

Community Consultation 2003

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Introduction

In July 2003 the District's first draft Community Plan was launched by the Rochford Local Strategic Partnership. The Partnership then undertook a period of consultation within the Community aimed at gathering views on the District and the draft Plan from the general public. A consultation plan was drawn up which included nine venues across the District, some of which were attended for a number of days. Appendix 1, shows the consultation timetable. The summary of the draft Plan and consultation was also published in Rochford District Matters and summary leaflets were distributed to all interested parties.

A close date for the consultation of 31st October was given.

Methodology

A display was created which explained the Community Plan and the draft themes. This was set up in a prominent place at each of the venues with the intention of capturing the views of as many people as possible.

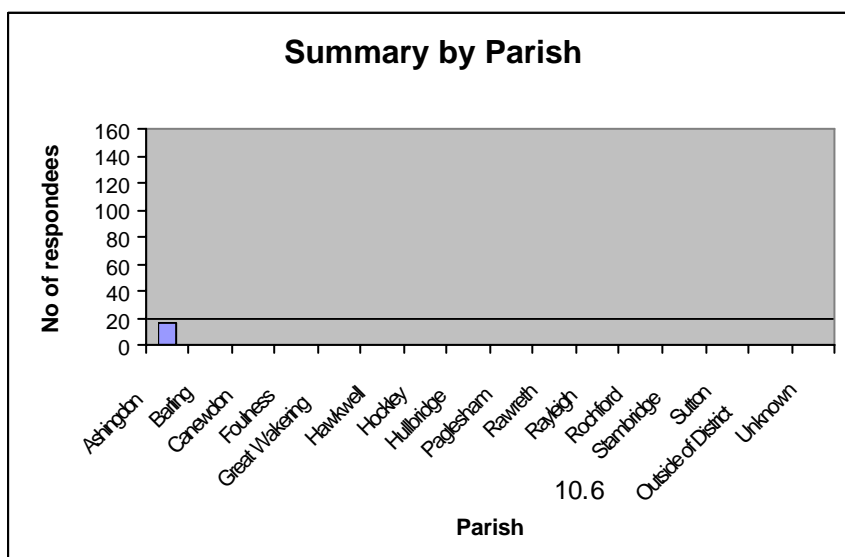
Wherever possible it was explained that the consultation was being carried out on behalf of the Partnership. The following questions were asked:-

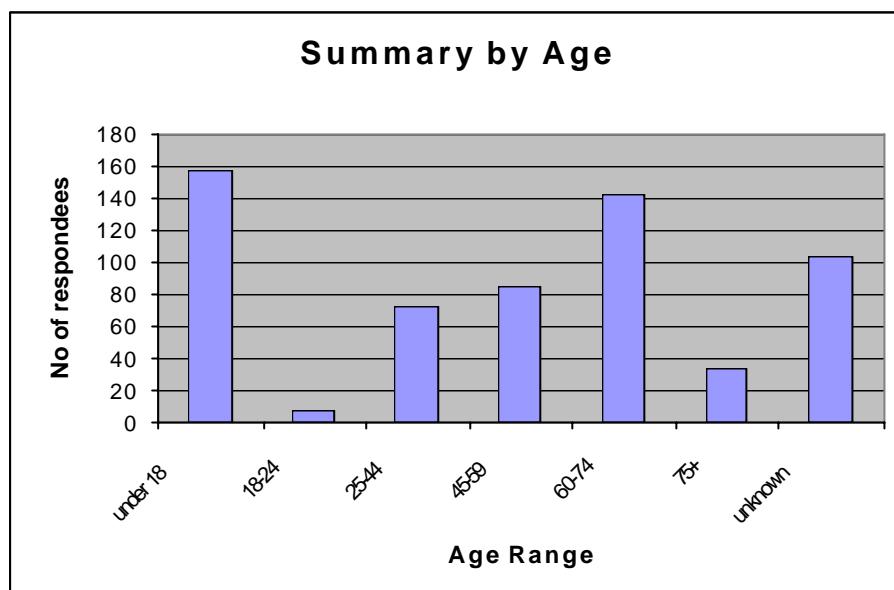
- What do you like about the District?
- What do you think could be improved about the District?
- What should be the main priorities for the Partnership to address?
- If we could achieve one thing in the next three years, what would you like it to be?

The comments that were recorded have been analysed using key words and then collated under the most relevant theme to which they relate, though it should be noted that in most cases they link to a number of other themes.

Profile of Consultees

A total of 603 were consulted under this method. The consultees covered a variety of Parishes and age ranges. The charts below show where the consultees live and the age range that they fall into:-





Findings

Residents generally like the District due to its quietness and rural nature with parks, countryside, open spaces and woodland among the top comments. Shops and schools, both primary and secondary also score highly. Community spirit, friendly atmosphere and the people also rank highly for making the District a good place to live. The town centre enhancements that have been carried out in recent years are also mentioned positively, particularly with regard to Rayleigh.

Access comes out positively though this was more to do with the physical situation of the District and the ease of access to places outside of the District such as London rather than travelling around the District.

By far the highest ranking comment for what needs improving was a need for more for young people to do and places for them to go. Improved public transport also figures highly, particularly bus services, with a large proportion of the comments being made by residents of the villages of the District. Policing is an issue high on the residents agenda, with many comments being that they would like to see a greater presence with local police officers walking the area. Many people accepted that the crime rate was comparatively low, but felt that a more visible presence would reduce the youth nuisance, litter, graffiti and vandalism which were considered to be an issue. There was a feeling that shops were generally good but in need of improvement; these comments were made with regard to the variety of shops in the centres generally and also the poor state of some of the shops in Hockley and Rochford in particular. Parking ranks highly as in need of improving with a variety of comments around car park charges and parking in residential areas along with the poor state of the roads and pavements. Another high ranking issue is the amount of building and new development that is allowed around the District, with comments mainly around the lack of infrastructure and amenities to cope with it.

Residents were asked to consider what their priorities for action are. Not all consultees responded to this question as they felt they had already given their answers in the previous questions. The

top priority for those who did answer was to see more police, closely followed by something for young people to do. Traffic congestion, transport provision, new development, the state of the roads and cleanliness of the District were also highlighted as priorities for attention. When asked for what residents would like the Partnership to achieve within the next three years, again the same issues were raised.

Draft Themes

All of the results were then identified under the most appropriate draft theme, though many of them link and could be included under a number of themes. The key words and number of residents highlighting them are shown in Appendix 2.

Feeling Safe

The message here is clearly that residents would like to see a greater policing presence. There were comments around people not feeling safe, though there were also a number of positive comments in this direction with several people saying that they thought the District was a safe place to live and has a low crime rate. Speeding comes out strongly and most comments were made with regard to enforcement. Youth nuisance and anti-social behaviour were also mentioned as areas for improvement.

Clean and Green Surroundings

Comments on this theme are generally very positive with a broad appreciation of the District's natural environment. The quietness, rural aspect, countryside, woodlands and parks and open spaces are all considered to be strengths of the District. There are a few contradictory elements within this theme – shops were seen by many people as a good aspect of the District, but also score highly as an area for improvement, mainly being seen as a lack of variety and in need of aesthetic improvement, there were also comments specifically regarding takeaways and the litter and cleanliness problems related to them.

Cleanliness again is contradictory with almost equal comments for good and bad, though it is observed that those who consider it in need of improving are all long term residents of the District whilst those who think it is good are more variable.

Recycling is mentioned on a number of occasions as in need of improvement, though this is not so much a reflection on the service as a desire to see it spread throughout the District.

Anti-social issues such as graffiti, vandalism, litter and dog fouling come are highlighted with many comments being passionately put.

There also appears to be a perception of general untidiness with regard to the District with comments on the state of footpaths, hedge cutting, verge cutting and overhanging trees.

Access to Leisure, Culture and Heritage

There is no doubt as to the biggest issue reflected within this theme – young people – more for them to do and more places for them to go. There is a strong desire to see more leisure facilities

in general and a swimming pool in the Rayleigh area in particular. Skate parks were also mentioned across a range of ages. On the positive side, the libraries are seen as good as are the existing leisure facilities within the District. Rochford Town Centre is highlighted as in need of improvement.

Learning and Work

There were very few concerns raised under this theme, schools come out in a positive light.

Healthy Living

Again, not a huge response to this theme. The main concern is the amount of building and new development taking place within the District and the lack of facilities to cope with it. Access to GP's and NHS dentists was also seen as an issue, with people saying that they had difficulty getting appointments.

Getting Around

Getting around the District is clearly an issue for people along with parking. Public transport – specifically buses appears to be the biggest concern. Comments were made on parking on streets in residential areas and also the car parking charging system, with people saying they would appreciate a shorter stay option.

Traffic congestion within the main towns of Rochford, Hockley and Rayleigh is raised. Another high ranking comment is the poor state of the roads and pavements throughout the District.

Access is seen as good, though this tends to reflect the position of the District in relation to other major places rather than the ease of access around it.

There is a desire to see the encouragement of more environmentally friendly forms of transport.

Feeling Part of a Community

Comments on this theme were very positive with people feeling that there is generally a good sense of community.

Ensuring Effective Service Provision

This theme attracted the fewest comments, with comments on Rochford District Council being about refuse collection, public toilets, council tax and practical help with collection and disposal of goods. This may reflect a perception by the public that the consultation was being carried out on behalf of Rochford District Council as opposed to an understanding of the Local Strategic Partnership.

People were generally keen to take part in the consultation and saw it as a positive experience. The majority of comments made were very general, though there were some quite specific which will be collated and passed to the relevant agencies. Appendix 3 shows a selection of some of the positive and negative comments that were made.

APPENDIX 1

Consultation Dates

Wednesday 16 th July	King Edmund School *
Sunday 3rd August	Hullbridge Charity Fair
Tuesday 5th August	Hockley Library
Monday 11th August	Rayleigh Library
Tuesday 12th August	Rayleigh Library
Monday 18th August	Clements Hall
Tuesday 19th August	Clements Hall
Monday 25th August	Great Wakering Village Fete
Tuesday 2nd Sept	Back Lane, Rochford
Wednesday 3rd Sept	High Street, Rayleigh
Tuesday 16th Sept	Sweyne Park School - lunchtime and evening*
Monday 6th October	CP & R Adult Community College*

* Venues for consultation with students and staff only, all other dates are public consultations

APPENDIX 2

Feeling Safe			
What's Good		What Needs Improving	
safe	14	policing	57
low crime	7	speed	21
security	3	safety	10
not rough	2	youth nuisance	6
neighbourhood watch	1	anti-social behaviour	5
speed cameras	1	bullies	1
		neighbourhood watch	1
		rough area	1
		speed cameras	1
		CCTV	1
		gangs	1
		problem alleyways	1
		noise (Paglesham)	1

Clean and Green Surroundings			
What's Good		What Needs Improving	
quiet	64	shops	45
shops	58	litter	36
countryside	57	cleanliness	27
parks	42	recycling	24
rural	37	graffiti	19
Rayleigh	24	need a supermarket	16
clean	23	vandalism	16
open spaces	21	more parks	13
green	20	dog fouling	10
Rayleigh enhancements	17	footpaths	10
woodland	17	less takeaways	5
river	9	street lighting	5
sea	9	fly tipping	4
atmosphere	7	hedge cutting	4
flowers	6	overhanging trees	4
Hockley Woods	6	tidy	4
town centres	6	Civic Amenity site	3
amenities	5	more trees	3
litter	5	pedestrianise centres	3
Rochford square	5	seating	3
footpaths	4	appearance	2
not too busy	3	conservation	2
recycling	3	derelict shops	2
tidy	3	pollution	2
beauty	2	rats	2
christmas decoration	2	Rayleigh Town Centre	2
fields	2	too quiet	2
nature reserve	2	verge cutting	2
takeaways	2	animal sanctuary	1
appearance	1	drains	1
big	1	empty buildings	1
charity	1	environmental protection	1
Cherry Orchard	1	flowers	1
church	1	greenswards	1
Hockley	1	houseboats - Paglesham	1
Hockley enhancements	1	nature reserves	1
King Georges	1	Rayleigh Weir	1
markets	1	Rochford pond	1
pretty	1	signposting in Hockley Woods	1
quality of life	1	Stambridge sewage works	1
scenery	1	street cleaning	1
small	1	too small	1
wildlife	1	walks	1
		Warners Bridge	1

		Watery Lane	1
		wildlife/nature	1

Access to Leisure, Culture and Heritage			
What's Good		What Needs Improving	
library	18	young people - things to do/places to go	90
Clements Hall	10	need a swimming pool	27
walks	10	facilities	18
leisure facilities	9	skatepark	15
history	5	leisure	13
sports centre	4	Rochford town centre	13
activities	3	play areas	12
public houses	3	have a cinema	7
bowls club	2	youth clubs	5
character	2	BMX Track	4
facilities	2	Clements Hall	4
football	2	less public houses	4
old fashioned	2	library	3
play areas	2	sport	3
recreation ground	2	market location	2
the Mill	2	recreation grounds	2
activities for the elderly	1	activities	1
ambience	1	arcade	1
antiques centre close by	1	arts	1
BMX track	1	Belchamps	1
bridle path	1	lighting for football pitches	1
entertainment	1	Mount - opening times	1
facilities for youth	1	need MacDonalds	1
golf	1	pavilion (King Georges Field)	1
Mount	1	The Mill	1
teen shelter	1		
things to do	1		
traditional	1		

Learning and Work			
What's Good		What Needs Improving	
schools	34	schools	5
Adult Community College	2	6th form college	1
education	2	adult education	1
jobs	2	school lunch system - King Edmund	1
work opportunities	1	industrial areas	1

Healthy Living			
What's Good		What Needs Improving	
doctors	9	Housing/building	41
hospital	5	doctors - access	25
surgeries	3	affordable housing	5
healthcare	2	Southend hospital	5
housing	2	dentists	2
nursery	2	help for homeless	1
dentists	1	medical care	1
health clinic	1	mobile phone masts	1
medical services	1	smokers	1
midwife	1		
nurses	1		
social services	1		

Getting Around			
What's Good		What Needs Improving	
access	35	buses	68
bus service	14	roads/pavements - state of	52
transport	8	traffic/congestion	42
train service	7	parking	40
traffic	6	transport	17
parking	5	car park charges	11
rail	5	cycle paths	9
convenience	3	crossings	7
pedestrian	3	bridle paths	3
commuting	1	cycling	3
roads	1	night buses	3
		signage	3
		access	2
		bus: Hawkwell - Rayleigh	2
		taxis	2
		bus shelter	1
		bus timetable	1
		Rayleigh - one way system	1
		traffic wardens	1
		trains	1
		white lines	1

Feeling Part of a Community			
What's Good		What Needs Improving	
friendly	35	children	3
community	34	creche (Mill Hall)	2
people	29	local residents	2
friends	14	Christmas lights	1
family	5	community centre	1
neighbourhood	5	facilities for the disabled	1
neighbours	3	Farmers Market	1
village	3	foreigners	1
boys	2	gypsies	1
youngsters	2	isolation	1
age range	1	overcrowding	1
day centre	1	travellers	1
no asylum seekers	1	voluntary sector	1
no gangs	1		
not multicultural	1		
ratepayers association	1		
StAR Partnership	1		
variety	1		
youth support	1		

Ensuring Effective Service Provision			
What's Good		What Needs Improving	
refuse collection	4	refuse collection	9
Council	3	public toilets	8
groups	2	planning	4
cheap	1	council	3
Civic Suite	1	rates	3
news	1	council spend	2
seeking public views	1	council tax	2
services	1	Rochford District Council	2
toilets	1	business rates	1
		cable TV	1
		Communication	1
		consultation	1
		ECC	1
		funding	1
		mains gas	1
		planning gain	1
		services	1

APPENDIX 3

A selection of "what's good" comments: -

- good community, good neighbourhood, quite a lot of activities available
- friendly village feel, plenty of character variety of shops. So far a safe area to walk in
- Hockley has retained its rural atmosphere, and Marylands woods is a special amenity
- the friendliness of the people and the quietness and cleanliness of the district
- good schools, easy commute to London, Hockley Woods
- small, semi-rural community with a reasonably safe environment with good access to London
- open aspects of a country town living area. Type of schooling eg, wide range- plays, presentations etc, not just working for league tables. Nice children, greenbelt land
- close feel of living in a semi -rural area, the schools are very good and it is a lovely environment to bring children up. Rayleigh is a nice modern town with everything you need at hand but still keeping its charm.
- rural aspect, especially Paglesham. Community spirit
- it's rural and please keep it that way, limit the building, no more roads
- the rural aspect including woodlands and river - the accessibility of public footpaths
- it has become more built up than when I visited just over 20 years ago, but it still retains the village feeling and I very much like living here. I think the people and shopkeepers are really friendly
- low crime, some good schools, community atmosphere
- mix of rural and urban, defined communities, heritage, good leisure facilities, good library facilities, green belt, open areas and parks for children to play
- good refuse collection, lots of amenities, close to Doctors, excellent library, excellent GP's and nurses - 24/48hr access, very good
- countryside, square - traditional character and shops - but should be closed to traffic - pedestrianised
- Close to countryside and coast. Nice walking in countryside. Feel safe compared to London.

- good shops, still some countryside, Cherry Orchard Park
- Hockley library good - particularly internet. Enhancement in centre is good, extra health clinic is good saves travelling to Southend
- Quality of life is good - better than where I came from
- convenience of shops, transport services are good. Area is a lot tidier now
- Quiet, good improvements in High Street area of Hockley. Leisure centre (Clements Hall)
- rubbish collection is good
- wonderful place to live
- good shopping area
- elderly looked after. Good charity organisations. Bus service during the day
- Schools. Brilliant help from social services re special needs. Plenty of parks
- refuse collection - recycling scheme. Good schools. Flowers in Rayleigh High Street
- Like Rayleigh town centre enhancements, Flowers etc
- variety of shops, parks, feel safe and at ease
- nice area, people nice, clean looked after range of shops
- Southend hospital, excellent
- Rayleigh enhancements, crime free, people
- Churchview excellent, good appointment system
- good regeneration of High Street, public toilets clean and well maintained
- very nice, friends and neighbours, good doctors, good District Council
- waterfront, good Council, Civic Suite - good service, lovely girls on reception
- Rayleigh Council is one of the best in Essex. Lots for elderly people
- closeness to the open countryside. Clements Hall sports centre. Local markets in Rayleigh High Street and Rochford square. Jobs to be had if required. Good schools - plumberrow primary school
- the kerbside recycling scheme - well done

- plenty of greenbelt land, woodlands and bird rich coast lands. Some nice historical buildings such as Rayleigh windmill and Dutch Cottage
- the nature which needs to be preserved eg. tree preservation and seawall area at Paglesham, Rochford, Wallasea etc
- the peace and quiet. The local shops in the square. Adult education at Rocheway College
- The people and the attention paid by the council
- it is of a reasonable size with easy access to countryside, coast and London. Rayleigh town centre is now very pleasant. Mill Hall and Clements Hall are valuable assets
- old fashioned feel of Rochford. Good architecture - should be promoted more, you can see the history. Adult Community College, StAR partnership
- lots of green, surrounding fields, environmentally pleasant, clean, quiet
- neighbourhood watch, village life, quiet
- good access to shopping - Southend, Basildon, Chelmsford
- library facilities, lack of crime
- lovely town, good town centre enhancement, proud of town
- Clements Hall is nice and clean, prefer it to other nearer sports centres
- come to Clements Hall because it's better than the one in Wickford
- safe, low crime, good for commuting

A selection of "what needs improving" comments: -

- it's too quiet, nowhere to go
- no transport in the evenings, nothing to do in the evenings
- not enough places for teenagers to go. Buses never run on time or don't even turn up
- the town square in Rochford because loads of kids hang around the chip shop and the Spar
- lack of facilities for teenagers
- not many swimming pools in the area

- lots of building going on that I don't like
- not enough buses pass through Wakering
- build for first time buyers and stop all retirement flats as town will be an Eastbourne with lack of youngsters
- make sure vandals do not win - clean up graffiti and rubbish
- another Doctors surgery to relieve the pressure on the staff of the existing practices
- the appalling road surfaces of most roads and sunken drain covers and manhole covers
- layby in Hockley village for buses. More free parking to attract shoppers to local shops
- re-introduce a police presence ie. Local beat policeman or possibly a local portable police office where folk can have direct contact
- lowering of council tax for businesses to come into the area and stay
- Transport, Arriva Bus co no 7/8 to enable a non-car owner to get to the swimming pool way out at Clements Hall and the cemetery. Return of the special bus service to this leisure centre. Open a swimming pool in the town. Rebuild the Pavilion, King Georges field. No more apartments for the elderly, rather respond to the need of housing young people
- policemen walking the streets, like before and policemen living in the village
- measures to discourage through traffic on B1013. Better, more frequent bus service may help this
- cleaner streets (mainly near and around Hockley station and Greensward Lane)
- transport - bus service to Rayleigh, pavements in urgent need of repair, affordable houses for first time buyers, houses are too expensive in this area
- Collect black/grey bin refuse every week and not every other week. Resurface roads and add speed cameras/humps in Plumberrow to stop speeding cars going to the Chase housing development
- for senior people like myself, it would be so good to have someone to advise when jobs need doing, such as my shed roof, I have been ripped off 3 times by rogue traders
- police visible on the streets, traffic wardens, another speed camera, more rubbish bins
- vandalism - especially in the parks and open spaces. Provide facilities for teenagers, skateboard parks, youth clubs, traffic problems in Rayleigh, shops in Rochford, more police around town centres

- more to do for the youths in the District, in Hockley youths seem to meet up in the evening outside Alldays, next day there is litter thrown around and makes the village look a mess. The new trees outside Somerfield often have the earth thrown around and the branches pulled off. cycle lane - cyclists are always on the pavement, even the postman. More policing throughout the District, thought we were going to see more presence. there always seems to be empty shops within the District, perhaps we could have more card shops, dress shops, shoe shops, anything rather than another takeaway
- more cycle paths and training for children for using their bikes for school etc, and also for people like myself commuting to and from work - I would feel safer on a cycle path. More pre and after school kids clubs for working parents and more NHS dentists (these are definitely lacking in this area.
- more facilities in Rayleigh for the 15-20 year olds. Cessation of building in the west of the District
- cleaner streets, tidier shopping parades, better awareness/ease of recycling, traffic congestion
- RDC is usually very good in most respects, but it is dragging it's feet regarding recycling (home collection)
- there should be more wildlife and nature reserves
- Rayleigh continues to expand, yet access to leisure facilities does not improve - still no chance of a swimming pool in Rayleigh! Halt large scale property development - the infrastructure does not have the ability to sustain increasing population (GP's, schools, water resources, etc) Improve recycling schemes - we seem to lag behind other areas. Police on the beat - where are they?? Get rid of the current one way system in Rayleigh - it was a disaster from the start.
- more voluntary sector co-ordination, greater policing numbers, local public transport
- we desperately need more facilities for the youth of Hullbridge
- bus company - drivers are rude and unreliable
- there doesn't seem to be enough for the 11-18 year olds (youth)
- too much car parking in High Street, garage end needs double yellow. Defacing road signs off High Street by the Total Garage. High Street overhanging hedges
- Somewhere to sit with benches for older people - last bus too early
- recycling - two weekly isn't enough in hot weather to collect bins
- somewhere for kids 10-16 years to go
- do a motorcross track at Park School

- do not feel safe and mobile phone masts not healthy
- swimming pool
- tip, closest to Barling have to pay, 8 miles to Rayleigh. People just dump them.
- more places to go and facilities for young people to relieve problems in town - elderly people afraid to go out after dark.
- reintroduce litter bins. More supermarkets. Need more GP's - access problems. Long wait for physio appointment
- stop off road parking, eg, Hawkwell Chase
- too much building, not enough infrastructure to cope. Too much traffic
- Car parking facilities in Rochford
- planning regulations should be governed locally not regionally. Should be more power to local councillors and officers. Too much development, not enough infrastructure
- more bus services to Rayleigh and Canewdon. Supermarket in Rochford, more publicity for free buses from supermarkets
- car parking should be cheaper - 20p/hour. All day Saturday free. Supermarket (maybe Co-op)
- access to Doctors, access to funding
- Ashingdon Road/Hall Road cycle paths not used, also a danger to elderly pedestrians. Bad policing - no police visibility. Council tax too high for value for money
- more food shops. More police on patrol to stop graffiti. Too much new building without more Doctors and hospitals
- council - re street cleaning (no service) doesn't happen
- Stop building. More Doctors needed
- parking on roads - should have laybys for buses. Access to NHS dentists
- not enough shops, too much traffic, no buses Hawkwell-Rayleigh. Litter. Too many new houses
- Hockley shopping centre needs more useful shops. Buses stopping in front of shops
- Too many buses at Spa Road- cause congestion. More Doctors
- improved recycling within the area. Adult education - poor, in Rayleigh, have to travel to Leigh/Rochford

- Southend hospital, sometimes poor admin. Eg, send appointments 2nd class, arrive after appointment date - should look at timing of appointments
- school holiday planning for children - more facilities
- Rayleigh has a lovely town centre - where is the visible cultural arts influence
- Leisure and sport for all age groups
- youth nuisance is a problem. Vandalism in Hockley
- bookshop, Doctors - difficult to get an appointment, affordable housing, traffic needs improving
- pavements - clear them of rose bushes etc trees are overhanging and edges, clean up roads/pavements
- better parks and equipment, lack of police on beat, lack of facilities such as a cinema/swimming pool. Lack of access to GP's
- shopping could be improved to be more like Leigh - too many charity shops, car parking on Tuesday - leave car park open, street cleaning
- encourage new shops for fresh fruit and vegetables and fresh fish
- Rayleigh should have its own town council as all investment is going into Rochford area eg. Sports Centre
- The High Street to be cleaned up, removal of litter, signs covered in labels, pavement always mucky. Removal of the graffiti or change name of town to Graffitileigh!
- something for youngsters to do, swimming pool, more variety of shops
- why is creche at Mill Hall being closed - very few facilities for children/young here!
- less parking in Rayleigh High Street
- ECC putting islands in road, these are a hazard to cyclists. More cycle paths
- why do planning dept not enforce breaches of planning regulations - too expensive?
- recycling bins - grey bins to be collected more frequently
- All aspects of litter, fly tipping, graffiti etc - the effect on visitors to Essex must be enormous
- safety, cleanliness, lawlessness and services - we pay more for less, this needs addressing

- as a horse rider we need more off-road riding routes (which Essex bridleways assoc strives to achieve) Speed reduction on country lanes eg. Lower Road, Hockley, Church Road, Hockley, Greensward Lane, Ashingdon from 60mph to 40mph - death traps!
- reduction in yobbish behaviour, vandalism, graffiti and litter lout culture
- it should become more conservation minded
- reduce betting shops, licenced premises, estate agents, charity shops
- could do with more speed cameras, especially near schools. The litter is a disgrace, the area around Hockley station is dreadful. More street cleaning
- A war on the people who plunder our environment with rubbish of every kind
- I used to enjoy a walk into Rochford of an evening, but not anymore. We need more policing. We as residents feel very vulnerable with the increase in crime in the town. Sadly the police take the view that we are no worse than any other town
- clearance of litter. Cutting back of undergrowth along Hullbridge Road which overhangs the footpath
- nothing for the young in Rochford and Hockley. Transport. Leisure centre in Rayleigh, swimming pool - not enough public time in the pool at Clements Hall
- Rochford needs improvement - a total facelift in the square. More policing in Rochford (it is very scary entering the square after 6pm due to youths hanging around). No supermarket in Rochford. Unused shops left derelict, makes the area look scruffy.
- medical care, GP surgery appointments