented, for example:
  - new boilers and better heating controls which have reduced gas usage by 40%,
  - toilets across the Council have been refurbished and use low level cisterns with dual flush, non percussive taps and waterless urinals which has reduced water usage by 1 million litres per year.
  - Signing up to the Travelbuddi scheme that will enable officers to share cars
  - The introduction of special screensavers on PCs has saved over £600 per year in energy costs
  - The Council promotes cycle use by staff and has installed a shower and cycle racks at the offices in Rayleigh.
- New lights in the offices which are movement sensitive means that lights are not left on when offices are empty.
- Cold water storage has been removed producing efficiency savings of around £2,000 per year since tanks no longer need to be disinfected
- We set ourselves targets to reduce vehicle emissions and fuel usage, including vehicles used in the new recycling and grounds maintenance contract.
- Overall, the estimated savings are around £2,300 per year in energy and over 1 million litres of water. All Council staff are encouraged to recycle paper, plastic cups and ink cartridges and an Electronic Document Management system has now been rolled out to further reduce paper use.

## Objective 4 – Making a difference to our local economy

The Council seeks to work with partners to support local businesses through the recession and will seek to maximise and encourage economic growth for the benefit of the communities in the area.

- In November 2008, the Council launched the Rochford in Business Initiative; a start up business competition designed to help get local business ideas off the ground. 6 businesses have so far received grants to develop their fledgling businesses.
- The Council used external funding from the Local Area Business Growth Incentive Scheme (LABGI) for master planning exercises in Hockley and Rochford town centres. The plans look at the opportunities for physical regeneration of the town centres and has been subject to public consultation.
- In 2008/9 Rochford District Council spent 71% of its overall expenditure with businesses in Essex. The Council will continue to support local businesses through procurement wherever possible and now aims to pay local businesses within 10 days of receiving invoices.
- The Council introduced free parking charges for all of its District car parks in the four Saturday mornings leading up to Christmas to encourage people into the town centres. Saturday afternoon parking has been free for many years to help encourage local shopping. In addition, hourly car park charges were frozen for 2009/10
- The Council continues to provide grant funding to the Chambers of Trade, which is to be used for the benefit of the three main town centres of Hockley, Rayleigh and Rochford and to support the retail businesses located there.
- Planning policies for the redevelopment of the former Rochford Hospital site came to fruition in 2008 and on an adjacent site in the town centre a new supermarket, library and housing complex was completed. Further work to reinvigorate the three main town centres of Hockley, Rochford and Rayleigh is now underway with the development of town centre action plans.



## 4 Financial Summary

This Annual Report provides a summary of the Council's statutory Statement of Accounts for 2008/09. The Statement of Accounts runs to over 60 pages and its content is largely prescribed by accounting standards that apply to all local authorities. The figures in this summary were originally compiled in line with proper accounting practice. This summary information is produced in the hope that it will give the reader a brief and uncomplicated picture of the main features of the Council's financial results for 2008/09.

The Statement of Accounts was approved by Full Council on 30 June 2009 and will be audited by the Audit Commission's appointed external auditors, PKF (UK) LLP.

The audited Accounts will be available from 30 September 2009 by contacting:-

Contact: Financial Services  
Email: [financial.service@rochford.gov.uk](mailto:financial.service@rochford.gov.uk)  
Writing to: Council Offices  
South Street  
Rochford  
Essex  
SS4 1BW  
Telephone: 01702 318028

This is the second year that we have presented the financial performance of the Council in this way and we would be very interested in your comments and views on both the content and format of this report, so that we may continue to improve how we communicate with you. Please use the above contact details and let us know what you think about this Annual Report and its contents.

Yvonne Woodward CPFA FMAAT  
**Head of Finance, Audit and Performance Management**

## What Rochford District Council spent

The Council produces a detailed Income and Expenditure Account, which can be found in the Statement of Accounts and is set out in a prescribed manner. The account below shows the cost of services in 2008/09 under each of our Corporate Objectives and the amount left to be financed from local and national tax income.

	<b>Net Expenditure 2008/09 £000s</b>
<b>Making a difference to our People</b>	
Elections	
Local Land Charges	
Cemeteries & Churchyards	2,684
Licensing	
Public Conveniences	
<b>Making a difference to our Community</b>	
Collection of local taxes	
Council Tax and Housing Benefits	
Emergency Planning & Health & Safety	
Leisure Premises	4,474
Sports Development & Promotion	
Concessionary Fares	
Housing Services & Homelessness	
<b>Making a difference to our Environment</b>	
Mill Tower Windmill	
Woodlands, Parks and Open Spaces	
Planning and Building Control	6,654
Environmental Health	
Street Cleansing	
Recycling	
<b>Making a difference to our local Economy</b>	
Economic Development	
Car Parks	2,269
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	
	16,081
LESS Internal capital charges for running the Council's Services	(4,161)
LESS Income from cash investments	(744)
PLUS Money taken into reserves for future use	853
<b>Cost of local services to be met by local and national taxes</b>	<b>12,029</b>



For the previous year, 2007/08, the Net Cost of Services was £10.45m (compared to £16.081m for 2008/09) shown by Corporate Objective as follows:-

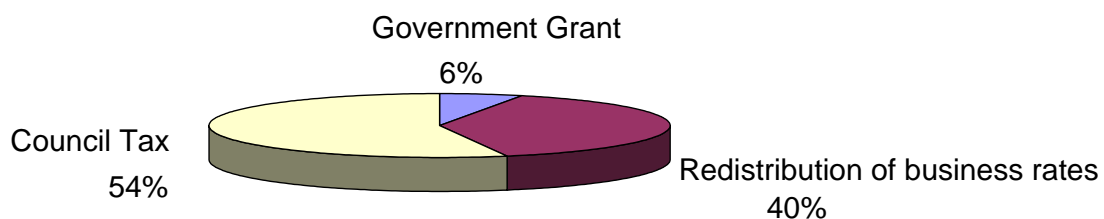
What did we spend last year:	Net Expenditure 2007/08 £000s
Making a difference to our People	1,683
Making a difference to our Community	4,142
Making a difference to our Environment	5,004
Making a difference to our local Economy	(380)
Net Cost of Services for 2007/08	10,449

The main reason for the increase from £10.45m to £16.08m was a charge for the fall in value of the Council’s land and buildings, in particular on car parks. This charge is cancelled out as part of the internal capital charges, before calculating the cost to be met by local and national taxes. This means it does not affect council tax.

### Where did the money come from?

The £12.03m that we spent on providing local services, after income raised from various fees and charges, came from local and national taxes and redistributed business rates.

Our total income for the year was £10.89m, which was split £622,000 Government Grant, £4.31m from national business rates returned to the Council and £5.96m from Council Tax from residents as shown below.



### Summary of Income and Expenditure

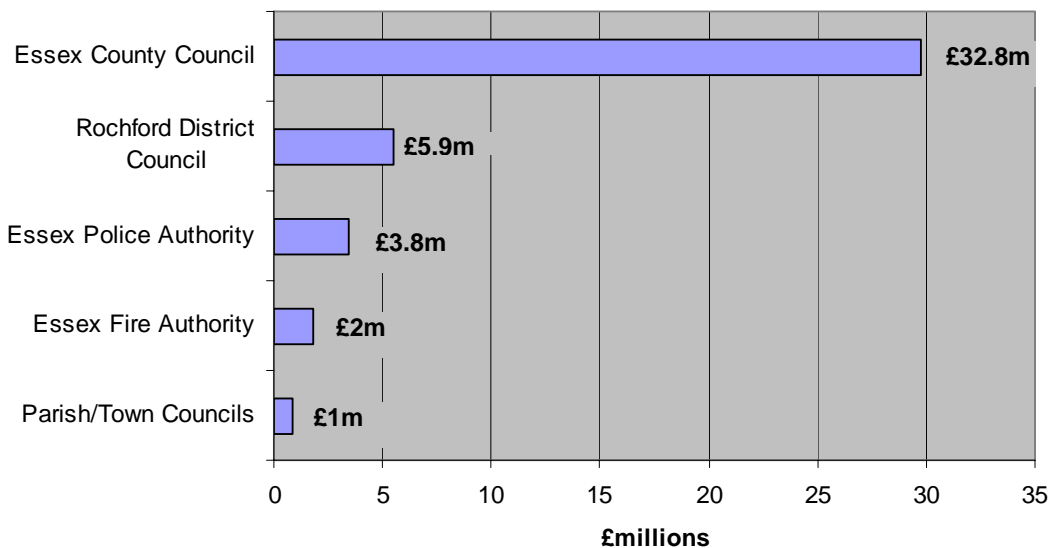
Revenue Account Surplus	2008/09 £000s
Total Income	(10,892)
Total Cost of Services	12,030
<b>Deficit for the year</b>	<b>1,138</b>

The Council is using balances built up over previous years to pay for the investment in the improved recycling service. This means that we used £1.138m of reserves this year which was £122,000 less than anticipated.

### Council Tax

The Council was responsible for collecting £45.5m of Council Tax last year, but we only kept £5.9m, equivalent to 13p in every £ collected. The majority of what’s collected is paid to others as shown in the graph below:

**Amount of Council Tax collected for each organisation**



The average Council tax for Band D property for 2008/09 was made up as follows:-

	2008/2009
Rochford District Council	£188.01
Essex County Council	1,046.61
Essex Fire Authority	£62.28
Essex Police Authority	£122.22
Town/Parish Councils (average)	£30.99
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,450.11</b>

The national average for Council Tax for 2008/09 was **£1,426.54**. From Government Grant and redistribution of business rates, we received £60.02 per head, compared to a national average of £78.99

## Capital Expenditure

We also spend money on improving land and buildings in order to continue delivering excellent cost effective services for all our customers. Capital Expenditure is the money spent on the purchase and improvement of buildings, vehicles, equipment and computer software. It is called capital expenditure as it results in assets which the Council and the community can use for more than one year.

For 2008/09, our expenditure on capital compared to what we planned to spend was:-

What we spent:	Planned £000s	Actual £000s
Vehicles and Equipment	1,197	1,149
Hall Road Cemetery extension	10	11
Leisure and Play Facilities	1,032	912
Private Sector Renewal Grants	185	173
Disabled Facilities Grants	178	178
Depot building improvements	318	130
IT infrastructure	30	35
Council offices	198	90
Freight House Car Park Lighting	40	42
Public conveniences	34	4
District Boundary Signs	30	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3,252</b>	<b>2,725</b>

£1m was spent on the new bins for the recycling contract which started in July 2008. Some of the projects not completed in 2008/09 will be rolled forward into 2009/10.

The £2.7m which was spent on our land and property assets was paid for by capital receipts from the sale of property, grants and from revenue.

How we paid for Capital Expenditure	2008/09 £000s
Grants and Contributions	766
Capital Receipts	1,959
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,725</b>

**What is the Council worth?**

At the end of each financial year, 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009, the Council draws up a balance sheet that shows how much our land and buildings are worth, what is owed to others (i.e. invoices that were unpaid as at 31 March 2009), what others owe us (e.g. businesses which owe rates and residents who owe Council Tax) and how much cash we have.

Net Assets	31 March 2009 £m
Value of land and property	35.3
Cash in bank and cash investments	10.2
Money owed to Rochford	2.6
Less Money owed by Rochford	(5.6)
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>42.5</b>

Revenue Reserves and Balances	31 March 2009 £m
Working Balances	4.1
Earmarked Reserves	1.9
<b>Total Revenue Reserves</b>	<b>6.0</b>

Rochford's net worth is £42.5m. This is represented by capital reserves of £36.5m and revenue reserves of £6m.

## Delivering Value for Money

The Council planned to make savings during the year of £380,000. We were delighted to report savings of £426,000 for 2008/09.

This has been achieved by more efficient service and better organisation – not by a lower quality or reduction in services and Rochford District Council staff are working harder than ever to ensure it offers its residents value for money.

Some examples of savings are:-

- Improvements in recovering overpayment of benefits (£78,000)
- Reducing the costs of repairs and maintenance by setting targets (£27,000)
- Advertising vacancies internally, in local papers and at the job centre (£25,000)
- Using different ways of delivering training rather than expensive class-based courses (£7,000)

The Council is determined to deliver high levels of performance. Rochford has shown that, despite having one of the lowest government grant funding levels, it continues to save money and reduce spending. We will continue to keep close scrutiny over Council money.

Over the last four years, the Council has saved £1.2m. This money has been reinvested in improving services. The main areas of investment are the new environmental contracts for recycling, street cleansing and grounds maintenance and meeting the additional costs of the Concessionary Fare scheme.

Further information on the Council's 2009/10 budget and five year Medium Term Financial Plans are available on the website, <http://www.rochford.gov.uk>.



## Financial Performance

Rochford District Council is top in Essex and one of the best in the country which it comes to collecting Council Tax. The Revenues and Benefits team collected 98.9% of the £45.5m Council Tax due last year, coming 28<sup>th</sup> out of 354 councils in the country. We also collected 97.5% of business rates due last year (98.6% in 2007/08), which compares to a national average of 99%.

Collecting income in the current economic climate is challenging but staff have offered as much support and advice as possible to help local residents and businesses to pay their bills.

In response to the economic downturn and to support local businesses, Rochford District Council made a commitment to pay invoices from local suppliers within 10 days. In 2008/9 we achieved 98% within 10 days and 100% within 30 days.

The Council achieved investment rates for the year averaging at 5.3% compared to the benchmark of 3.7%. This meant an extra £220,000 in income.

## What Next?

In 2008, Rochford District Council was subject to a Comprehensive Performance Assessment, the result of which was that we are considered to be a 'good' authority. The Audit Commission agreed that the Council delivers good quality frontline services which receive high rates of public satisfaction. In addition; as mentioned at the start of this report, Rochford was ranked as the 7<sup>th</sup> best place to live in Great Britain in an independent survey carried out by the Halifax.

So, even though Rochford is a good Council and the District is a great place to live, we know that 2009/10 will be a critical year for Rochford as we continue to strive to improve services and improve performance in a difficult economic climate.

The Council's plans for 2009 onwards are set out in the Corporate Plan which is available from the contact details on at the beginning of this Annual Report

The Council would be very interested in your comments and views on both the contents and layout of this document so that we can continue to improve how we communicate with residents and partners. Please use the contact details below and let me know what you think about this Annual Report.

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