

KEY POLICIES AND ACTIONS FOR 2003/2004

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report formally sets out the main areas of policy development for 2003/2004. It identifies the main projects to be progressed and implemented and also highlights the main areas of service development/change. Lastly it suggests areas to Members that might be appropriate for the Overview & Scrutiny Committees to consider in 2003/2004 and outlines the timetable for establishing the budget for 2004/2005.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 With the budget agreed at full Council on 28th January and with the Council Tax set at tonight's meeting, it is opportune for Members to formally agree to the main areas of the Council's work programme for 2003/2004. At the same time, Members can consider the programme relating to the monitoring of the 2003/2004 budget and the preparation of the 2004/2005 budget. Members might also like to consider those policy, resource and service issues which might be appropriate for examination by the Overview & Scrutiny process in 2003/2004.
- 2.2 Such an approach is in line with the budget and policy framework procedure rules now contained in the Council's approved constitution. It is also an attempt to address observations made by the Council's external auditors, PKF, who would like to see a more transparent and closer linkage between the Council's budgetary process and work programme.

3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The majority of the Council's work is governed by statute and is driven by legislative requirements. At the same time, there are some local discretionary elements which are fed in through the budgetary process.
- 3.2 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 framework, Appendix B with the main projects, and Appendix C with service development/change. In each of the Appendices, the linkage to one or more of the Council's six corporate aims listed below, is also given.

1. To provide quality cost effective services
 2. To work towards a safer and more caring community
 3. To promote a green and sustainable environment
 4. To encourage a thriving economy
 5. To improve the quality of life for people in the District
 6. To maintain and enhance the local heritage and culture.
- 3.3 Subject to any Member comments on the programme, the intention would be to consult on its content through the March edition of Rochford District Matters. This again would be in line with the Council's approved constitution.
- 3.4 Any feedback received from this exercise can then be looked at within the context of the preparation of the 2003/2004 Corporate Plan/Best Value Performance Plan, which needs to be considered and approved by full Council in June.
- 3.5 Given the work programme outlined and the issues coming before Council in the foreseeable future, Appendix D outlines some suggestions for Members to consider in terms of suitable topics to be examined by the Overview & Scrutiny Process in 2003/2004. The list is not exhaustive and there might be other matters which Members feel should be given greater weight. However, in determining those areas for consideration, Members need to take into account the capacity of each Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the timetable available.
- 3.6 Finally, Appendix E sets out the process and timetable for monitoring the 2003/2004 budget and preparing the 2004/2005 budget for Members' information. The intention is to combine the half-yearly review of the budget with the half-yearly review of the work programme as contained in the Corporate Plan/Best Value Performance Plan. In this way, it is envisaged that Members can be kept advised of progress on both the budget and the work programme.

4 RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Council **RESOLVES**
- (1) that the work programme for 2003/2004, as set out in Appendices A, B and C and the public consultation on its content, as outlined in the report, be agreed.
 - (2) that those areas of work, with or without amendments, for consideration by the Overview & Scrutiny process, as outlined in Appendix D, be agreed.

- (3) that the programme for the monitoring of the 2003/2004 agreed budget and the development of the 2004/2005 budget framework, as outlined in Appendix E, be noted.

Paul Warren
Chief Executive

Background Papers:

None

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KEY

The number in brackets overleaf in Appendices A, B and C is reference to one or more of the Council's Corporate aims.

These are listed below:

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| Aim 1 | To provide quality, cost effective services |
| Aim 2 | To work towards a safer and more caring community |
| Aim 3 | To promote a green and sustainable environment |
| Aim 4 | To encourage a thriving local economy |
| Aim 5 | To improve the quality of life for people in the District |
| Aim 6 | To maintain and enhance the local heritage and culture |

Policy Development

Replacement Local Plan (3, 4, 5 & 6)

Draft agreed	April 2003
First Deposit	June – August 2003
Second Deposit	November–January 2004
Inquiry	Summer 2004

Community Strategy (5)

Draft agreed	April 2003
Consultation	June – August 2003
Final Strategy agreed	March 2004

Community Transport Strategy (2, 3 & 5)

Draft agreed	April 2003
Consultation	June – August 2003
Final Plan	September/October 2003

Housing Strategy (2 & 5)

Strategy agreed	July 2003
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Housing Business Plan (2 & 5)

Plan agreed	June 2003
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Homelessness Strategy (2& 5)

Strategy agreed	July 2003
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Private Sector Renewal Strategy (2 & 5)

Strategy agreed July 2003

Asset Management Plan (1 &5)

Report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee on Performance Indicators June 2003

Approve revised Asset Management Plan July 2003

IEG Statement (1 & 3)

Agree revised statement September/October2003

Capital Strategy (1)

Agree revised strategy July 2003

Corporate Plan/Best Value Performance Plan (1)

Agree 2003/2004 Plan June 2003

Economic Development Strategy (3, 4 & 5)

Draft agreed March/April 2003

Consultation with Business Community April/June 2003

Agree Final Plan September/October 2003

Risk Management (1)

Compilation of Divisional Risk Register and agreed actions Ongoing

Internal Audit to review processes and controls May/June 2003

Progress report July 2003

Approval of Annual Assurance Statement July 2003

Thames Gateway Strategic Framework (5)

Work involved in inputting into
Strategic Framework Document

Ongoing

Strategic Framework Document agreed by
Thames Gateway – South Essex Board

May/June 2003

Licensing Policy (2 & 5)

Draft agreed

October 2003

Consultation

November/December 2003

Final Policy

Early 2004

Appendix B

Main Projects

Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park (3 & 5)

Royal Visit and official planting in arboretum	April 2003
Existing area of Park fully accessible to the public	September 2003
Expansion of the Park over a period – in tandem with local plan proposals	Late 2003 onwards
Investigation and development of a Trust to oversee and safeguard the Country Park	Late 2003 onwards
Trust proposal formally considered and agreed by Council	Summer 2004

Rayleigh Windmill (5 & 6)

Awaiting Heritage Decision	March 2003
If approved, secure necessary permissions	November 2003
Commence project	March 2004

Clements Hall (5)

Commence refurbishment works	April 2003
Complete works	December 2003

Mill Hall (5)

Complete refurbishment works	April 2003
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New Park Leisure Centre (5)

Consider options	February 2003
Develop finalised scheme with costings	November 2003

Secure Planning Permission	Summer 2004
Commence work on site	Late 2004/early 2005
Centre complete	Late 2005

Refurbishment of Rochford Garden Way (2 & 5)

Commence refurbishment works and conversion of 2 shops to bed-sits	July 2003
Complete work on site	October 2003

Refurbishment of Spa Court (2 & 5)

Commencement on site	March 2004
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Redevelopment of Hardwick House site (2 & 5)

Funding announcement	February 2003
Start on site, subject to funding and planning permission	Late summer 2003

Public Convenience Refurbishment (5)

Detailed programme currently being determined.

Council Office Review (1)

Feasibility studies to Committee	March/April 2003
Implementation	From early Jan. 2004

Sports Pavilion Upgrade (5)

Detailed programme currently being determined – to be undertaken in parallel with Council Office review

Refurbishment work to concentrate on enhancements to pavilions to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act

Service Development/Change

Finance Best Value Review (1)

Soft Market exercise completed March 2003

Report and draft Action Plan April 2003

Public Protection/Regulation Best Value Review (1, 2 & 5)

Report and draft Action Plan June 2003

Emergency Plan Best Value Review (1, 2 & 5)

Report and Draft Action Plan March 2003

Community Safety Best Value Review (1, 2 & 5)

Report and Draft Action Plan March/April 2003

Environment Management/Stewardship Best Value Review (1, 3 5)

Initial report to Committee June/July 2003

Conclude review/production of Action Plan April 2004

Transport Activities & Parking Best Value Review (1, 2 3 & 5)

Co-ordinate with Decriminalised parking enforcement – initial report June 2003

Conclude review/production of Action Plan February/March 2004

Recycling Provision (3)

Review recycling performance of the District September 2003

Development of Frail Elderly Services (1 & 2)

Report on second phase of study March 2003

Final Strategy June 2003

Investors in People (1)

Agree action plan April 2003

Compliance with IIP Spring/Summer 2004

Web Site (1 & 5)

Citizen First module (e.g. on-line viewing of Council Tax details) April/May 2003

Committee minutes/agendas/report online May/June 2003

Link to Planning Portal June/July 2003

Online GIS (geographical information system) June/July 2003

Public access to planning applications Autumn/Winter 2003

NLIS level 3 electronic land charge searches Autumn/Winter 2003

Freedom of Information Act (1 & 5)

Initial report to Members March/April 2003

Agree Policy Statement & Framework July 2003

Approve design and implementation of December/January 2004

Local Service Agreement (1)

Report to Committee on progress of any arrangements with Essex County Council April 2003

Public Service Agreement Indicator (1)

Review performance of key indicators agreed with Essex County Council and progress October/November 2003

towards targets

Comprehensive Performance Assessment (1)

Member training	May – June 2003
Completion of Self-Assessment?	January – February 2004
Peer Review?	February - March 2004

Woodlands Management (3 & 5)

Report to Committee	March/April 2003
Implementation thereafter	

Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (5)

Action Plan to Committee	June 2003
Evaluate Service Delivery	September 2003
Lining and signing	Autumn 2003
Apply for Order	February/March 2004
Effective date	October 2004

Trial of Sheltered Housing Management (2 & 5)

Early view sought from Tenants of trial	May/June 2003
Six month review and report to Committee	September 2003
Final consultation	February 2004
Evaluation and report	April 2004

Rawreth & John Fisher Playing Field (5)

Depending on lottery bid, implementation of drainage works	June/September 2003
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Implementation of Transfer of Liquor Licensing (2 &5)

Dependent on legislation

Autumn/Winter 2003

Second Air Quality Review (3 & 5)

Initial screening assessment and report

June 2003

Detailed study if necessary

December 2003

Issues for the Overview & Scrutiny Process

Finance and Procedures Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- Risk Management Review of the budget and the budget monitoring process
- Oversee CPA process and assessment
- Oversee progress of Risk Management Strategy
- Twice Yearly presentations by SIS on IT support contract
- Oversee review of Council premises
- Monitor grant provision to Outside Bodies

Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- Oversee production of the Local Plan
- Twice yearly presentations by Serviceteam (re refuse collection and street cleansing)
- Twice yearly presentations by Essex County Council Highways re Performance
- Oversee work on the Environmental Management/Stewardship Best Value Review
- Oversee work on Transport Activities and Parking Best Value Review

Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- Twice yearly presentations by Serviceteam (re grounds maintenance)
- Twice yearly presentations by Holmes Place on the Leisure Contract
- Further development of policy and services in respect of the Frail Elderly
- Development of policy and services in respect of young people
- Development of policy framework and service responses in respect of gypsies/travellers

- Development of Animal Welfare Charter
- NHS Scrutiny studies
- Development of policy on empty homes

Appendix E

Closure of accounts approved	June 2003
Consultation with Local Chambers	October 2003
Half Yearly Review and Review of Budget Strategy	November 2003
Final views from Chambers	December 2003
Ongoing issues relating to Budget Strategy	Nov. - January 2004
Budget Setting meeting	January 2004
Council Tax set	February 2004