

WHAT IS THE CORPORATE PLAN

The Council's Corporate Plan sets out Rochford District Council's short and medium term priorities, over the next 5 years or so, and is linked into the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and budget process.

The Corporate Plan is a living document, with its delivery plan reviewed and updated annually. It has not been developed in isolation and has taken account of national, regional, county-wide and local priorities. To inform the Council in setting priorities we use a range of information and intelligence, including the results of public consultation exercises undertaken in the District.

Most importantly the plan provides the Council's link to the Rochford Local Strategic Partnership (of which Rochford District Council is a lead member) and highlights how the Council's own objectives aim to support those of the Local Strategic Partnerships through its Sustainable Communities Strategy.

Internally, the Corporate Plan is underpinned by Divisional Plans and individual staff and team priorities are picked up through the Performance Development Review (PDR) process. The Corporate Plan does not set out everything the Council does. However, it attempts to focus on the 'headline' items and provides clarity around where the Council plans to concentrate its activity. The Plan should be read in association with the Council's Annual Report on performance, which is to be published in July, and gives details of how we have performed over the last year.

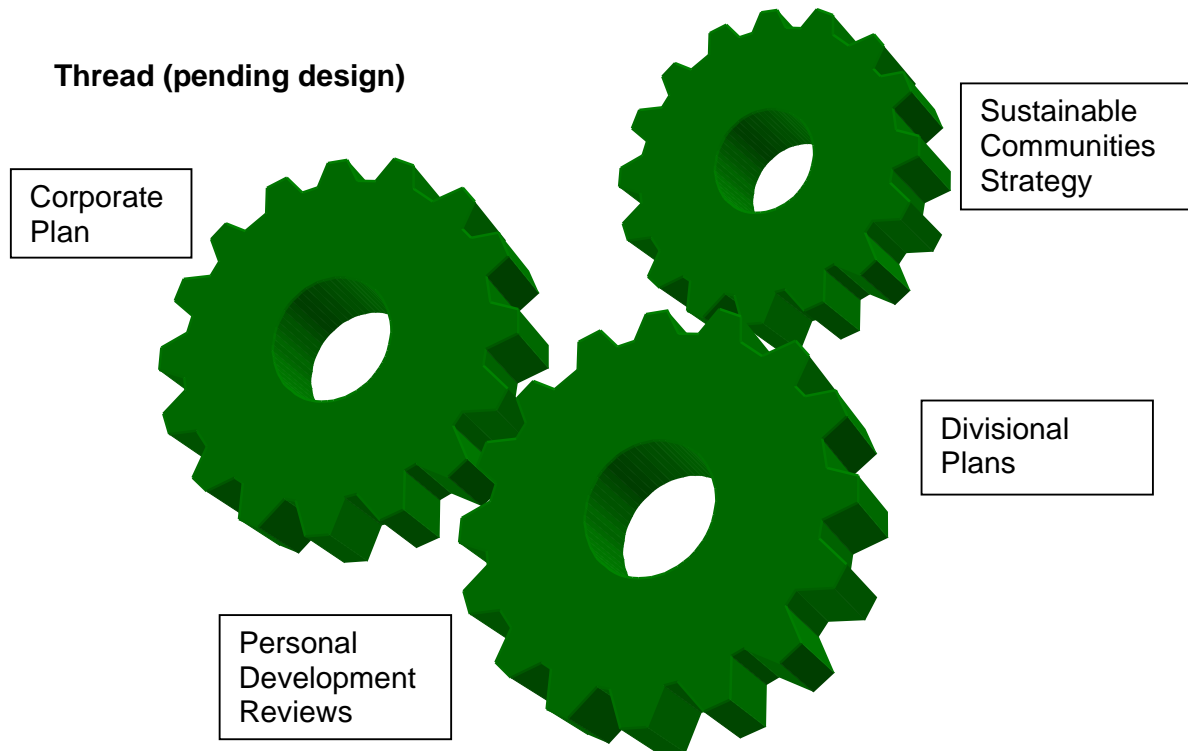
Diagram of Performance

To be inserted

We describe this linkage between partnership and Council priorities, our Corporate plan and Annual Report and ultimately to divisional plans and individual employee's personal development reviews as our golden thread. This means that everything the Council does can be related to the priorities of our community.

Examples Given

Rayleigh Leisure Centre, Recycling Scheme

Thread (pending design)**OUR VISION FOR ROCHFORD**

The Council's vision is shared with that of the Local Strategic Partnership;

To make Rochford District a place which provides opportunities for the best possible quality of life for all who live, work and visit here

The Council cannot deliver all services and improvements without its partners. To that end we are involved in a range of partnerships. The overarching partnership for Rochford is the Rochford Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) which includes a range of partners. The LSP is responsible for delivering the Sustainable Communities Strategy 2009-2021 which identifies shared priorities for the district.

The LSP also links the partners to the broader county Local Area Agreement. This is an agreement between central and local government. It includes a number of performance targets that the partnership works towards.

To support this, the Council has four main corporate objectives for 2008-2013, these are;

Making a difference to our people



Making a difference to our community



Making a difference to our environment



Making a difference to our local economy

Our vision and our 4 corporate objectives translate into the things that we do; our key strategic documentation such as this Corporate Plan, the Local Plan and the emerging Local Development Framework; the services we deliver and the facilities we provide. It is our intention that these are complementary with the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Essex Local Area Agreement.

As a Council we have been asked what we envisage the District looking like under our vision. Over the **next five years**, we see a number of projects coming to fruition or making considerable progress to being delivered. These projects will contribute to the Council achieving its vision and its aims.

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. In particular, we wish to utilise our position within Thames Gateway South Essex to promote the District as the 'green part' of the sub-region.

By the 'green part' we mean woodlands; coast and areas for outdoor recreation and leisure – all the things which fit well with our overarching vision. To this end, there will be improvements in the provision and upgrade of green space, resulting in increased usage. Enhancement of heritage sites and local facilities will improve opportunities for leisure and free time activities, improving the quality of life for residents, workers and visitors to the District and providing quality places to visit.

Following its expansion and completion of a new car park entrance at the eastern end of the site, together with improved footpath and cycle links, residents will be able to take full advantage of the resource offered by Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park. In addition, the environmentally sympathetic Wallasea Wetlands Project, will have commenced, this will become a popular destination for bird watchers and others, particularly during the winter months.

We see us 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 reduced¹.

Our Planning Core Strategy will provide clarity as to where and how the housing needs of our communities will be met. The new homes to be provided will offer high quality design and include water retention and renewable energy features. There will be growing emphasis on responding to and meeting the needs of a community which is ageing. At the same time, engagement with and facilities for young people across the District will have improved. We will ensure that our recycling rate will be above 50% and

¹ Against a baseline of...

significant strides will have been made by the Council in connection with reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

The automotive development on Rochford Business Park will be complete. Passenger flights will have increased from London Southend Airport which will result in new jobs for the area. Further employment land will also be under construction in the environs of the airport and progress will have been made on the development of a new terminal and railway station.

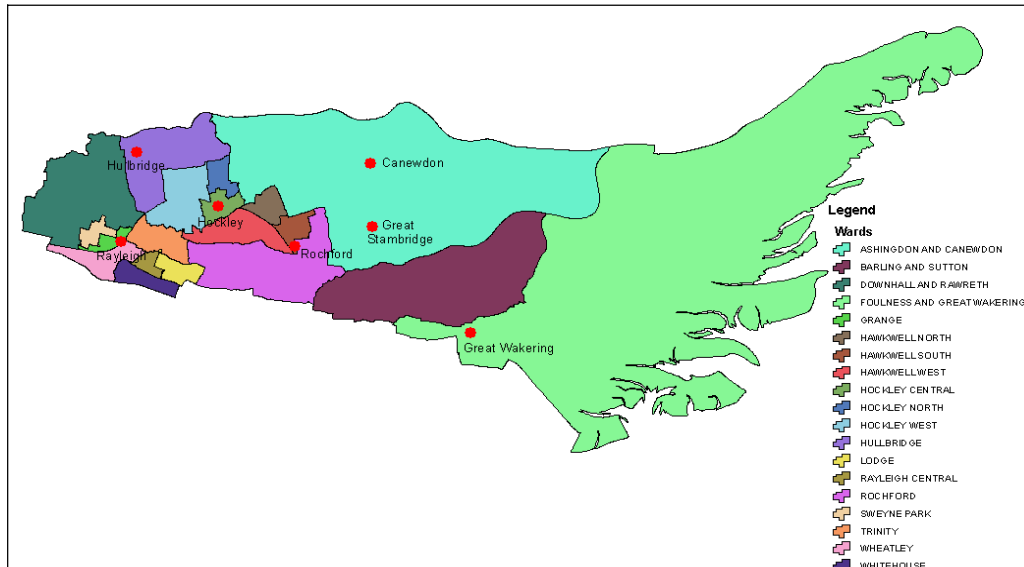
Lastly, in working to achieve our vision and ensure delivery against our corporate aims the Council will carry out its work in accordance with a set of values which it thinks are important.

- 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.

A PICTURE OF OUR DISTRICT

The Place

Rochford is a small district located in south east Essex. It is bounded by the River Crouch to the north and the urban areas of Southend and Castle Point to the south. The district has three main towns, Rayleigh, Rochford and Hockley. Much of the remaining area is green belt with a large area around Foulness, largely under Ministry of Defence control. London Southend Airport straddles the district's southern boundary with Southend.



The People

The district has a population of 79,700 (82,164 2007 Mid Year population estimate Office of National Statistics) people, living in 33,700 households. This is predicted to rise to 80,300 by 2011, and to 81,000 by 2021, with a forecasted large increase of those particularly over the age of 85 years.

The area is relatively affluent, ranking 316 out of 354 most deprived authorities nationally. The most deprived ward, Foulness and Great Wakering East, ranks 2,680 of 8,414. Owner occupied homes constitute 86% of households. This is amongst the highest in the country. Private renting accounts for approximately 6%. House prices are higher than the average for England and Wales. Unemployment levels are below regional and national average at 3%, although they are now increasing as a result of the recession.

The Council

The Council employs 219 full time equivalent staff, with key services contracted to the private sector, for example, refuse collection, recycling,

street cleansing, grounds maintenance, leisure management and the IT service.

The Chief Executive, supported by two Corporate Directors, heads the Council's staff structure. Heads of Service then lead the management of particular service areas. The organisational structure separates the external, front line focus services, creating a clearer focus for the organisation's work. The Council has 39 elected Members and has a Conservative administration as follows: 33 Conservative; 5 Liberal Democrat and 1 Rochford Residents. Until 2006, the Council operated a committee system with 5 Policy Committees bearing responsibility for policy and service developments within their remit. The CPA inspection in 2004 identified that the Council's overview and scrutiny process in particular needed improvement. Consequently, in May 2006, a new Review Committee was established following a member led review of the process. It aims to provide a balance to decision and policy making and be a means through which the Council can seek out and receive information and representation from the community.

Following on from that change, the political decision making structure was again reviewed in the context of the Local Government White Paper, "Strong and Prosperous Communities", and emerging legislation. As a result, from June 2007 we have operated a structure with an Executive Board and 3 Area Committees. The chairmanship of the Review Committee has also passed to the main opposition party. Further refinement has taken place in that we have now moved to a 'strong leader' model of government, with the Leader appointing members to the Executive and allocating portfolios to those members. This was implemented in May 2008.

Our Approach to Community Engagement

The Council has an effective and pro-active approach to community engagement using a diverse range of engagement techniques. Service users have been involved in a number of service development initiatives, including:

- the revision of benefit forms to make them more user friendly leading to a Plain English Crystal Mark award;
- focus groups in different localities to shape the new waste management and recycling contract;
- focus groups and telephone surveying to better include disadvantaged groups in the development of the Access to Services agenda;
- engaging young people at youth events;
- going into and working with schools to get young people to engage with the Local Development Framework.
- Focus groups to develop an improved web-site

The Council uses road shows to get into communities and engage them. The District has a small Black and Ethnic Minority population that is dispersed widely across the District and without any recognised representative organisation; the Council has recognised that engaging with these groups is difficult.

However, with Castle Point and Maldon Councils, the Council secured money through the Building Capacity East fund to undertake work to map and engage these and other minority groups, and to establish engagement arrangements. This joint working ensures that groups are not overly consulted but have the opportunity to input into decision-making and service issues.

The Council has recently refreshed its Citizens' Panel to increase the size of the panel in order to make it more robust and increase the number of people that can be engaged, but also to be able to identify needs and trends at the sub-district level. The Citizens' Panel is a useful tool within the Council's basket of engagement techniques and the results are used to inform policy and service development. Examples include the Access to Service work, the new waste and recycling contract, and the development of Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park.

The Council also uses its District newspaper, Rochford District Matters, and website to engage, inform, and respond to those who live, work and visit within the District.

Community Feedback

The General Satisfaction Survey of all 388 authorities, conducted every 3 years by independent pollsters, aims to find out what people like or dislike about how their Council runs things. The last residents' survey, conducted in October 2006, confirmed that Rochford District Council is in the top 25% for overall satisfaction. The survey placed Rochford 2nd out of all Essex authorities for overall satisfaction with the Council's performance.

Place Survey Results

Still awaited

Residents stated in the satisfaction survey that the following were important in making the community a good place to live:

- Level of crime
- Health services
- Clean streets
- Education provision
- Affordable housing

The survey also asked residents what most needs improving in their local area. Those things highlighted for the District were:

- Activities for teenagers
- Level of Traffic Congestion
- Road/Pavement repairs
- Level of Crime

A survey which ranks areas for factors affecting quality of life has placed Rochford district seventh in Great Britain.

The research was carried out by Halifax for its third annual survey, detailing thirty best locations in the country. This was the first time Rochford achieved a ranking shooting to seventh position.

The survey tracks where living standards are highest in Great Britain by ranking local performance across key indicators; covering the labour market, the housing market, the environment, education and health. The index examines data at local authority level. 408 local authorities have been analysed in this survey. Data has been gathered from sources including DEFRA, the Met Office, the Department for Transport and the Halifax house price database and the Office of National Statistics.

ACHIEVING OUR OBJECTIVES FROM 2009 TO 2013

Through the work around the budget process, the Council has identified its key priorities for 2009/2010 and the period up until 2012/2013. These are described below and are aligned to one or more of the Council's four key objectives. The focus and detail is very much on those things to be delivered or started in 2009/2010, recognising that the action plan is reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

The Council is a multi-functional organisation providing a wide range of services, functions and facilities. Our key targets for the year are listed under

our four objectives, but in terms of absolute priorities, the eight listed below are seen as paramount for the year ahead;

- Delivering our target savings but at the same time improving service access and delivery for our community
- Work on the ICT contract renewal process
- Improving our council tax and benefits capacity
- Continuing to develop and consolidate our partnership arrangements via the LSP and other partnerships such as the CDRP to develop and improve service provision to our communities.
- Embedding and continuing to develop our kerbside recycling arrangements
- Progressing the LDF Core Strategy to submission stage
- Progressing the Joint Area Action Plan in partnership with Southend Borough Council, covering London Southend Airport and its environs.
- Progressing the three town centre studies for Hockley, Rochford and Rayleigh to detailed action plans for each centre

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO OUR PEOPLE



A key challenge for the Council is to continue to improve and meet the increasing and changing expectations of our customers. For many of them, they have no choice but to use the service on offer by the Council and therefore it is important that we deliver our services in the most cost effective way to a standard which is recognised as excellent. If we wish to deliver our vision '***To make Rochford District a place which provides opportunities for the best possible quality of life for all who live, work and visit here***' it is important we get our service offer right and ensure it continues to meet the ever changing demands placed upon us.

In national surveys to date we have received high satisfaction rates from our residents and it is important that we continue to do so.

Our key targets for the next 12 months are;

- To deliver our target savings but improve service access and delivery to our community through such initiatives as trialling late opening of our reception and switchboard at Rochford and separating out our switchboard and reception services.
- To deliver the Council's Strategic Improvement plan.
- To improve the front line reception and telephone service at the Rochford offices.
- To achieve the Member Development Charter by the end of 2010
- To work on the ICT contract renewal process
- To achieve the Excellence level of the Equality Standard for local government (formerly level 5) by the end of 2010.

- Prepare the Rochford Core Strategy, part of the Local Development Framework.

Our longer term targets for 2013 are;

- To continue to deliver the Workforce Development Plan to improve the Council's leadership capacity, the skills and capacity of the workforce, and the organisation as a whole.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO OUR COMMUNITY



In order to achieve the Council's vision we recognise that we must have an inclusive community where residents are not only safe but feel they are safe. Although the District already has a very low crime rate compared to the rest of the Country and other parts of Essex, the Council (as part of the Local Strategic Partnership) aims to make the District even safer by actively playing its part in the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP), which involves a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies. The Council appreciates the link between high levels of community involvement and the feeling of safety and is therefore keen to promote vibrant communities.

Also important to the Council is the caring aspect, aiming to progress services and initiatives which deal with the more vulnerable sections of our community, either alone or in partnership with other public agencies, the private sector or the voluntary and community sector.

Our key targets for the next 12 months are;

- Develop and consolidate our partnership arrangements via the LSP and other partnerships.
- To produce and begin to implement a community involvement strategy
- To improve our council tax/benefits capacity
- To ensure that community facilities provision and access to these is considered in all new major residential development.
- To complete the laying out of new junior/mini sports pitches behind Rayleigh Leisure Centre for usage during the 2009/2010 season.
- To continue to support the Disabled Facilities Grant process.
- To continue to support handy man and handy gardening services.
- To continue to support the development of the Third Sector

Our longer term targets for 2013 are;

- Through the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, to achieve sustainable levels of crime reduction and fear of crime by

tackling crime and the causes of crime, targeting specific issues and particular problem areas where appropriate.

- Implement a series of initiatives aimed at providing more alternative facilities specifically for young people, with the intention to secure at least one new facility per year.
- To secure the delivery on average of 50 affordable housing units per year through the auspices of Rochford Housing Association.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO OUR ENVIRONMENT



We are committed to looking after the environment of the district; protecting the amenities of residents and preparing plans for future development that are well designed and sustainable.

Growing awareness of the impact of climate change means that the work we do for the benefit of the district and the plans we prepare for the future must be carefully considered, be sustainable, and balance the needs of residents, workers and visitors against our long-term ambition to protect and enhance the environment.

Our key targets for the next 12 months are;

- Continue to improve recycling rates.
- To continue to refurbish our play areas through our rolling programme of playground improvements.
- To ensure that play provision and access to it is considered in all new major residential developments.

Our longer term targets for 2013 are;

- To complete the extension to Rochford Cemetery in Hall Road, Rochford for usage from 2012/2013.
- To ensure that community facilities provision and access to these is considered in all new major residential developments.
- Through the Council's Local Development Framework, to ensure that the future development of the District up to 2021 and beyond is planned and carried out in a sustainable fashion.
- To work on reducing the Council's own carbon dioxide emissions by 30% (based upon 2005 baseline).
- To consolidate the recently purchased areas both west and east of Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park to allow their integration into the Park and secure access from Cherry Orchard link road, and improve footpath and cycle access through the expanded Park.

- To continue to improve and upgrade our parks and open spaces through a rolling programme of open space refurbishment.
- To support the RSPB in its proposals to secure the Wallasea Island wetlands project for bird watching and other recreation.
- To utilise the Local Development Framework process to support and enhance our built heritage of listed buildings and Conservation Areas.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY



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

The district of Rochford is located within the Thames Gateway South Essex sub region. Within South Essex, considerable change to the economy and social environment is planned with an increase of 55,000 net additional jobs across the sub region by 2021 – approximately 20%. There are currently 21,000 jobs in the District and very low rates of unemployment. However, outward migration is high with 68% of workers commuting out of the District to work.

To meet the aspirations of our communities and to begin to sow the seeds for more dynamic and sustainable employment locally, we need to further develop the regeneration of our employment areas and town centres. At this first stage, key to this process will be the planning policies contained in our Local Development Framework (LDF).

Our key targets for the next 12 months are;

- Implement the Joint Area Action Plan in partnership with Southend Borough Council, covering London Southend Airport and its environs.
- Produce and implement a new Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan.
- Produce the two major town centre studies of Hockley and Rochford to aid the regeneration of those two centres and have prepared action plans for both as part of the Local Development Framework process.
- Produce a town centre study of Rayleigh to aid the regeneration of the town centre and to prepare an action plan as part of the Local development Framework.

Our longer term targets for 2013 are;


- To work with the County Council as highway authority, to look at potential solutions to the current congestion problems across the District to ensure the highway infrastructure becomes 'fit for purpose'


and at the same time, discuss with them the public transport network to ensure a more frequent, reliable and comprehensive system with better linkages between bus and rail.


- Through the Local Development Framework process, to seek to develop policies which result in the replacement of the old and poorly located industrial estates within the District. At the same time, to identify the provision of new employment areas.
- To use the Local Development Framework process to secure the long-term future of the wharfage at Baltic Wharf as an employment area and ensure that appropriate access infrastructure is put in place.


CORPORATE PLAN - ACTION PLAN 2009 – 2010

The Corporate Plan Action Plan highlights our key targets that the authority will be working towards over the next twelve months.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO OUR PEOPLE			
Key Targets	Deadline	Key Activities & Actions	Portfolio
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To deliver our target savings but improve service access and delivery. 	July 2009	Report to Executive on target savings/further access proposals Separate our telephone switchboard and reception by June Trial late opening of reception and switchboard – until June/July.	Cllr Cutmore Cllr Mrs Webster
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To deliver the Council's Strategic Improvement plan. 	Spring 2010	To produce a more 'Rochford' specific ambition with better golden thread connectivity. Develop more effective scrutiny process. To develop the Council's internal Performance Management Systems to further embed the performance management culture and secure effective and efficient delivery of objectives. To develop a partnership Performance Management System that is simple to operate, transparent and accessible to partners, cost effective and effective in outcome delivery.	Cllr Cutmore
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To achieve the Member Development Charter 	Late 2010	Complete self-assessment. Develop and implement the resulting action plan through the Charter Implementation Group and the Member Learning and Development Programme.	Standards Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To work on the ICT contract renewal process 	July 2009	Complete option appraisal. Executive decision on future provision of ICT service by July 2009.	Cllr Mrs Webster
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To achieve the Excellence level of the Equality Standard for local government (formerly level 5) by the end of 2010. 	Dec 2010	Obtain Level 4 by May 2009. Produce Action Plan for achieving "Excellence". Undertake external validation for "Excellence" by December 2010.	Cllr Mrs Webster
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare the Rochford Core Strategy, part of the Local Development Framework. 	Spring 2010	Submission plan in October 2009, followed by a public inquiry to test the soundness of the plan in Spring 2010. For adoption by Autumn 2010.	Cllr Hudson

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO OUR COMMUNITY			
Key Targets	Deadline	Key Activities & Actions	Portfolio
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop and consolidate our partnership arrangements via the LSP 	Ongoing	Provide a shared performance framework for all partnerships that operate under the auspices of the LSP. Restructure partnership arrangements.	Cllr Cutmore
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To produce and begin to implement a community involvement strategy 	Spring 2010	Review existing mechanisms. Revise Strategy and introduce new processes/systems with partners from Spring 2010..	Cllr Cutmore
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve our council tax/benefits capacity 	September 2009	Explore the potential opportunities for joint working or the provision of shared services with other public agencies.	Cllr Mrs Capon
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that community facilities provision and access to these is considered in all new major residential development. 	Rochford Core Strategy adopted in Autumn 2010	Policy CLT6 in the Rochford Core Strategy Preferred Options (October 2008) provides the policy framework for the delivery of necessary community facilities within new residential schemes. Details of the community facilities required on a location by location basis to be included in the Allocations Development Plan due to be adopted in October 2011.	Cllr Hudson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continue to support the Disabled Facilities Grant process. 	Ongoing	Continue to process suitable applications for the Disabled Facilities Grant, and in doing so, review procedures in order to reduce the processing timescales.	Cllr Mrs Capon
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continue to support handy man and handy gardening services. 	Ongoing	Continue to monitor and develop the provision of both the handyman and gardening services, with the initial aim in 2009/10 of undertaking 730 gardening jobs and 410 handyman jobs.	Cllr Mrs Butcher
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continue to support the development of the Third Sector 	Ongoing	Monitor funding levels and Service Level Agreements with key third sector groups. For review in 2010/2011.	Cllr Cutmore
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To complete the laying out of new junior/mini sports pitches behind Rayleigh Leisure Centre 	Winter 2009/2010	Receive groundwork tender May 2009. Commence works – Summer 2009.. Pitches available for use – late 2009/early 2010.	Cllr Gordon

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO OUR ENVIRONMENT			
Key Targets	Deadline	Key Activities & Actions	Portfolio
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to improve recycling rates. 	Ongoing	Consolidate in flats and caravan sites in 2009/1010. Exceed a 60% recycling rate by April 2013.	Cllr Starke
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continue to refurbish our play areas through our rolling programme of playground improvements. 	Ongoing	Undertake a detailed Health and Safety audit of these activities.	Cllr Gordon
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that play provision and access to it is considered in all new major residential developments. 	Rochford Core Strategy adopted in Autumn 2010	Policy CLT7 in the Rochford Core Strategy Preferred Options (October 2008) provides the policy framework for the delivery of necessary community facilities within new residential schemes. Details of the community facilities required on a location by location basis to be included in the Allocations Development Plan due to be adopted in October 2011.	Cllr Hudson

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY			
Key Targets	Deadline	Key Activities & Actions	Portfolio
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the Joint Area Action Plan in partnership with Southend Borough Council, covering London Southend Airport and its environs. 	2010	Submission Plan in October 2010, followed by a public inquiry in February/March 2010.	Cllr Hudson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce and implement a new Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan. 	July 2009	New Strategy being prepared. Approval by July 2009.	Cllr Gordon
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce the two major town centre studies of Hockley and Rochford to aid the regeneration of those two centres and have prepared action plans for both as part of the Local Development Framework process. 	2012	Plans to be prepared and submitted by April 2011.	Cllr Hudson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce a town centre study of Rayleigh to aid the regeneration of the town centre and to prepare an action plan as part of the Local development Framework. 	2012	Initial consultation on options in October 2010. NOTE – still considering the detailed timetable for preparation	Cllr Hudson