
KEY POLICIES AND ACTIONS FOR 2005/2006

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report formally sets out the main areas of policy development for 2005/2006. It identifies the main projects to be progressed and implemented and also highlights the main areas of service development/change. Lastly it suggests areas to Members that might be appropriate for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to consider in 2005/2006 and outlines the timetable for establishing the budget for 2006/2007.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 With the budget agreed at Full Council on 27th January and with the Council Tax set at tonight's meeting, it is opportune for Members to formally agree to the main areas of the Council's work programme for 2005/2006. At the same time, Members can consider the programme relating to the monitoring of the 2005/2006 budget and the preparation of the 2006/2007 budget. Members views are also sought on those policy, resource and service issues which might be appropriate for examination by the Overview and Scrutiny process in 2005/2006, notwithstanding that a number of issues have already been flagged up for closer examination.
- 2.2 Such an approach is in line with the budget and policy framework procedure rules now contained in the Council's approved constitution. It also provides a transparent and closer linkage between the Council's budgetary process and work programme.

3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The majority of the Council's work is governed by statute and is driven by legislative requirements. A key area of work will relate to the implementation of the CPA Improvement Plan and developing the Council's response to the "Gershon" agenda. At the same time, Members have decided upon some local discretionary elements for inclusion in the budget and these will be progressed during the year.
- 3.2 The main priorities for the Council over the coming year will be:-
- the implementation of the CPA Improvement Plan, with its focus on developing the Council's vision, building capacity and securing further improvement in frontline services like Council Tax/Housing Benefit, and progressing the Housing Option Appraisal process.

- Local priorities for the year will focus on further environmental initiatives, progressing the forward planning process, developing green business waste initiatives and additional resourcing of the housing agenda.
- “Flagship” projects will be the new leisure centre on the former Park School site, Rayleigh Windmill refurbishment and Websters Way enhancements; the latter two funded by Thames Gateway monies.

The Gershon agenda around seeking efficiencies will also kick in, with the first annual statement required to be signed off by the Leader and the Chief Executive in April 2005.

- 3.3 The attached appendices A, B and C make no attempt to cover all the Council's functions. Instead, they focus on the “headline” areas of work for the forthcoming year. Appendix A deals with the policy framework, Appendix B with the main projects, and Appendix C with service development/change. In each of the Appendices, the linkage to one or more of the Council's six corporate aims listed below, is also given.
1. To provide quality cost effective services
 2. To work towards a safer and more caring community
 3. To promote a green and sustainable environment
 4. To encourage a thriving economy
 5. To improve the quality of life for people in the District
 6. To maintain and enhance the local heritage and culture
- 3.4 Subject to any Member comments on the programme, the intention would be to publicise its content in the next edition of Rochford District Matters. This again would be in line with the Council's approved constitution.
- 3.5 The key elements of the Council's work programme will be included in the 2005/2006 Performance Plan, which will need to be considered and approved by Full Council in June.
- 3.6 Given the work programme outlined and the issues coming before Council in the foreseeable future, Appendix D outlines those topics to be examined by the Overview and Scrutiny Process in 2005/2006. The list is not exhaustive and there might be other matters which Members feel should be given greater weight. However, in determining those areas for consideration, Members need to take into account the capacity of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the items already agreed, and the timetable available.

- 3.7 Finally, Appendix E sets out the process and timetable for monitoring the 2005/2006 budget and preparing the 2006/2007 budget for Members' information. The intention is to combine the half-yearly review of the budget with a half-yearly review of the work programme in November. In this way, it is envisaged that Members can be kept advised of progress on both the budget and the work programme.

4 RECOMMENDATION

4.1 It is proposed that the Council **RESOLVES**

- (1) that the work programme for 2005/2006, 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 Overview and Scrutiny process, as outlined in Appendix D, be agreed.
- (3) That the programme for the monitoring of the 2005/2006 agreed budget and the development of the 2006/2007 budget framework, as outlined in Appendix E, be noted.

Paul Warren

Chief Executive

Background Papers:

None

For further information please contact Paul Warren on:-

Tel:- 01702 318199

E-Mail:- paul.warren@rochford.gov.uk

Appendix A**Policy Development**Develop the Council's Vision/Corporate Strategy (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)

Secure ODPM Funding to facilitate the process	April 2005
Member Visioning Awayday	July 2005
Consultation	Sept/Oct 2005
Input into revised Budget Strategy	Nov-Jan 2006
Publish Corporate Strategy	April 2006

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

Receipt of Inspector's report	Aug/Sept 2005
Adoption of Local Plan	Spring 2006

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

Local Development Scheme submitted to GoEast	March 2005
Commence work on Local Development Framework	From May 2005

Asset Management Plan (1 & 5)

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Performance Indicators	July 2005
Update Asset Management Plan	July 2005

IEG Statement (1 & 5)

Agree IEG 5	December 2005
-------------	---------------

Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy (2 & 5)

Comment on and approve to Council's commitments within the new Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy	March 2005
--	------------

Capital Strategy (1)

Agree revised Capital Strategy

July 2005

Performance Plan (1)

Agree 2005/2006 Plan

June 2005

Statement of Efficiency (Gershon) (1)

Production of Annual Statement

April 2005

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

Consolidation and expansion of the Park over a period – in tandem with local plan proposals	Ongoing
Further development of a Trust to oversee and Safeguard the Country Park. To be formally considered and agreed by Council	By July 2005

Rayleigh Windmill (5 & 6)

Completion of Refurbishment of Windmill	July 2005
Completion of Scented Garden	November 2005

New Rayleigh Leisure Centre (5)

Commence work on site	March 2005
Centre completed	Spring/summer 2006

Electronic Records Management and Workflow (1)

Implementation in Planning	April 2005
Implementation in Revenues and Benefits	December 2005

Rayleigh Civic Suite (1 & 5)

Commence works on lift and toilets	March 2005
Complete work on lift and toilets	August 2005

Webster's Way Enhancements (3, 4 and 5)

Commence on site	April 2005
Complete scheme	July/August 2005

Extend Rochford Cemetery (2 & 5)

Purchase additional land

From Spring 2006

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

Test of Tenant Opinion	Feb/March 2005
Board Consideration of Recommended Option	March/April 2005
Recommendation to Full Council	April 2005
Submission to Government Office	May 2005
Subject to Government Office decision, implement way forward	From July 2005

Succession Planning – Organisation Restructure (1)

Consider alternatives	by April 2005
Agree on Way Forward	by July 2005
Commence implementation	from Oct 2005

Expand Member Training and Development Programme (1)

Review and outline new programme	April 2005
Implement new programme	from June 2005
Evaluate content and review progress of 2005/2006 programme	March/April 2006

Review Effectiveness of Overview and Scrutiny Process (1)

Look at Best Practice elsewhere	March-July 2005
Benchmark against best practice	Sept/Nov 2005
Evaluate options	Jan/March 2005
Implement changes	from June 2006

Review effective operation of Planning Services Committee (1)

Look at Best Practice elsewhere	March-July 2005
Benchmark against best practice	March-July 2005
Consult residents/applicants	Oct/Nov 2005
Evaluate options	Jan/March 2006
Implement changes	from June 2006

Implement Workforce Development Plan (1)

Investors in People Accreditation achieved and maintained	from April 2005
Development of staff training and development Programme	Ongoing
Upgrade staff skills/qualification information base	by Dec 2005
Complete first review of recruitment and retention policies	by Dec 2005
Develop career path structures within the organisation	by Dec 2005
Complete Job Evaluation Scheme for Staff	by April 2005
Improve recruitment access to job and available opportunities	by Sept 2005
Secure recruits to areas of known shortage	by June 2005

Waste Collection and Recycling (1 & 3)

Evaluate options and introduce kerbside garden waste scheme	April 2005
Roll out kerbside recycling scheme to more rural parts Of the District	by Dec 2005
Participation in county-wide establishment of Joint Committee to oversee the procurement process	January 2005

Participation in the Essex Waste Procurement Project
including the development of overarching bidding framework
For County-wide scheme

Development of overarching bidding framework for County-wide scheme	From May 2005
--	---------------

Housing Benefits Improvement (1 & 2)

Implement key outstanding aspects of HB Improvement plan in
respect of

Strategic Management	by Dec 2005
----------------------	-------------

Customer Services	by March 2005
-------------------	---------------

Processing of claims	by July 2005
----------------------	--------------

Build improvement and capacity in HB Service through
evaluating partnering options available (1 & 2)

Evaluate Options available	by Oct 2005
----------------------------	-------------

Take decision on way forward	by Dec 2005
------------------------------	-------------

Implement preferred option	from April 2006
----------------------------	-----------------

Extension of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (1, 3 & 5)

Finalise consultation with stakeholders on "hot spots"	April 2005
--	------------

Consult ECC Highways on acceptability of controlling Orders	June 2005
--	-----------

Draft orders	August 2005
--------------	-------------

Submit orders for DfT Approval	Sept 2005
--------------------------------	-----------

Consideration of Residents Parking Schemes	Oct 2005
--	----------

Lining and Signing (if necessary)	Jan 2006
-----------------------------------	----------

Implementation	Feb 2006
----------------	----------

Develop and Evaluate options to secure additional parking (4 & 5)

Assess potential sites/schemes to deliver improved parking By Sept 2005

Develop action plan for Member consideration By Nov 2005

Feed into budget process Nov 2005
Onwards

Recycling for Business Waste (3 & 4)

Development of support information / services available to encourage increased recycling by local businesses. By Dec 2005

Additional Environmental Works (3 & 5)

Development of the Graffiti Removal Protocol to provide assistance to individuals or organisations in removing graffiti. April 2005

Option report from Members to determine priority spend between the areas listed July 2005

Homelessness and Housing Advice (1 & 5)

Appoint additional staff by end March 2005

Review homelessness prevention/housing advise service by end Oct 2005

Determine way forward by February 2006

Implement preferred option by October 2006

Review homelessness strategy by end March 2006

Clements Hall Replacement Skateboarding Ramp (2 & 5)

Proposals for replacement of existing skateboard ramp By Oct 2005

Service Improvement (1)

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

Appendix D

Issues for the Overview and Scrutiny Process

Finance and Procedures Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- ◆ Oversee implementation of CPA Improvement Action Plan
- ◆ Oversee work around Risk Management
- ◆ Oversee the budget monitoring process
- ◆ Oversee and review the work with Town and Parish Councils to assist Service delivery
- ◆ Twice Yearly presentations by VIVISTA on IT support contract
- ◆ Monitor grant provision to Outside Bodies
- ◆ Continue to review Partnership Working Agreements
- ◆ Oversee the development of the Benefits Service and implementation of recommendations from the BFI CPA Benefits assessment

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- ◆ Oversee continued progress on the Local Plan
- ◆ Twice yearly presentations by ServiceTeam (re refuse collection and street cleansing)
- ◆ Quarterly reports by Essex County Council Highways re Performance and new highway arrangements

Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- ◆ Twice yearly presentations by ServiceTeam (re grounds maintenance)
- ◆ Twice yearly presentations by Holmes Place on the Leisure Contract
- ◆ Review and development of policy framework and service responses in respect of gypsies/travellers
- ◆ Monitor progress on development and implementation of the Stock Option appraisal process
- ◆ Monitor progress on implementation of the Homelessness Strategy

Appendix E

Closure of accounts approved	June 2005
Consultation with Local Chambers	October 2005
Members AwayDay around half yearly review	Oct/Nov 2005
Half Yearly Review and Review of Budget Strategy	Nov 2005
Final views from Chambers	Dec 2005
Ongoing issues relating to Budget Strategy	Nov-Jan 2006
Members AwayDay on 2006/2007 Budget	Jan 2006
Special Council Budget Setting meeting	Jan 2006
Council Tax set	Feb 2006