

Rochford District Community Strategy – DRAFT 1

What we're trying to achieve

“to work in partnership to improve the quality of life for all those who live in the District”.

The Community Strategy for the district aims to gather together all the people and partners involved in providing help and services to the residents of the district to make the area a better place to live work and visit.

All of the issues which affect our quality of life are related and can only be successfully tackled through partnership working between statutory agencies, the private, voluntary and community sectors. These agencies will come together, under the Local Strategic Partnership, to work more closely and effectively on the key issues which most affect the community.

The main areas the Strategy for Rochford will concentrate on are:-

1. Feeling Safe
2. Clean and Green Surroundings
3. Access to Leisure, Culture and Heritage
4. Improving Opportunities for People
5. Healthy Living
6. Getting Around
7. Feeling Part of a Community
8. Ensuring Efficient Service Provision

What we want to achieve in the future

The Rochford Local Strategic Partnership is committed to improving local services and environment with a view to improving the quality of life for all of the residents of the District. We have identified eight priority areas as follows:-

1. Feeling Safe - To make the District a place where people feel safe
2. Clean and Green Surroundings - To improve the quality of life and enhance, protect and preserve both our local and wider environment for now and for future generations.
3. Access to Leisure, Culture and Heritage - To develop opportunities to enhance the leisure, culture and heritage participation of residents and visitors, in order to improve their wellbeing
4. Improving Opportunities for People - To encourage a more prosperous local economy, by developing the level and range of skills locally to meet future employment needs
5. Healthy Living - to improve and promote social, physical and mental health of everyone in the district including having a decent home to live in
6. Getting Around - To improve people's abilities to get across and around the District
7. Feeling Part of a Community - To promote active and responsible citizenship within the local community.
8. Ensuring Efficient Service Provision - To ensure effective service provision throughout the district.

1. Feeling Safe

What are we trying to achieve?

'To make the District a place where people feel safe'

What people have told us:

In recent years Rochford has consistently been one of the safest areas in the country in which to live with recorded crime in the District being significantly lower than both the county and national averages. There are however, still some issues with regard to fear of crime, and perceived youth nuisance is a problem in some areas. In a recent survey of the town and parish councils, 13 of the 14 councils cited Community Safety to be a priority with comments made on speeding and road safety, vandalism and nuisance. In a number of recent surveys the most important issues highlighted relating to crime were, burglary, car crime, drugs and youth nuisance. Everybody is affected, the young as well as the elderly and vulnerable, in fact young people (16-25) are more likely to be victims of crime than older people.

What is in place so far to make people feel safe:-

- Rochford has a strong multi-agency Crime and Disorder Partnership
- All crime was down 8.6% in 2001 compared to 1998-99
- There are 164 police officers in Rayleigh Police Division, covering the Castle Point District as well as Rochford District
- There are 270 neighbourhood watch groups
- A Domestic Violence Panel has been established in the Rochford District
- The Thames Corridor Focus panels provide a multi-agency response to hate crime
- South East Essex Racial Incident Panel provide multi-agency response to racial incidents
- There were 51 reported instances of vandalism which were addressed by Rochford District Council between 1/4/02 and 1/10/02.

Actions that could be taken:

Community safety applies to all partners and the community. Therefore, everybody needs to take on the responsibility of dealing with crime.

1. Implement the actions in the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy which deal with:
 - Crime reduction
 - Fear of crime
 - Road safety
 - Substance misuse
 - Domestic violence
 - Improving quality of life for those in the district.
2. Reduce peoples' fear of crime, by promoting the low level of crime in the area, and challenging media sensationalism

3. Introduce initiatives to reduce business crime
4. Improve the safety of the environment in the area, by improved lighting and designing out crime
5. Improving access to advice on how to prevent crime
6. Improve support for victims of crime
7. Improve facilities for young people to get them off the street

How could we measure it?

1. Percentage of residents who feel “fairly safe” or “very safe” after dark whilst outside in the local authority area
2. Percentage of residents who feel “fairly safe” or “very safe” during the day whilst outside in the local authority area
3. The percentage of people with high levels of worry about burglary, car crime, violent crime, and perceived disorder

2. Clean and Green Surroundings

What are we trying to achieve?

‘To improve the quality of life and enhance, protect and preserve both our local and wider environment for now and for future generations’.

What people have told us:-

Surveys that have been carried out in the past suggest that more could be done to keep land free from litter and refuse.

It is generally thought that 50% or more of household waste is recyclable. In the recent town and parish council survey, 12 of the 14 respondents stated that environmental issues were a priority, mentioning the protection of the greenbelt and the expansion of the recycling scheme as important issues.

What is in place so far to improve our green clean surroundings:-

- A kerbside recycling scheme covering 18% of the district allows for residents to put garden waste, newspaper, card, cans, textiles and plastic bottles out for collection every fortnight
- There are a total of 54 recycling sites in the District
- Between April 2001 and January 2002 a total of 402.71 tonnes of glass were collected from the 30 glass collection sites in the District
- Rochford District currently has 10 designated urban conservation areas
- There are more than 200 known sites of archaeological interest in the District
- There are 5 sites of national importance scheduled as Ancient Monuments
- Work is underway to create 100 acres of new Country Park at Cherry Orchard Jubilee Park
- Rochford has good air quality

Actions that could be taken

1. Improve access to kerbside recycling facilities
2. Improve the quality of the sports pitches in the district
3. Encourage community involvement in ‘litter pickups’, for example school groups, community groups
4. Promote recycling and environmental awareness in schools
5. Develop projects to increase the potential for business waste recycling and environmental improvement
6. Increase access to green and open spaces including walks, information and educational centre at Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park, training walking guides

7. Improve disabled access to playspaces, community facilities, parks and open spaces
8. Encourage business and the community to work together to promote energy saving ideas
9. Promote awareness and knowledge of good environmental practice
10. Encourage the use of energy efficient forms of transport in partnership with other organisations.
11. Investigate opportunities for introducing environmentally friendly and energy efficient vehicles into partners fleets
12. Encourage involvement in environmental improvement schemes
13. More active enforcement of controls on litter, dog fouling, rubbish dumping and similar issues

How could we measure it?

1. Satisfaction with waste collection overall
2. Satisfaction with the provision of recycling facilities
3. Satisfaction with parks, open spaces, play areas, and other community recreation activities
4. Percentage of the total tonnage of household waste which has been recycled
5. Number of businesses involved in environmental projects
6. Number of members of the community involved in environmental projects

3. Access to Leisure, Culture and Heritage**What we are trying to achieve:-**

'To develop opportunities to enhance the leisure, culture and heritage participation of residents and visitors, in order to improve their wellbeing'

What people have told us:-

Access to leisure is important for the wellbeing of all. Leisure is often associated with active participation in sport but it is in fact much broader than this. Almost everything we do for pleasure can be classed as leisure. There are several leisure activities which are prevalent in the District mainly relating to outdoor activities such as sailing and angling. Of a sample of 1265 residents in 1999, 57% were satisfied with the Council's sports and leisure facilities – over a third had never used the facilities. In a survey for the Arts strategy in August 1999, over 80% felt there were not enough cultural activities and opportunities within the District. There are no dedicated cinema, theatre or concert hall venue in the District – travel is necessary in order to take part in such activities.

What is in place to access leisure, culture and heritage so far:-

- Four indoor sports facilities are available
- The District has four golf courses open to golf club members
- Three public halls are suitable for local Arts use
- There is only one museum in the District at the Rayleigh Windmill
- There are three yacht clubs in the District
- There are two small sailing centres on the river Crouch
- Eight water filled mineral workings are used for angling in the District
- There are 29 playspaces, and 14 playing fields in the district

Actions we could take

1. Promote local festivals and events to the community such as village fairs
2. Encourage local community groups to share their experience of events to increase community attendance
3. Improve disabled access to sports and leisure facilities
4. Increase opportunities for sports, leisure and arts in local communities
5. Increase access and take up of funding opportunities for the voluntary sector to develop cultural activities locally
6. Increase investment in cultural and leisure facilities to enable more people to use them
7. Celebrate the achievements of local people in heritage, sports and arts; role of honour evening, press releases and competitions.

8. Increase community participation at the Rochford Heritage Open Day
9. Involve local people in recording of their local history
10. Promote less well know sports in the community
11. Work in partnership with other agencies to promote sustainable tourism within the District.
12. Encourage the private sector to develop a cinema in the district

How could we measure it?

1. Percentage satisfied with sports/leisure facilities
2. Percentage satisfaction with parks, open spaces, play areas, and other community recreation activities
3. Percentage satisfied with theatres/concert Halls
4. Percentage of residents who have participated in a local sporting activity or event, or have attended a local sporting facility in the last 3 months or in the last year
5. Percentage of residents who have participated in a local arts activity or attended a local arts facility in the last 3 months or in the last year

4. Improving Opportunities for People**What we are trying to achieve:-**

‘To encourage a more prosperous local economy, by developing the level and range of skills locally to meet future employment needs ‘

What people have told us:-

There is low unemployment in the District. There are 25,000 people employed in the district accounting for 22% of the jobs in South Essex. However these are mainly in a large number of small business, and a small number of large businesses only 5 employ more than 250 staff. A high proportion of the working population commute into London and around the County. Businesses frequently find it problematic finding new staff. There is currently little provision to encourage new business into the area.

Local secondary school results are consistently higher than the rest of Essex. The Rochford district has lower than average qualification levels though this could be accounted for by the higher than average proportion of older people in the population or the fact that people have to leave the district to attend higher education. There is an increased link between the education system and local employers, through business and entrepreneurial status at King Edmund School.

What is in place so far to improve opportunities for people :-

- The local economy mostly comprises small local employers.
- There are 2155 VAT registered companies and 507 non-VAT registered companies in the District
- There are four secondary schools in the Rochford District, The King Edmund School has business and entrepreneurial status
- There are 26 primary schools in the district
- In 2001, there were 7101 children in primary education and 5265 in secondary education, these figures are forecast to fall
- Castle Point and Rochford Adult Community College provides adult learning in the area from Rocheway, Rochford
- SEEVIC college is the only further education facility in the area
- There are no higher education facilities in the district
- There are 6 industrial estates in the area
- There is no start up business advice delivered in the district
- There are three Chambers of Trade, South Essex Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses active in the area.

Actions could we take

1. Encourage businesses to recruit local people to fill vacancies
2. Promote Rochford district as a place for business development and investment such as Cherry Orchard Business Park
3. Mentoring young people to help them achieve more
4. Improve the access to learning for all such as disabled, those in rural areas and those socially disadvantaged

5. Strengthen links between Schools and local businesses
6. Investigating and bidding for funds to support opportunities for learning and working locally such as: out of hours kids clubs, skills and employee development programmes
7. Investigation and bidding for funds to help businesses develop locally

How could we measure it?

1. Percentage of young people (18 – 24) in full time education or employment in the district
2. Percentage increase or decrease in the total number of VAT registered businesses in the area
3. Number of jobs in the local economy and percentage increase or decrease in the number of local jobs
- 4.** Percentage of people in the district who consider they have good or very good access to learning
5. To increase the number and participation and achievement of young people
 - 16-18 years olds in structured learning
 - level 2 achievement by age 19
 - level 3 achievement by age 19
- 6.** To increase the level of participation and achievement of adults in learning
 - Adults participating in learning
 - Raise literacy and numeracy skills
 - Level 2 achievement *
 - Level 3 achievement
7. To increase engagement of employers in workforce development
 - Employer engagement in workforce development
 - Address skills growth needs of sea and air gateway employers
8. To raise quality and equality of education and training
 - Learner satisfaction
 - Address learners needs in deprived and rural locations
 - Progression into higher education

5. Healthy Living**What we are trying to achieve**

‘to improve and promote social, physical and mental health of everyone in the district including having a decent home to live in’

What people have told us:-

Rochford is a relatively affluent community with some pockets of deprivation. The district has the fourth highest percentage of owner occupied housing in the country. Health is linked to material deprivation and in turn to employment, education, housing and social care. There is a great inequality in health between those who are affluent and those who are not.

The population in Rochford District is ageing, people are living longer and there is a declining birth rate, however this trend is higher than the national average. Whilst there is provision of supported sheltered housing demand for home care to support people living at home exceeds supply. There is a lack of affordable housing in the district and gaps in the provision of supported housing.

The District has a critically high ratio of patients to Doctors in some areas with a higher average number of patients per GP than any other area of South Essex and one of the smallest number of practices. This is a nationwide problem and there is a need to re-educate people to look at areas where other trained staff such as nurses or therapists may be able to better meet their healthcare needs.

What is in place so far in terms of healthy living:-

- There are 10 General Practices with a total of 34 GP's
- There are 1100 warden supported sheltered and very sheltered properties in Rochford District
- There are 200 residential care places
- The total number of properties in the District is approximately 32,000. Of these the total private sector stock is around 29,000, the fourth highest proportions nationally
- The services at Rochford Hospital will be extended and developed for mental health patients in the area
- Southend Hospital serves residents in the district
- There are Farmers Markets in Rochford during the spring and summer months
- The StAR partnership promotes baby massage, breast feeding and other health related initiatives

Actions that could be taken

1. Encourage and educate people to have a healthy lifestyle, for example, healthy eating, and prevention of drug and alcohol abuse, not smoking, taking exercise

2. Improve access to local GP services in the area and increase the number and level of health care professionals and therapists to deliver high quality care in the area
3. Promote Rochford as a potential site for a Diagnostic Treatment Centre
4. Secure funding to develop a Healthy Living Centre in the district
5. Improve access to local care services and respite for carers
6. Improve the independence of older people through health care and housing adaptation support
7. Encourage people to take up activities which improve their health, such as walking for health, and falls prevention programmes
8. Increase access to health advice through promotion of NHS direct, local advice centres (GP practices) and healthy living centre.
9. Improve the support for mentally ill people through the provision of a new elderly mentally ill home in Rawreth and the development of Rochford Hospital as the major provider of mental health provision in the area.
10. Ensure young people have appropriate parenting skills
11. Reduce the amount of non-decent housing in the area and provide services which encourage home owners to adequately maintain their properties
12. Ensure an adequate supply of appropriate housing within the district, including provision for key workers such as teachers, nurses and police
13. Ensure an adequate supply of supported housing to meet the needs of all client groups
14. Improve the provision of housing advice services to help prevent homelessness
15. Improve access to self contained housing, with support if needed, for homeless people
16. Improve educational attainment in the district
17. Help secure employment opportunities locally

How could we measure it?

1. Percentage of residents who feel that satisfied or very satisfied with their GP services
2. Percentage of residents who feel that adequate health services would be available locally in their time of need
3. Percentage satisfied or very satisfied with housing
4. Ratio of GPs to patients

5. Improve independence for older people
6. Everyone is able to see a health professional in their surgery within 24 hours and everyone able to see a doctor in 48 hours
7. The maximum wait for an outpatient appointment will be three months and the maximum wait for inpatient treatment will be down to 6 months
8. Smoking cessation rates improved
9. Breast feeding rates improved
10. Percentage of housing of a decent homes standard
11. Affordable homes provided compared with the requirement established by the latest housing needs survey for the district
12. Supported homes provided compared with the requirements established in the latest housing strategy
13. Ratio of cases of homelessness which are prevented compared with homeless applications
14. Proportion of people who have applied as homeless who have to live in bed and breakfast accommodation

6 Getting Around**What are we trying to achieve?**

'improve people's abilities to get across and around the District.'

What people have told us:-

Transport is a major concern to many residents. Many surveys have reported transport as being a priority, many of the comments were around the poor public bus service and public transport access from isolated areas.

Transport and access problems are a barrier to bringing new investment into the area. In a recent business survey transport was seen as an issue. This high level of commuting workforce reinforces this issue.

The recent survey of the Taxi Voucher Scheme showed it to be a very popular addition to the area, with many stating that their quality of life has been much improved by the service. A partnership made up of the District and County Council's and PCT along with local Voluntary and Community groups is currently looking at the provision of Community Transport for the district.

What we have in place so far to help people get around:-

- There are stations at Rochford, Hockley and Rayleigh
- Rochford District has a major rail route through the District that runs to London Liverpool Street – minimum travel time from London across the District ranges from 45 minutes to 54 minutes.
- Southend Airport operates freight and charter services
- 80% of households have access to one or more cars, with 44% of these owning 2 or more cars
- The Council operates a charging policy in its public car parks with free parking on Saturday afternoons to encourage visitors to the shopping areas
- There are 1300 car parking spaces available in the District which attract 1.3 million visitors per annum.

What action could we take?

1. Increase the availability of community transport provision to enable people in rural or isolated areas to get around better
2. Work with Essex County Council to improve the condition of local roads
3. Improve awareness and take up of concessionary travel to eligible people
4. Encourage participation in walk to school (walking busses) and cycle to school initiatives.
5. Increase the number of cycle routes available and the proficiency of cyclists

6. Work with public transport providers to improve public transport services in rural areas.
7. Develop health facilities which are accessible to the population

How could we measure it?

1. Percentage satisfaction with the provision of public transport information overall
2. Percentage overall satisfaction with the transport services
3. Percentage of business satisfied with local transport and infrastructure

8. Feeling Part of a Community**What we are trying to achieve**

‘To promote active and responsible citizenship within the local community.’

What people have told us:-

There are many community groups and voluntary organisations and many individuals who work unrecognised for the good of their communities. Community involvement is key to making our community a better place to live and therefore enhancing the quality of life for those who live within the community and those who visit.

There is a need to encourage people to want to come and work and live within the district, whilst noting that the current cost of housing often makes it difficult to attract qualified people in professions such as the police, teachers, medical staff, etc. Local involvement is the wider challenge – getting communities to engage with each other, community involvement moves forward community democracy. It is thought that people feel part of a community but not necessarily the community of Rochford district.

What we have in place to help people feel part of a community so far :-

- Rayleigh and Rochford District Association for Voluntary Service have a membership of approximately 60 voluntary organisations, plus there are many others who work independently
- StAR Project, is a multi-agency approach set up to manage and implement community projects which lead to regeneration in the Rochford area, a reduction in crime levels and inequalities of health.
- The District Council hold a Citizenship Debate event each year, involving the four secondary schools
- The District Council launched a Citizen Award this year to recognise the contribution of members of the community
- There are 5 day centres for the elderly around the District
- Hawkwell Parish Council are in the process of setting up a scheme to involve the local youth in their parish
- There are a number of village fairs and fetes during the spring and summer months
- There are Farmers markets in Rochford during the spring and summer months

What actions could we take

1. Increase attendance of people at community events such as village fairs, village appraisals, voluntary events and StAR partnership events

2. Work together to increase the number of volunteers in the local community, involved in projects such as community transport, litter pickups, neighbourhood watch
3. Increase the nominations for the Rochford Citizen Awards to recognise peoples contribution to the community
4. Work together to develop community involvement and community development initiatives
5. Work with partners to increase the success of the district in securing funding for community projects such as Lottery Bids, Awards for All, New Opportunities Funds, and East of England Development Agency
6. Improve disabled access to local facilities and events, such as public buildings and leisure centres.
7. Promote the role of schools as centres for the community
8. Work with parishes to undertake parish or market town appraisals which engage the community in planning locally for the future
9. Improve opportunities for communication with and between youth, such as encouraging the development of a website by local youth for local youth to be linked to partner websites.

How could we measure it?

1. Number of Town and Parish Councils undertaking parish appraisals
2. Number of volunteers in the community
3. Numbers in the community using schools facilities
4. Percentage of public buildings with disabled access
5. Percentage of residents satisfied with the area in which they live.

8. Ensuring Effective Service Provision

What we are trying to achieve

‘To ensure effective service provision throughout the District.’

By working together we can improve the quality of life of the residents of the District by delivering quality, cost effective services which meet the local needs.

What have you told us

- 60% of people feel well informed about Rochford District Council services
- 75% of people are satisfied with the way Rochford District Council runs the authority
- 40% consider Rochford District Council gives good value for money

What have we put in place to ensure effective service provision so far

- Consultation takes place with the community by various public sector bodies on a regular basis, through PCCG meetings, Rochford District matters newspaper and surveys
- Rochford District Council and ...(other partner names)..... has a planning and performance management system in place

What actions could we take

1. Work in partnership to improve the quality of services, public, voluntary and private in the area.
2. Improve access to information about services in the community including electronic information
3. Encourage partners to monitor services to ensure they meet the needs of the public
4. Consult with the community in a co-ordinated and timely way so that people feel they can influence improvements to services in their area

How could we measure it?

1. Percentage of people feeling well informed about the Councils services
2. Percentage of people who consider that RDC gives good value for money
3. Percentage of people feeling involved in their local community
4. Percentage of adults who feel they can influence decisions made in their local area
5. Achievement of NSF targets by the PCT

Questions for the LSP Steering Group

1. Do you think the actions and performance measures of the draft are correct
Which of each do you think are the most important? – please pick out your top 5
in each area
2. Do you think the actions would help improve the district?
3. Are there other things the partnership should be doing?
4. Do you have performance measures which would be better?
5. Can you suggest actions and performance measures for 'ensuring effective
service provision' as this is currently ver biased towards Rochford District
Council.

28 April, 2003