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## KEY POLICIES AND ACTIONS FOR 2008/2009

### 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report formally sets out the main areas of policy development for 2008/2009. It identifies the main projects to be progressed and implemented and also highlights the main areas of service development/change. It also identifies issues on which the Council may wish to request consideration by the Review Committee and outlines the timetable for establishing the budget for 2009/2010.

### 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 With the budget agreed at Full Council on 29 January and with the Council Tax rate to be 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.
- 2.2 At the same time, Members can consider the programme relating to the monitoring of the 2008/2009 budget and the preparation of the 2009/2010 budget. Members' views are sought on those policy, resource and service issues which might be appropriate for examination by the Review Committee, although it will be for that Committee to determine its work programme in 2008/2009.
- 2.3 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 A large proportion of the Council's work is governed by statute and is driven by legislative requirements. In a number of the key service areas there are national targets and standards to meet and, where appropriate, more local targets have also been set. Satisfaction rates with the Council remain high when compared nationally and the Council's image, in comparative terms, is a positive one. At a time of ever-rising public expectations, the challenge for the Council within the budget process remains one of not just maintaining current satisfaction rates but improving upon them, acknowledging that the finances available to the Council are finite.
- 3.2 A key focus for the council this year will be around the implementation of our new environmental contracts around refuse collection and recycling, street cleansing and grounds maintenance. In particular, we plan to achieve a 'step change' in our recycling rate through major improvements to our kerbside collection service. This coming year will also be important as it is the year of our Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) re-inspection, which takes place in the week commencing 16 June. The work around the CPA will certainly impact upon both members and staff over the coming months.

- 3.3 Other key projects for the Council this year will be continued work through the Rochford Local Strategic Partnership on the further development of the new Rochford Community Strategy and its implementation, ensuring effective linkage with the Essex-wide new Community Strategy and the emerging Local Area Agreement Two (LAA2). Work around the Local Development Framework and its various stages will also continue, with the Core Strategy being out for consultation in June/July. Our Access to Services Strategy work will progress, with many of the key themes coming forward for detailed consideration and decision. We will continue with the purchase of land at Cherry Orchard to secure the enlargement of Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park.
- 3.4 With specific budgetary decisions now made, 2008/2009 will see initiatives coming forward in relation to young people and facilities for the young, new businesses, urban tree planting, partnership working in connection with Council Tax/Benefits, heritage and public open space refurbishment. We are also establishing a fund to support any further enforcement activity in terms of the removal and clearance of sites where necessary following successful planning enforcement action.
- 3.5 The key elements of the Council's work programme will be publicised through the press, the web and through Rochford District Matters, using other medium as appropriate. The main elements will also be included within a revised corporate plan and in the 2008 Performance Plan (to be renamed the Annual Report), both of which will be prepared and considered by Full Council in June and July respectively.
- 3.6 The attached appendices A, B and C make no attempt to cover all the Council's functions. Instead, they focus on the 'headline/priority' areas of work for the forthcoming year. Appendix A deals with the policy and strategic Framework. Appendix B covers the main projects and Appendix C the key areas of service development/change. In each of the appendices, the linkage to one or more of the Council's six corporate aims, listed below, is given.
- (1) To provide an excellent cost effective frontline service for all our customers.
  - (2) To work towards a safer and more caring community.
  - (3) To provide a green and sustainable environment.
  - (4) To encourage a thriving local economy.
  - (5) To improve the quality of life for people in our District.
  - (6) To maintain and enhance our local heritage.
- 3.7 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. 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.

- 3.8 Appendix E sets out the process and timetable for monitoring the 2008/2009 budget and preparing the 2009/2010 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. There will also be a mid year Performance report on all our main Performance Indicators. 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.
- 3.9 Finally, Appendix F sets out a list of events, for Members' reference, which will impact on the Authority during the year. It is not all-encompassing, but does attempt to capture the key activities which the Council will be involved in.

#### **4 RECOMMENDATION**

It is proposed that the Council **RESOLVES**

- (1) that the work programme for 2008/2009, 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 2008/2009 budget and the development of the 2009/2010 budget, as outlined in Appendix E, be noted.
- (4) that the main events timetable outlined in Appendix F be noted.

Paul Warren

Chief Executive

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**Background Papers:-**

None

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If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 546366.

**Policy Development Work**Council's Corporate Plan (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

- Produce an updated Plan in the light of 2008/2009 Budget Process – for consideration and approval by Council June 2008

Local Development Documents (3, 4, 5 & 6)

- Finalisation of Core Strategy for consultation June / July 2008
- Public Inquiry into Core Strategy June 2009
- Adoption December 2009

London Southend Airport and Environs Action Area Plan (4, 5 & 6)

- Publication of Issues and Options June/July 2008
- Adoption June 2009

Asset Management Plan (1, 3)

Report on Asset Management Performance Indicators July 2008

Review Asset Management Plan July 2008

Capital Strategy (1)

Review and production of revised Capital Strategy December 2008

Choice Based Letting Policy (1, 2 & 5)

- Discussions with Thames Gateway on Sub Regional Policy/cross-border nominations July 2008
- Final decision on policy/scheme to be implemented (regional or local) October 2008

Performance Plan (to be renamed Annual Report) (1)

Prepare 2008 Annual Report for Member consideration  
and approval

July 2008

Economic Development Strategy (3, 4 & 5)

Review and revised Strategy for Member consideration  
and approval

June 2008

Rochford District Sustainable Community Strategy (2, 3, 4, 5 & 6)

Finalise new strategy with Partners of the Local  
Strategic Partnership

May/June 2008

**Main Projects****Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park (3 & 5)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ▪ Purchase of additional land to the west for expansion of Country Park                             | April 2008  |
| ▪ Purchase of additional land to the east – likely to be Subject to a CPO                           | Dependent on negotiations – estimated date for Inquiry late 2008/early 2009 |
| ▪ Detailed design proposal for enlarged Country Park Submitted to Executive Board for consideration | November 2008   |

**Public Open Spaces Refurbishment Programme (3 & 5)**

- |  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| ▪ Programme submitted to Executive Board for consideration | September 2008      |
| ▪ Implementation of programme                              | Autumn 2008 onwards |

**Sweyne Park Extension – Pitch Provision (3 & 5)**

- |   |                |
|---|----------------|
| ▪ Reports to West Area committee and Executive Board on management/usage of the pitches | April 2008     |
| ▪ Submission of planning application  | May/June 2008  |
| ▪ Commence pitch preparation works  | Autumn 2008    |
| ▪ Pitches into community use  | September 2009 |

**Refurbishment of Great Waking Public Convenience (3 & 5)**

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|---|---------------|
| ▪ Refurbishment of the Great Waking Toilets | By March 2009 |
|---|---------------|

**Youth Facilities Capital Programme (2 & 5)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ▪ Programme submitted to Executive Board for |  |
|--|--|

consideration

July 2008

- Implementation of programme

Autumn 2008

Hall Road Cemetery Extension (2 & 5)

- Surveys completed
- Outline planning application prepared
- Detailed Design prepared

August 2008

August 2008

By July 2009

Urban Street Tree Planting Programme

- Programme submitted to Executive Board for Consideration
- Implementation of Programme

September 2008

Nov '08–Feb '09

New Business Start Up Initiatives (4)

- Proposal submitted to Executive Board for Consideration (see link with Economic Development Strategy)
- Implementation

June 2008

Summer/Autumn  
2008Partnership Working in connection with Revenues/Benefits Service (1 & 2)

- Report back on further options and way forward to Executive Board
- Implementation from

September 2008

Jan/Feb 2009

Heritage Programme (5 & 6)

- Proposals submitted to Executive Board for consideration
- Implementation from

June 2008

Autumn 2008



Member Training & Development Programme (1)

From May 2008

Access to Services (1, 2 & 5)

- Business cases submitted to Executive Board
- Implementation roll-out

April 2008

From May/June  
2008

**Key Service Improvements**Commencement of new Refuse and Recycling Contract (1, 3 & 5)

from April 2008

Roll out of the new re-cycling arrangements

from June 2008

Roll out of the New Grounds Maintenance Contract (1, 3 & 5)

from April 2008

Roll out of the New Street Cleansing Contract (1, 3 & 5)

from April 2008

**Choice Based Lettings**

- Commence Implementation of Scheme

from Jan 2009

**Maintenance of Service Improvement in Key Areas**

- Planning Services
- Housing Benefits/Council Tax Services
- Recycling and Waste Collection Service
- Environmental Services

**Workforce Development Plan**

Key items for 2008/2009:

- Developing Leadership Capacity and Developing the Skills and Capacity of the Workforce across the Organisation
- Review of Recruitment & Advertising Contracts

March 2008 -  
Sept 2008May 2008 –  
Dec 2008

Issues for possible consideration by the Review Committee in 2008/2009

- Monitoring of decision-making structure – including Member Champions and Forward Plan
- Member role on outside bodies/benefit to the Council
- Flooding, drainage and ditch clearance – who is responsible for what
- Child and adolescent mental health provision
- Use of community halls/assets

Budget Process

Closure of Accounts	June 2008
Performance Plan (to be renamed Annual Report) identifying Performance over last year, targets for 2008/09 and main financial information of the Authority	July 2008
Draft Internal Divisional Plans produced – internal bidding system	Oct 2008
Consultation with Local Chambers/Business around potential budget items/issues	Oct 2008
Half Yearly Review and Review of Budget Strategy	Nov 2008
Members Awayday – half yearly review and first input into 2009/2010 Budget	Nov 2008
Member Awayday – Finalise priorities for budget	Jan 2009
Budget setting when budget for the Council is agreed	Jan 2009
Council tax set	Feb 2009
Key Plans and Actions Report	Feb 2009
Update 'From Vision to Reality'	Feb 2009
Internal Divisional Action Plans finalised	Mar 2009
Corporate Plan updated and agreed	June 2009

Main Events in 2008 / 2009

April 2008 -	New contracts commence
May 2008 -	Elections
June 2008 -	New kerbside recycling scheme kicks in
June 2008 -	CPA Inspection
June 2008 -	New Community Strategy for District in place
June/July 2008 -	LDF Core Strategy Consultation
October 2008 -	Revised CPA Assessment published
November 2008 -	First Member Budget Awayday
January 2009 -	Second Member Budget Awayday
January 2009 -	Budget Agreed
January 2009 -	Implementation of Choice Based Letting Scheme
February 2009 -	Council Tax Set