

## **KEY POLICIES AND ACTIONS FOR 2006/2007**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report formally sets out the main areas of policy development for 2006/2007. It identifies the main projects to be progressed and implemented and also highlights the main areas of service development/change. It also identifies strategic issues on which the Council may wish to request studies by the Review Committee and outlines the timetable for establishing the budget for 2007/2008.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 With the budget agreed at Full Council on 31st 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 the coming year. At the same time, Members can consider the programme relating to the monitoring of the 2006/2007 budget and the preparation of the 2007/2008 budget. Members views are also sought on those policy, resource and service issues which might be appropriate for examination by the Review Committee.
- 2.2 This approach is in line with the budget and policy framework procedure rules. It also provides a 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. The implementation of the CPA Improvement Plan and developing the Council's response to the "Gershon" agenda remains a key area of work. At the same time, Members have decided upon some local discretionary elements for inclusion in the budget and these will be progressed during the year.
- 3.2 The main priorities for the Council over the coming year will be the implementation of the CPA Improvement Plan, with its focus on developing the Council's vision, building capacity and securing further improvement in frontline services like Council Tax/Housing Benefit, and progressing the Housing Transfer Ballot process. The "Gershon" agenda around seeking further efficiencies will again need to be considered. The budget process also means that local priorities for the year will focus on:-

- Improving lighting in Alleyways that are the responsibility of RDC – £5,000
- Continuation of the Benefits Call Centre - £10,000
- Additional Post to assist the Overview and Scrutiny process - £35,000
- Additional post to provide focus for key issues relating to the environment and new contracting arrangements within partnerships - £45,000
- Obtain Chartermark for customer focussed RDC services - £5,000
- Expand Gardening and Handyman services - £10,000
- Additional post to ensure delivery of services through new technology - £37,000
- Continue to develop tourism – £10,000

3.3 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

3.4 Subject to any Member comments on the programme, the intention would be to publicise its content in the next edition of Rochford District Matters. This again would be in line with the Council's approved constitution.

3.5 The key elements of the Council's work programme will be included with the emerging corporate plan, work on which is now underway, and in the 2005/2006 Performance Plan, which will need to be considered and approved by Full Council in June.

3.6 Given the work programme outlined and the issues coming before Council in the foreseeable future, Appendix D outlines those topics suggested for study by the Review Committee in 2006/2007. However, in requesting subjects for consideration, Members need to take into account the capacity of the Review Committee and note that it sets its own agenda.

- 3.7 Finally, Appendix E sets out the process and timetable for monitoring the 2006/2007 budget and preparing the 2007/2008 budget for Members' information. The intention is to combine the half-yearly review of the budget with a half-yearly review of the work programme in November. In this way, it is envisaged that members can review progress on both the budget and the work programme at a critical stage during the financial year and make any adjustments that might be appropriate to ensure key targets are met or reassessed.

#### **4 RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Council **RESOLVES**
- (1) that the work programme for 2006/2007 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 2006/2007 budget and the development of the 2007/2008 budget framework, as outlined in Appendix E, be noted.

Paul Warren

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#### **Background Papers:**

None

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**Appendix A**
**Policy Development**Develop the Council's Corporate Strategy (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

Draft strategy for consideration and approval

April 2006

Review/update strategy with input into 2007/2008 budget

Nov 2006/Jan 2007

Publish updated Corporate Strategy

April 2007

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

Adoption of Local Plan

Spring 2006

Local Development Documents (3, 4, 5 & 6)Statement of Community involvement:-  
public consultation  
adoptionMay/June 2006  
January 2007Asset Management Plan (1 & 5)Report to Policy, Finance & Strategic  
Performance Committee on Performance Indicators

July 2006

Review Asset Management Plan

July 2006

IEG Statement (1 & 5)

Agree IEG 6

April 2006

Capital Strategy (1)

Review Capital Strategy

Nov/Dec 2006

Performance Plan (1)

Agree 2006/2007 Plan

June 2006

Statement of Efficiency (Gershon) (1)

Production of Annual Statement

April 2006

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**Appendix B**
**Main Projects**

<u>Improving lighting in Alleyways that are the responsibility of RDC( 2)</u>	
Consider criteria and list of priorities	Spring 2006
<u>Continuation of the Benefits Call Centre( 1)</u>	
Review operation of call centre	Ongoing
<u>Additional Post to assist the Overview and Scrutiny process ( 1)</u>	
Undertake and complete recruitment	May 2006
<u>Additional post to provide focus for key issues relating to the environment and new contracting arrangements within partnerships ( 3 &amp; 5)</u>	
Undertake and complete recruitment	May 2006
<u>Obtain Chartermark for customer focussed RDC services ( 1)</u>	
Council Tax and Benefits service	Summer 2006
Planning Services	Autumn 2006
<u>Expand Gardening and Handyman services ( 2 &amp; 5)</u>	
Notify partners of budget availability	Ongoing
<u>Additional post to ensure delivery of services through new technology ( 1 )</u>	
Undertake and complete recruitment	May 2006
<u>Continue to develop tourism ( 3,4 ,5, &amp;6)</u>	
Prepare a Destination Rochford Publication with associated website development	Winter 2006 for the 2007 season

Review and upgrade literature in connection with; Walks leaflet Activities leaflet Rights of Way Heritage trail /churches	to be completed in conjunction with above
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Investigate opportunities for i) bird watching ii) caravanning/camping	Tourism Sub- Committee to complete its work by July 2006
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Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park (3 & 5)

Consolidation and expansion of the Park over a period	Ongoing
Acquisition of additional land following adoption of local plan	Spring 2008
Further development of a Trust to oversee and safeguard the Country Park. To be formally considered and agreed by Council.	Autumn 2006

Rayleigh Windmill (5 & 6)

Completion of Sensory Garden	March 2006
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New Rayleigh Leisure Centre (5)

Centre completed	Spring 2006
Official Opening	May 2006

Electronic Records Management and Workflow (1)

Completion of roll out	Spring 2007
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Extend Rochford Cemetery (2 & 5)

Purchase additional land	From Spring 2006
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## Appendix C

**Key Service Initiatives**Housing Option Appraisal (1 & 5)

New key parts of timetable

Housing Stock Transfer

Pre ballot communications

May-July 2006

Formal offer document

August 2006

Ballot

Sept-Oct 2006

Ballot results

November 2006

Legal Transfer

April 2007

Expand Member Training and Development Programme (1)

Review and outline new programme

April 2006

Implement new programme

from June 2006

Evaluate content and review progress of  
2006/2007 programme

March/April 2007

Waste Collection and Recycling (1 & 3)Participation in county-wide establishment of Joint  
Committee to oversee the procurement process

Ongoing

Development of overarching bidding framework for  
County-wide scheme

Ongoing

Revenues and Benefits Partnership( 1 & 2)Continue to evaluate partnership working with  
Chelmsford, Maldon and Rochford

April-May 2006

Share business support facilities

June 2006

Explore options for billing and collection

October 2006

Explore options for recovery and enforcement

January 2007

Determine whether to fully integrate service across the Councils April 2007

Recycling for Business Waste (3, 4)

Booklet containing recycling information and suppliers to be circulated to local businesses April 2006

Clements Hall Replacement Skateboarding Ramp ( 2 & 5)

Additional funding agreed. Spring 2006

Service Improvement (1)

Overall, we will strive to improve the number of statutory indicators in the top two quartiles by 5% over the year Ongoing

**Appendix D**

**Issues requested for consideration by the Review Committee**

Review of Bus Services

Review of Planning Enforcement

Monitoring operation of the new Committee structure

**Appendix E**

Closure of accounts approved	June 2006
Consultation with Local Chambers	October 2006
Review Budget at half yearly stage	Nov 2006
Final views from Chambers	Dec 2006
Members Away Days on 2007/2008 Budget	Nov 2006/Jan 2007
Special Council Budget Setting meeting	Jan 2007
Council Tax set	Feb 2007