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## ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

### 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report presents the draft Annual Report for Members' consideration. The Annual Report is based on the vision and objectives in place for 2013/14.

### 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 All Members will have received a copy of the Quarterly Performance Indicators report, which was considered by the Executive on 11 June 2014. 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 2013 to 31 March 2014. The Financial Statements for the year were signed off by the Head of Finance, as the Responsible Officer, on 30 June 2014, 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 30 September 2014, 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 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 is agreed for publication.
- (2) That the audited Financial Statements for 2013/14 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 2013-14



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 2014-2017
- Financial Statements 2013/14

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 2013/14 and aim to show what has been achieved in terms of service delivery and outcomes for our residents.

2013/14 was another challenging year with further cuts in Government funding. The Council 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.

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.

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



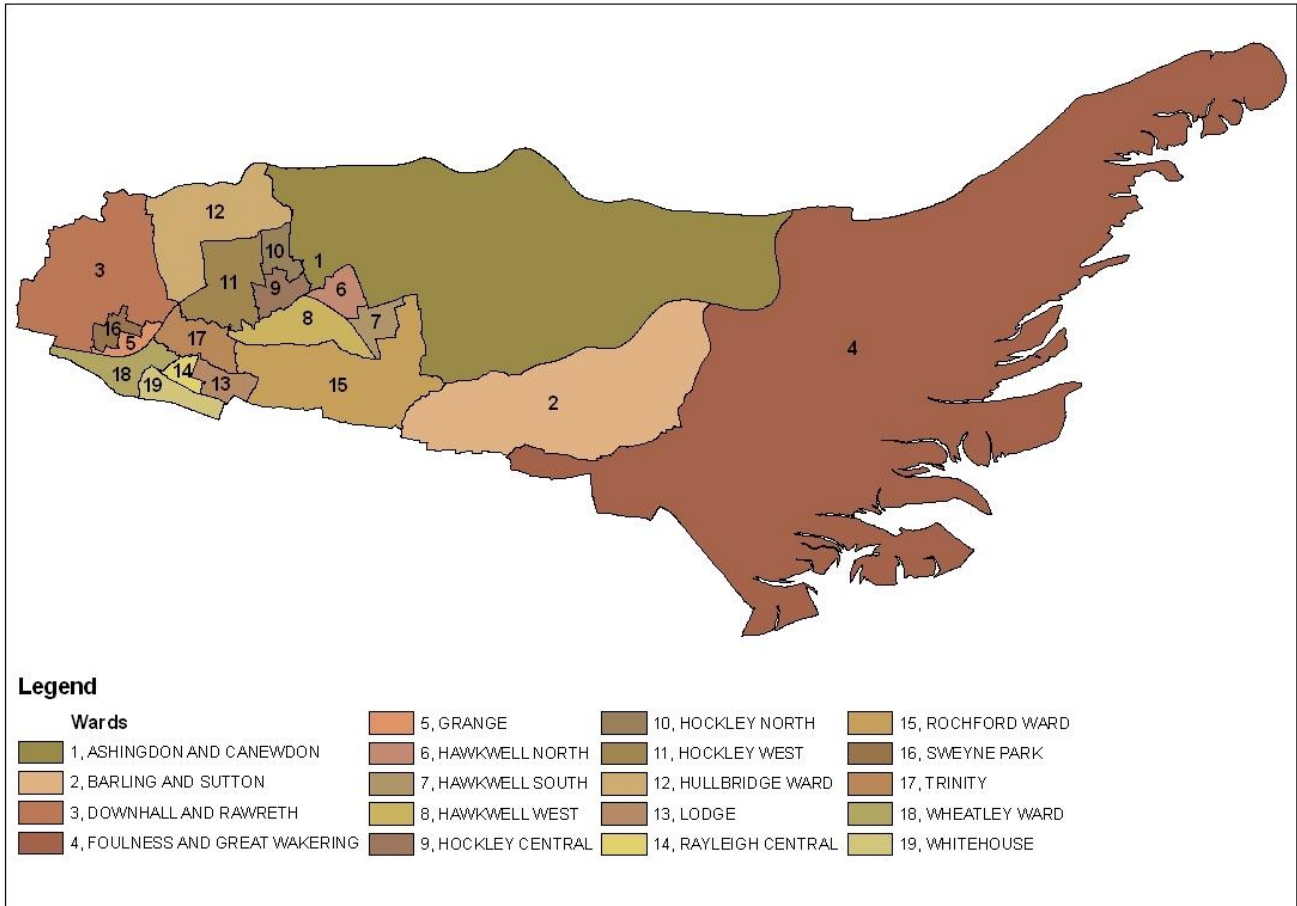
**Terry Cutmore**  
**Leader of the Council**



**Amar Dave**  
**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.
- 5.1% of Rochford residents are unemployed, compared to a regional figure of 7.5% (nomisweb Jan 2013 – Dec 2013).
- Rochford Council employs approximately 228 full time equivalent members of staff, with key services (e.g. refuse collection, street cleansing, and leisure management) contracted to the private sector.
- The Council Tax base was 28,617 and the average Band D Council Tax bill in 2013/14 was £1,538.91.
- The annual revenue budget for 2013/14 was £10.09m, compared to £10.27m in 2012/13.



### 3 Our Councillors

Rochford District Council has 39 Councillors representing the 19 wards across the District. The composition of the Council for 2013/14 was 31 Conservative, 2 Green Party, 4 Liberal Democrats and two Rochford District Residents until 16 March 2014 when there were then 29 Conservative, 2 Green Party, 2 Independent Conservative, 4 Liberal Democrats and 2 Rochford District Residents.

Following the elections in May 2014 the composition of the Council is 27 Conservative, 2 Green Party, 1 Independent Conservative, 1 Labour, 1 Liberal Democrats, 2 Rochford District Residents and 3 UK Independence Party.

The Chairman of the Council for 2013/14 was Councillor Mrs Barbara Wilkins, and the Vice-Chairman was Councillor Mrs June Lumley.

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, Strategic Housing and Customer Services.

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

**Legal, Estates and Member Services** which includes: Standards & Ethical Governance, Member Services, Legal Services, Asset Management, Building and Property maintenance, Engineering Services, Civic & Ceremonial, Overview and Scrutiny, Member Training and Development, Land Charges and Burials.

**Finance** which includes: Audit, Financial Services, Risk and Performance Management, Procurement and Office Support.

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

**Chief Executive** which includes Elections.

## 5 Our Vision

Our vision, for 2013/14, which is shared with that of Castle Point and Rochford Joint Local Strategic Partnership, was:

*To make Rochford District a place which provides opportunities for the best possible 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.
- Co-ordinate 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.**

Our vision and our three corporate objectives translate into the things that we do; our key strategic documentation such as the Corporate Plan, the Local Plan and the Local Development Framework (LDF); the services we deliver and the facilities we provide.

## 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 is one of 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 £18,500 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 Families and Carers Together and The Peaceful Place.
- 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 we also provide services to Brentwood, Castle Point and Thurrock for their elections payroll.
- 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. 2,048 children took part in arts and sports workshops and projects across the District.
- Our Wild Woods Day in June 2013 was extra special as it celebrated its tenth birthday with over 3,000 people enjoying the party. The event was also successful in helping to introduce families to new activities and local sports clubs. From running clubs to golf, everyone who came could try their hand at different sports.
- During 2013/14, 1,975 people attended our health walks.
- Our Member Services team achieved re-accreditation to the South East Charter for Elected Member Development in January 2014. The Charter was originally achieved by the Council in 2010.
- Active Plus Games is a project aimed at increasing participation in the over 50 age group. Over 450 people have now accessed free vouchers for sport and physical activity sessions across Rochford District and Castle Point.
- Time for Life was a successful project delivered in partnership with Active Life which included exercise sessions with essential life skills e.g. fire safety and health checks for the over 50s. Active Life won Physical Activity Project of the year at the Essex Sports Awards for the Time for Life project.
- Our Revenues & Benefits Team have retained their Customer Service Excellence accreditation.
- Online reporting of hate crime, anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse 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.
- 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 37 ceremonies took place at the Windmill.
- A new youth arts leadership project called 'Student-Led Music ensembles' began in 7 Rayleigh schools. This gives 100 young people year round opportunities to compose their own music in small 'ensembles' of primary school age children, led by students from Fitzwimarc School.

- For the fifth 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 3,600 people visited the Windmill in 2013/14.
- The Rochford and Castle Point Sports Awards, sponsored by Virgin Active, were held at the Mill Arts and Events Centre. The ceremony was compered by BBC Essex's Ben Fryer and awards were presented by London 2012 Bronze medallist, Chloe Rogers, from the GB women's Hockey team.
- Rochford District Council supported 62 children from Rochford Primary School and Wakering Young People's Community Partnership to achieve an Arts Award. This is a national award that recognises young people's enjoyment of the arts and helps them to develop as artists and arts leaders.
- 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.
- 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.
- We have increased the usage at the Approach car park at Rayleigh Station by 120% by reducing the daily charge to £4.
- We retained the Gold Investors in People accreditation and gained the CIPFA Platinum accreditation for training and continuing professional development.
- 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.
- 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.
- According to the Essex Tracker Survey, 75.4% of Rochford residents are satisfied with the way Rochford District Council runs things – this is the highest in Essex.
- Essex County Council Trading Standards in partnership with Rochford District Council's Community Safety Team funded and delivered one-day free Home Safety checks for residents in the district.
- There has been an increase in the number of motorists paying for parking using electronic payment methods of wave and pay credit/debit card and pay by mobile phone. This has increased from the first 6 months of operation by 100%.
- More than 50 residents obtained invaluable safety advice at the Community Older Persons Event (C.O.P.E.) run by Rochford District Council and the Rochford District Community Safety Partnership.
- There was an 8.3% reduction in Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) and other burglary was down by 16.6%.
- The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is continuing to fund a specialist independent mediation service in order to address neighbourhood disputes which are causing anti-social behaviour for residents in Rochford District.

## Objective 2 – Making a difference to our environment

- We reclaimed the title of being the best Authority in England when it comes to recycling, with a rate of 66.8% and Rayleigh Windmill was illuminated green at the Rayleigh Christmas lights ceremony to celebrate this.
- We launched a campaign with the aim of reducing chewing gum litter in the local area.
- We have built on our 'Love Where You Live' partnerships with MacDonalD's, local scouting groups and other community groups to secure over 500 hours of their time and collected over 200 bags of litter. To thank the volunteers we held a picnic style presentation at Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park.
- We have formed a partnership with the Probation Service through the Community Payback Scheme in order to provide assistance with litter picking of industrial sites and general duties. We also secured two individual placements to carry out yard duties and assist the Street Scene team totalling 170 hours of committed labour.
- The tonnes CO2 released for each resident of Rochford has reduced year on year and we are now only just behind Castle Point for having the lowest CO2 emission in Essex and well below the national average.
- 100% of licensing applications have been dealt with within relevant timescales.
- Two 'compost giveaways' have taken place, distributing over 20 tonnes of compost, reinforcing recycling messages to residents.
- Following the flooding in August we bailed out nearly 70 properties and took away 3 tonnes of rubbish. We also waived the Council Tax for residents whose homes were left uninhabitable due to the flooding.
- The new Grounds Maintenance contract, which covers the maintenance of open spaces and the cutting of grass verges, started in December. Other aspects of maintenance, such as the cutting of rural verges, the provision of ground staff for football and the cleaning of pavilions are now managed as stand alone contracts.



- As part of the 'Love Rochford District' campaign, we spray painted any dog poo in targeted areas, orange, in a bid to shame irresponsible owners.
- We work in partnership with Hopeworx, a community re-use project, for the diversion of all furniture and electrical appliances collected through the bulky waste service.

- We launched a campaign aimed at reducing chewing gum litter in the local area. Clearing chewing gum is a very costly process for the Council and can be avoided if residents use the litter bins provided to dispose of their gum correctly.
- The Council's Planning Enforcement Team have utilised the services of an additional officer by, amongst other things, closing 312 enforcement cases in the last year. Furthermore the issuing of 50 Planning Contravention Notices over the year puts RDC as the second highest in its national "family group" of authorities.
- In partnership with SITA UK and mobile application designers Love Clean Streets, we have introduced a mobile phone app 'Rochford Sita' to enable instantaneous reporting of street scene issues, such as graffiti and fly-tipping. The app alerts our cleansing team to the location and nature of an issue enabling these to be dealt with more efficiently.
- Our Allocations Plan has been adopted, along with the Hockley Area Action Plan. The Allocations Document includes maps and diagrams of how land in the district will be used – whether that is for residential use, employment use or education use, open spaces or environmentally protected areas for example.
- The Council's Legal team and the Environment Agency won the Prosecution Team of the Year award for its joint work in taking prosecution action against serious planning and environmental breaches at Michelins Farm.

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

- The Rochford Arts Trail scooped two regional Towns Alive awards; it won the ‘Culture and Environment’ category for the East zone and overall winner in the East.
- The Council was awarded funding from Arts Council England for its ‘Rochford Art Collector Series’ project. The funding enabled 7 artists to be commissioned to create original artworks inspired by Rochford that were made available to the public, for free, to collect and keep during the Rochford Art Trail.
- 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.
- We once again brought in free parking for all of our District car parks in the three 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 has continued to provide quarterly newsletters to all businesses signed up to the Rochford Business Network, which was set up in 2009. We had 31 new businesses join the Rochford Business Network in 2013/14 and anticipate membership will continue to grow.
- ‘Shop at my Local’ celebrated another milestone as the 1000<sup>th</sup> shopper signed up and pledged to shop locally in the Rochford District and around 400 traders are registered on the website. We were involved in two national campaigns that encourage support for local traders; Independents Day (retail) and Small Business Saturday.
- We achieved our targets set for phase 1 on Low Carbon Grants for Business. Since 2009, the scheme has engaged with over 246 businesses in the District. In phase 1 of the programme 28 project and 12 apprenticeship grants have been awarded, totalling exactly £230,387. It is pleasing to report that, through the scheme, 63 jobs have been created and 71 safeguarded within the District
- We have continued to host three business breakfast events per year with, on average, 70 businesses represented at each event. Speakers included Southend United and its Community & Education Trust, Salvation Army Employment Plus UK, MedTech, Superfast Essex Broadband Project (including BT), the Castle Point & Rochford Community Safety Partnership and the Police & Crime Commissioner for Essex. Future events will include Invest Essex, Essex County Council’s Employability & Skills Unit and BIZphit.
- Businesses have continued to make the most of complimentary business seminars. Rochford District Council and Castle Point Borough Council provided businesses with a series of free business seminars by teaming up with Pro-Actions Business Improvement (Essex) Limited. In total 62 businesses attended the business briefings in 2013/14, which were based on Marketing for Growth, Social Media and Improving Sales to Win More Business. The Council have arranged for five business seminars to be held in 2014/15.



- 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, and we involve the local business community with this.
- In recent years the Council has been exploring the possibility of enhancing the District's economy through the promotion of tourism. The District has been identified as the 'green' part of the Thames Gateway and as having the potential to be the arts and cultural opportunities area for the sub region. We have begun to actively promote the area as a tourism destination, having produced and circulated a District Visitors Guide.
- The Council is working with local Parish and Town Councils to promote and encourage the use of footpaths and Rights Of Way's, which will add to the District's tourism offer, increase footfall, be green and encourage local engagement in volunteering.
- The Council has been working with other Local Authorities to support Superfast Essex; part of a national government-led programme to improve broadband connectivity. In Essex we're aiming to provide speeds of 24Mbps and above to as many homes and businesses as possible.
- London Southend Airport has enjoyed its busiest year ever with almost a million passengers using the airport in 2013, and is now looking forward to even more exciting developments in 2014. The London Southend Airport and Environs Joint Area Action Plan has been prepared to respond to the challenges and opportunities offered by London Southend Airport and its surrounding area by managing growth, directing investment and ensuring the protection of areas and places sensitive to change. The proposals in the Plan will help create over 6,000 new jobs.
- In 2013/14 the Economic Development Team received 122 business support enquiries; 10 of which resulted in a business visit. The majority of enquiries were in relation to start-up advice. The Economic Development Team will continue to provide useful and relevant information, advice and networking opportunities to all businesses in the District and to those looking to locate their business in the Rochford District.
- The Council is working with stakeholders to develop a town team for Rayleigh, with agreed objectives and actions; the intention will be to introduce town teams for Rochford and Hockley thereafter. Town teams arose from both the Localism Act and the Portas Review, as an important commodity for the community. The town teams are business led and, as an authority, we are keen to support and facilitate this.

## 7 Financial Summary

This Annual Report provides a summary of the Council's statutory Statement of Accounts for 2013/14. 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 2013/14.

The Statement of Accounts was signed off by the Head of Finance on 30 June 2014 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 2014 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

We have presented the financial performance of the Council in this way for a number of years 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 2013/14 under each of our Corporate Objectives and the amount left to be financed from local and national tax income.

	<b>Net Expenditure 2013/14 £m</b>
<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	<b>6.34</b>
Local Land Charges	
Cemeteries & Churchyards	
Licensing	
Public Conveniences	
Democratic Services	
<b>Making a difference to our Environment</b>	
Mill Tower Windmill	
Woodlands, Parks and Open Spaces	
Planning and Building Control	<b>4.83</b>
Environmental Health	
Street Cleansing	
Recycling	
<b>Making a difference to our local Economy</b>	
Economic Development	
Car Parks	<b>0.45</b>
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>11.62</b>
LESS Statutory Accounting Adjustments, including capital charges	(1.41)
LESS Income from cash investments	(0.06)
PLUS Money put to reserves for future use	0.07
<b>Cost of local services to be met by local and national taxes</b>	<b>10.22</b>

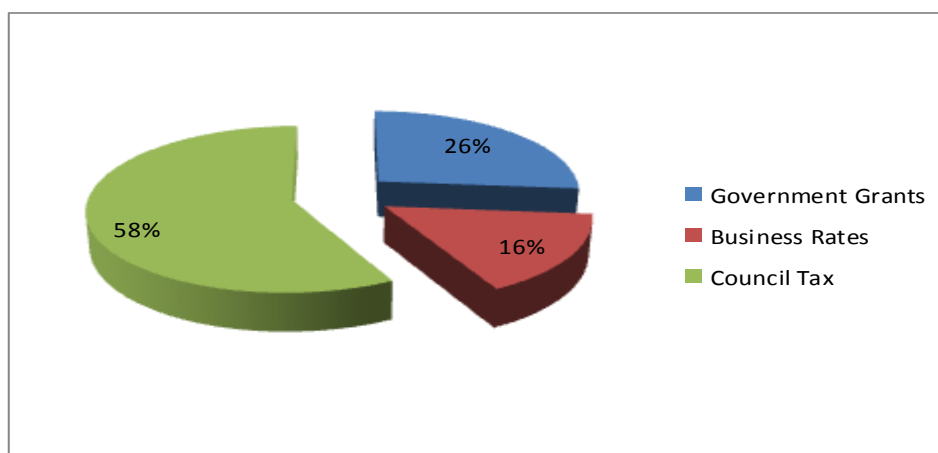
The Net Cost of Services last year (2012/13) was £11.38m, shown by Corporate Objective as follows:

<b>What did we spend last year:</b>	<b>Net Expenditure 2012/13 £m</b>
Making a difference to our Community	5.75
Making a difference to our Environment	5.73
Making a difference to our local Economy	(0.10)
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>11.38</b>

### 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 £10.22m (2012/13 £10.27m), which was split £2.7m Government Grants, £1.62m from national business rates returned to the Council and £5.9m from Council Tax from residents as shown below.



### Summary of Income and Expenditure

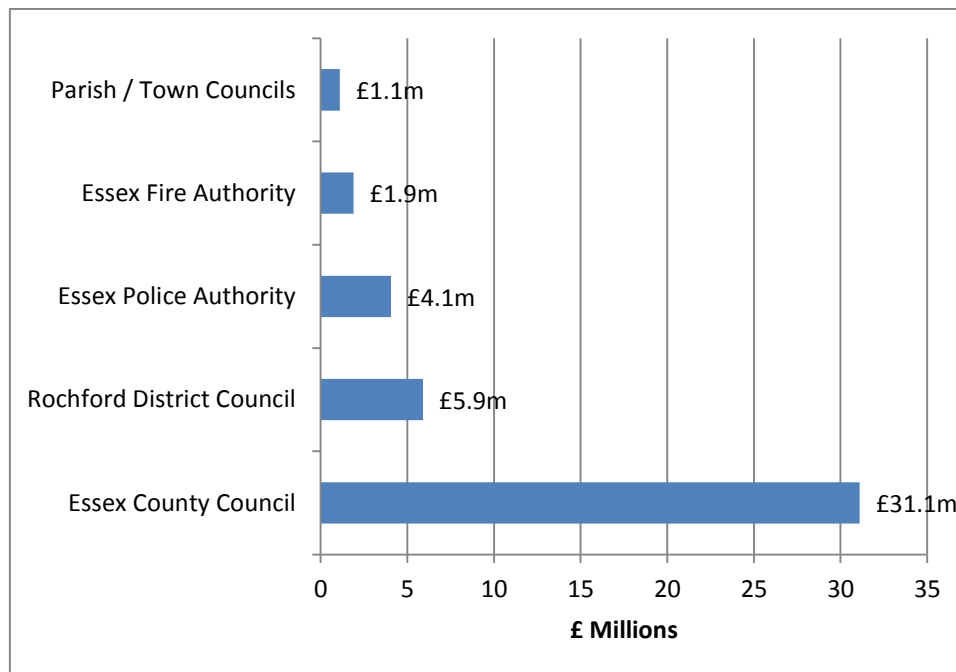
<b>Revenue Account Surplus</b>	<b>2013/14 £m</b>
Total Income	(10.22)
Total Cost of Services	10.11
<b>Surplus for the year</b>	<b>(0.11)</b>

The Council has been using balances built up over previous years to cover some of the reduction in Government funding and these must now be built up again.

## Council Tax

The Council was responsible for collecting £44.1m of Council Tax last year, but we only kept £5.9m, 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 reduction in the amount of Council Tax collected was due to the Government's introduction of a Local Council Tax Support scheme, which gives a discount to eligible claimants, instead of paying a Council Tax benefit.

The average Council Tax for Band D property for 2013/14 was made up as follows:

	2013/14
Rochford District Council	£205.11
Essex County Council	£1,086.75
Essex Fire & Rescue Service	£66.42
Essex Police Authority	£141.48
Town/Parish Councils (average)	£39.15
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,538.91</b>

In 2013/14 the national average for Council Tax on a band D property was **£1,456**.

## 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 2013/14, discretionary relief was awarded to 31 organisations throughout the District at a cost to the Council of £9,457.

## 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 2013/14 our expenditure on capital compared to what we planned to spend was:-

What we spent:	Planned £000s	Actual £000s
Vehicles and Equipment	544	128
Leisure and Play Facilities	220	148
Disabled Housing Grants	493	425
IT infrastructure	47	47
Council properties	296	154
Big Society Grants	49	48
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,649</b>	<b>950</b>

Some of the projects not completed in 2013/14 will be rolled forward into 2014/15.

The £950,000 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	2013/14 £000s
Grants and Contributions	190
Capital Receipts	760
<b>Total</b>	<b>950</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), 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 2013 £m
Long term assets	35.6
Money owed to Rochford & cash/bank investments	7.6
Less Money owed by Rochford	(2.4)
Less All other liabilities	(25.5)
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>15.3</b>

Usable Reserves and Balances	31 March 2013 £m
Capital Grants and Receipts	2.4
Working Balances	1.0
Earmarked Reserves	2.2
<b>Total Revenue Reserves</b>	<b>5.6</b>

## Delivering Value for Money

During 2013/14, the Council has been successful in generating income through the provision of services to partners and other Councils and approximately £132,400 has been earned from objectives such as:

- providing a payroll service to Castle Point and Trust Administration
- working in partnership on Legal Services and Building Control
- providing grounds maintenance services to Parish Councils and Essex County Council

The Council also planned to make savings during the year of £420,000, 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:

- Intensive testing on Benefits were carried out by Internal Audit instead of the external auditors.
- New contract arrangements for the Grounds Maintenance service.
- £Over a £100,000 per year in savings from a new ICT contract.
- Reduction in the cost of external audit.

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 2014/15 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 98.3% of the £44.1m Council Tax due last year. We also collected 97.8% of business rates due last year, which was an increase on 2012/13.

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.

Despite falling returns for investments, the Council achieved investment rates for the year averaging at 1.1% (1.8% in 2012/13).

## What Next?

The Council's plans for 2014 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.

Yvonne Woodward CPFA FMAAT  
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