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## ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13

### 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report presents the draft Annual Report for Members' consideration.

### 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 All Members will have received a copy of the Quarterly Performance Indicators report, which was considered by the Executive on 12 June 2013. Information from that document has been used in the compilation of the draft Annual Report. Quarterly Performance Statistic Reports for each Division are available on the Council's website by selecting 'Council & Democracy / Our Performance' - the website address is [www.rochford.gov.uk](http://www.rochford.gov.uk).

### 3 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

- 3.1 The Annual Report includes summarised financial information for the financial year 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013. The Financial Statements for the year were signed off by the Head of Finance, as the Responsible Officer, on 7 June 2013, in line with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011. The Financial Statements will be presented to Members after they have been audited by the External Auditors at the Audit Committee on 24 September 2013, together with the External Auditor's report on its audit work. In the meantime, a copy of the draft Financial Statements has been placed in the Members' Library and published on the Council's website. Further copies of the Financial Statements are available on request from the Head of Finance. The Annual Report will be published on the website, with hard copies available on request.
- 3.2 Once the financial information has been audited, a copy of the information presented in the Annual Report will be included in the autumn edition of the Council's newspaper, Rochford District Matters, in order to give it as wide an audience as possible amongst our residents.
- 3.3 Hard copies of the Annual Report will be available on request, and provided to the local libraries, the media and both Council reception areas.

### 4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Failure to report on performance means that the Council is missing the opportunity to let residents and interested organisations know what has been delivered and achieved during the year.

### 5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 By restricting production of the Annual Report to the website and Rochford District Matters, with hard copies available in public areas and on request, costs will be kept to a minimum. The main cost is in officer time in compiling the report.

**6 RECOMMENDATION**

6.1 It is proposed that Council **RESOLVES**

- (1) That, subject to Member comments and changes resulting from the audit of the accounts, the Annual Report be agreed for publication.
- (2) That the audited Financial Statements for 2012/13 be presented to September's Audit Committee meeting for approval with the External Auditor's report.

Yvonne Woodward

Head of Finance

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**Background Papers:-**

None.

For further information please contact Yvonne Woodward (Head of Finance) on:-

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Email: [yvonne.woodward@rochford.gov.uk](mailto:yvonne.woodward@rochford.gov.uk)

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

# Annual Report 2012-13



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

- Corporate Plan 2013-2018
- Financial Statements 2012/13

These documents are available on our website **[www.rochford.gov.uk](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: **[financialservices@rochford.gov.uk](mailto:financialservices@rochford.gov.uk)**

Writing to: Council Offices  
South Street  
Rochford  
Essex  
SS4 1BW

Phone: 01702 318029

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## **1 Introduction**

We are pleased to introduce this report which will provide an overview of the Council's performance, spending and financial position for 2012/13 and aim to show what has been achieved in terms of service delivery and outcomes for our residents.

2012/13 was another challenging year with further cuts in Government funding. The Council started preparing for 2012/13 early in 2011 and again had some tough decisions to take to balance the budget. The delivery of the achievements highlighted in this report during a time of unprecedented cost reductions, together with continuing an excellent level of performance across the Council, demonstrates the Council's ability to cope with these tough times.

Over the last year we have been working to deliver on our promise 'to make Rochford District a place which provides opportunities for the best quality of life for all who live, work and visit here'. We continue to strive to create an environment that is vibrant, safe, sustainable and modern whilst retaining the essential characteristics of the salt marshes, rivers, woodlands, open spaces, villages and market towns that make the District what it is today. According to a 'Quality of Life' report published in the Sunday Times, using data compiled by Experian, Rochford District is one of the top ten areas to live in England.

We cannot do this on our own and we have been working hard to develop networks through the public, private and community sectors within the District ensuring that this Council is seen as a credible partner to deliver for the community.

Particular highlights of 2012/13 include Rochford District Council's contribution to the hugely successful London Olympic and Paralympic Games. On Friday 6 July 2012, 30,000 people lined the streets of Rayleigh to celebrate the Olympic torch visiting the District as part of its 70 day journey around the country. The Council also received a very positive and complimentary report following a Peer Review in November 2012. Views from Councillors, staff, residents and partners indicated that the Council has strong and effective senior management and political leadership, is a good partner to work with and has a strong track record of achievement. The full report is available on our website at **[www.rochford.gov.uk](http://www.rochford.gov.uk)**. Further achievements are included within this report. Also, our Electoral Services team successfully organised the first Police and Crime Commissioner elections, using the supplementary vote system.

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



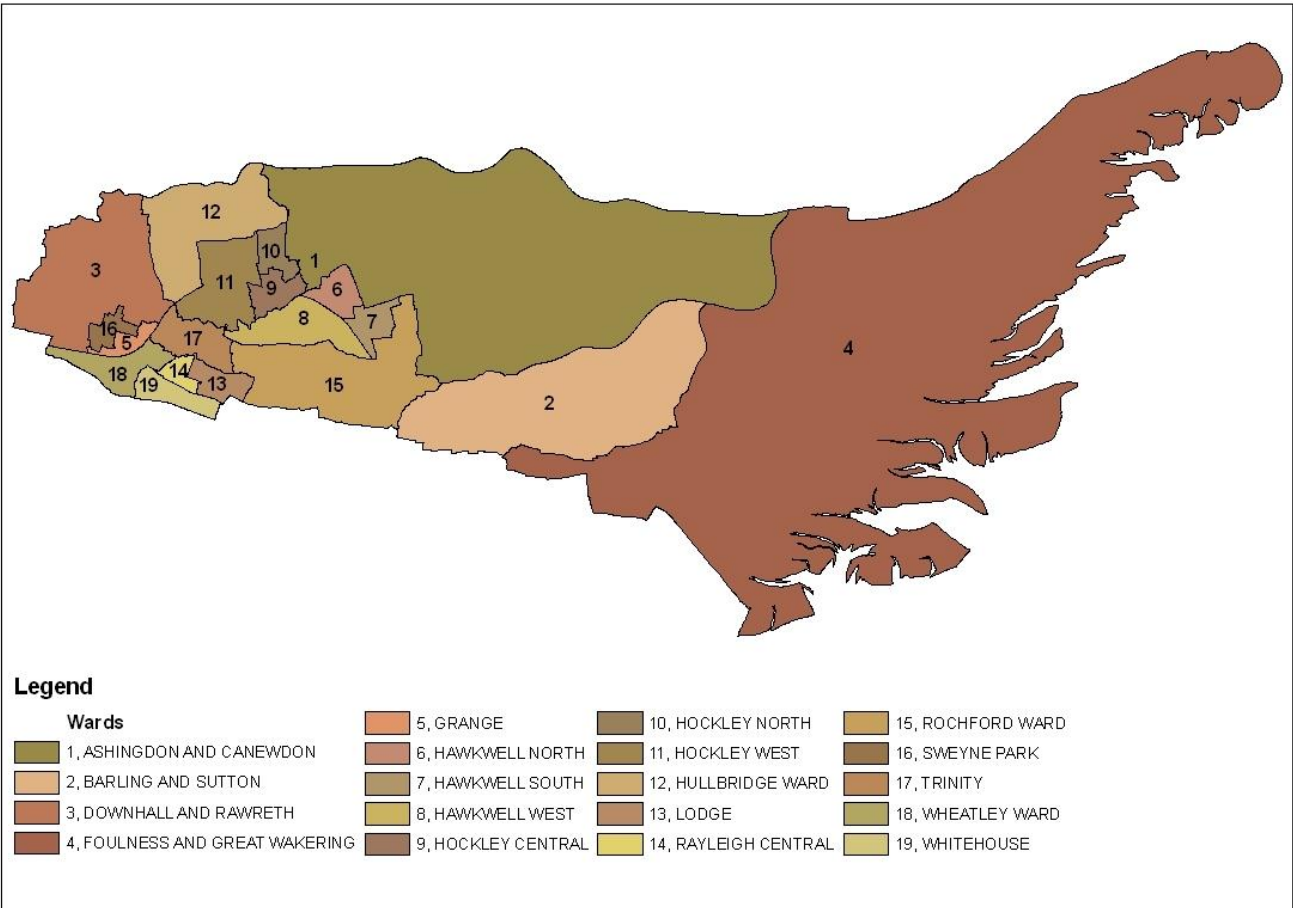
**Terry Cutmore**  
**Leader of the Council**



**Paul Warren**  
**Chief Executive**

## 2 Facts and Figures about Rochford District Council

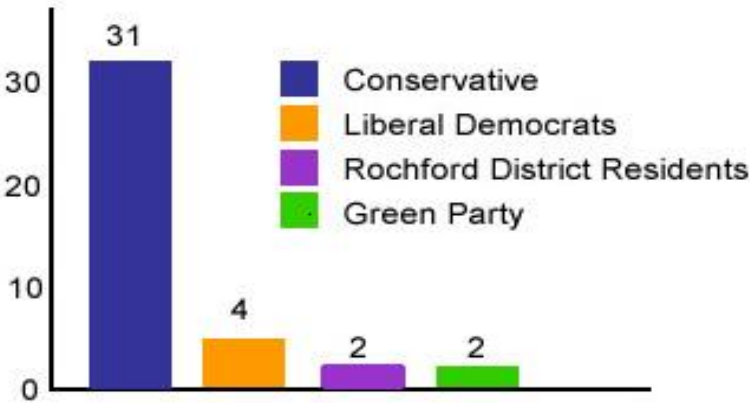
- The 2011 Census showed that Rochford District had a population of 83,287, compared to 78,700 in 2001 – a 5.8% increase.
- Rochford ranks 299 out of 326 authorities nationally (1 is the most deprived and 326 the least).
- 84% of homes within the District are owner occupied and 8.5% of households are privately rented – Census 2011.
- 5.5% of Rochford residents are unemployed, compared to a regional figure of 6.7% (nomisweb July 2011 – June 2012).
- Rochford Council employs approximately 217 full time equivalent members of staff, with key services (e.g. refuse collection, street cleansing, leisure management) contracted to the private sector.
- The Council Tax base was 31,632 and the average Band D Council Tax bill in 2012/13 was £1,528.22.
- The annual revenue budget for 2012/13 was £10.266m, compared to £10.215m in 2011/12.



### 3 Our Councillors

Rochford District Council has 39 Councillors representing the 19 wards across the District. Currently, the political composition of the Council is:

The Chairman of the Council for 2012/13 was Councillor Mrs Joan Mockford, and the Vice-Chairman was Councillor Mrs Barbara Wilkins.



For further information about the Council, please visit our website – [www.rochford.gov.uk](http://www.rochford.gov.uk)

## 4 Our Services

Local Government in Essex is largely structured into what is commonly termed ‘two-tiered’. This means that the responsibilities and service provision is shared between District and County Councils.

For Rochford, the Council works together with Essex County Council and the Town and Parish Councils to provide a large range of services to the public.

Rochford District Council includes:

**Environmental Services** which includes: Refuse Collection, Recycling, Street Cleansing, Public Open Spaces, Woodlands, Environmental Health and Licensing.

**Community Services** which includes: Leisure and Culture, Benefits, Council Tax, Community Safety and Strategic Housing.

**Planning & Transportation Services** which includes: Development Management, Building Control, Spatial planning policy, Planning Enforcement, Taxi Licensing, Car Parking and Economic Development and Regeneration.

**Legal, Estates and Member Services** which includes: Member Services, Legal, Asset Management, Land Charges and Burials.

**Information and Customer Services** which includes: Elections, Customer Services, Office Support and Information and Communications Technology.

**Finance** which includes: Audit, Financial Services and Performance Management.

**People & Policy** which includes: Human Resources, Policy Development, Partnerships, Health & Safety, Emergency Planning and Business Continuity, Internal and External Communications and Staff Engagement.

## 5 Our Vision

Our vision, which is shared with that of Castle Point and Rochford Joint Local Strategic Partnership, is:

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

In working to achieve our vision and ensure delivery against our corporate objectives, the Council will carry out its work in accordance with a set of values which it thinks 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.

To support its vision, the Council has three main corporate objectives:

- **Making a difference to our community\***
- **Making a difference to our environment**
- **Making a difference to our local economy.**

We want to improve the quality of life for the people in our communities and play a full role in the sustainable growth and prosperity of our county.

We see ourselves developing our services and improving their access to meet the changing needs and expectations of our communities. Our emphasis will be on quality and cost effectiveness whilst ensuring that Rochford District will remain one of the safest places in the country and the fear of crime will be reduced.

- \* Towards the end of the year, Making a difference to our People and our Community were amalgamated.

## 6 Our Objectives

We want to achieve Value for Money and this underpins the Council's three main objectives:

### **Making a difference to our Community**

A key challenge for the Council is to continue to meet the increasing and changing expectations of our customers. For many, there is no choice but to use a service on offer and therefore it is important that we deliver our services in the most cost effective way, to a standard which is recognised as excellent.

We recognise that we must have an inclusive community where residents are not only safe but where they feel safe. The crime rate in the Rochford District remains the lowest in the County but we aim to make the District even safer by playing our part in the Community Safety Partnership which involves a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies.

The Council also aims to progress services and initiatives which deal with the more vulnerable sections of our community.

### **Making a difference to our Environment**

We are committed to looking after the District's environment; protecting the amenities and preparing plans for future development that are well designed and sustainable.

We have a growing awareness of the impact of climate change and so, the work we do and the plans we make must be very carefully considered, sustainable and also balance the needs of residents, workers and visitors against our long term ambition to protect and enhance the environment.

### **Making a difference to our Local Economy**

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

The following pages highlight some of the work done by the Council during the year.

## Objective 1 – Making a difference to our community

- Grants to Voluntary Organisations (£90,000 for revenue and £11,469 for capital funding) were distributed across the District for voluntary services and projects, including the Citizens' Advice Bureau, RRAVS, Wyvern Community Transport, Bar n Bus Trust, Supporting Carers and Families Together, Rayleigh Through the Looking Glass.
- We have continued to develop partnership working, delivering cost savings and increased revenue. We continue to provide payroll services to Castle Point Borough Council and remain part of the Public Law Partnership (PLP). The PLP offers a broad range of skills to public legal services. Benefits of being part of the PLP include financial savings on training and legal research services and helping to earn in excess of £30,000 additional income for services provided by our Legal Team to PLP member authorities. Our Building Control team are part of a cross-boundary partnership scheme and have checked 100 applications outside of our District, generating an income of around £13,000 during 2012/13. Our Community Safety team have delivered domestic abuse awareness training across Essex.
- We facilitated the smooth transition of a new IT contract, in partnership with 3 other Councils, with no on-site service issues experienced. The new contract will save £7 million for the 4 Councils in the partnership over five years.
- We modernised and improved the resilience of the IT infrastructure by re-locating servers to an off-site data centre, combined with a corporate upgrade to Windows 7 and Office 2010.
- Affordable sports and arts activities for children aged 0 to 16 are provided across the District during school holidays, delivered in partnership with Virgin Active. 1,136 children took part in arts workshops and projects across 14 schools in the District.
- Throughout the year intergenerational arts activities took place, including students from Greensward Academy working creatively with members of Hockley and Hawkwell Day Centre and music students from Fitzwimarc School leading a music afternoon at the Lavers Sheltered Housing Scheme in Rayleigh. Residents at Millview Court in Rochford worked with a local artist to create Rochford's 'Glass Bead' – an artwork created as part of the London 2012 programme in Essex.
- During 2012/13, 3,420 people attended our weekly health walks, including walks under the Walking Your Way to the Games banner.
- Active Plus Games is a project aimed at increasing participation in the over 50 age group. Over 350 people have now accessed free vouchers for sport and physical activity sessions across Rochford District and Castle Point. 75 people attended the Active 50+ Festival, delivered in partnership with Active Life.
- We have successfully implemented the new Local Council Tax Support Scheme following the abolition of Council Tax Benefit on 1 April 2013, including funding the CAB for 6 months to allow them to provide a help service to people affected by the changes.
- We have successfully facilitated the return of Business Rates administration in-house.

- Our Revenues & Benefits Team have retained their Customer Service Excellence accreditation.
- We have developed an in-house system for collecting customer feedback, which includes, for the first time, face to face surveys at our two reception areas.



- We have set up a new internal function to provide a centralised resource of advice and assistance for staff undertaking procurement and tender activity. Ordering has been centralised and both initiatives should ensure a more corporate approach and offer opportunities for savings in purchasing.
- Online reporting of hate crime, anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse has been developed and is available via our website and we also published a series of pocket sized advice guides for residents with tips on protecting their homes and vehicles, dealing with anti-social behaviour, hate crime and domestic abuse.
- Our Community Safety Team successfully tendered to deliver County wide training in Domestic Abuse and take-up has exceeded expectations.
- Details of all invoices paid, with a value of more than £500, are published and updated on a monthly basis.
- The Rayleigh Windmill continues to be immensely popular as a venue for Civil Weddings, Civil Partnerships, naming ceremonies and renewal of vows. During the past year the 100th Civil Ceremony took place at the Windmill.
- The Rayleigh Windmill Museum achieved national accreditation from Arts Council England. The award recognises the professional way the collection is displayed and conserved for future generations to enjoy.
- For the fourth year running, Rayleigh Windmill received the national accreditation of Quality Assured Visitor Attraction from Visit England. The windmill hosted a variety of touring exhibitions and installations and nearly 3,000 people visited the Windmill in 2012/13.
- Our 9th annual Wild Woods Day in 2012, a key event in our calendar promoting arts, sport and play, attracted over 2,500 people.
- The first joint Rochford and Castle Point Sports Awards, sponsored by Virgin Active, was held at the Mill Arts and Events Centre. The ceremony was compered by BBC Essex's Ben Fryer and awards were presented by Badminton Olympic and Commonwealth Games medallist, Gail Emms.
- Activerochford, the Community Activity Network for the Rochford District, secured funding of £10,000 to deliver family sports sessions and provide grants to talented athletes and local sports clubs.
- Results from the recent Census show that the population in the District is ageing. Our Ageing Population Strategy continues to support older people in the District and ensures that we can respond to the needs of this growing section of our community.

- We continue to address the cuts in public spending and the impact of the reduction in Government funding, whilst maintaining essential services to our residents.
- We have a firm commitment to animal welfare and have been awarded the RSPCA's Silver Footprint Awards for 'Animal Welfare Principles' and 'Stray Dogs' achieving Gold for 'Contingency Planning'.
- The Council continues to work with partners to support local businesses and meet their needs and will seek to maximize and encourage economic growth for the benefit of the communities in the area.
- Following significant response to community involvement on options, the Hockley Area Action Plan has been published and submitted to the Government for examination. The Plan will set out how Hockley centre will be permitted to be developed in the future. We listened to suggestions, comments and concerns of local residents and groups, resulting in a final plan, which had considerably evolved since initial options.
- There was a 0.94% reduction in the number of repeat victims of domestic abuse and an 18.53% reduction in dwelling burglaries.
- We were, once again, awarded the prestigious Safer Parking Award Scheme Park Mark, an initiative aimed at reducing crime and fear of crime in parking facilities.
- Our partnership working with South East Essex NHS delivered in the region of £40,000 worth of savings when new systems in care homes and emergency responses to calls made by care homes were implemented.
- The Thames Gateway South Essex (TGSE) Strategic Housing group (Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend and Thurrock) is working with private owners to renovate empty properties to make them available to people in need of housing.

## Objective 2 – Making a difference to our environment

- We are currently achieving a recycling rate of nearly 68%, making us the third highest performing authority in the country. We have also secured Government funding of £600,000 over three years for rolling out a weekly refuse scheme for flats.
- In partnership with SITA, we have introduced a mobile 'phone app (Rochford/SITA UK) to enable instantaneous reporting of street scene issues, such as fly-tips and graffiti. The app alerts our cleansing team to the location and nature of an issue enabling these to be dealt with more efficiently.
- We have built on our 'Love Where You Live' partnerships with MacDonald's, local scouting groups and other community groups to secure over 300 hours of voluntary capacity for litter picks.
- We have formed a partnership with the Probation Service through the Community Payback Scheme in order to provide assistance with litter picking of rural footpaths, resurfacing Sweyne Park bridleway and routine grounds maintenance of Rayleigh Cemetery. We also secured two individual placements to carry out yard duties and assist the Street Scene team totalling 170 hours of committed labour.
- Improvements have been made in the air quality at Rawreth Industrial Estate in Rayleigh, meaning that the Council could revoke the Air Quality Management Area Order for that area.
- 100% of the scheduled food hygiene inspections have been carried out over the past year and 100% of licensing applications have been dealt with within relevant timescales.
- Three 'compost giveaways' have taken place, distributing over 20 tonnes of compost, reinforcing recycling messages to residents.
- We led a county-wide initiative of sampling soda water in pubs and other catering premises. Approximately 80% of first samples failed the standard and action was taken to deal with these failures, resulting in 8 voluntary prohibitions over the use of equipment until the equipment had been properly cleaned.
- We secured savings of £154,500 from our grounds maintenance contract and arranged the transfer of cemeteries and play spaces grounds maintenance operations back in-house from 1 April 2013.



- Consent was secured from Essex County Council and Southend Borough Council for Stock Road Recycling Centre to be made available to Rochford residents free of charge.
- We carried out roadway and car park improvements at Grove Woods and Hockley Woods.

- We secured a formal partnership with Hopeworx, a community re-use project, for the diversion of all furniture and electrical appliances collected through the bulky waste service.
- We successfully defended the Rochford Core Strategy, which sets out the key planning policies for the next 15 years, in the High Court. A legal challenge was brought by developers wishing to build on areas of Green Belt, which the Council wished to protect. The victory ensures that a plan is in place to deliver homes and employment in appropriate locations and that the District's environment is protected from inappropriate developments.
- Our Allocations Plan has been submitted to the Government for examination. This Plan allocates land for development/protection from in the District and will ensure that development takes place in the most appropriate, sustainable areas; and that the District's Green Belt is protected.
- Our Legal and Planning Enforcement teams, in conjunction with the Environment Agency successfully prosecuted against major planning breaches in the District.

### Objective 3 – Making a difference to our local economy

- The 2012 Rochford Art Trail was the East Region winner of a 'Towns Alive' award in the 'Environment and Culture' category.
- Evaluation of the Rochford Art Trail and other Trails across Essex, showed a significant impact on Essex, generating £1,235,844 for the Essex economy, creating the equivalent of 17.05 full time jobs for Essex and brought in 24,127 additional visitors to the county. 32 local artists/small businesses received paid employment across the Council's arts projects and events. Two local businesses began delivering regular holiday activities in a cost-neutral arrangement with the Council – both businesses reported an increase in new business.
- Rochford took part in the county-wide 'Sparks Will Fly' festival to celebrate the London 2012 Olympics. The festival generated valuable income and tourism and helped to create a cultural legacy for Essex. 75,000 people enjoyed fourteen free events held across the county – including 'Sparks Will Fly' and Wild Woods Day' and a total of £1,047,366 (net) was generated for the economy.
- We are aware that for businesses cash flow is crucial and as part of its support for local businesses, the Council prioritises payment of their invoices with a target of paying within 10 working days. During 2012/13 almost 95% local suppliers were paid within 10 days of receipt of an undisputed invoice.
- Parking charges have been introduced at two Council owned sites, Freight House, Rochford and Hockley Woods. However, we once again brought in free parking for all of our 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 and parking remains free on Sundays.
- The Council provides a quarterly newsletter to all businesses signed up to the Rochford Business Network, which was set up in 2009. We also provide useful and relevant information, advice, networking and opportunities through this Network on a regular basis.
- 'Shop at My Local' continues to run and membership steadily increases, helping to keep trade local. There are now approximately 1,000 shoppers and 434 traders. The recently updated and re-launched website has received great feedback. Facebook and Twitter are also used for communication with businesses and shoppers.
- We are progressing well towards targets set by the Low Carbon Business Initiative. The scheme has engaged with over 100 businesses in the District, with 20 project grants being awarded, totaling close to £153,000. It is pleasing to report that, through the scheme, 48 jobs have been created and 52 safeguarded in the District. 12 apprenticeship grants have also been awarded.
- We continue to host three Business Breakfasts per year, with representation of between 70 and 120 businesses. Speakers include the Chairman of Southend United Football Club and Southend United Community Trust. Future events will include the Police & Crime Commissioner for Essex.

- We have hosted several small business seminars, in partnership with business specialist Pro Actions. The seminars have been fully attended and all have received excellent feedback. Topics covered include Boosting Sales, Effective Marketing, Increasing Profits, Social Media and Controlling Finances. Many businesses have commented on how helpful and inspiring the seminars are and more are planned.
- We continue to sponsor and work with schools across the District to host the Young Entrepreneur Awards. This is a one-day event that puts students in front of a team of judges to scrutinise business proposals for development within set criteria. Students experience what it is like to run a business and also have a chance to look at the different aspects of business, including leadership, management and marketing. We have had excellent feedback on this event, from students, teachers and judges.
- We have progressed the London Southend Airport and Environs Joint Area Action Plan with Southend on Sea Borough Council. The plan will help realise an additional 6,200 jobs by 2027 through development of new employment uses to the west of the airport, with accompanying infrastructure. It will also put in place policies to ensure future development is managed in the interests of local residents and the environment.



- We continue to provide a business support function and are a source of support for many of the businesses based in the District. We receive queries such as where to source jam jars, where to relocate a large business, how to start a new business, how to host an opening ceremony and how to get permission to install a sign. We have connected several local businesses and continue to build on our function as a signposting and networking service.

## 7 Financial Summary

This Annual Report provides a summary of the Council's statutory Statement of Accounts for 2012/13. 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 2012/13.

The Statement of Accounts was signed off by the Head of Finance on 7 June 2013 and will be audited by the Audit Commission's appointed external auditors, BDO LLP UK.

The unaudited Accounts are available on the Council's website and the audited Accounts will be available from September 2013 by contacting:

Contact: Financial Services

Email: **[financialservices@rochford.gov.uk](mailto:financialservices@rochford.gov.uk)**

Writing to: Council Offices  
South Street  
Rochford  
Essex  
SS4 1BW

Phone: 01702 318029

This is the sixth 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**

## 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 2012/13 under each of our Corporate Objectives and the amount left to be financed from local and national tax income.

	Net Expenditure 2012/13 £m
<b>Making a difference to our Community</b>	
Collection of local taxes	
Council Tax and Housing Benefits	
Emergency Planning & Health & Safety	
Leisure and Sports Development	
Housing Services & Homelessness	
Community Safety	
Elections	
Local Land Charges	
Cemeteries & Churchyards	
Licensing	
Public Conveniences	
Democratic Services	
	<b>5.75</b>
<b>Making a difference to our Environment</b>	
Mill Tower Windmill	
Woodlands, Parks and Open Spaces	
Planning and Building Control	
Environmental Health	
Street Cleansing	
Recycling	
	<b>5.73</b>
<b>Making a difference to our local Economy</b>	
Economic Development	
Car Parks *	
	<b>(0.10)</b>
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>11.38</b>
LESS Statutory Accounting Adjustments, including capital charges	(0.81)
LESS Income from cash investments	(0.11)
PLUS Money taken from reserves for future use	(0.19)
<b>Cost of local services to be met by local and national taxes</b>	<b>10.27</b>

**\*Note:** We received more in income from car parks than we spent out.

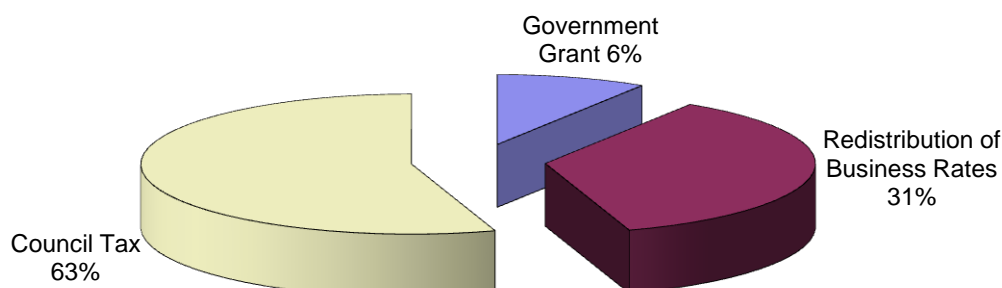
The Net Cost of Services last year (2011/12) was £12.7m, shown by Corporate Objective as follows:

What did we spend last year:	Net Expenditure 2011/12 £m
Making a difference to our Community	7.00
Making a difference to our Environment	5.94
Making a difference to our local Economy	(0.21)
Net Cost of Services	12.73

### Where did the money come from?

The £10.2m that we spent on providing local services, after contributions from reserves and income raised from various fees and charges, came from local and national taxes and redistributed business rates.

Our total income for the year was £10.27m (2011/12 £10.33m), which was split £0.65m Government Grants, £3.19m from national business rates returned to the Council and £6.43m from Council Tax from residents as shown below.



### Summary of Income and Expenditure

Revenue Account Surplus	2012/13 £m
Total Income	(10.27)
Total Cost of Services	10.20
<b>Surplus for the year</b>	<b>(0.06)</b>

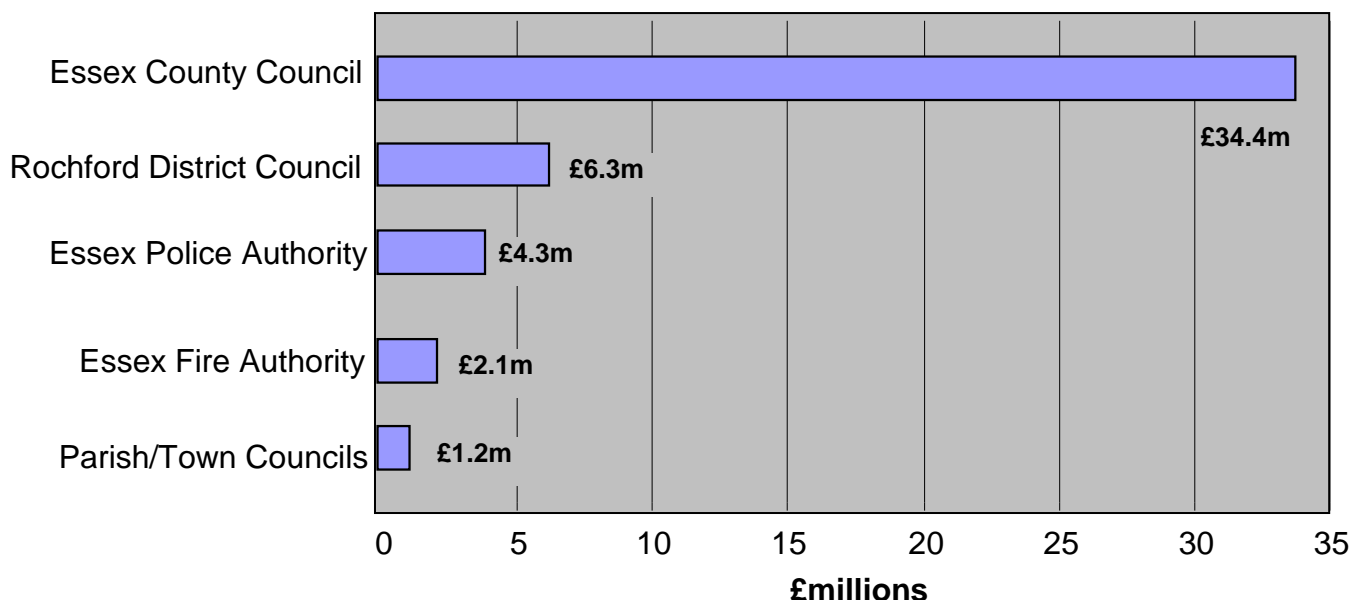
The Council is using balances built up over previous years to cover some of the reduction in Government funding.

The Council recognises that these balances won't last and has plans to continue to reduce expenditure.

## Council Tax

The Council was responsible for collecting £48.3m of Council Tax last year, but we only kept £6.43m, 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 2012/13 was made up as follows:

	2012/13
Rochford District Council	£201.15
Essex County Council	£1,086.75
Essex Fire & Rescue Service	£66.42
Essex Police Authority	£136.71
Town/Parish Councils (average)	£37.19
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,528.22</b>

In 2012/13 the national average for Council Tax on a band D property was **£1,510**. From Government Grant and redistribution of business rates, we received £38 per head, down from £43 in 2011/12, compared to a national average of £60 in 2012/13

## Discretionary Rate Relief

Charities and some sports clubs are entitled to 80% mandatory relief on their business rates. In order to provide additional support, the Council can award discretionary relief for the remaining 20%. For 2012/13, discretionary relief was awarded to 35 organisations throughout the District at a cost to the Council of £18,535.

## 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. Capital Expenditure does not directly affect the Council Tax.

For 2012/13 our expenditure on capital compared to what we planned to spend was:-

What we spent:	Planned £000s	Actual £000s
Vehicles and Equipment	264	127
Hall Road Cemetery extension	40	10
Leisure and Play Facilities	304	177
Private Sector Renewal Grants	104	32
Disabled Facilities Grants	313	222
IT infrastructure	62	45
Council properties	272	204
Thames Gateway Energy Schemes	31	9
Big Society Funding	42	11
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,432</b>	<b>837</b>

Some of the projects not completed in 2012/13 will be rolled forward into 2013/14.

The £837,000 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	2012/13 £000s
Grants and Contributions	224
Capital Receipts	613
<b>Total</b>	<b>837</b>

## What is the Council worth?

At the end of each financial year, 1 April to 31 March, 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 2013), 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 2011 £m
Value of land and property	37.2
Cash in bank and cash investments	4.8
Money owed to Rochford	2.0
Less Money owed by Rochford	(2.9)
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>41.10</b>

Usable Reserves and Balances	31 March 2013 £m
Capital Grants and Receipts	2.2
Working Balances	0.9
Earmarked Reserves	2.2
<b>Total Revenue Reserves</b>	<b>5.3</b>

Rochford's net worth is £40.7m. This is represented by unusable reserves of £35.9m and revenue reserves of £4.8m.

## Delivering Value for Money

During 2012/13, the Council has been successful in generating income through the provision of services to partners and other Councils and approximately £77,000 has been earned from objectives such as:

- providing a payroll service to Castle Point Borough Council
- working in partnership on Legal Services and Building Control
- providing grounds maintenance services to Parish Councils and Essex County Council
- providing domestic abuse work for other authorities

A new ICT contract was successfully let, with 3 other authorities, providing estimated savings to the Authority of up to £0.6m up to 2016/17.

The Council also planned to make savings during the year of £900,000, which were delivered.

This has been achieved by more efficient service and better organisation. Rochford District Council's dedicated staff continue to work hard to ensure it offers its residents value for money.

Some examples of savings are:

- Reducing around 60 budgets, following a review of the previous years' spend where there had been consistent under-spending.
- Reducing the cost of our Leisure Services and running costs, with no events/activities lost.
- The cost of services provided by the Home Improvement Agency were integrated into the contract price.

- Grounds maintenance contract costs were reduced, with no impact on service delivery.
- Intensive testing on Benefits were carried out by Internal Audit instead of the external auditors.
- Following a reduction in requests, our subsidised pest control service was discontinued, except for cases of emergency and financial hardship.

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.

Further information on the Council's 2013/14 budget and five year Medium Term Financial Plans are available on the website: **[www.rochford.gov.uk](http://www.rochford.gov.uk)**.



## Financial Performance

Rochford District Council is amongst the best in Essex and the country when it comes to collecting Council Tax. The Revenues and Benefits team collected 98.7% of the £48.3m Council Tax due last year (the same as in 2011/12). We also collected 96.9% of business rates due last year, which was an increase on 2011/12.

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.

The Council achieved investment rates for the year averaging at 1.8% (1.4% in 2011/12) compared to the benchmark of 0.4%.

## What Next?

The Council's plans for 2013 onwards are set out in the Corporate Plan which is available from the contact details at the beginning of this Annual Report.

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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 and what other information you would like to see included.

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