
KEY POLICIES AND ACTIONS FOR 2013/2014

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report formally sets out the main areas of activity for 2013/14. It identifies the main policies and projects to be progressed, changed and implemented and highlights any areas of service development. It also identifies those issues that the Council would wish the Review Committee to consider as part of its work programme in 2013/2014 and outlines the timetable for establishing the budget for 2014/2015.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 With the budget agreed at an extraordinary meeting of Full Council on 29 January and the Council Tax rate set at another extraordinary meeting of Full Council earlier this month, it is opportune for Members to formally agree the main areas of the Council's work programme for the coming year.
- 2.2 At the same time, Members can consider the programme relating to the monitoring of the 2013/2014 budget and the preparation of the 2014/2015 budget. Members' views are sought on those policy, resource and service issues, which would be appropriate for examination by the Review Committee, although it will be for that Committee to determine the detail of its work programme in the next Municipal Year (2013/2014).

3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 Despite the many uncertainties that continue to exist around Local Government funding, with a budget for 2013/2014 and revised 5 year Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) now agreed, it is important for the Council to continue to focus on service delivery and key priorities for the benefit of Rochford residents.
- 3.2 Key projects for the Council in the coming year will remain the progression of key planning documents, such as the Allocations Plan, the Joint Area Action Plan for the Airport and its Environs and the Town Centre Action Plans for Hockley, Rochford and Rayleigh town centres. Work will also commence on a review of the Core Strategy and particularly the housing policies as agreed. This will commence once the work around housing needs and other supporting documentation has been completed. At the same time, the focus will start to shift from plan making to implementation, as the proposals already highlighted start to be progressed.
- 3.3 Internally, there will be major work streams around implementing the changes to the Council Tax/Benefits system and preparing for the introduction of Universal Credit. Another major area of work will be the implementation of the new IT contract across the Authority and the delivery of a new

telephone/communications system, as well as continuing to review and enhance our customer contact arrangements.

- 3.4 There will be actions arising from the findings of the Peer Review and these will be considered and rolled out over the coming months. Arising from both the Peer Review and the process around the development of the 2013/2014 Budget, a greater role is envisaged for the Review Committee in terms of inputting into the budget process in future years. Hence, the suggested work programme for the Review Committee outlined in appendix D contains a number of areas which will be key to next year's budget considerations and the overall Medium Term Financial Strategy going forward.
- 3.5 With the budget now agreed, a revised, updated version of the Corporate Plan is being produced for consideration by the Executive and approval by the Council at its meeting in April. Amongst other things, the revised Corporate Plan will include a rationalisation of the Council's corporate objectives from four down to three. Currently, the emphasis is on 'making a difference' to:-
1. Our People
 2. Our Community
 3. Our Environment
 4. Our Local Economy
- In the revised plan, this will be rationalised to 'making a difference' to:
1. Our Community
 2. Our Environment
 3. Our Local Economy
- 3.6 The key elements of the Council's work programme will be publicised through the press, the web and through Rochford District Matters, using other media such as Twitter, as appropriate.
- 3.7 The attached appendices A, B and C make no attempt to cover all the Council's functions. Instead, they focus on the 'headline' areas of work for the forthcoming year. Appendix A deals with the policy and strategic framework. Appendix B covers the main projects and appendix C, key areas of service development/change. In each of the appendices, the linkage is highlighted to one or more of the Council's three proposed corporate objectives around:-
1. Community
 2. Environment

3. Local Economy

- 3.8 Appendix E sets out the process and timetable for monitoring the 2013/2014 budget and preparing the 2014/2015 budget for Member's information. The intention is to combine the half-yearly review of the budget with a half-yearly review of the work programme in October/November. In addition to the work planned for the Review Committee, there will continue to be regular monitoring reports covering the performance of key service areas into the Executive. In this way, it is envisaged that Members can review progress on both the budget and the work programme during the financial year and make any adjustments that might be appropriate to ensure key targets are met or reassessed.
- 3.9 Finally, appendix F sets out a list of events for Members' reference which will impact on the Authority during the year. It is not all-encompassing, but does attempt to capture the key activities which the Council will be involved in.

4 RECOMMENDATION

4.1 It is proposed that Council **RESOLVES**

- (1) That the work programme for 2013/2014, as set out in appendices A, B and C and the public notification of its content, as outlined in the report, be agreed.
- (2) That those areas of work, with or without amendments, for consideration by the Review Committee, as outlined in appendix D, be agreed.
- (3) That the programme for the monitoring of the 2013/2014 budget and the development of the 2014/2015 budget, as outlined in appendix E, be noted.
- (4) That the main events timetable, as outlined in appendix F, be noted.

Paul Warren
Chief Executive

Background Papers:-

None.

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

Policy Development WorkCouncil's Corporate Plan (1-3)

- Produce an updated Plan in the light of 2013/2014 Budget Process – for consideration and approval By Executive and endorsement by Council April 2013

Local Development Documents (1-3)

- Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD)
 - Submission March 2013
 - Public Inquiry Summer 2013
- Development Management Development Plan Document (DPD)
 - Submission Consultation Spring 2013
 - Submission July 2013
 - Public Inquiry Autumn 2013
- Review of Core Strategy commences Autumn 2013

London Southend Airport and Environs Joint Action Area Plan (1-3)

- Submission May 2013
- Public Inquiry Autumn 2013
- Adoption Winter 2013

Hockley Town Centre Area Action Plan (1-3)

- Submission March 2013
- Public Inquiry Summer 2013

- Adoption Autumn 2013

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - Charging Schedule (1-3)

- Consultation on preliminary schedule Autumn 2013
- Pre-submission consultation Spring 2014
- Submit schedule July 2014
- Examination Autumn 2014
- Adoption December 2014

Rochford Town Centre Area Action Plan (1-3)

- Pre-submission consultation Summer 2013
- Submission September 2013
- Public Inquiry Winter 2013
- Adoption Spring 2014

Rayleigh Town Centre Area Action Plan (1-3)

- Pre-submission consultation Summer 2013
- Submission September 2013
- Public Inquiry Winter 2013
- Adoption Spring 2014

Annual Report (1-3)

- Prepare 2012/13 Annual Report for Member consideration and approval July 2013

Living Landscapes (1 & 2)

Develop the Upper Roach Living Landscape Vision in Partnership with Essex Wildlife Trust March 2014

Licensing Policy (1 & 3)

- Update the Statement of Licensing Policy January 2014

Climate Change Policy (1 & 2)

- Prepare Climate Change and Sustainability Policy 2013-2018 June 2013

Main ProjectsRecycling Initiatives (1&2)

- Consolidate and modify the recycling scheme to maximise our recycling rates On-going
- Weekly collection of waste from flats Commence April 2013
Complete June 2013

Procure long-term Grounds Maintenance solutions (1&2)

- Finalise specification March 2013
- OJEU Notice April 2013
- Award contract July 2013
- New contract operational November 2013

Environmental Contracts (1&2)

- Negotiate with contractor over extension of contract Ongoing
- Revised contract in place March 2014

Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park (1&2)

- Commence work on a Pet Memorial Area May 2013
- Funding bid submitted to enhance access and biodiversity October 2013
- Revised Management Plan approved April 2014

Materials Recovery Facilities Contract (1&2)

- Commence work on the Materials Recovery Facilities Contract (due in May 2015) January 2014

Refurbishment and renovation of South Street Depot (implement April 2014 onwards) (1&3)

- Site survey April 2013
- Design & layout finalised and costed Sept/October 2013
- Planning consent March 2014

Acacia House Development (1&3)

- Obtain planning permission June/July 2013
- Tender for works July/August 2013
- Construction phase October 2013/
March 2014
- Commence Occupation April 2014

Replace the Council's Main Telephone System (1)

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- Assess options and determine procurement route May/June 2013
- Implementation of new system March 2014

Provision of Columbarium at Rayleigh Cemetery (1&2)

- Start on site March/April 2013
- Operational from April/May 2013

Revenues and Benefits (1)

- Monitor, review and revise Local Council Tax Support Scheme December 2013
- Monitor the efficiency/collection rates of the NNDR administration process Ongoing
- Review Capita calls contract, in conjunction with the work on the new telephone replacement project. October 2013

Areas for Service Development/Change

- Business Processing Re-engineering work across service functions (1) Ongoing
- Prepare for the implementation for Individual Electoral Registration (1) July 2014
- Implementation of the new IT Contract (1) From April 2013
- Work around Customer Access to Services in addition to the new telephone system replacement and embedding the IT contract such as reviewing customer contact arrangements. Ongoing

Work Areas for consideration by the Review Committee in 2013/2014

- Review options for change and financial savings that can be negotiated with the Street Cleansing and Waste Management Contractor.
- Review of woodlands including opportunities of additional funding streams.
- Review of the Council's Car Parks and parking charges.
- Review of the Leisure Service provision and the Leisure Services Contract.

The aim of the above reviews would be to feed into the 2014/15 Budget Process.

Other work areas for consideration include –

- Partnership arrangements, including the statutory requirement around the Community Safety Partnership (possibly jointly, with Castle Point Borough Council).
- Implementation of the changes to the Welfare System.
- The delivery of local highway maintenance services (possibly jointly, with Castle Point Borough Council).

Budget Process

Closure of Accounts	June 2013
Annual Report identifying Performance over last year and main financial information of the Authority	July 2013
Completion of early review of 2013/2014 Budget	July 2013
Corporate Plan reviewed	September 2013
Draft Internal Divisional Plans produced – internal bidding system	Oct 2013
Consultation with Local Chambers/Business around potential budget items/issues	Oct 2013
Community Consultation around Budget examining potential budget items/issues	Oct –Dec 2013
Member Budget Awayday – agree budget framework	Nov 2013
Half Yearly Review of Medium Term Financial Strategy, Work Programme and Key Performance Indicators	Oct/Nov 2013
Member Awayday – Finalise priorities for Budget	Jan 2014
Budget setting for the Council is agreed	Jan 2014
Council Tax Set	Feb 2014
Key Plans and Actions Report	Feb 2014
Corporate Plan Updated and Agreed	April 2014
Internal Divisional Action Plans finalised	April 2014

Main Events in 2013/2014

May 2013	County Council Elections
June 2013	Accounts for 2012/2013 agreed
June 2013	Wild Woods Day
November 2013	New Grounds Maintenance Contract Operational
November 2013	First Member Budget Awayday
January 2014	Second Member Budget Awayday
January 2014	Budget Agreed
February 2014	Council Tax Set