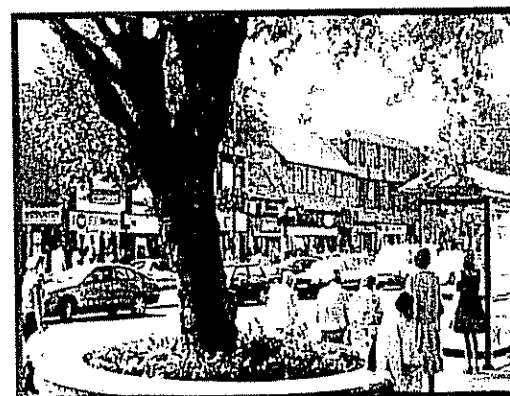


**Our
performance
over the past
year**



**Our future
work
programme**



June 2003

**Incorporating the Corporate Plan
and Best Value Performance Plan**

Charge £2



**Rochford District
Council**

The Government requires the District Council to produce this plan by law. The cost of its preparation, printing and production, including the staffing resources involved in writing this plan, is estimated at approximately £10,000

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section 1

introduction

Introduction

Welcome to the Council's performance plan. This is the second year we've produced a document that combines the information that was formally contained within our Corporate Plan and the Best Value Performance Plan. We found that both documents contained common information and thus, through combining both plans into one document, we now have a single point of reference.

This plan contains details on the Council, looks at our performance over the past year, compares our performance with other authorities, and sets out our proposed actions and targets, in particular for the coming year. It also looks forward over the next three years, to tie in with our 3-year budget strategy. Both the plan and the budget strategy are reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

The Council has always prided itself on delivering good services at low cost and looking at, and implementing, new initiatives in line with its overall aims. The plan provides an ideal vehicle for testing this and flagging up its future actions.

section 2

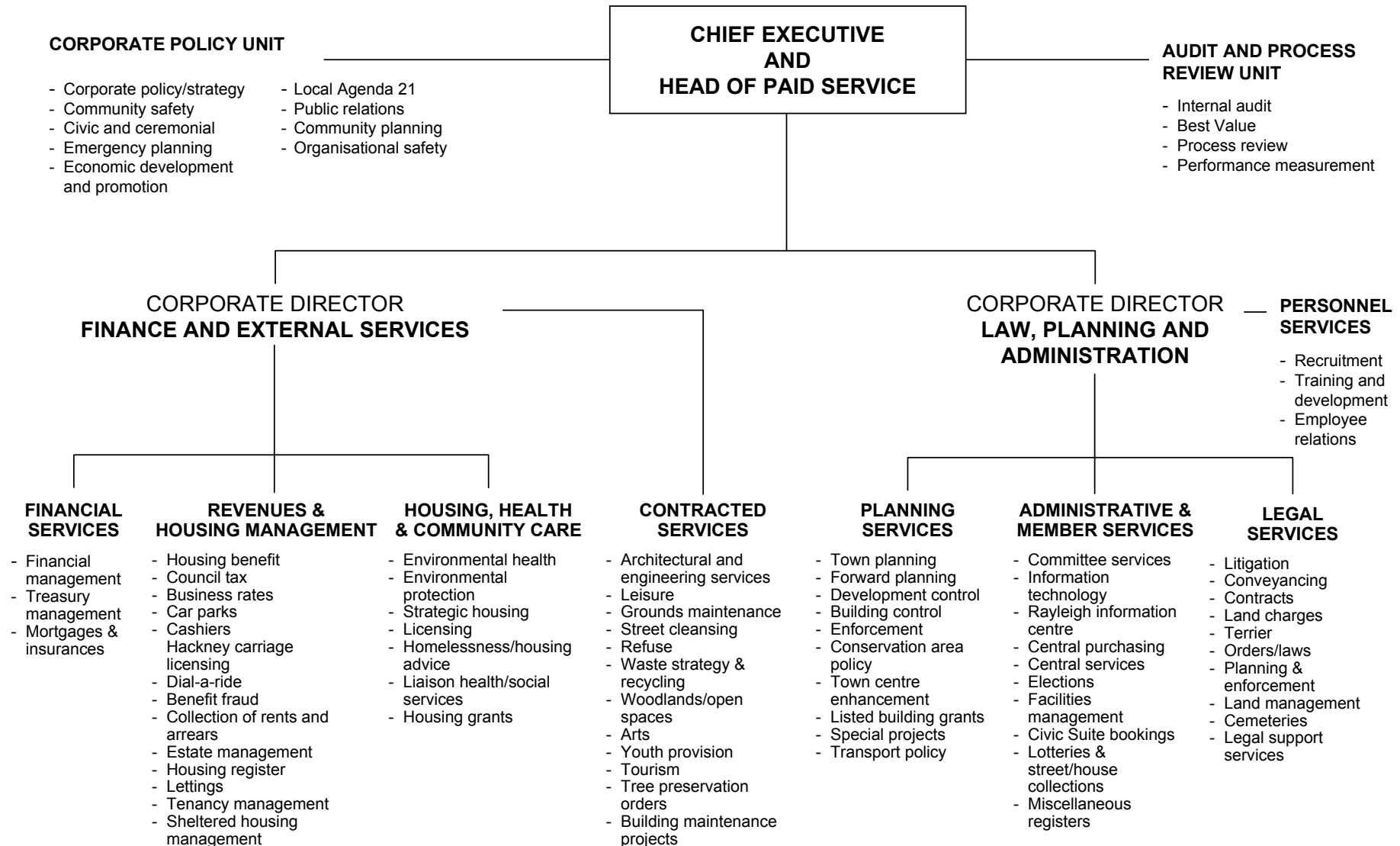
getting to know us

Some basic information

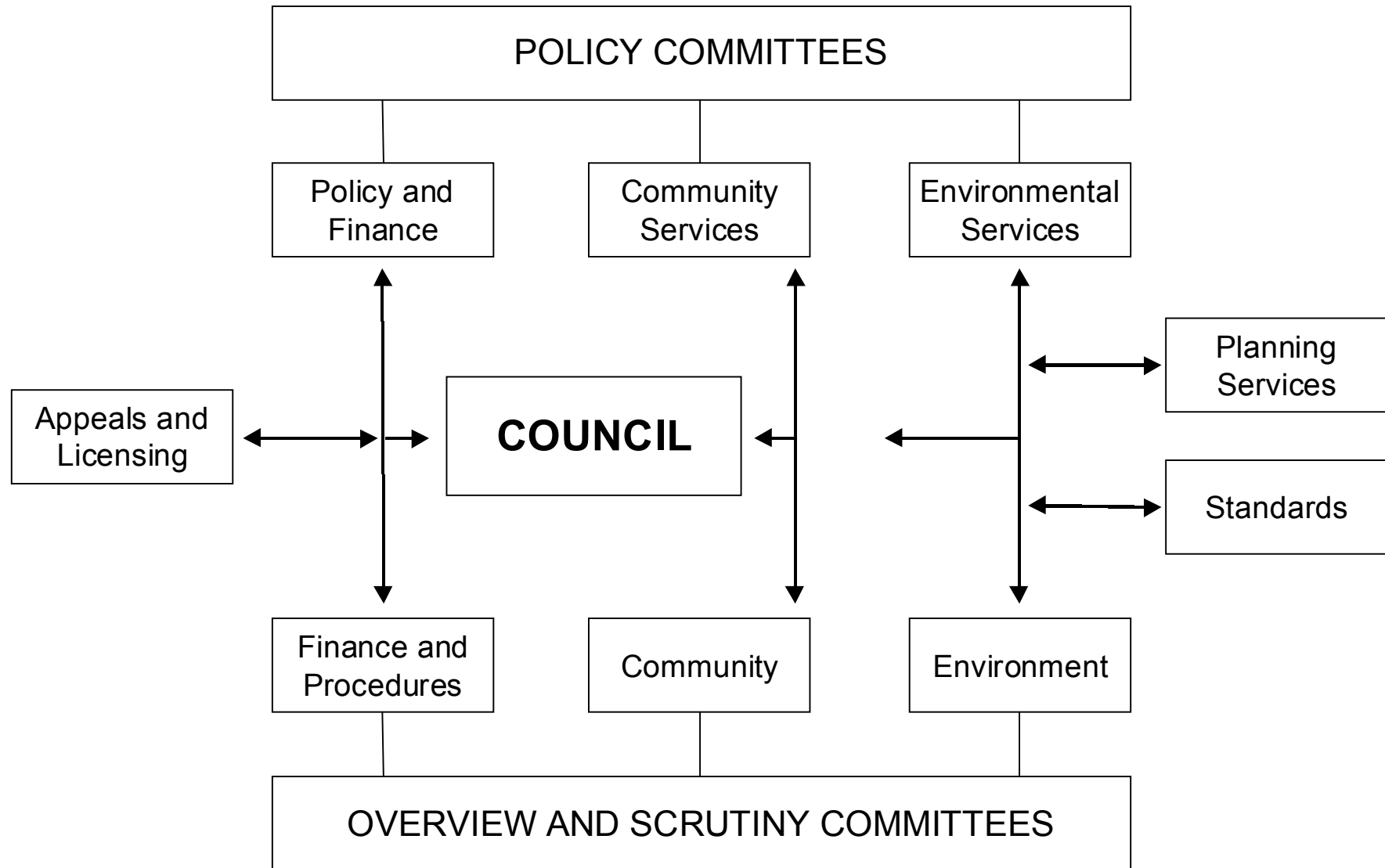
The following information is the latest available data:

Political make-up of the Council	Conservative	30	Owner occupation	86%
	Labour	3	Car ownership	80%
	Liberal Democrats	4	Estimate of number of companies in the district	2650
	Independent	1	Estimate of number employed in the district	25000
	Hawkwell Residents' Association	1		
Council's net expenditure	£7.5m (2002/2003)			
Number of employees	221 (full time equivalent)			
Area of the Rochford district	42240 acres 17094 hectares			
Total population	78489			
Number of dwellings	32706			
Number of private dwellings (including Social Housing providers e.g. Housing Associations, Housing Trusts)	30900			
Number of council dwellings	1806			

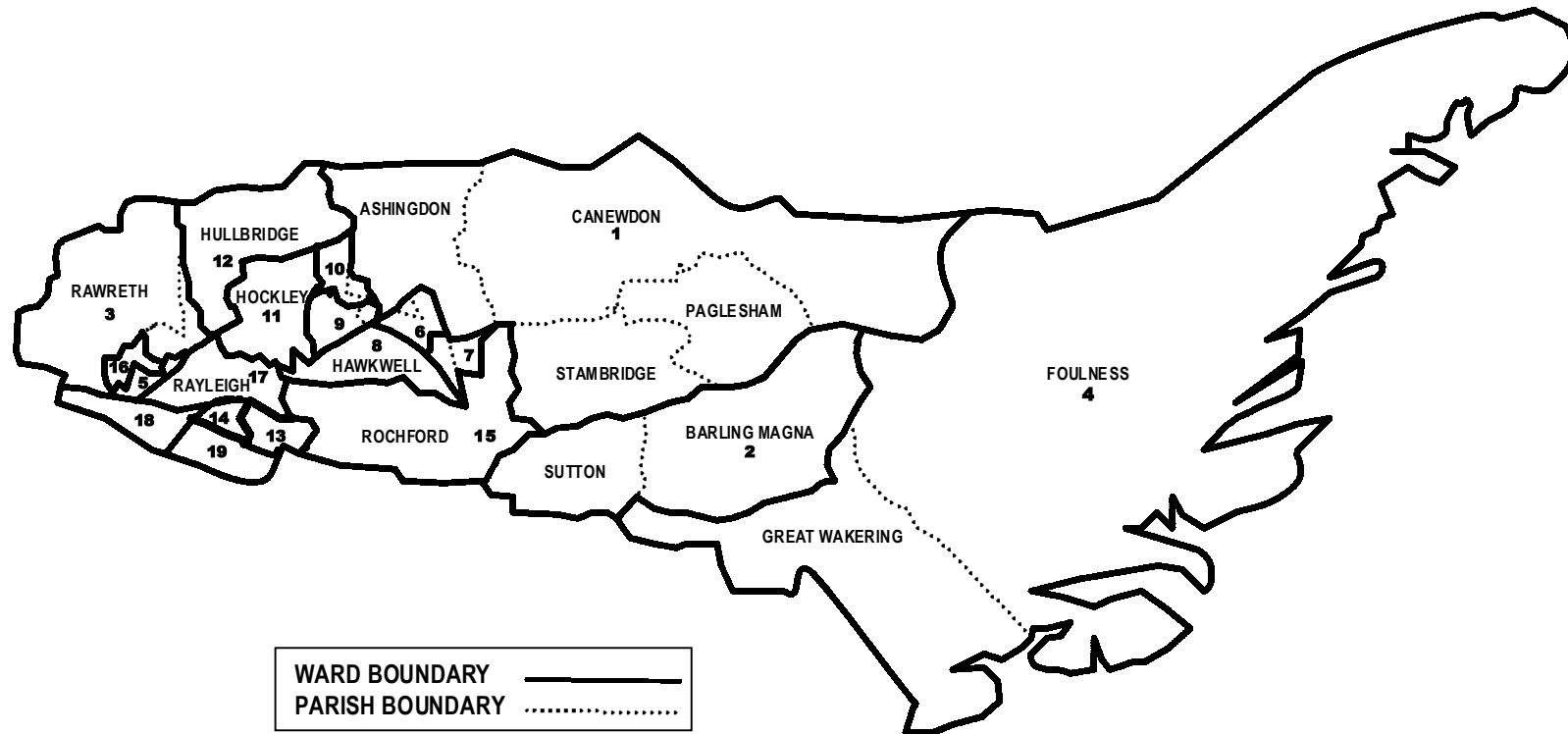
Our management structure



The committee structure



The district of Rochford



Key to Wards

1	Ashingdon and Canewdon	8	Hawkwell West	15	Rochford
2	Barling and Sutton	9	Hockley Central	16	Sweyne Park
3	Downhall and Rawreth	10	Hockley North	17	Trinity
4	Foulness and Great Wakering	11	Hockley West	18	Wheatley
5	Grange	12	Hullbridge	19	Whitehouse
6	Hawkwell North	13	Lodge		
7	Hawkwell South	14	Rayleigh Central		

Your Councillors

The Rochford area is represented by 39 District Councillors.

The District is divided into 19 areas known as Wards, and each Ward has at least one councillor. Below is a complete list of all the District Councillors and where you may contact them. If you are not sure of the ward in which you live or work, contact the Council's Information Centre on 01702 318150 for assistance.

Ashingdon and Canewdon Ward

Mrs T J Capon	Stowe House	01702 258792
Conservative	12 Wheatfields Great Stambridge SS4 2BT	

Mr T G Cutmore	"Hailwood"	01702 544511
Conservative	9 Highcliff Crescent Ashingdon SS4 3HN	terrycutmore@hotmail.com

Barling and Sutton Ward

Mr R A Amner	51 Oxford Road	01702 200899
Conservative	Rochford SS4 1TF	01702 543330 theamners@aol.com

Downhall and Rawreth Ward

Mr C I Black	56 Love Lane	01268 778973
Liberal Democrat	Rayleigh SS6 7DX	chris_black@lineone.net

Mr R A Oatham	8 Brixham Close	01268 785295
Liberal Democrat	Rayleigh SS6 9PG	ron@oatham2000.fsnet.co.uk

Grange Ward

Mr C J Lumley	38 London Road	01268 784147
Liberal Democrat	Rayleigh SS6 9JE	j.r.lumley@talk21.com

Mrs J R Lumley	38 London Road	01268 784147
Liberal Democrat	Rayleigh SS6 9JE	j.r.lumley@talk21.com

Foulness and Great Wakering Ward

Mr T E Goodwin	73 Alexandra Road Great Wakering Southend-on-Sea SS3 0HN	01702 219977
Conservative		
Mr C G Seagers	2 Wedds Way Great Wakering Southend-on-Sea SS3 0DN	colin@seagers.net
Conservative		
Mrs B J Wilkins	"Chula Vista" 4 Newstead Road Great Wakering Southend-on-Sea SS3 0AB	01702 218631/ 07733 231699
Conservative		

Hawkwell North Ward

Mrs M A Starke	Alt Wien Little Stambridge Hall Lane Rochford SS4 1EN	01702 544773 01702 530329 maureen@essbro.com
Conservative		
Mr M G B Starke	Alt Wien Little Stambridge Hall Lane Rochford SS4 1EN	01702 544773 01702 530329 michael@essbro.com
Conservative		

Hawkwell South Ward

Mr P A Capon	Stowe House 12 Wheatfields Great Stambridge SS4 2BT	01702 258792
Conservative		
Mrs H L A Glynn	c/o Rochford District Council Council Offices South Street Rochford SS4 1BW	
Independent		

Hawkwell West Ward

Mr J R F Mason	Wistaria Cottage Englefield Close Hawkwell Hockley SS5 4LE	01702 204377 john.mason@bigfoot.com
Hawkwell Residents		
Mr D G Stansby	52 Hill Lane Hawkwell Hockley SS5 4HQ	01702 202431
Conservative		

Hockley Central Ward

Mr K H Hudson	Lower Hockley Hall Farm	01702 233434 k.hud@btopenworld.com
Conservative	Lower Road Hockley SS5 5LT	
Mrs M D McCarthy	53 Cotswold Avenue Rayleigh	01268 775823
Conservative	SS6 8AN	
Mr J Thomass	2a Hamilton Gardens Hockley	01268 742044
Conservative	SS5 5BU	

Hockley North Ward

Mr C A Hungate	16 Gatscombe Close Hockley	01702 201551 c_and_l@btinternet.com
Conservative	SS5 4XA	

Hockley West Ward

Mrs L Hungate	16 Gatscombe Close Hockley	01702 201551 c_and_l@btinternet.com
Conservative	SS5 4XA	

Hullbridge Ward

Mrs R Brown	4 Meadow Road Hullbridge	01702 231497 r.brown.hull@care4free.net
Conservative	SS5 6BW	
Mrs L A Butcher	16 The Trunnions Rochford	01702 542022 lesley_butch@hotmail.com
Conservative	SS4 1DJ	
Mr C R Morgan	1 Padgetts Way Hullbridge	01702 231180 07867 800840 christopher.morgan@lineone.net
Labour	SS5 6LR	

Lodge Ward

Mr C C Langlands	26 Worcester Drive Rayleigh	01268 747105
Conservative	SS6 8SU	
Mr T Livings	37 Copford Avenue Rayleigh	01268 741525
Conservative	SS6 8RL	

Rayleigh Central Ward

Mr R G S Choppen	Coppermill 17 Western Road Rayleigh SS6 7AY	01268 774152
Conservative		
Mr A J Humphries	37 Wellington Road Rayleigh SS6 8EX	01268 779328 01268 779523
Conservative		tony@humphries37.fsbusiness.co.uk

Rochford Ward

Mrs S A Harper	24 Oak Road Rochford SS4 1NR	01702 545814 suedeoakroad@aol.com
Conservative		
Mrs M S Vince	53 Doggetts Close Rochford SS4 1ED	01702 547074
Labour		
Mr D A Weir	18 Glenwood Avenue Hawkwell SS5 4HH	01702 207764

Sweyne Park Ward

Mr G A Mockford	8 Broomfield Avenue Rayleigh SS6 9EJ	01268 781028
Conservative		
Mr P K Savill	112 Rawreth Lane Rayleigh SS6 9RR	01268 780595 01702 555676
Conservative		

Trinity Ward

Mr K A Gibbs	17 Upper Lambricks Rayleigh SS6 8BP	01268 778756
Conservative		
Mr J E Grey	18 St Martins Close Rayleigh SS6 7SW	01268 772491
Conservative		

Wheatley Ward

Mr J M Pullen	9 Burrows Way	01268 775711
Conservative	Rayleigh SS6 7DF	
Mrs M J Webster	White Gables	01268 775374
Conservative	Castle Drive Rayleigh SS6 7HT	

Whitehouse Ward

Mr S P Smith	8 Woodlands Avenue	01268 743017
Conservative	Rayleigh SS6 7RD	ssmithx4@lineone.net
Mr P F A Webster	White Gables	01268 775374
Conservative	Castle Drive Rayleigh SS6 7HT	

Our parish and town Council

Ashingdon

Electorate
2,715

Mr P Murray

Clerk of the Ashingdon Council
Ashingdon Parish Council
Tamarix, 43 Wedgwood Way
Ashingdon, Rochford, SS4 3AS

Tel. & Fax 01702 544375

Barling

Electorate
1,331

Mr B Summerfield

Clerk of Barling Magna Parish Council
Sutton Hall Cottages
Sutton Road, Rochford, SS4 1LG

Tel. 01702 540774

Email bsummvint@hotmail.com

Canewdon

Electorate
1,174

Mrs K Cumberland

Clerk of Canewdon Parish Council
'Kia Ora', Pudsey Hall Lane,
Canewdon, Rochford, SS4 3RY

Tel. 01702 258536

Fax 01702 257253

Email parish_clerk@canewdon.com

Foulness

Electorate
178

Ms D Deeks

Clerk of Foulness Parish Council
8 The Chase
Foulness Island, SS3 9XS

Tel. 01702 218644

Great Wakering

Electorate
4,277

Mr H E Morris

Clerk of Great Wakering Parish Council
Parish Council Offices
Little Wakering Hall Lane
Great Wakering, Southend-on-Sea, SS3 0HB

Tel. & Fax 01702 219343

Email enquiries@greatwakering-pc.gov.uk

Hawkwell

Electorate
8,937

Mr. S Mennell

Clerk of Hawkwell Parish Council
R/o Hawkwell Village Hall
Main Road, Hawkwell, Hockley, SS5 4EH

Tel. & Fax 01702 207710

Email hawkwell.council@totalise.co.uk

Hockley

Electorate
7,455

Mr P Stanley

Clerk of Hockley Parish Council
The Old Fire Station
Southend Road
Hockley, SS5 4QH

Tel. 01702 207707
Fax 01702 204173
Email enquiries@hockley-essex.gov.uk

Hullbridge

Electorate
5,390

Mrs L M Cowan

Clerk of Hullbridge Parish Council
98 Ferry Road, Hullbridge, SS5 6EX

Tel. & Fax 01702 232038
Email hullbridgepc@lineone.net

Paglesham

Electorate
206

Mrs E Botfield

Clerk of Paglesham Parish Council
1 Lycett Villas, Church End
Pagelsham, Rochford, SS4 2DQ

Tel. 01702 258912
Email ianpuzey@compuserve.com

Rawreth

Electorate
787

Mr S Croucher

'Jolians'
Church Road
Rawreth, Wickford, SS11 8SG

Tel. & Fax 01268 767212
Email spencer@jolians.freemove.co.uk

Rayleigh

Electorate
24,115

Mrs B Larken

10 Bellingham Lane
Rayleigh, SS6 7ED

Tel. 01268 741880
Fax 01268 741881
Email rayleigh.towncouncil@btopenworld.com

Rochford

Electorate
5,868

Mrs J Rigby

Clerk of Rochford Parish Council
Parish Council Rooms
West Street
Rochford, SS4 1AS

Tel. & Fax 01702 540722

Stambridge

Electorate
548

Mrs A Bates

Clerk of Stambridge Parish Council
90 Woodfield Park Drive
Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 1LW

Tel. & Fax 01702 471466

Sutton

Electorate
104

Mr B Summerfield

Clerk of Sutton Parish Council
Sutton Hall Cottages
Sutton Road, Rochford, SS4 1LG

Tel. 01702 540774

Email bsummvint@hotmail.com

How to contact us

This is a directory of the services provided by Rochford District Council and their partners. If you know which service you want, please call the telephone number shown alongside that service. If you are not certain who you need to speak to, please contact one of our information centres:

Council Offices South Street Rochford SS4 1BW Telephone: 01702 546366 Fax: 01702 545737	Civic Suite Hockley Road Rayleigh SS6 8EB Telephone: 01702 318150 Fax: 01268 711931	E-mail: information@rochford.gov.uk or (if name of person is known) firstname.surname@rochford.gov.uk	Web site www.rochford.gov.uk
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If you require a service out of hours telephone 01268 527317.

Unless otherwise stated, the dialling code for the following numbers is 01702.

A

Abandoned Cars	318078
Accounts Payable	546366 Ext. 3112
Air Pollution	318045 or 318160
Animal Welfare	318045 or 318160
Architectural and Engineering Services	318115 or 318116
Arts	318120

B

Benefits (see Housing Benefit)	
Body Piercing and Tattooing	318045 or 318160
Bottle Banks	318099
Building Control	318081

Burials/Cemeteries	318127
Business Rates	318017

C

Caravan Sites	318045 or 318160
Car Boot Sales	318045 or 318069
Car Parks:	
- Maintenance	318116
- Parking Fees	318026
- Penalty Notices	318026
- Season Tickets	318026
Cemeteries	318127
Chairman's Civic Diary	318144
Charity Collections	318179

Children's Play Areas	318111
Citizens Advice Bureaux:	
- Hockley/Rayleigh	01268 770782
- Rochford	545552
Civic Suite:	
- Lettings	318150
Committees:	
- Agendas/Minutes	318140
- Dates of Meetings	318140
Community Safety	318103
Complaints	318128
Concessionary Fares/Issue of Passes	318028
Conservation Areas	318109
Council Meetings	318140
Council Tax Benefit (see Housing Benefit)	
Council Tax Payments:	
- General Enquiries	318020
- Direct Debit Payments	318027
- Recovery	318018
Councillors	318140
Country Parks (RDC District)	318117
(Essex County Council 01245 437714)	

D

Dangerous Structures/Demolitions	318082
Dog Fouling	318111
Domestic Violence	318112
Drain Blockages:	
- Council	318078 or 318079
- Private	318078 or 318079
Drug Reference Group	318112

E

Economic Development and Promotion	318165
Education (Essex County Council)	01245 436231
Elections	318136 or 318128
Electoral Registration	318136 or 318128
Essex County Council:	
- General Enquiries	08457 430430

F

Flag Days	318179
Flooding	318132
Food Safety	318045 or 318160
Fly Tips	318111

G

Garage Lettings	318065
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	318001
Grass Cutting	318111
Grounds Maintenance	318111

H

Health and Safety	318045 or 318160
Highways (Essex County Council)	01268 771458
Homelessness/Housing Advice	318158 or 318069
House to House Charity Collections	318179
Housing Benefit - Street names beginning with:	
A - L	318010/012/013
M - Z	318009 or 318011

Housing Defects:	
- Council	318079 or 318078
- Private Homes	318045 or 318160
Housing Forms	318064 or 318065
Housing Improvement Grants	318045 or 318160
Housing Repairs:	
- Council	318079 or 318078
Housing Rent Queries	318064 or 318065
Housing Transfers	318067
Housing Waiting List	318061

I

Infectious Diseases	318160 or 318045
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L

Land Availability	318102
Land Charge Searches	318133 or 318134
Leisure Centres:	
- Clements Hall, Hockley	207777
- Great Wakering Sports	219832
Leisure Services	318120
Libraries (Essex County Council)	01245 284981
Listed Buildings	318109
Litter Bins	318111
Litter Collection	318111
Lotteries	318141
Local Plans	318109

M

Mortgage Payments	546366 Ext. 3112
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N

Noise Nuisance	318045 or 318160
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P

Paper Banks	318099
Parks, open spaces and woodland	318117
Pavement Trading Licensing	318045 or 318160
Payments Online	318196
Pest Control	318045 or 318160
Planning Applications	318191
Planning:	
- General	318191
Planning Enforcement	318088
Police:	
- Rayleigh Police Station	01268 775533
- Rochford Police Station	547241
Pollution	318045 or 318160
Public Conveniences	318078 or 318079
Public Entertainment Licensing	318045 or 318160
Public Halls:	
- Freight House, Rochford	548977
- Castle Hall, Rayleigh	01268 778171
- The Mill, Rayleigh	01268 778171
Public Relations	318144
Public Rights of Way (Essex County Council)	01245 437099

R

Rates (see Council Tax or Business Rates)	
Records Office (Essex County Council)	01245 244644
Recycling Enquiries	318099

Refuse Collection:	
- Normal	318111
- Bulky Items	318124
Registrar of Births and Deaths	01268 777362
	01268 699214
Registrar of Marriages	343728
Rent Allowance/Rebate (see Housing Benefit)	
Rent (see Housing)	
Right to Buy	318064

S

Sewer Blockages	318078 or 318079
Sheltered Housing	318063
Social Services (Essex County Council)	01245 492211
Sports Development	318121
Stray Dogs	318077
Street Cleansing	318111
Street Charity Collections	318179
Street Lighting (on the highway) (Essex County Council)	01268 771458
Street Naming and Numbering	318082
Street Trading	318045 or 318160
Sunday Trading	318045 or 318160

T

Taxi Licensing Service	01702 318035
Taxi Vouchers	318026
Toilets	318078 or 318079
Tourism	318120
Tourist Information (Essex County Council)	01245 283400
Trading Standards (Essex County Council)	01245 341800

Traffic Signs (Essex County Council)	01268 771458
Tree Preservation Orders	318077 or 318117

W

Waste Disposal (Essex County Council)	01245 491222
Water Quality	318045 or 318160
Woodlands	318077 or 318117

Y

Youth/Community Safety	318112
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For your convenience, we have included the telephone numbers of several local organisations, but the Council is unable to accept any responsibility for services offered by those organisations

section 3

the fundamentals of local
government

The fundamentals of local government

Central Government context

Over the last few years, the Government has introduced a range of legislation and new initiatives aimed at the modernisation of local government. The Government is anxious to ensure that:

- Councils are empowered to lead their communities;
- Council's political decision-making processes are efficient, transparent and accountable;
- There is continuous improvement in the efficiency and quality of the services for which councils are responsible;
- Councils actively involve and engage the community in local decisions;
- Councils have the powers they need to ensure that they can promote and improve the well-being of their areas and contribute to sustainable development.

The Government's programme for the reform of public services is therefore designed to ensure that services are delivered in ways that:

- Are responsive to the concerns and needs of local communities;

- Improve continuously, especially in areas where there has been a pattern of under-performance;
- Are co-ordinated in ways which minimise duplication, maximise effectiveness, and present a concerted response to the causes of complex problems such as social exclusion and neighbourhood renewal; and
- Suit the needs of the consumer or citizen (rather than the convenience of the provider).

The three tiers

When it comes to knowing exactly who is responsible for providing you with local government services, it needs to be remembered that there are three tiers of Local Government operating within Rochford – the County Council, the District Council and a number of Parish/Town Councils across the District.

In terms of who does what:

County Council

- Emergency planning
- Waste disposal

- Education
- Libraries
- Social services
- Highways and transportation, including public transport and rights of way
- Trading standards
- Strategic land use planning in the form of the structure plan
- Minerals planning issues
- Tourism
- Employment promotion and economic development including European liaison

District Council

- Meeting future needs for housing in the district including the provision of grants for adaptations to disabled persons homes and improvement grants
- Planning – incorporating the preparation of statutory plans for land use and development, most development control, building regulations, and planning enforcement

- Environmental health – concerning the areas of food safety and hygiene, clean air, certain health and safety matters, environmental protection and nuisance
- Support for those who are homeless or the victims of domestic violence
- Refuse collection and waste recycling
- Street cleaning and the removal of fly-tips and abandoned cars
- Managing council-owned housing
- Collection of all council tax, including that relating to the County Council, the Parish/Town Councils and also the Police Authority
- Payment of housing and council tax benefit
- Town centre car parks in the Council's ownership
- Parks, open spaces and playing fields
- Leisure facilities
- Cemeteries and crematoria
- Employment promotion and economic development
- Introduction and enforcement of bye-laws

Town/Parish Councils

- Allotments
- Cemeteries, war memorials and the maintenance of some closed churchyards
- Aspects of the environment including litter control and bye-laws
- Social and recreational facilities such as parish and community halls, some parks, open spaces and playing fields
- Public amenities such as footway lighting, public seats and shelters, public clocks and off-street car parking areas

Towards a community strategy

The Local Government Act 2000 places a duty on each District Council to prepare a Community Strategy.

Whilst the District Council has the responsibility for its preparation, the Government advises that other agencies must play their part and commit to the strategy. These include not just the other tiers of Local Government, but other public agencies such as the police, health and the voluntary and business sectors. In the district of Rochford a partnership has been set up, the Rochford Local Strategic Partnership, to develop the Community Strategy.

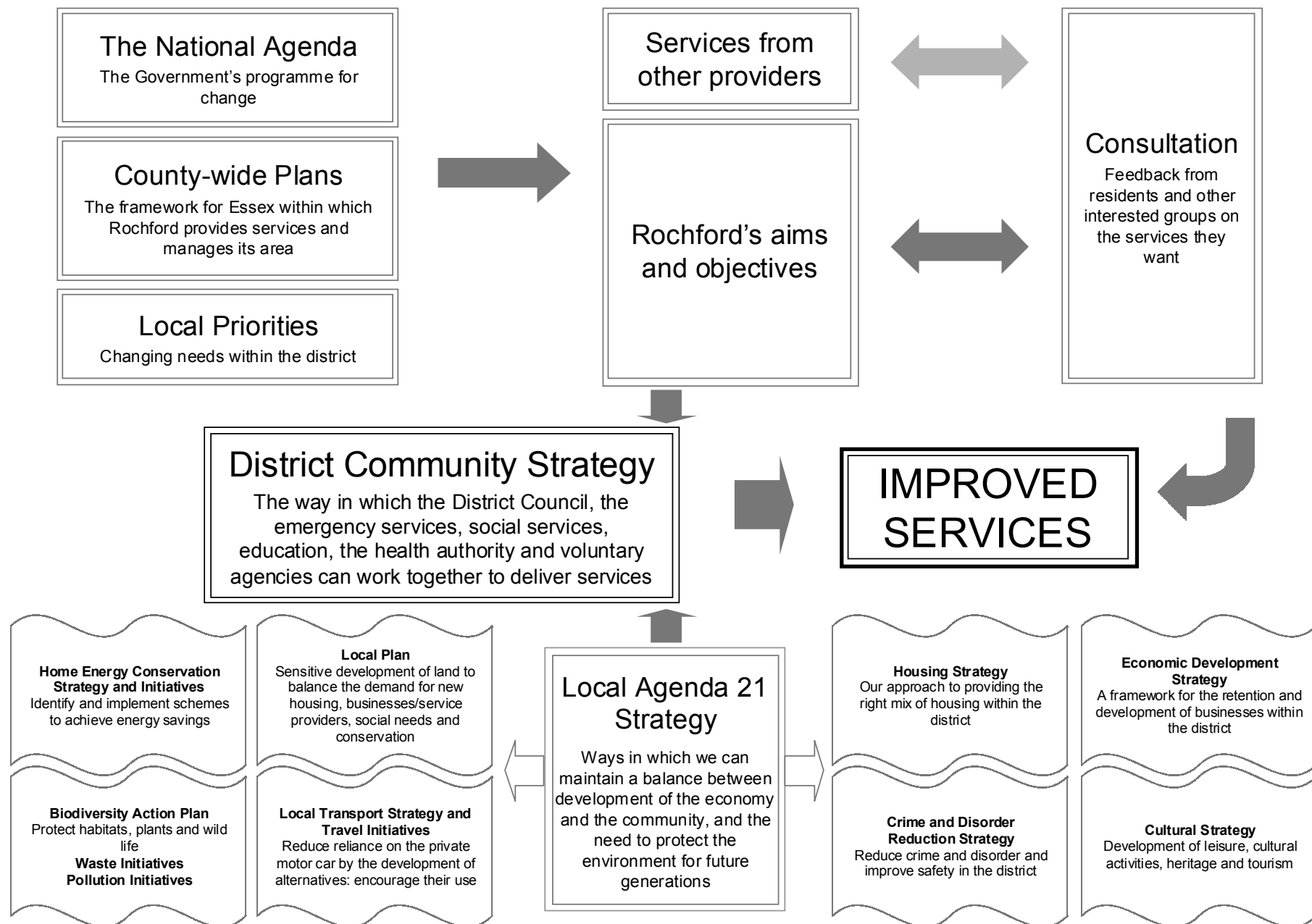
In the Government's view, a community strategy must have four key components:

- A long term vision for the area with achievable outcomes
- An action plan identifying shorter term priorities and actions which will contribute to the achievement of the longer term outcomes
- A shared commitment from a variety of agencies, not just the District Council, to implement the plan
- Arrangements for monitoring and reviewing progress of the plan

The Community Strategy will represent an integrated approach to tackling the problems and issues of the area and the delivery of services and actions in response to these. It will provide a fundamental tool for working with partners to improve services in the Rochford District.

A draft strategy has been developed for consultation with businesses and residents over the summer months. We will be attending fairs and fetes, schools and libraries, and other areas where we hope to get people's views.

The following diagram shows the importance of a community strategy to future service provision. It will provide the link between the national and county-wide agenda, local strategies and plans, and services provided by the Council and local partners.



section 4

the national agenda

The national agenda

The Government wishes to see a strong, vibrant, innovative and responsive local government delivering the quality of local leadership and public services that their communities need.

Consequently, since 1997, the Government has introduced a range of measures aimed at developing better local leadership and focussing on service delivery. The concept of best value, in other words continuous improvement, has been introduced and enacted through legislation. Local Public Service agreements (PSAs) between Government and County authorities such as Essex, have been concluded. These arrangements aim to encourage local authorities to stretch their performance targets in return for additional finance and freedoms.

New political arrangements and new constitutions have been brought in via the Local Government Act 2000. That legislation also saw the introduction of statutory community strategies and a broad new enabling power to promote 'community wellbeing'.

In December 2001, a local government white paper outlining further change – 'Strong Local Leadership - Quality Public Services' – was published. A new system of comprehensive performance assessment, together with the concept of scoring and league tables, has now been introduced for all local authorities. Counties and single tier authorities were assessed in 2002 and the assessment of district councils is now programmed for 2003 and 2004, with the Essex Districts

scheduled for inspection under this process in February 2004.

Further changes to the financial regime applied by central government to local government are currently going through Parliament and, subject to parliamentary approval, will take effect from later this year.

Legislation introducing reforms to the Planning system are also before Parliament, as is legislation in connection with the introduction of Regional Government. It is anticipated that both these Bills will become law in the next few months. Thus, the local Government landscape continues to change.

In subject terms, much of the Government's focus to date has been on education, health and social care, crime and disorder reduction, and transport. Many of the services in these areas are delivered by county councils or single tier authorities, although districts play an increasingly important role in respect of health and social care provision and crime and disorder reduction. In the Local Government White Paper, the Government acknowledged the role that districts play, recognising that they are responsible for many of the services – planning, housing, leisure, environmental services – which have a direct impact on quality of life. The Government's view is that district councils should not work in isolation.

There are particular issues facing districts that have limited resources and limited capacity to undertake significant discretionary activity, not least because they employ only a

small number of staff. The Government feels that districts should therefore work in partnership with other agencies, particularly county councils, to respond and adapt to meet local challenges.

More recently, the Government has issued further guidance in respect of the content of this Plan. In that guidance, the Government has stated that those national priorities to which district councils could contribute include the following:

- **Improving the quality of life**
 - of children, young people and families at risk by tackling child poverty, maximising the life chances of children in care or in need, and strengthening protection for children at risk of abuse
 - of older people, by enabling them to live as independent lives as possible and avoid unnecessary periods in hospital
- Promoting healthier communities and narrowing health inequalities by targeting key local services - such as health, education, housing, crime and accident prevention - to match need; and the encouragement of healthy lifestyles
- Creating safer and stronger communities by working with the police and other local agencies to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, strengthen community cohesion and tackle drug abuse

- Transforming the local environment by improving the quality, cleanliness and safety of public space
- Promoting the economic vitality of localities by supporting business improvement, providing positive conditions for growth and employment, improving adult skills, helping the hardest-to-reach into work, and extending quality and choice in the housing market

Responding to the Government's agenda

Local Government change and reform have been high on this Government's agenda. As outlined above, the pace and volume of change shows no sign of diminishing. Local authorities will therefore continue to need to balance the requirements of the national agenda relative to local demands and priorities, given the finite resources available.

As far as Rochford is concerned, we believe we have made good progress in addressing the national agenda, given the resource constraints within which the authority operates. To date the Council's achievements include the following:

- **Implementation of the Best Value process**

We have concluded a number of best value reviews of key services, details of which are given in section 8.
- **Implementation of a new political structure**

In response to the requirements of the Local Government Act 2000, which required local authorities to review and change their decision-making process,

the Council introduced a new revised committee structure and adopted a new Constitution last year.

- **Formation of a joint board with the local Health Authority**

In October 2001, the Council agreed to establish a joint member board, initially with the Rochford and Castle Point Primary Care Group (PCG) and latterly, the Rochford and Castle Point Primary Care Trust (PCT), which superseded the PCG in April 2002. This has recently been extended to include Castle Point Borough Council.

- **Participation in the County Council's Public Service Agreement (PSA)**

Essex County Council and Central Government signed a Public Service Agreement in February 2002. Within that agreement, there was scope for District Councils to become involved and participate. We have therefore signed up, in partnership with the County, to contribute to a number of areas that are part of the agreement.

- **Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy**

In March 2002, the Council, along with the Police, the Police Authority, the County Council, and Probation and Health, reviewed its Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy and agreed a new Strategy for the period 2002-2005. The implementation of the new strategy is overseen by a well-supported Partnership Committee

attended by representatives from a range of statutory, voluntary and community groups.

- **Community Planning and Local Strategic Partnerships**

The Local Government Act 2000 requires councils to lead in the development of local Community Strategies through local partnership arrangements. The Council has established a Local Strategic Partnership Group that has overseen the production of a draft Community Strategy. The draft has been developed for consultation with businesses and residents over the summer months. It is envisaged that the final strategy will form the basis of public service delivery in the district over the next 10 years. Further details of the components of the Community Strategy are given in section 3.

The challenge for Rochford

Local government needs to both promote and respond to the environment in which it finds itself. It is important that whatever problems and opportunities present themselves, the district council continues to aspire to improving its service provision.

The challenges that Rochford faces are considerable. They range from meeting rising expectations from the public against a background of continuing tight financial controls on public expenditure, to working with other organisations in areas

which, not that long ago, were seen as outside a local authority's remit, e.g. crime and disorder, and health.

Fortunately, Rochford is well used to both responding to and promoting change and having to reconcile a variety of competing demands and issues. For many years, the authority has had to provide a growing range of services and activities with limited funds. Whilst the potential to make significant step-change improvements is much harder to secure in a small local authority such as our own, Rochford has a good record of achievement.

Over the years, the Council has been able to show that having limited resources is no barrier to securing service improvements for its residents. The benefits secured from the tendering and negotiation process last year around the management of the council's leisure facilities is a good example of this.

In awarding the contract to Holmes Place, the Council secured a number of benefits. Over £7 million will be invested into the Council's facilities over the 20 year contract. In addition, the Council has saved approximately £400,000 per annum on the total operational cost associated with many of these facilities, including the ongoing programme of maintenance at all sites.

section 5

what we have been doing
in the past year

What we have been doing in the past year

The following table summarises the objectives we set ourselves for 2002/03, and tells you what we have and have not done.

Any further action that the Council is planning for the coming years, and its progress on action plans developed within completed best value reviews, has been included in section 7.

What we said . . .	What we did . . .
Move towards a balanced budget	The new council tax rates, together with those planned for the next two years, will enable us to balance expenditure and income
Undertake Best Value reviews of the following services: Financial Services	Completion of this review has been delayed and will report in July 2003. Some actions have already been implemented, including the amalgamation of the council tax and housing benefit service within the authority. We are also considering a joint-working arrangement with other authorities for business rates
Public Regulation, Inspection and Protection	We missed our completion date of December 2002 and the review is ongoing. We have consulted residents on the services concerned and what they wish us to deliver in the future. An action plan will be considered in September 2003 for approval and implementation thereafter.
Emergency Planning	An action plan has been approved which includes improvements to communication and media management, and a review of the emergency-planning arrangements. Details of our plans for delivery are included in section 8

What we said . . .	What we did . . .
Community Safety	The review has been completed, with the action plan addressing ways to tackle 'fear of crime', support for victims, and mediation on neighbourhood disputes. Details of our plans are included in section 8
Implement action plans arising from earlier reviews on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Strategy and Housing Management • Development Control and Building Control • Asset Management • Civic and Public Relations 	Details of progress on action plans coming out of these reviews are included in section 8
Carry out an initial comprehensive performance assessment of the authority by November 2002 designed to measure how effectively Rochford manages its services	An initial assessment was completed by December 2002. Formal self-assessment, based on new guidance, is now under way with a peer review timetabled for November 2003 and inspection in February 2004.
Complete the Department of Social Security's verification framework for housing benefit by August 2002, a scheme designed to reduce benefit fraud	This was completed by July 2002 and the scheme is fully operational
Develop the Council's website to provide information relevant to customers in the district by March 2003	The website has been enhanced over the year to provide more extensive information on what we do, how we do it, and what we plan to do. There is now a translation service available and the facility to pay council tax, business rates, rents, parking penalties and invoices on-line. Businesses and residents can view their own accounts on the web.

What we said . . .	What we did . . .
	<p>Searches for land charges on properties within the district can be ordered, and paid for, on the web and planning applications can be submitted electronically.</p> <p>A change-of-address form has been introduced that will provide a one-stop shop to notify a change to the relevant council departments.</p>
Implement and monitor the newly launched crime and disorder reduction strategy for the district	<p>We have introduced a system for fast-tracking the removal of abandoned vehicles.</p> <p>A study is being undertaken to identify the nature and incidence of crime in rural areas, as a first step to developing initiatives to address any issues that may be identified.</p>
Implement CCTV schemes in Hullbridge and Hockley by March 2003	Installation of these schemes was delayed but work is now being carried out for completion by the end of June. The scheme will also include the installation of cameras in Rochford.
Review our inspection regime for the health and safety of businesses in the district	Proposals for improvement have been agreed with the Health and Safety Executive. We now have a risk-based programme of inspections and in 2002/03 have completed 85, compared with the target of 40 we set ourselves
Prepare the Local District Plan to consultation stage by November 2002. This provides a planning and development framework for the district	We did not achieve the target date but the plan is now due for publication in July 2003

What we said . . .	What we did . . .
Formally open Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park by March 2003	In the past year the bridleways have been completed, the lake constructed, 28,000 trees planted and fences erected. The full public opening is scheduled for early September 2003 but HRH the Princess Royal visited the site in April to see the progress of works and to plant a ceremonial tree
Prepare a Woodlands Strategy for the district by December 2002. This will plan the provision and usage of woodlands over the next 5 years	A new woodlands strategy was introduced in March which will provide a 5-year plan for the maintenance and improvement of our woodlands, including access to the sites
Review the need for an extension of recycling activity	Our recycling rate in 2002/03 increased to 10.54% and by September 2003 a further 600 properties in Little Wheatleys will have access to the service
Examine options to reduce business waste and the use of natural resources by March 2003	This activity has been delayed due to staffing shortages but will be picked up in 2003/04
Review our fees and charges, particularly relating to car parking, by October 2002	We have adjusted the charging rates for different lengths of stay to respond to feedback from consultation
Produce an Economic Development Strategy for the District by November 2002	<p>This was produced in April 2003, for consultation with the business community during May and June. The final version will be published by October 2003.</p> <p>The strategy is looking at ways to encourage and develop businesses in the area and, through working together, to enable businesses to contribute to a quality environment and community safety within our district.</p>
Completion of town centre enhancement schemes for Rochford, Hockley and Hullbridge, in partnership with Essex County Council, by August 2002	<p>These works have concentrated on paving and street lighting.</p> <p>In Hockley electric cables have been put under ground and this has resulted in some delay to the works, with completion now expected in summer 2003.</p>

What we said . . .	What we did . . .
	<p>The scheme at Rochford has been completed and provides a focal setting for the town centre.</p> <p>In addition to the paving and lighting, work is being undertaken at Hullbridge on forecourts and the installation of waste bins. Phase 1 will be completed by July 2003: the 2nd phase will start soon after, with completion planned for December 2003.</p>
Review provision of play areas by November 2002 , including the feasibility of transference to the relevant Parish/Town Council	The play spaces at Hawkwell Common and Hockley Woods have been refurbished with new equipment and safety surfaces.
Review the Parish Partnership fund by July 2002.	<p>The fund awarded grants in 2002/03 to Barling and Foulness for the refurbishment of play areas; Ashingdon for the provision of skateboard facilities; and to Hockley for upgrading an open space/play area.</p> <p>Ashingdon decided not to proceed with their initiative in the light of local residents' concerns.</p> <p>The initiative was reviewed in July 2002 and it was decided not to roll the scheme forward in 2003/04.</p>
Upgrade Clements Hall and Mill Hall	<p>Completion of works at Mill Hall is imminent with a modernised foyer, improved catering and new furnishings.</p> <p>Improvements at Clements Hall are to include a sauna and jacuzzi, a 120-station fitness suite (including a spinning studio), new catering facilities and some improvements to the poolside area. This work is now planned for completion by Summer 2004.</p>

What we said . . .	What we did . . .
Preparation of a Community Strategy for consultation by March 2003. This strategy will provide a framework for improved partnership working and service delivery.	A draft community Strategy has been produced and we will be consulting those who can help deliver it during April and May 2003, with community consultation following between July and October 2003. The final plan will be published by March 2004
Draw up proposals for the new leisure facilities on the former Park School site by March 2003	Emerging proposals for the site include a four-court sports hall, squash courts, fitness suite, aerobic studio, healthy living centre, indoor bowls, and outdoor tennis and netball courts, plus a skateboard park and catering facilities. The works are due for completion by December 2005
Upgrade sheltered accommodation at The Lavers, Rayleigh by April 2003	This is a scheme designed to convert 16 bedsits to 12 flats. The first phase of six units has been completed but the full scheme will not be finished until September 2003
Review the support required from Rochford District Council and its partners for frail elderly by July 2003	Consultants have looked at housing and support needs of older people in the district. They are now considering further the needs within sheltered housing and we expect to produce a strategy by September 2003
Report on the housing condition survey by September 2002 with recommendations arising from the survey's conclusions	A survey of a sample of privately owned houses has been completed and this will be used to help decide future policy on improving housing in the district
Introduce citizenship awards for individual who have made a contribution to the local community	<p>The scheme was successfully launched in October 2002, with 39 excellent nominations received in the three categories.</p> <p>The winners in each category were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sophie Morgan for 'children of courage' • Eddie Hall for 'charitable support' • Jonathan Baker for 'community spirit'

What we said . . .	What we did . . .
	<p>The overall winner was 20-year-old Jonathan, whose Deputy Head nominated him for the contribution he had made to his school and the community at large.</p> <p>Winners attended the civic dinner to receive their awards and, in April, a small reception was held for all nominees and nominators to thank them for their involvement in the project.</p>
Obtain a lottery grant for works on the windmill at Rayleigh and commence restoration in Spring 2003	A lottery grant was not agreed. We are now developing a further application for a bid in 2003/04. Works will be programmed if and when a grant is available.
Make Heritage/Design Awards by October 2002	<p>We received nine nominations covering new developments, refurbishments, environmental improvement schemes and industrial developments.</p> <p>The overall winner was 3 East Street for its contribution to conservation, with a special award for the Old Boiler House (Rochford Lofts) for innovative development and two further, highly commended and commended, awards.</p>
Develop Mill Hall at Rayleigh as a venue for arts and entertainment, with works commencing by March 2003	In addition of the digital cinema facility, new improvements will provide better facilities for productions and for the visiting public.

Some successes and failures



The following tables illustrate some of our successes and failures over the past year, by showing

- **those activities where performance improved in 2002/03, and those where performance declined**
- **areas in which we performed well or poorly compared with other district councils in the Eastern Region in 2001/02, the most recent year when comparative figures are available**
- **those performance indicators on which our actual performance was significantly different from the targets we set ourselves for 2002/03**

These tables should not be read in isolation for each shows just one element of the picture. For the purpose of this section we have selected those indicators that focus on service delivery in specific areas and the management of the district.

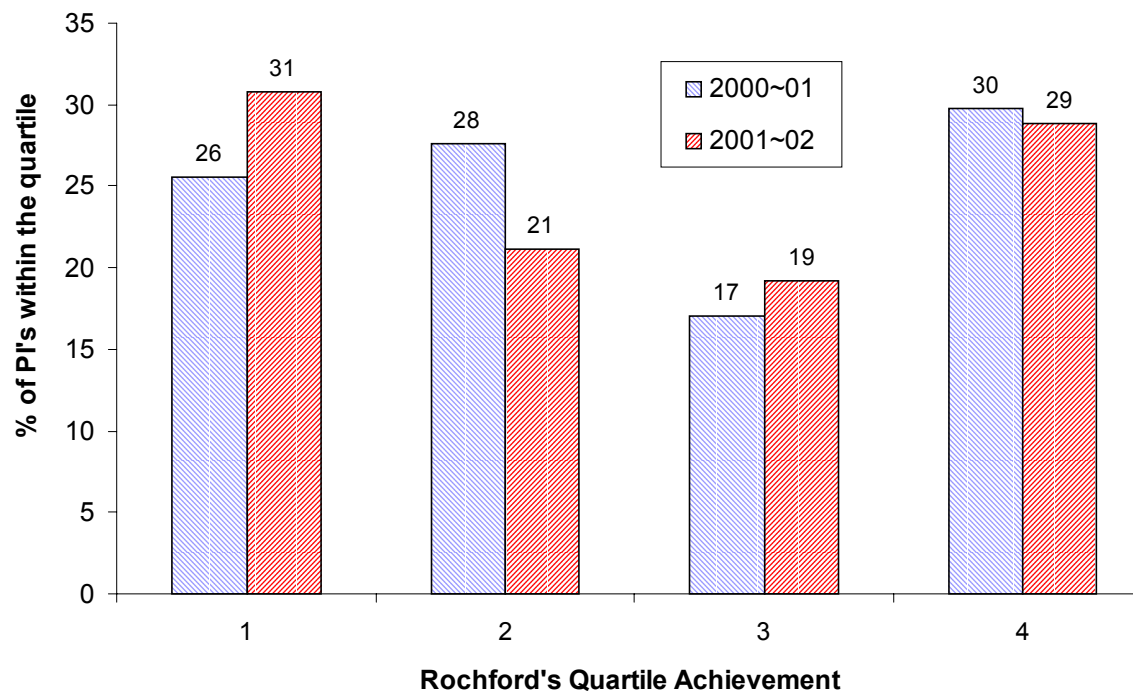
Full details of all our performance measurements, from which these examples have been taken, can be found in section 11. Indicator numbers have been given in brackets after the description. Those prefixed 'BV' are mandatory Government Best Value indicators whilst those with 'local' are Rochford's own performance monitors.

Our performance in 2002/03 compared with the previous year

	
Time to process new claims for housing benefit and council tax benefit (BV78a)	Percentage of recoverable overpayments of housing benefit that were recovered in the year (BV79b)
Household waste that is recycled or composted (BV82)	Time taken to process a new application and late renewals for a concessionary travel pass (local 2.11)
Cost of waste collection per household (BV86)	Time between receiving a housing application and acceptance as a qualifying person (Local 2.16)
Homes built on previously developed land (BV106)	Enforcement proceedings actioned within 10 days of instruction (local 8.3)
The percentage of authority buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled people (BV156)	
Number of complaints received (local 1.1)	
Number of days between the receipt of a request to purchase a council dwelling and acknowledgement of the right to buy (local 2.7)	
Homelessness applications on which a written decision is made within 33 working days (local 9.3)	



Our performance compared with other district councils

The following chart demonstrates how our performance on measurable performance indicators compared with district councils in the East of England in 2000/01 and 2001/02. This comparison provides data that demonstrates the quartile into which each of the indicators falls. There has been a substantial increase in the number of indicators within the top quartile but this has come principally from indicators that were in the second quartile rather than those on which we were performing less well. The number of above-average indicators dropped from 54% to 52%.



For indicators in the 4th quartile that were retained for 2002/03 we have, over the past year, looked at ways to improve performance and this will continue in the year ahead.

The following table summarises both areas where we did particularly well in 2001/02 and those where our performance was weak when compared with other district councils in the East of England. We will be concentrating our efforts on these weak areas.

Where we did very well 	Where we did poorly 
Invoices paid within 30 days (BV8)	Turn out for local elections (BV6)
Council tax collected during the year (BV9)	Unfit private sector dwellings made fit or demolished as a direct result of local authority action (BV62)
Rent collected (BV66)	Household waste that is recycled (BV82a)
Time taken to complete non-urgent responsive repairs (BV73)	Re-let times for local authority dwellings (BV68)
Time to process new claims for housing benefit or council tax benefit (BV78)	Urgent repairs completed in Government time limits (BV72)
Spend per head of population on cultural and recreational facilities and activities (BV116)	Our performance against a checklist to measure enforcement best practice for environmental health (BV166)
Domestic burglaries (BV126) and vehicle crime (BV128)	Waste collections missed (local 5.1)
Household planning applications determined within 8 weeks (local 3.1)	Homelessness applications on which a written decision is made within 33 working days (local 9.3)

Our performance in 2002/03 compared with the targets we set ourselves

		Indicator	Actual	Target	Comments
😊	BV78b	Time for processing notifications of change of circumstances (days)	9.41	14	Recruitment to full staff establishment enabled this improvement
😞	BV79b	Recoverable overpayments of housing benefit that were recovered in the year	36.83%	65%	Loss of key personnel left targets too challenging. Situation now corrected
😊	BV106	Homes built on previously developed land	52.74%	40%	This is difficult to target accurately
😊	BV109a	Planning applications for major developments processed in 13 weeks	50%	40%	Targeting is difficult as a mix of applications impacts on outcome
😞	BV166	Performance against a checklist on enforcement best-practice	27.4%	58.75%	Our performance has improved year on year but our target was over ambitious
😞	BV183	Average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation	11.7 weeks	4.5 weeks	The target was over optimistic
😊	Local 1.1	Complaints received in the year	244	360	Complaints reduced substantially in Housing and Contract Services
😊	Local 2.7	Time between receipt of request to purchase a council dwelling and acknowledgement of the right to buy	5.85 days	8 days	Low level of requests resulted in higher performance
😞	Local 2.16	Time between receiving a housing application and acceptance as a qualifying person	7.87 days	3.25 days	It was necessary to allocate resources to other priorities
😞	Local 8.3	Enforcement proceedings actioned within 10 days	74.63%	95%	Loss of key personnel affected overall performance. Situation now corrected
😞	Local 9.3	Homelessness applications on which a written decision is made within 33 working days	60%	70%	We have improved our performance on last year but missed the increased target

section 6

what you have told us

What you have told us

We are constantly trying to improve the services we provide and regularly ask for your comments and feedback through various surveys and questionnaires.

Here are some of the things you have told us throughout the year.

Transport

What you said

During the past year we have worked with a number of partners to research the transport needs of the community and conducted a community transport survey in the Christmas edition of Rochford District Matters.

Thanks to all of you who completed and sent back the forms.

Whilst a high proportion of residents in the area have cars, there are lots of people who don't and who experience problems in using public transport: this includes the young, elderly and people in rural areas.

The vast majority of your comments related to bus travel. Many were dissatisfied with the poor service, travel times and lack of buses in rural areas. A third of the respondents said that poor transport prevented them from shopping in local towns, visiting friends and relatives, and taking part in leisure activities. More than half said they would use a community transport scheme. The majority of people recognised the

benefits of such a scheme and, even if they might not need it now, thought they might do in the future.

What we are doing

Working with partners, including Rochford and Rayleigh Association of Voluntary Services, Essex County Council and Castle Point and Rochford Primary Care Trust, we are developing a community transport scheme for the district to address some of the problems. We aim to have this fully set up by the November 2003.

Taxi Voucher Scheme

Last April we introduced a new scheme of Taxi Vouchers to enable people with mobility problems to get out and about in the district using taxis paid for by the Council. This replaced the former 'Dial-a-Ride' scheme which Rochford people said was difficult to book, and was dominated by a small number of users.

What you said

The new taxi voucher scheme has proved so successful that we now have over 300 people using the scheme, far in excess of our initial expectations of 84.

90% of people who used the scheme were satisfied with it, with a high proportion saying it was a change for the better.

Most people said they would like more vouchers – particularly as the amount they received had reduced as the numbers that joined the scheme increased.

What we are doing

We obtained additional funding to provide some more vouchers but there was a considerable increase in the take-up of the scheme and consequently the number of vouchers allocated to each person will remain unchanged.

Car Parks

This survey asked drivers in our fee-paying car parks about their satisfaction with car parks, details of their usage of the car parks and how they could be improved.

What you said

The most common issues raised were:

- The reintroduction of a 1-hour charge
- Pay on exit parking
- CCTV/lighting
- More parking spaces
- More ticket machines

What we are doing

The 1-hour charge has been reintroduced from April 2003. Pay on exit parking has been investigated but has been found to be too expensive to implement. More ticket machines have been installed in Back Lane Car Park, Rochford, and others are being considered.

Lighting has been improved in many of the car parks - Southend Road, The Approach and Mill Hall/Bellingham Lane and CCTV has been installed in Mill Hall/Bellingham Lane.

Unfortunately the Council cannot increase the number of spaces in the car parks in and around the town centres without acquiring land, and our surveys show that there is still capacity in our existing car parks.

Council Tax

In November last year Council Tax payers were asked for their views on the service provided by the section dealing with council tax. The responses were generally favourable with some useful information being received that will help us improve our service in the future.

What you said

You told us that whilst you were generally satisfied with the service, including the office hours and the attitudes and efficiency of staff, you felt we could be more understanding when trying to recover arrears of council tax.

What we are doing

The Council will be considering this feedback as part of a review of all its financial services in the near future. In the mean time we have set up a specialist section, trained to deal with council tax recovery sympathetically. We have already taken action to enable people to pay their council tax electronically via the Council's web site, saving the time and cost of travelling to Council offices or the mailing of payments.

Recycling

In late 2002 and early 2003, a questionnaire was distributed to all residents that are currently participating in our kerbside recycling scheme. The questionnaire asked for residents' opinions on how specific aspects of the scheme were operating and attempted to discover how satisfied residents were with the scheme in general.

What you said

We received an enthusiastic response, with over half of residents returning the completed questionnaire. Feedback indicates that the majority of residents are satisfied with the kerbside recycling scheme.

What we are doing

We have already started to answer some of the questions asked such as why do we only recycle certain types of plastics, why don't we accept glass on the recycling scheme

and what to do about junk mail. The answers are in the March edition of Rochford District Matters. The Recycling section will continue to answer your questions through our newspaper over the coming months.

Our newspaper

We have undertaken a review of the Council's newspaper in each of the past two years to find out what you think about Rochford District Matters.

What you have said

As part of this you have told us that you are generally satisfied with the newspaper, and the articles in it. However one of the main problems is that not all of you get the paper. In part this is because it is not delivered to some areas where the paths are unmade or very dark. However, in others we have reports of the papers being 'dumped' before they get that far. We regularly check to see if you get the paper but have experienced problems in distribution particularly in rural areas, or those with access problems.

What we are doing

We are improving the content and relevance of the newspaper. We have recently taken over the design of the paper to improve its readability, and will avoid Council 'jargon' in our articles.

We continually follow up with our distributors where people have not received a copy of the newspaper. We have also

made copies available in a number of public buildings such as Clements Hall Leisure Centre, Civic Suite Rayleigh, Mill Hall, and Rochford District Council Offices in Rochford. Alternatively you can telephone Helen Collins on 01702 318161.

Future consultation

In order to improve our services we plan to ask for your views on a regular basis. The following surveys and consultations will be undertaken in the coming year:

- General satisfaction survey
- Housing benefits survey
- Planning survey
- Local plan consultation
- Community strategy consultation
- Consultation with those in sheltered housing on the new management arrangements
- Consultation with the business community on our Economic Regeneration Strategy
- Environmental satisfaction survey
- Licensing policy consultation
- Tenants survey

- We are also setting up a joint consultation forum with Castle Point Borough Council and the Castle Point and Rochford Primary Care Trust to enable us to consult with our residents on a more regular basis.

If you are interested in being part of this panel please let Helen Collins know on 01702 318161

section 7

our plans for the future

Our plans for the future

The Council's aims are

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

Clearly, in realising these aims in our plans, the resources we work within are key to their achievement. The balancing of our budget is an important factor in the achievement of our goals.

Our plans for the coming year

The Council has agreed its budget for 2003/2004. The key tasks for the year are those activities:

- Identified through the planning and budgetary process, many of which are required to meet the legislative demands placed upon the Council by Central Government

- Identified through the service review process which are aimed at tackling performance and service issues
- Required to meet political priorities which have emerged through the political process

The main efforts of the Council will be centred around the following corporate objectives.

To improve the quality and cost effectiveness of services we will . .

- **Maintain a balanced budget position**

The Council had been using its resources to support the delivery of services in the district to keep council tax at a low level. This position became increasingly unsustainable with a growing gap between Government grant and the cost of service delivery. Last year through the budget process the Council took action to move towards a balanced budget situation and maintain an adequate balance in reserves. That was achieved but it is important in this and succeeding years to maintain that position.

More details of the Council's budgetary situation are contained in section 10.

- **Complete our initial Comprehensive Performance Assessment of the authority by October 2003**

Comprehensive Performance Assessment is a requirement of government. The guidance for District Councils has now been finalised. Under the assessment, each District Council will be categorised as poor, weak, fair, good or excellent. The assessment will focus on:

1. What the Council is trying to achieve
2. How the Council has set about delivering its priorities
3. What the Council has or has not achieved to date
4. In the light of what the Council has learnt, what it plans to do next

The District Council will complete its initial self assessment by October 2003, in advance of formal inspection in February 2004.

- **Continue with best value reviews**

In the past year we commenced work on two major reviews: one relating to Financial Services; the other on Public Regulation, Inspection and Protection. We had hoped to complete both by December 2002 but both have involved significantly more resources than initially envisaged. Some conclusions have already arisen

from the Financial Services Review and we have already acted on these.

A key issue for the Public Regulation, Inspection and Protection review remains that of liquor licensing, which will become a local authority function in 2004. Final details are awaited, as the legislation is still before Parliament.

The Financial Services Best Value Review will be completed by July, with the Public Regulation, Inspection and Protection Review now timetabled for completion by September, subject to the licensing legislation being finalised.

This year we have commenced a further review on Our Environment. The review will focus on our contribution to the management of the physical environment, community safety and the provision of activities to positively engage children and young people. The programme is to finish the Review by October to feed into our Comprehensive Performance Assessment submission.

In addition to the above, we will continue to implement the action plans arising out of the Best Value Reviews we have already completed. Section 8 provides further details.

- **Continue to develop the council's website to provide information relevant to customers in the district**

The Council is continuing to develop its website to provide residents with information about Council services and to enable electronic delivery of some services. This work will continue throughout the year.

Improvements planned include:

1. Committee minutes, agendas and reports on line – November 2003
2. Electronic submission of planning applications – June/July 2003
3. On-line access to maps(Geographical Information System) – November/December 2003
4. Public access to planning application information – November/December 2003
5. Electronic processing of land charge searches (NLIS level 3) – December 2003

- **Further improve our customer interface**

This year we will be targeting our letter turn-around times and telephone answering response times to improve our customer communications.

We are setting a target for 2003/2004 of 90% of all letters requiring a response to be replied to within five working days and 80% of all telephone calls via the switchboard to be answered within 10 seconds.

- **Meet our Public Service Agreement targets**

As outlined in section 4, we have signed into the Public Service Agreement between Essex County Council and Central Government to deliver on a number of local targets related to some of our services. The areas covered are:

1. Increasing the proportion of homeless applications on which the authorities makes a written decision within 33 days
2. Increasing the percentage of planning applications determined in 8 weeks
3. Increasing the percentage of standard searches carried out in 10 working days
4. Improving the average time for payment of new claims for rent allowance
5. Reducing paper usage by Rochford District Council
6. Reducing the number of days lost due to sickness absence in Rochford District Council

These cover some of the key services areas where the Council has recognised it needs to improve. The targets run for a 3-year period from 2002/2003 through to 2004/2005. It is important that we focus on the 6 areas both in this financial year and next year to ensure that we deliver.

- **Improve our refuse collection in respect of 'missed bins' collection**

Our refuse contractor, Serviceteam, has specific targets in respect of "missed bin" collections. This is a key customer service and so our aim this year is to improve our performance on both the number of missed bins and the number of missed bins collected the following day. Targets for this and the next two years (local 5.1) are detailed on page 11.17.

- **Determine the way forward following our review of Council accommodation**

Over the past 18 months, the Council has been examining its accommodation in the context of the Disability Discrimination Act, its overall service delivery, and the potential offered by developments in its IT capacity. The results of that work, together with appropriate costings, are now being brought together so that a decision can be taken on the way forward. Decisions are anticipated by September/October so that work can commence in January 2004.

- **Work towards securing 'Investor in People' status for the whole Council over the next 12 months**

Staff are the Council's most important resource. A range of measures are already in place and further initiatives are being progressed to ensure that the Council continues to develop and learn as an organisation. As part of its workforce development programme, and in recognition of achievements over a period, the Council plans to obtain Investor in People status by July/August 2004.

- **Work towards meeting our obligations under the Freedom of Information Act**

The Freedom of Information Act comes into operation across the public sector in January 2005. From that date, individuals have a right of access to information held by the Council, with certain limited exceptions. The Council has already made good progress in implementing the provisions of the Act, including the production of a list of all publications available to the public. A detailed action plan for the final roll-out phase is scheduled for January 2004.

- **Develop electronic purchasing within the authority**

Along with five other authorities in Essex, the District Council has recently entered into an 'e-procurement' consortium using IdeA's 'marketplace' system, designed to enable the purchasing of goods and services electronically. The system will take between 9 – 15 months to roll out effectively across all activities and the intention is to be fully operational by October 2004.

To work towards a safer, more caring community we will . . .

- **Continue to monitor progress and implement as appropriate the actions arising out of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy for the District (2002-2005)**

This strategy identifies a range of objectives and actions for implementation over a 3-year period until March 2005. The focus is on the prevention of crime, particularly burglary, vandalism, violent crime, speeding and drug abuse. Work on implementing the strategy is overseen by the Rochford Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, a forum which comprises the main statutory partners, parishes and representatives from community and voluntary groups.

Particular actions to be pursued this year include:

- Fast-tracking to rehabilitation for those misusing drugs
- Completion of a study to identify the incidence and nature of rural crime
- Initiatives related to addressing business crime
- Provision of a daytime drop-in centre for those suffering from domestic violence

- **Address the needs of the elderly and frail elderly**

With our partners in Health and the County Council, we are developing a range of services to address the needs of the elderly and frail elderly. To this end, we will be looking to approve a frail elderly housing and support strategy by October 2003.

Subject to confirmation that revenue support funding is available, we will also be working with Swan Housing Association to ensure that a scheme to redevelop Hardwick House, one of the Council's existing sheltered schemes, commences by March 2004 at the latest.

- **Develop the Council's health and safety and food safety inspection regimes**

Health and safety service and food service plans, outlining key activities and targets in respect of the Council's health and safety and food safety work, will be submitted to Council for agreement in July 2003.

- **Reduce the turnaround times associated with council housing voids**

To this end, we have revised our monitoring procedures and set ourselves a turnaround time for void properties of 38 days for 2003/04.

- **Develop alternatives to the use of bed-and-breakfast accommodation for the homeless**

We intend to stop the use of bed-and-breakfast accommodation for the homeless by April 2004

- **Develop a strategy to bring empty houses back into use**

The intention is to produce a strategy to reduce the number of privately-owned empty houses by December 2003.

- **Continue with the rolling programme of playground refurbishment to ensure that our play spaces remain in good condition, meet health and safety standards and provide good play value**

Over the past few years, the Council has established a rolling programme for play area improvements. This has ensured that play areas remain in good condition, meet health and safety standards and provide good play value. On average, the programme funding allows us to address two play areas per year. The programme has also afforded us the opportunity to look at the type of play facilities on offer and in some instances has allowed us to provide radically different provision, such as skateboarding facilities. The rolling programme has also provided us with the opportunity to discuss with the local Parish/Town Council whether they wish to contribute to the refurbishment scheme under consideration and take over the future

responsibility for maintaining what is essentially a very 'local' facility.

- **Complete the 12 months trial of sheltered housing management**

The Council commenced a trial of new working arrangements for its sheltered housing scheme managers in March 2003. This provides a centralised out-of-hours service to support those managers.

Early views from tenants are now being sought and initial findings at the 6 month stage will be reported into Council in September/October. The final consultation will take place in February 2004 with evaluation and report back completed by April 2004.

- **Produce a new animal welfare charter for the Council by December 2003**

The Council is looking at its responsibilities and functions in respect of animal welfare. The intention is to produce a new charter by December 2003.

- **Develop our policies and services in respect of young people**

Over the past few years, the Council has, through its crime and disorder reduction initiatives, sports and arts initiatives, playground improvement programme and citizenship initiatives, worked hard on enhancing the services and facilities it can offer to young people. Through working with the County Council, who have

the overarching responsibility for education and youth services, the Council is looking to further develop its role.

The Council recognises it is important to take stock of its position, particularly in this area where there have been a number of initiatives in recent years, and so the Council plans to formally review its policies and services to young people between October and December 2003.

- **Develop our policy and service response in respect of gypsies and other travellers**

There have recently been a number of unauthorised encampments setting up and moving around the district. Enforcement action has been taken where possible but the process is an extremely lengthy and resource-intensive one. The Government itself is reviewing its policy framework and initiatives in respect of the gypsy/travelling community.

The Council will formally review its policy and service response to gypsies/travellers between January and June 2004.

To promote a green and sustainable environment we will . . .

- **Progress the Local District Plan through its various statutory stages to adoption**

The new Local Plan will set out the planning and development framework for the period to 2011. It identifies where development will take place over the period and the planning criteria which will be applied. It provides guidance for the growth of business and for the provision of land for other activities such as public open space and leisure activities.

The consultation on the first deposit draft will commence by July 2003 and will continue through until September/October 2003.

The responses to that consultation will then be assessed with the second draft likely to be placed on deposit in early 2004. The current programme is for a public local inquiry on the plan to be held next summer. However, this may change in the light of the content of the Planning and Compensation Bill currently going through Parliament. Under the Bill, local plans will be superseded by Local Development Documents (LDDs). Depending on the timing of that legislation and progress on the plan, rather than proceed to a public local inquiry, the content of the Local Plan may be amended to become the Rochford Local Development Document.

- **Continue to implement the development plan in connection with Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park**

Works completed to date are detailed on page 5.4. The Princess Royal officially planted a ceremonial tree in the Park in April 2003.

The Park is now to officially open for public access from September 2003. We will also continue to roll out our ongoing development plan, which now includes the physical expansion of the park both to the west and to the east towards Cherry Orchard Way, as identified in the new Local Plan.

The Council has already been successful in securing funding for this project from both the Forestry Commission and Thames Gateway South Essex and will continue to seek external funding from these and other sources, as appropriate, to develop the project.

The Council plans to investigate the development of a Trust to oversee and safeguard the Country Park. This work will commence in late 2003 with the aim being to make a decision on this before August 2004.

- **Roll out the Woodland Strategy agreed by Council in March 2003**

The Council has prepared a strategy for managing its woodland areas over a five-year period. This strategy will also help the Council obtain funding to support its work from both the Forestry Commission and English

Nature in the coming years. With the strategy having been agreed, a detailed action plan is now being drawn up for Council approval by August 2003.

- **Progress the Community Transport Strategy agreed by the Council in early June 2003**

The Council has now agreed to a Community Transport Strategy in partnership with Rayleigh, Rochford, and District Association for Voluntary Service. This will provide a Community Car Scheme, which will offer pre-arranged trips for those who find it difficult to use or access regular forms of public transport, and a minibus priority service, by November 2003.

- **Review recycling activity**

Performance is continuing to improve in this area of activity, with the Council already exceeding the current Government's target of 10% by the end of 2003/2004.

This year a further 600 properties in Little Wheatleys will be added to the scheme.

The continued effectiveness of the kerbside recycling scheme and its potential for further expansion will be reviewed by September 2003. Any further increase in the number of households covered, however, will be dependent on additional resources over and above the current budget allocation.

At the time of our formal review of the scheme last summer, the Council concluded that any real expansion of the existing kerbside scheme to achieve a real boost over and above the current domestic recycling rate would require specific government funding.

- **Develop a specific recycling scheme targeted at local businesses**

Working with the local business community, we are aiming to progress a specific 'green' business initiative for consideration by the Council by November 2003 with implementation, subject to approval, by April 2004.

- **Undertake a further review of the district's air quality**

An assessment of the District's air quality will be completed and submitted to Government by July. Depending on the outcome of that, if a further detailed air quality assessment is required, the options for carrying that out will be considered by Council in September.

To encourage a thriving local economy we will . . .

- **Produce a final version of our Economic Development Strategy for the District by October 2003**

A draft strategy, which sets out the role of the Council in terms of local economic development and identifies

key priorities for the future, is currently out for consultation with the local business community. The intention is to look at the comments received, review the draft strategy in the light of that feedback, and produce a final strategy by October 2003, together with an action plan.

- **Finalise our consultation protocol with the local business community**

We have been working on a consultation protocol with the local business community. Both parties are keen to develop their working relationship and a draft protocol has been produced which is now out for comment. It is envisaged the protocol will be finalised by October 2003, in tandem with the Economic Development Strategy.

- **Continue to promote 'local' businesses through their inclusion on the Council's approved list of contractors, where appropriate**

The Council operates an approved list of contractors in connection with many of its functions. Whilst there are a variety of criteria for inclusion on the list, the Council is mindful of its role in the local community and has attempted to ensure that, where appropriate, local businesses are included. This list is reviewed annually.

The Council's work in this area will need to take into account the work now being done in connection with e-procurement (see page 7.4)

- **Work with Thames Gateway South Essex on the Thames Gateway regeneration project**

Thames Gateway is the largest regeneration project in Europe and is identified by Government as a national priority.

A large part of South Essex has been included in the Gateway and the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership has been established to oversee work in the area. The Partnership's plans and activities will be developed and implemented in the area over the next 20 years. Rochford District Council is a full member of the partnership, although only a small part of the designated Gateway area falls within our district, mainly around the airport.

The Council will continue to play a full role in the development of the partnership's work to make sure that Rochford District is well represented and has an input into the decision-making processes on investment, infrastructure, and other key issues to be addressed within the Gateway area.

The Partnership will be launching its overall strategy for Thames Gateway South Essex in July 2003. Within that document, the District's main role is seen as contributing towards the leisure, recreation and tourist aspirations of the Gateway.

- **Review the location and operation of Rayleigh market**

This market currently operates on a Wednesday from the Council car park adjoining the Civic Suite in Rayleigh. With the lease to use the car park for the market falling due for renewal shortly, the opportunity exists to look at its location and operation in the context of the town centre at Rayleigh, which has seen considerable investment in recent years resulting from partnership working of the District Council, County Council and the Town Council.

The Council intends to complete this review, involving the market operator, the local chamber of trade, other partners and interest groups, by September 2003.

- **Review our policy on enforcement**

This area of activity is being initially examined within the context of the Public Regulation, Inspection and Protection review. The intention is to have a new enforcement policy in place no later than April 2004.

To improve the quality of life for people in the district we will . . .

- **Continue to upgrade the Council's leisure facilities**

Holmes Place, who were appointed the Council's leisure contractors in April 2002, will be upgrading Clements Hall in this financial year. This upgrade follows on from the refurbishment works carried out to

the Mill Hall. The refurbishment of Clements Hall, which is the main leisure centre in the District, will represent a major upgrade of the facility and is now scheduled for completion by next summer. A summary of the planned improvements are detailed on page 5.5.

- **Progression of new leisure facilities on the former Park School site**

This year will see the development of a finalised scheme with costings and the submission of a planning application in late 2003 or early 2004. The intention is for planning permission to be secured no later than summer 2004 so that work can then commence on site before the end of the calendar year. Our proposals for development are outlined on page 5.6.

- **Finalise the Community Strategy for Rochford District**

A Local Strategic Partnership has been set up to look at how organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors can best work together to provide 'joined-up' services within the district. The partnership has overseen the production of a draft community strategy which will be launched in July 2003. Consultation on this strategy will take place over the summer through to October. Responses to the consultation will then be considered and it is the partnership's intention to finalise the strategy by March 2004.

- **Develop the Council's strategic and business framework in respect of housing**

The Council is now preparing strategies in respect of homelessness and private sector housing stock. These strategies will be finalised by July 2003.

Both will feed into an overall housing strategy and a housing business plan, which, following discussion with GoEast, the Government's regional office, now have to be completed and submitted to the regional office by October 2003.

Together, these documents will form the framework and means through which the Council will respond to, plan and carry out its functions in respect of the private sector, other public sector and its own housing stock.

- **Commence the refurbishment and conversion to residential of the two empty shop units in Rochford Garden Way**

As part of the overall upgrade of this area, works on this scheme will commence in July with completion by October/November 2003.

- **Continue the refurbishment/upgrade of the Council's sheltered housing stock**

Stage 1 of the Lavers Sheltered Housing Scheme upgrade is now complete and work has commenced on stage 2, which will be completed by September 2003.

However, before committing to further schemes, the Council will review its programme in the light of its emerging Housing Strategy and Business Plan, taking into consideration the conclusions of the work being completed in connection with the frail elderly, and hopefully the progression of the Hardwick House scheme.

- **Continue to work towards the implementation of decriminalised parking enforcement in the District by October 2004**

The enforcement of roadside parking restrictions in the District currently rests with the Police and the traffic warden service managed by them. From October 2004, this responsibility will transfer to the District Council. Hence, the Council is currently in the process of implementing its action plan to ensure that the work is transferred in accordance with the programme.

- **Introduce our new responsibilities in connection with liquor licensing as smoothly as possible**

Legislation is currently going through Parliament that will transfer the responsibility for liquor licensing from magistrates to the local authority from early 2004. The Public Regulation, Inspection and Protection review is considering the best means of managing this new responsibility and will be reporting with its conclusions in September 2003. Whatever the means chosen to carry out this new function, the Council plans to have a Licensing Policy in place by December 2003.

- **Carry out a refurbishment programme of its public toilets**

In 2001/2002, the Council completed the refurbishments of its two main public toilets in Rayleigh and Rochford. The intention is now to refurbish the remaining 5 public facilities. Two toilets will be refurbished in 2003/2004 and three in 2004/2005.

- **Upgrade the drainage associated with our playing fields at Rawreth Lane and St John Fisher**

The Council has recently been successful in its application for lottery funding to improve the drainage of its playing fields at Rawreth Lane and St John Fisher. The works will commence in July with completion by late August, in time for the new football season.

- **Upgrade our sports pavilions and sports grounds to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act**

The Council is currently finalising its detailed programme for its pavilions and sports grounds. Once agreed, the intention is to ensure that all the works identified are completed by October 2004.

To maintain and enhance the local heritage and culture of the district we will . . .

- **Submit a new lottery bid for the Windmill and its environs at Rayleigh**

A lottery bid for £180,000 was made for improvement works to the Windmill at Rayleigh. The works involved preservation and restoration to enable increased access to the windmill by the community, including disabled access. Unfortunately this bid was rejected in March 2003.

Following discussions with officials from the Heritage Lottery Fund, a revised bid is now being prepared. The plan is to submit the revised bid no later than November 2003. If approved, work on the restoration of the Windmill and the adjoining areas will commence by next summer 2004, subject to any necessary permissions being granted.

- **Prepare a draft Cultural Strategy for the district by November 2003**

A cultural strategy has already been produced for the whole of Essex by the County Council in partnership with the Districts. The Council is looking to produce a draft strategy for the District by November 2003. This will provide a framework the Council's approach for the development of arts, heritage, sport, tourism and outdoor recreation.

- **Develop the promotion of the 'arts' across the district.**

The Council is working with the Rochford Arts Forum to promote various arts and activities across the District. As part of the overall programme, the Council is looking to promote five arts events across the District in this financial year and organise five events in schools. The Council is also looking to facilitate two visiting museum events by next March.

Our plans for the next three years

To improve the quality and cost effectiveness of services we will . . .

- **Continue to focus on maintaining a balanced budget**

Rochford District Council continues to receive the lowest grant funding from Central Government of all the authorities in Essex and one of the lowest in the country.

Through the 3-year budget strategy and decision making on relative priorities, the Council will maintain a balance between its income and expenditure.

- **Implement the action plans arising from the Comprehensive Performance Assessment of the authority**

As outlined earlier, the inspection of the Council under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment programme for District Councils is scheduled for February 2004. Following that inspection, a report and action plan will be produced by July 2004. The plan will undoubtedly form a key part of the Council's work programme for 2004/2005 and 2005/2006.

- **Progress our 'E-Government' Strategy**

By the end of 2005 the Council aims, wherever possible, to deliver its services electronically to those who wish to access services in this manner.

- **Develop our risk management culture and systems**

The Council has a risk management strategy in place and is working on developing a risk culture and appropriate systems across the authority.

Whilst much is planned in 2003/2004, it is important that the focus remains on this area of work over a sustained period.

- **Maintain our focus to deliver the Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets in place with the County Council and Central Government**

As outlined on page 7.3, the Council wishes to improve its performance over a period in the areas identified. In addition, there is a financial incentive for the Authority to achieve the targets set.

- **Implement the decisions taken in connection with the review of the Council's accommodation**

Having determined the most appropriate locations and configurations of the offices and functions of the Council, one area of focus over the next three years will be the implementation of those outcomes.

To work towards a safer more caring community we will . . .

- **Produce a new Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy by March 2005**

This will incorporate an audit of the community safety issues in the district, measure reductions in crime achieved since the previous three-year strategy was produced, and identify initiatives to further reduce crime and disorder.

- **Implement our conclusions following our review of policies and services in respect of the frail elderly and young people**

Given the work that the Council is carrying out in these areas at present, these will be key areas of activity for the Council over the next three years.

- **Determine the way forward in connection with our own housing stock no later than December 2005**

As required by Government, the Council will need to look at the options relating to the management of its own stock no later than 2005. The details around this and the timeframe will be further outlined in the Council's Housing Strategy and Business Plan.

To promote a green and sustainable environment we will . . .

- **Review our kerbside recycling initiative**

Subject to sufficient resources being made available by Government, we aim to maintain progress towards achievement of the Government's household waste recycling and composting target of 18% in 2005/2006.

- **Continue to implement our proposals relating to the management and expansion of Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park**

The Council's plan is to substantially complete its proposals for the Country Park by March 2005, so that

the area can then start to realise its potential as a community resource, providing opportunities such as guided walks and school trips.

Whether the Council can fully achieve its aspirations is dependant upon the Council acquiring the land it has identified to secure its expansion and the continued support from organisations such as the Forestry Commission and Thames Gateway South Essex, in terms of funding and resources.

- **Continue to progress work on our Local Plan to Public Inquiry and adoption stage, if appropriate, or move towards a Local Development Document, as required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Order Bill**

We will continue to focus on getting our future planning framework in place, either via the existing Local Plan system or via the emerging new system of a Local Development Document. Much will depend upon the progress of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Order Bill and the advice received from GoEast, the Government's Regional Office.

To encourage a thriving local economy we will . . .

- **Continue to work with Thames Gateway South Essex to deliver the Thames Gateway initiative**

The Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership will continue to be an important and growing influence on the work we do, impacting on a variety of our policies

and activities. Of particular interest to Rochford is the potential to develop in the areas of leisure, recreation, and tourism, within the context of the wider sub-region of Thames Gateway South Essex.

For Rochford District Council the key priorities will be:

- with Southend Borough Council, resolving the future of London Southend Airport and its environs;
- developing and extending the Green Grid concept across the district and, in particular, Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park;
- promoting the leisure and tourism potential of the district and securing new hotel provision in the area;
- promoting the enhancement of Rochford town as a centre for 'arts and crafts'
- conserving and enhancing the district's heritage, particularly in the centres of Rochford and Rayleigh;
- enhancing rail and bus interchange facilities across the district; and
- securing high value-added employment.

To improve the quality of life for people in the district we will . . .

- **Build a new sports facility on the former Park School site to be open in 2005**

In 2005, the Council expects to open a new sports facility on part of the site of the former Park School through working with the County Council, who currently own the site, and the District Council's leisure contractor, Holmes Place. A summary of our plans is outlined on page 5.6.

- **Roll out the actions contained in the Community Strategy**

The Community Strategy is a plan for the local delivery of services to meet the needs of the Community.

Following agreement to the strategy in March 2004, the intention will be to implement any agreed programme of actions attributable to the Council and, through the Local Strategic Partnership, monitor progress on the implementation of the strategy.

- **Complete the refurbishment of the Council's sheltered housing schemes**

Subject to agreeing the way forward in terms of older-persons accommodation (see page 7.5) the intention will be to continue to upgrade the Council's existing sheltered facilities.

- **Complete the upgrade of the Council's public toilets**

The intention is to complete the upgrade programme of the Council's 7 public toilets by March 2005.

To maintain and enhance the local heritage and culture of the district we will . . .

- **Complete improvement works on the Windmill and its environs at Rayleigh**

Subject to approval of our revised lottery application and receipt of the necessary permissions, works will commence in summer 2004.

- **Continue to focus on the promotion of the 'arts' across the District**

Development of 'arts' activities across the District is seen as something the Council needs to build on year by year in the context of an approved cultural strategy.

section 8

our programme for
service reviews

Our programme for service reviews

The programme

The service review programme published in our 2002 plan was:

2002/03

Financial Management	The ways and means of managing all monies moving into, through and out of the organisation
Public Regulation, Inspection and Protection	Those issues that affect the public including licensing, food safety, health and safety enforcement, pollution, and planning enforcement

2003/04

Managing our Environment	The operational issues of managing the Council's environmental contracts and services
Environmental Stewardship	The means for using resources to protect the environment for future generations
Transport Activities and Parking	Community transport initiatives, taxis and parking within the district

2004/05

Communications	The means for developing corporate thinking throughout the organisation, and the Council's interface with the public
Democratic Renewal	Operation of committees, elections and electoral registration, and review of how the new political structure is bedding in

2005/06

Support Services	What goes on behind the scenes to support front-line delivery
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When best value was first introduced it was a requirement that all services had to be reviewed over a 5-year period. It is now accepted that this can result in substantial time and money being spent on reviews that will make little difference to those using the service, or the community at large. Fewer, more cross cutting, reviews are being encouraged.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment has now been introduced within local government, designed to measure how well a local authority is identifying what it is trying to achieve and how it is going about achieving it. There is a need to

concentrate on an assessment of Rochford District Council's performance during the coming months, pending an inspection in February 2004, and consequently we have reassessed our review programme.

Only one review will be undertaken in 2003/04. This will amalgamate the two former reviews on Managing Our Environment and Environmental Stewardship, into 'Our Environment'. This commenced in April and is due to report in October 2003.

The planned review on Transport Activities and Parking has been put on hold pending changes relating to the decriminalisation of parking enforcement.

We do not intend to set a programme for subsequent years in future as we need to be able to respond to priorities flowing from the Comprehensive Performance Assessment, from changes to national priorities, and from issues arising from time to time within the many services that we provide.

This year there is a need to undertake a number of consultations with residents and again these will provide feedback to us on what we do well, and not so well, helping us to identify the things we need to look at.

Our progress on the 2002/03 reviews

Unfortunately both these reviews are running behind schedule with the expected dates for completion being:

Financial Management	July 2003
Public Regulation, Inspection and Protection	Sept 2003

This does not mean that changes are not already being made: where potential improvements are identified within the review process, in some instances these are implemented before the review is completed.

The outcomes of these reviews, and the actions planned for the future, will be reported in our next plan.

Outcomes from earlier reviews

Some of the principal actions that have been implemented, or are to be implemented within the next three years, are:

Asset Management (2000/01)

This review concentrated on the means for managing Council assets in the future. Actions include:

- A local land and property gazetteer, which provides a consistent way of identifying properties, is being introduced in stages for completion by December 2003

- A computerised land management system is also being introduced in tandem with the gazetteer. This will enable us to better manage our property and land assets
- The necessary works for disabled access to our buildings will be completed by October 2004
- We are currently reviewing the council's office accommodation, and how it helps or hinders effectiveness of service delivery.
- Development of Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park and a new leisure facility at the former Park School site is being progressed. Details are summarised on pages 5.4 and 5.6.

Civic and Public Relations (2000/01)

This review looked at the Council's success in informing the public and its contribution towards development of our community through civic events. Actions include:

- a Chairman's page was introduced on the website in May 2002 and a Chairman's charity page was added in June 2002
- representatives from charity and community groups attended the civic reception in March 2003

- We are continuing to provide information to our residents through Rochford District Matters and have improved the format and content
- A citizen's award scheme has been introduced with the first year's awards being presented in March 2003
- We are currently setting up a new contract for the printing and distribution of Rochford District Matters.

Leisure (2000/01)

This concentrated on sports, culture, arts and general recreational facilities in the district, including tourism.

Actions include:

- We introduced new management arrangements for our leisure facilities in April 2002 and are now rolling out improvements to Clements Hall. Our plans are detailed on page 5.5
- Plans to develop Park Sports Centre are on target for completion by December 2005. Details of our plans can be found on page 5.6
- We have produced a directory of facilities for hire
- The summer sports programme was developed further last year to include such activities as kite

flying, bowls and archery. The overall take-up increased by 25%

- A directory of sports and arts facilities, and clubs in the district, is now available at reception and on the web
- The pavilions to be upgraded have been identified, including issues around disabled access, and works will be completed by October 2004
- We will be submitting a second bid in late autumn 2003 for a lottery grant to develop the Windmill as a potential tourist attraction
- A district-wide playing pitch assessment was completed in November 2002 and incorporated into the new Local Plan
- The website is being developed further to provide information to residents on sports, leisure and arts activities
- A plan for usage of the woodlands was completed in March 2003. Details are given on page 5.4
- Land at Blatches Farm has been developed as the Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park. Information on what we have achieved so far is detailed on page 5.4. Opening is planned for September 2003.

- A week-end sports festival was held at Clements Hall to give children taster sessions in sports

In the past year an Arts Week and several other arts events took place

We ran play schemes for children with disabilities during the year and this will continue

Strategic Housing (2001/02)

This looked at the role of housing within Rochford covering:

- our own stock
- housing associations
- private landlords
- residential mobile homes
- owner-occupied homes

Actions include:

- A review of housing schemes to help young mothers, identified that no additional support units were required
- We have secured capital funding to build additional supported accommodation for those with learning difficulties
- We will review the accommodation needs for young people and the development of the Shared Ownership Scheme by October 2003

- We are currently developing sheltered accommodation for the elderly, and frail and elderly, and will complete a review of the needs in the district by October 2003
- We have recently completed a review of the processing of applications for renovation and disabled facilities grants. Improvements will be realised in the coming months.
- A new grant policy is being developed
- We are increasing the proportion of properties adapted for the disabled
- We are introducing a scheme to assist elderly residents with the maintenance of their gardens (March 2004)
- The needs for low cost housing and shared ownership have been incorporated in the Local Plan
- Determine most appropriate method of managing Council stock, including a possible transfer to Registered Social Landlords, in accordance with Government policy requirements (March 2005)
- Two properties have been made available for re-letting through the cash incentive scheme

- 298 properties designated 'elderly housing stock' have been released for general needs housing
- Additional properties have been made available for temporary use by homeless people
- We have acquired 10 units from Springboard Housing Association for homeless people and a further unit will become available shortly
- Three units of hostel accommodation have been improved and made self-contained.
- A leaflet on the homelessness service has been produced and information is available on the web site
- The time taken to decide homeless application has been reduced
- Identify extent of 'rough sleeping' in the district by July 2004.

This review was completed in February 2002 but it has only recently been inspected, and the inspectors' assessment is not yet known.

Housing Management (2001/02)

The management of our housing stock is a key feature of the Council's service provision and this review was set up to consider:

- housing repairs and maintenance
- setting and the collection of rent
- management of tenancies
- consultation and involvement with tenants
- allocation and re-letting of housing

Actions include:

- A new points allocation policy was introduced in October 2002 which better suits the housing needs of the district
- A new system for completing post-tenancy repairs has been introduced. This is reducing, and will continue to reduce, empty properties
- Facilities are now available on the web for on-line payments of rent
- We wrote to our tenants to encourage participation but there was limited response. Our new Tenant Participation Officer will be developing this further

- A review of the quality of Council stock commenced in December 2002 and will be completed by August 2003
- Evaluate costs/benefits of preventative/responsive maintenance (October 2003)

This review was completed in February 2002 but it has only recently been inspected, and the inspectors' assessment is not yet known.

Development and Building Control (2002/03)

The review considered all aspects of the planning and building control service other than planning enforcement which is being covered in the review on Public Regulation, Inspection and Protection. Issues concerning the Local Plan were not included, other than in relation to communication of that plan.

Achievements to date, and our plans for the future, include

- The proportion of decisions delegated to officers exceeded the Government target of 90% for 2002/03
- Electronic submission of planning applications is being introduced in July 2003
- All advice and guidance leaflets have been updated to help applicants and are available on the web

- Key advice and guidance on planning is available on our website
- A revised code of conduct for members for planning matters has been implemented
- A development team approach was introduced in January 2003 to manage larger developments involving a variety of council services
- The planning system has been streamlined and exceeds Government targets for the speed of decision-making
- A new Local Plan will be published for consultation by July 2003.
- The benefit of an estate agent's pack to provide information on the council's planning services will be evaluated by March 2004
- On-line access to information on planning applications will be available by December 2003 and application details will be viewable on the web by March 2004
- The procedure for consulting neighbours will be reviewed by September 2003
- An approach for ensuring that works are in accordance with planning conditions will be considered by December 2003

- Historic records on planning applications from 1990 will be available on the web by March 2004 with further phases implemented by March 2006

The inspectors' assessment of this review is summarised in section 9.

Emergency Planning (2002/03)

This review was charged with looking at the Council's emergency planning response, including communication and accommodation issues; also test arrangements against a range of factors to ensure the response is as good as it should be.

The action plan was agreed in March 2003. Our plans include:

- The provision of sandbags to the elderly and vulnerable will continue, with additional stores available in locations at risk of flood
- Selected members and staff will receive media training by March 2004
- A model for the allocation of officers in an emergency will be produced by March 2004
- The location of an emergency planning response centre will be reviewed by September 2003

- The ability to join up services to provide an emergency planning response will be evaluated by March 2004
- An 'emergency' will be tested by March 2005

Community Safety (2002/03)

Rochford joined up with Essex County Council and other Essex District Councils to consider crime and disorder across the county, with particular emphasis on drugs and alcohol related crime. The inspectors' assessment of this review is summarised in section 9.

Rochford has conducted an independent review of local community safety issues. An action plan was agreed in April 2003 and our plans for the future include:

- addressing fear of crime by, for example, providing 15-20 advisory sessions per year to community groups
- support victims of crime both through mediation and financial support to Victim Support
- engage more with businesses to develop initiatives to reduce business crime
- develop stronger links with other Council departments as a means to addressing community safety issues through service delivery

section 9

what our auditors and
inspectors have told us

What our auditors and inspectors have told us

Auditors

Key issues identified by our auditors in their report for the year ended March 2002 were:

Corporate Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A code has been adopted but this needs expanding with development of actual and planned procedures • The authority's appraisal of its current position is accurate but responsibility still needs to be comprehensively delegated to management with target dates • Considerable work is required on risk management <p>Action point: Develop risk culture within the authority</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variable progress in key initiatives <p>Action point: Address non-compliances in action plans, documenting progress and setting due dates</p>
Performance Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance management has improved but there remain compliance issues • Unqualified opinion on the Best Value Performance Plan with no action points • Documentation on service action plans is variable • There are no key indicators identified within the quarterly performance reports 	Financial Standing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unqualified opinion on the statement of accounts • Conduct arrangements are strong • Council Tax increases should continue to stabilise reserves • Capital programme is unlikely to be achievable • Concerns over long-term prospects for the Housing Revenue Account <p>Action points: Develop long term forecasting and address slippage of the Capital Programme</p>

Democratic Renewal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New committee structure bedding in
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New constitution is comprehensive • Recommendations of the independent panel for remuneration were not followed • Operational issues are not considered to be a problem
	<p>Action points:</p> <p>Financial regulation and standing orders would benefit from updating</p> <p>Monitoring and review of the scrutiny and standards function is a priority</p> <p>Benchmark allowances against other authorities</p>
Leisure Contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract process is adequate
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible public finance initiative from future capital projects
	<p>Action points: Ensure contract standing orders are comprehensive for review purposes</p>

Community Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local partnership for developing the strategy is completed • No work has yet been carried out on the strategy <p>Action point: Progress the strategy and develop Corporate Plan therefrom</p>
E-Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed priorities have hindered an overall assessment on progress of delivering services electronically • There is no formal methodology used <p>Action point: A more formal project methodology and monitoring process should be introduced</p>
Recruitment and Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff performance system is not operating efficiently • There is a significant loss of professionals and senior management <p>Action point: Consider succession planning</p>

Their overall conclusion was that:

Overall, the authority is making reasonable progress and effectively managing initiatives in most areas.

However the authority needs to ensure there is no slippage or ineffective delivery

Inspectors

During the past year, the Audit Commission has inspected three of Rochford's best value service reviews –

- Development and Building Control (July 2002),
- Strategic House and Housing Management (both April 2003).
- Essex-wide review of Community Safety, which concentrated on drugs and alcohol abuse.

Their method of assessment is to look for evidence to answer two questions:

Is it a good service?

(ranging from no stars to 3 stars)

Will it improve?

(4 ratings: poor, uncertain, promising and excellent)

Inspectors' findings on these reviews are summarised on the following pages. A review of our progress on implementation of the action plans, developed as part of the review process, is detailed in section 8.

The inspectors' report on our reviews on Strategic Housing and Housing Management are not yet available and will be reported in our next BVPP.

Details of actions taken in response to auditors' and inspectors' recommendations are given in the appropriate section of this plan.

Development and Building Control

Is it a good service?

Positive

Negative

Staff are generally accessible, helpful and constructive	Weak link to corporate objectives
Town centre enhancements were praised by local people	The Local Plan needs to be reviewed
The service has improved in recent years including the speed of decision making	Committee size and public speaking at committees needs to be addressed to assure fairness and consistency
Building Control has achieved a high level of public satisfaction	Communication during the planning process needs to be improved
Development Control is securing good quality development	
Good consultation arrangements	

Two stars, promising prospects for improvement

Will it improve?

Positive

Negative

Action plan provides a comprehensive framework for improvement	The recommendations resulting from the review should be implemented, with particular regard to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • size of Committee • site visit procedure • written information on the procedure
Implementation of the action plan is under way	The Local Plan should be updated as a matter of urgency
Building Control competes effectively with the private sector	Councillors should receive mandatory, regular training on planning matters
Development Control has improved over the past two years	Other methods of delivering the service should be thoroughly evaluated

Community Safety in Essex

Is it a good service?

Positive

Negative

Community Safety is a key priority with key objectives to reduce crime	Information sharing needs to improve
Good joint working between councils and the police	Little evidence of evaluation of success
There is a wide range of community safety initiatives	Higher priority needed to address fear of crime
Crime remains low	
Localised disorder problems related to drugs and alcohol are being addressed	

Two stars, promising prospects for improvement

Will it improve?

Positive

Negative

The review has improved partnership working	Community safety needs to be integrated into core business
Weaknesses have been identified which will help focus on ways to improve drug and alcohol related crime	Fear of crime remains an issue and there is a need for a more co-ordinated approach to media management
	Need to address barriers to information sharing

section 10

our finances

Our finances

3-year rolling budget

The Council has, for many years, managed the finances of the authority by looking at potential income and expenditure over a 3-year period. This has enabled the authority to keep council tax increases to a minimum without major changes to services, irrespective of any large fluctuations in income and expenditure that occur on a yearly basis.

The process begins in the autumn of each year and culminates in the setting of the council tax in late February. Progress on the strategy is reviewed in June/July of each year following the closure of accounts.

In reviewing the 3-year rolling budget, the Council looks at:

- Proposals to change service levels and prioritisation of objectives identified for the period
- Assumptions with regard to income projections, including Government grants
- The level of council tax increases which may be required over the 3-year period
- The level of capital expenditure which the Council may be able to undertake

- Review of the level of balances required to maintain the financial standing of the Council

The following rolling budget has been agreed:

	Revised	Estimated		
	2002/03 £m	2003/04 £m	2004/05 £m	2005/06 £m
Net spending on services	7.8	8.1	8.5	9.0
To be paid for by:				
Government grant	3.5	3.8	3.8	3.8
Council tax	4.0	4.3	4.7	5.2
Changes to Council Reserves	(0.3)	-	-	-
Council tax increase		9%	9%	9%

Budget summary for 2002/03 and 2003/04

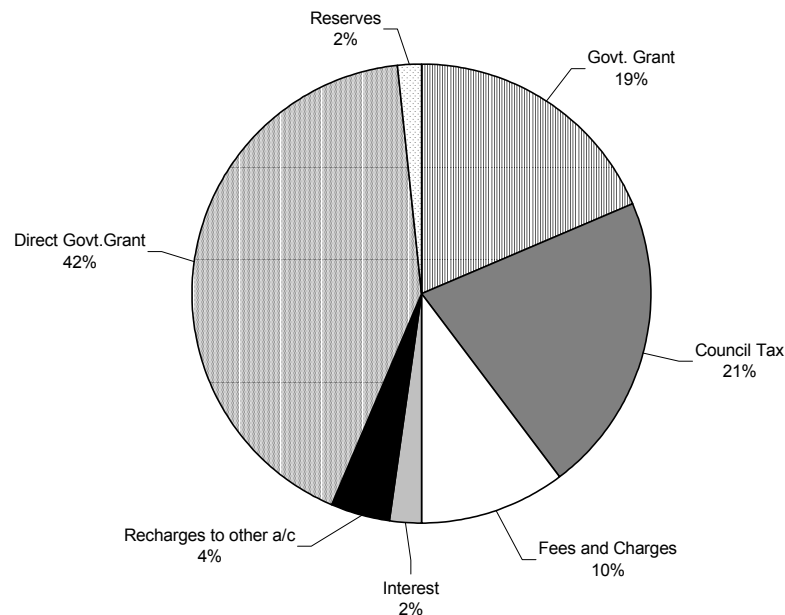
Including the use of reserves of £300,000 in 2002/03, the increase in net expenditure was 9.6%. Government funding rose by 9.3%.

Council tax increased by 9% to £142.29 in band D.

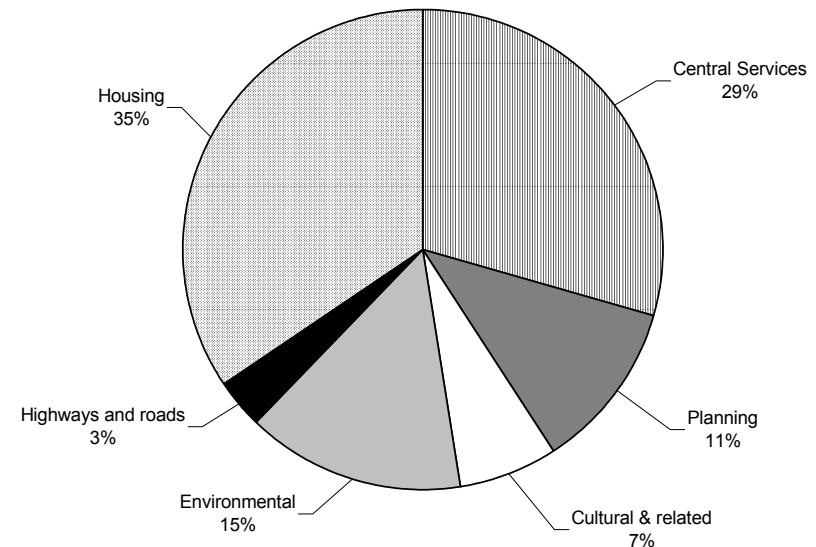
For 2002/03 it is expected that there will be an under-spend of around £60,000. Savings from vacant posts will be higher than estimated but these are offset by additional costs relating to the advertising of these vacant posts, homelessness and the implementation of electronic government.

The analysis of income and expenditure for the year is shown in the diagram below:

Where the money came from in 2002/03



What the money was spent on in 2002/03



For 2003/04, apart from inflationary increases, there will be:

- An expansion of recycling to 600 properties in Little Wheatleys
- Increased investment in public conveniences
- Responding to the Government requirements relating to contaminated land, tax credits, electronic government and the comprehensive performance assessment

- Additional costs from an increase in employers' National Insurance contributions.

In setting the budget for 2003/04 the Council moved from a budget supported by reserves to a budget supported by Government grants and council tax.

In previous years reserves had to be used to support our expenditure as Government funding was low. This has been partly recognised by the Government, as the increase in funding was good for 2003/04; however it was an increase from an extremely low base.

Even after this increase Rochford still receives the lowest Government grant per head of population in the county and the 14th lowest in England.

In view of past experience a cautious view has been taken in respect of Government funding over the 3-year period.

General Fund Services

The table below shows how much we estimated to spend on each of the main services we provide. The amount on each service includes a charge for the value of assets, which the service uses, such as buildings, land and vehicles. This charge is not included in the final calculation of the Council Tax requirement as this element is removed as shown below.

	2002/2003 Estimate	2003/2004 Estimate
Central Services		
• This covers the cost of providing services including elections and collection of Council Tax and Business Rates.	2,061,900	2,350,900
Cultural		
• This deals with the provision of leisure services including Sports, Arts and Open Spaces.	2,663,000	2,828,550
Environmental		
• As well as environmental health services, this also includes cemeteries, street cleansing, waste collection and disposal.	2,657,600	2,809,800
Planning Services		
• This includes development control, planning enforcement, local plans and building control.	1,359,400	1,459,900
Housing Services		
• This includes provision of services for the homeless and payment of housing benefits and grants.	1,139,900	1,536,100
Highways, Roads & Transport Services		
• This covers street/footpath lighting, parking services and concessionary travel.	428,900	282,700
Net cost of services	10,310,700	11,267,950
Plus: General Contingency	20,000	10,000
Contribution to General Fund Balance	60,000	37,350
Less:		
• Capital Charges (included in cost of services)	(2,062,500)	(2,801,900)
• Savings we intend to make	(526,000)	(320,000)
• Use of Reserves	(325,500)	-
	7,476,700	8,193,400
Less Grant from Government and Collection Fund Surplus	(3,530,388)	(3,859,585)
Amount to be met from Council Tax	3,946.312	4,333,815

Housing Revenue Account

In addition to the General Fund Services the Housing Revenue Account contains the transactions in respect of Council Housing within the District.

The following summary shows the main heads of expenditure and income.

	2002/2003 Estimate	2003/2004 Estimate
General Management		
• This covers the cost of providing estate management, lettings and rent collection services	618,800	672,500
Wardens and special services		
• This deals with the provision of sheltered housing for the elderly and miscellaneous estate costs.	708,600	744,200
Housing Repairs		
• This is for all the repairs relating to the housing stock. The figure includes the administration of repairs	1,500,000	1,588,100
Charges relating to the buildings and assets		
• This includes the repayment of debt, interest on debt and depreciation	2,550,500	2,462,000
Cost of services	5,377,900	5,466,800
Rents and Charges		
• This includes rent income, charges for sheltered housing and miscellaneous other income	(5,720,700)	(5,910,000)
Housing Subsidy		
• This is the net sum that is calculated under the Governments housing subsidies. For Rochford it is a charge not a credit.	595,000	757,000
Net Cost of service	252,200	313,800

The Housing Revenue Account has its own balance. The estimated position on balances is as follows:

• Balance b/fwd	868,710	616,510
• Usage during the year	252,200	313,800
• Balance c/fwd	616,510	302,710

Capital expenditure

Spending on major projects is called capital expenditure and does not come directly from council tax. Instead the Council either sells existing land or buildings or borrows money which is then paid back over a number of years. The Council also receives some grant to fund capital spending.

The capital expenditure programme is split into two main parts, the housing programme and the general fund. The general fund programme for 2003/04 includes the following new items:

Football pitch drainage	£90,000
Improvements to public conveniences	£50,000
Repairs and improvements to operational assets	£40,000

Council housing projects are funded by the major repairs allowances from the Government and capital receipts from the sale of assets. For 2003/04 we plan to spend around £1.4m on repair, renovation and improvement works to the Council's housing stock.

Our other housing spending is on:

Private sector renewal grants	£100,000
Disabled facilities grants	£108,000
Social housing grants	£300,000

Procurement

No contracts were entered during the year that involved the transfer of staff into the private sector.

The likelihood of staff transferring in the future, as a result of outsourcing, is low because the following principal services have already been contracted out:

- Refuse collection
- Street cleansing
- Ground maintenance
- Computer services
- Building maintenance
- Rodent control

Although the leisure management contract was re-let last year, and involved a transfer of staff, this was from one private company to another.

section 11

our performance

Our performance

Corporate health

No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
BV1	<p>(a) Does Rochford have a Community Strategy developed in collaboration with the local strategic partnership, for improving economic, social and environmental well-being in a sustainable way?</p> <p>If not,</p> <p>(b) By when, does the authority plan to have such a strategy in place?</p> <p>(c) Are the partnership arrangements in place to support the production of the strategy?</p>	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	
BV2	<p>(a) The level of the Commission for Equality Standard for Local Government to which the Authority conforms</p>	Not applicable	Nil	Level 1	Level 1	Level 1	Level 2	<p>Level 1 status equates to adoption of a comprehensive equality policy</p> <p>Level 2 status equates to engagement in, an impact and needs assessment, and equality action planning</p>

Corporate health

No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
BV2 New for 2003/04	(b) The duty to promote race equality (i) Does the authority have a Race Equality Scheme in place which meets defined criteria (ii) Is there evidence to demonstrate continuing improvements from the scheme?			Not applicable	No	No	Yes	
BV3	The percentage of citizens satisfied with the overall service provided by the authority	75%	75%	Not due to be collected	80%	Not due to be collected	Not due to be collected	Results taken from general survey undertaken in 2000/01 – 1216 responses received with +/-3% confidence interval Further survey due 2003/04
BV4	The percentage of complainants satisfied with the handling of those complaints	37.8%	37.8%	Not due to be collected	55%	Not due to be collected	Not due to be collected	Results taken from survey undertaken in 2000/01 – 230 responses received with +/-6.5% confidence interval Further survey due 2003/04
BV11	(a) The percentage of top 5% of earners that are women	Not applicable	9.09%	8.33%	See note	See note	25%	Any increase in numbers for these two categories is dependent on vacancies and the suitability of applicants
	(b) The percentage of top 5% of earners from black and minority ethnic communities	Not applicable	0%	0%	See note	See note	See note	We have a small ethnic population.

Corporate health

No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
BV12	The number of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence per employee	9.39	10.42	7.85	7.32	6.80	6.75	
BV14	Early retirements (excluding ill health retirements) as a % of the total workforce	0%	0.47%	0%	0.45%	0.50%	1.00%	Our current programme for restructuring and succession planning may result in a higher level of early retirements
BV15	Ill health retirements as a % of the total workforce	0.4%	0.94%	0.84%				Targets cannot be set for this indicator
BV16	The percentage of:							
	(a) staff declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act disability definition, compared with	6.7%	4.19%	5.4%	6%	8%	10%	Achievement will be dependent on applications from those meeting this definition
	(b) the percentage of economically active disabled people in the authority area	10.23%	11.26%					This figure is based on census data and will remain unchanged
BV17	Percentage of:							
	(a) minority ethnic community staff, compared with the total number of authority employees	0.4%	0.84%	0.4%				Targets cannot be set as achievement will be dependent on applications from those meeting this definition
	(b) the percentage of economically active minority ethnic community population in the area	1.66%	1.55%					This figure is based on census data and will remain unchanged

Corporate health

No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
BV156	The percentage of authority buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled people	9%	18%	25%	50%	75%	100%	
BV157	The percentage of those interactions and could be delivered electronically, that are so delivered	34%	45%	45%	73%	97%	100%	
BV177 New for 2002/03	Percentage of authority expenditure on legal and advice services which is spent on services that have been awarded the Quality Mark and meet a legal need identified in the Community Legal Service Partnership strategic plan	Not applicable	Nil No CLSP in place	No target set	See note			Targets cannot be set until the strategic plan has been produced (March 2004)
BV180 New for 2003/04	Energy consumption/m ² of local authority operational property, compared with comparable buildings in the UK as a whole	Not applicable	No data	No target set				Final guidance for the collection of this data is not yet available. Rochford will continue to measure energy consumption with local indicator 1.11 detailed below
Local 1.1	Number of complaints received per annum	394	244	360	232	220	208	
Local 1.5	Percentage of telephone calls to our switchboard answered within 10 seconds	78%	74%	80%	80%	82%	85%	
Local 1.8	Cost of electoral registration service per household	£1.53	£1.60	£1.90	£1.78	£1.87	£1.96	

Corporate health

No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
Local 1.10	Total number of pieces of paper used in the production of documents throughout the authority	3.346m	2.822m	3.279m	3.213m	3.149m	3.086m	The targets are those set for the PSA with ECC. Our 2002/03 outturn figure will be used as a benchmark to manage continuous improvement
Local 1.11 New for 2003/04	Cost of energy consumption at the Rochford and Rayleigh Council Offices (per m ²)		Actual cost £14.90	Not applicable	£14.16	£13.45	£12.77	This is to be measured instead of BV180
Local 1.12 New for 2003/04	Proportion of correspondence received by the council that is responded to within 5 working days	Not applicable	59%	Not applicable	90%	92%	94%	
Local 1.13 New for 2003/04	Proportion of payments made via the web for							
	(a) council tax		0.8%	Not applicable	1.5%	2.5%	3.0%	
	(b) business rates		0.8%		2.0%	3.0%	3.3%	
Local 2.2	Percentage using direct debit: for payment of							
	(a) council tax	71.0%	71.0%	72%	72%	72.5%	73%	
	(b) business rates	54.8%	59.6	55%	60%	61%	62%	
Local 2.9	Percentage of payments allocated to accounts via electronic means	70.31%	87.90%	89%	89.50%	90.00%	90.50%	The government has set a target of 80% by March 2005

Resources

No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
BV8	The percentage of undisputed invoices paid within 30 days	97.32%	98.26%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
BV9	Percentage of Council Tax collected during the year	99.1%	98.90%	99.0%	99.10%	99.15%	99.17%	
BV10	The percentage of business rates which should have been received during the year that were received	98.0%	99%	98.7%	99.05%	99.10%	99.12%	Our target for 2002/03 is that set by the Government for achievement in 2004/05
BV66	The proportion of rent collected	98.5%	98.90%	98.5%	98.60%	98.65%	98.70%	
Local 2.3	Cost of administering the business rate collection service per business rate property	£72.73	£73.52	£71.41	£71.00	£70.50	£70.00	
Local 2.8	Percentage of all payments to the Council processed by cashiers on the day of receipt	99.2%	99.86%	100%	99.80%	99.90%	99.95%	
Local 2.11	Average time taken to process a new application and late renewals for a concessionary travel pass (days)	4.1	2.07	3	3	3	3	
Local 2.12	Total number of hours patrol officers spend patrolling car parks as a percentage of total hours worked	47.1%	48%	55.0%	50%	52%	55%	

Community safety

No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
BV126	Number of domestic burglaries per 1,000 households	4.67	7.34	5.50	7.04	6.50	6.44	Targets are based on a split of police information for Rochford District Council and Castle Point Borough Council
BV127	Violent crimes per 1,000 population analysed by those committed: (a) by a stranger (b) in a public place (c) in connection with licensed premises (d) under the influence	Not applicable	Unable to report	Not applicable				Targets are not set by the Police on this data, therefore the Council is unable to set them locally. The Police currently do not collect data in this format
BV128	Number of vehicle crimes per 1,000 population	2.13%	2.04%	7.6%	5.07%	5.00%	4.96%	
BV174	The number of racial incidents recorded by the authority per 100,000 population	0	0	0	0	0	0	
BV175	The percentage of racial incidents that resulted in further action	Not applicable	Not applicable	100%	100%	100%	100%	
BV176	The number of domestic violence refuge places per 10,000 population which are provided, or supported, by the Authority	1	1	0	1	1	1	The council believes it funds sufficient refuge places so the targets are unchanged

Housing

No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
BV62	The proportion of unfit private sector dwellings made fit or demolished as a direct result of local authority action	0.98%	0.90%	1%	2%	2%	2%	
BV63	Energy efficiency – the average SAP rating of local authority owned dwellings	56	56	62	56	56	62	Housing survey will establish new improved levels
BV64	The number of private sector vacant dwellings that are returned into occupation or demolished during the year as a direct result of action by the local authority	Not applicable	1	2	2	2	2	
BV74	Satisfaction of tenants of council housing with the overall service provided by their landlord, with results broken down by:			Not due to be collected	93% of all groups	93% of all groups	93% of all groups	Results for 2002/03 taken from 2000/01 survey – 1476 responses received with +/- 2% confidence interval. Further survey due 2003/04
	(a) the total population	87.74%	87.74%					The 2000/01 survey did not provide an analysis by ethnic groups
	(b) black and minority ethnic	Not applicable	Not applicable					
	(c) non-black and minority ethnic	Not applicable	Not applicable					

Housing

No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
BV75	Satisfaction of tenants of Council housing with opportunities for participation in management and decision making in relation to housing services provided by their landlord, with results broken down by:			Not due to be collected	60% for all groups	70% for all groups	80% for all groups	Results for 2000/01 taken from survey – 1445 responses received with +/- 2.6% confidence interval. Further survey due 2003/04
New for 2003/04	(a) total population	54.6%	54.6%					
	(b) black and minority ethnic	Not applicable	Not applicable					
	(c) non-black and minority ethnic	Not applicable	Not applicable					
BV164	Does the authority follow the Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice in rented housing and follow the Good Practice Standards for social landlords on tackling harassment included in the Code of Practice for Social Landlords: Tackling Racial Harassment?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

Housing

No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
BV183 New for 2002/03	The average length of stay (weeks) in:							The 2002/03 figures in brackets have been calculated on the same basis as the target set for that year, and are included for comparison purposes only. The method of calculation has now been changed.
	(a) bed-and-breakfast accommodation	Not applicable	11.7 (7.5)	4.5	9	6	6	
	(b) hostel accommodation of households which include dependent children or a pregnant woman and which are unintentionally homeless and in priority need	Not applicable	29.3 (13.8)	14	25	25	20	
BV184 New for 2002/03	(a) The proportion of local authority properties that were non-decent at the beginning of the year	Not applicable	18%	No target set	18%	15%	5%	
	(b) The percentage change in proportion of non-decent LA properties by the end of the year	Not applicable	Nil	No target set	Nil	17%	67%	
BV185 New for 2002/03	Percentage of responsive (but not emergency) repairs during the year, for which the authority both made and kept an appointment	Not applicable	0%	No target set	See note	See note	See note	Our appointment service does not operate as defined by the Audit Commission
Local 2.7	Time between receipt of request to purchase council dwelling and acknowledgement of the right to buy (days)	8.13	5.85	8	5	5	4	

Housing

No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
Local 2.16	Time between receiving housing application and acceptance as a qualifying person (days)	2.35	7.87	3.25	3	3	3	Resources were allocated to priority areas in 2002/03
Local 6.5 New 2003/04	Average turnaround time (days) for void properties	55	47	Not applicable	38	32	29	
Local 9.3 (formerly BV67)	Proportion of homelessness applications on which the authority makes a decision and issues written notification to the applicant within 33 working days	52.83%	60%	70%	78%	85%	85%	

Housing benefit and council tax

No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
BV76 2002/03	Security: whether the local authority has a written and pro-active strategy for combating fraud and error which embraces specified initiatives including those sponsored by the Department of Social Security, which is communicated to all staff regularly	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
BV76 Amended for 2003/04	Security:	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable				
	(a) Claimants visited per 1,000 caseload				289	321	357	
	(b) Number of fraud investigators per 1,000 caseload				0.5	0.5	0.5	
	(c) Number of fraud investigations per 1,000 caseload				48	53	59	
	(d) Number of prosecutions and sanctions per 1,000 caseload				9	12	15	

Housing benefit and council tax

No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
BV78	Speed of processing:							
	(a) Average time for processing new claims (days)	42	50.23	50	45	40	36	The Government has targeted 36 days by 2006/07
	(b) Average time for processing notifications of change of circumstances (days)	13.25	9.41	14	10	9	8	The Government has targeted 8 days by 2006/07
	(c) Percentage of renewal claims processed on time	71.56%	73.97%	80%	82%	83%	85%	The Government has targeted 82% by 2006/07
BV79	Accuracy of processing:							
	(a) Percentage of benefit claims calculated correctly	96.40%	95.60%	97%	97%	97.2%	97.5%	
	(b) Percentage of recoverable overpayments (excluding Council Tax Benefit) that were recovered in the year	63.33%	36.83%	65%	65%	67%	70%	

Housing benefit and council tax

No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
BV80	User satisfaction survey of those using the benefits service – percentage stating that they strongly agree that they are satisfied with:	Not applicable		Not due to be collected				Below are listed the number of responses within each category in the survey conducted in 2000/01 and the confidence interval for the result. Further survey due in 2003/04
	(a) the facilities to get in touch with the benefits office							
	All	91.6%	91.6%		93%			Confidence interval +/-1.7%
	Successful claims	92.2%	92.2%		93%			Confidence interval +/-1.7%
	Unsuccessful claims	76.0%	76.0%		80%			Confidence interval +/-16.7%
	(b) service in the actual office							
	All	87.2%	87.2%		90%			Confidence interval +/-2.6%
	Successful claims	88.8%	88.8%		90%			Confidence interval +/-2.5%
	Unsuccessful claims	50.0%	50.0%		60%			Confidence interval +/-28.3%
	(c) the telephone service							
	All	83.3%	83.3%		85%			Confidence interval +/-3.1%
	Successful claims	84.6%	84.6%		85%			Confidence interval +/-3.1%
	Unsuccessful claims	57.1%	57.1%		65%			Confidence interval +/-26%
	(d) staff in the benefits office							
	All	89.6%	89.6%		93%			Confidence interval +/-2%
	Successful claims	90.7%	90.7%		93%			Confidence interval +/-1.9%
	Unsuccessful claims	64.0%	64.0%		70%			Confidence interval +/-18.8%

Housing benefit and council tax

No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
BV80	(e) the clarity and understandability of the forms, leaflets and letters							
	All	74.6%	74.6%		80%			Confidence interval +/-2.8%
	Successful claims	75.9%	75.9%		80%			Confidence interval +/-2.8%
	Unsuccessful claims	54.2%	54.2%		60%			Confidence interval +/-20%
	(f) speed of service							
	All	84.9%	84.9%		90%			Confidence interval +/-2.2%
New for 2003/04	Successful claims	86.4%	86.4%		92%			Confidence interval +/-22%
	Unsuccessful claims	55.6%	55.6%		60%			Confidence interval +/-18.7%
	(g) overall satisfaction							
	All	N/A	N/A		92%			
	Successful claims	N/A	N/A		93%			
	Unsuccessful claims	N/A	N/A		65%			

Environment

No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
BV82	Percentage of the total waste:							
	(a) which have been recycled	6.08%	7.22%	6.5%	8%	8.5%	13%	
	(b) which have been sent for composting	1.89%	3.32%	3%	3.5%	4%	5%	
BV84	Number of kilograms of household waste collected per head	410.7	402.47	370	380	380	370	
BV86	Cost of waste collection per household	£30.11	£30.76	£34.27	£31.40	£32.10	£32.80	
BV89	Percentage of people satisfied with the cleanliness standard in their area	78%	78%	Not due to be collected	80%	80%	80%	Results taken from general satisfaction survey 2000/01 – 1215 responses with +/- 3% confidence interval. Further survey due 2003/04
BV90	Percentage of people expressing satisfaction with:			Not due to be collected				Results taken from general satisfaction survey 2000/01 – responses 1168 (recycling) and 1211 (waste), both with +/- 3% confidence interval. Further survey due 2003/04
	(a) household waste collection	91%	91%		92%			
	(b) waste recycling	71%	71%		75%			
BV91 New for 2002/03	Percentage of residents served by a kerbside collection of recyclables	Not applicable	17.4%	18%	19.5%	19.5%	36%	No increase in budget allowance planned for 2004/05

Environment

No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
BV199 New for 2003/04	Proportion of land and highways assessed as having combined deposits of litter and detritus	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	See note			Guidance was available too late to implement this for 2003/04. Cleanliness is currently measured by local 5.2 below
Local 5.1 New for 2003/04	(a) The number of bins that were not collected (per 100,000 collections)		114	Not applicable	100	75	50	
	(b) The proportion of missed bins that were collected within 24 hours	82.72%	80.73%	98%	90%	95%	96%	
Local 5.2	Percentage of streets that meet the standard of cleanliness specified in the code of practice on litter and refuse:							New targets on 'rural areas' reflect a redefinition of the standard
	(a) shopping areas	99.07%	96.56%	99%	99%	99%	99%	
	(b) residential areas	89.79%	90.58%	97%	95%	96%	97%	
	(c) rural areas	97.85%	99%	98%	85%	88%	92%	
Local 5.5 Amended for 2003/04	(a) Average time (days) taken to remove fly-tips for which external agencies are responsible (hazardous waste)			Not applicable	14	7	7	
New for 2002/03	(b) Average time (days) taken to remove fly-tips for which RDC is responsible	Not applicable	1.75	Target not set	2	2	2	

Planning

No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
BV106	Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land	30.6%	52.74%	40%	40%	35%	30%	There is a very limited supply of previously developed land
BV107	Planning cost per head of population	£12.07	£13.31	£13.32	£14.06	£14.50	£15.00	
BV109 New for 2002/03	Percentage of planning applications which meet Government targets of: (a) major applications in 13 weeks (b) minor applications in 8 weeks (c) other applications in 8 weeks	Not applicable Not applicable Not applicable	50% 68% 88%	40% 60% 84%	50% 68% 88%	55% 69% 89%	60% 70% 90%	
BV111	Percentage of applicants satisfied with the service received	76%	76%	Not due to be collected	80%	80%	80%	Results taken from survey 2000/01 – 230 responses with +/-5.5% confidence interval. Further survey due 2003/04
BV188 New for 2002/03	The number of decisions delegated to officers as a percentage of all decisions	Not applicable	94%	90%	93%	93%	93%	We consider that we are now operating at peak delegation levels
BV200 New for 2003/04	(a) Is there a development plan (or alterations to it) that has been adopted in the last 5 years and the end date of which has not expired?	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	No	No	Yes	

Planning

No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
	(b) If no, are there proposals on deposit for an alteration or replacement, with a published timetable for adoption within 3 years?	Not applicable	Not applicable		Yes	Yes	Yes	
Local 3.1	Percentage of household applications determined within 8 weeks	89%	95%	85%	94%	94%	94%	
Local 3.4	(a) Building control applications determined within statutory periods	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
	(b) Initial appraisal of 'full plan' applications within 10 working days	86.48%	73.72%	85%	85%	85%	85%	
Local 3.12 (formerly BV109)	Percentage of all applications determined within 8 weeks	79%	82.6%	82%	82%	83%	84%	
Local 3.13	Average time taken to determine all planning applications (weeks)	9.78	10.3	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.0	

Environmental health

No.	Detail of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
BV166	Score against a checklist of enforcement best practice for environmental health/trading standards	5%	27.4%	58.75%	43.3%	48.3%	58.3%	Services covered by this checklist are: Food Safety Health and Safety Housing Standards Pollution Control Pest Control Licensing (including taxi and private hire vehicles)
	Written enforcement policies							
	1(a) Does the authority have written and published enforcement policy/policies, formally endorsed by its members that cover all aspects of environmental health and trading standards enforcement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	1(b) Is non-compliance with statutory requirements followed up in accordance with the enforcement policy/policies	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	1(c) Do the policy/policies confirm that the authority has signed the Enforcement Concordat?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	1(d) Do the policy/policies take into account the guidance set out in "The Code for Crown Prosecutors"?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

Environmental health

No.	Detail of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
BV166	1(e) Do the policy/policies include the criteria to be met before formal enforcement by the authority?	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	1(f) Do the policy/policies make provision for situations where there is a shared enforcement role?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	1(g) Do the policy/policies make provision for the particular interests of consumers within the authority's area including business owners, employees and the public?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	1(h) Are the policy/policies mentioned above followed, monitored and reported on and any variations addressed within a service plan or BVPP?	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	

Environmental health

No.	Detail of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
BV166	Planned enforcement activity							
	2. Does the authority have risk based inspection programmes and sampling and surveillance regimes for regulatory services that:							
	(a) meet legal requirements	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	
	(b) otherwise have regard to official guidance	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	
	(c) otherwise have regard to other appropriate professional guidance and standards	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	3. Are the programmes and regimes mentioned above in point 2 followed, monitored and reported on and any variations addressed within a service plan or BVPP?	No	No	No	No	No	No	
	4. Does the authority have targeted educational and information programmes?	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	

Environmental health

No.	Detail of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
BV166	5. Are the programmes mentioned above in point 4 followed, monitored and reported on and any deviations from the planned programme addressed within a service plan or BVPP?	Not applicable	No	No	No	No	No	This applies only to Trading Standards
	Reactive and responsive enforcement activity							
	6. Does the authority have and implement policies, procedures and standards for:							
	(a) responding to and dealing with complaints made to the local authority about a third party and requests for services regarding statutory enforcement functions?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	(b) Supporting the provision of consumer advice, including participation in a consumer support network?	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	

Environmental health

No.	Detail of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
BV166	7. Does the authority have and implement policies, procedures and standards for responding to and dealing with:							
	(a) statutory notifications (e.g. RIDDOR reports of accidents, occupational diseases and dangerous occurrence)?	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	
	(b) the referral to other regulators of relevant information received where there is wider regulatory interest?	No	No	No	No	No	No	
	8. Are the policies and procedures and standards mentioned above in points 6 and 7 followed, monitored and reported on and any variations addressed within a service plan or BVPP?	No	No	No	No	No	No	

Environmental health

No.	Detail of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
BV166	Appropriate resources							
	9. Has the authority within the last five years benchmarked its resources for relevant services against similar local authorities or comparable service providers including private and voluntary?	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	Consultation and satisfaction levels							
	10(a) Does the authority have a range of mechanisms in place to consult stakeholders affected by their service regarding the development of the enforcement policy?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	10(b) Does the authority have a range of mechanisms in place to consult stakeholders affected by their service regarding satisfaction levels? and	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	10(c) Are the consultation responses considered and acted upon?	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

Environmental health

No.	Detail of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
Local 9.2 (formerly AC-H1)	The percentage of food premises inspections that should have been carried out that were carried out for:							
	(a) high risk premises	96.8%	97.82%	95%	97%	97%	97%	
	(b) other premises	97.5%	97.73%	95%	97%	97%	97%	
	(c) all premises	97.0%	97.78%	95%	97%	97%	97%	
Local 9.4 New for 2003/04	Health and safety visits to high risk premises that were carried out as a percentage of those that should have been carried out		Not applicable		95%	96%	97%	

Culture and leisure

No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
BV114 Amended for 2002/03	Score against a checklist (all parts must be positive to score a 'yes')	Not applicable	Nil	100%	100%	100%	100%	
	1. Is the strategy widely scoped, including:		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	(a) arts							
	(b) heritage							
	(c) sport							
	(d) tourism							
	(e) outdoor recreation (parks, countryside, play, carnivals and other events?							
	2. Have all of the following been involved in drawing up the strategy?		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	(a) other public agencies including tiers of local government							
	(b) the voluntary sector							
	(c) the private sector							

Culture and leisure

No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
BV114	3. Was consultation on the strategy both:		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	(a) inclusive, and							
	(b) active?							
	4. Is the strategy linked to:		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	(a) other corporate strategies and plans							
	(b) other relevant local documents, involving discussions with adjoining local authorities and a link to other organisations' plans and strategies							
	5. Is there an action plan for the Council as described in DCMS guidance?		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	6. Are arrangements in place to		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	(a) monitor implementation							
	(b) review the strategy?							

Culture and leisure

No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
BV119	Percentage of residents by targeted group satisfied with the local authority's cultural and recreational activities			Not due to be collected	Deleted for 2003/04			General satisfaction survey conducted 2000/01 – responses 6503 (women) and 19 (ethnic minorities)
	(a) Women	49.6%	49.6%					Confidence interval +/-4%
	(b) Minority ethnic community	36.8%	36.8%					Confidence interval +/-22.5%
BV119 New for 2003/04	The percentage of residents satisfied with the local authority cultural services:	Not applicable	Not applicable					A survey will be conducted in 2003/04. There is no historical evidence on which to base targets
	(a) Sports and leisure facilities							
	(b) Libraries							
	(c) Museums							
	(d) Arts activities and venues							
	(e) Parks and open spaces							

Culture and leisure

No.	Details of Indicator	RDC Performance		RDC Targets				Comments
		2001/02	2002/03	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
BV170	(a) The number of visits to/usages of museums per 1,000 population	Not relevant	Not relevant	Not applicable	Not applicable			Council does not have any museums or galleries
	(b) The number of those visits that were in person per 1,000 population	Not relevant	Not relevant	Not applicable	Not applicable			
New for 2002/03	(c) The number of pupils visiting museums and galleries in organised groups	Not relevant	Not relevant	Not applicable	Not applicable			

How our 2001/02 results compare with other East of England district councils

The inclusion of a figure in the upper or lower quartile column is not an indication of best/worst performance. In some case a higher figure represents better performance whilst in others the lower figure is better.

Indicator	Description	Rochford		Results of East of England District Councils		
		2001/02 Results	Quartile Ranking (1=Best)	Upper Quartile	Median	Lower Quartile
BV1	Whether Rochford has established a timetable for preparing a community strategy that works towards a long-term vision for the area	No	4	Yes	Yes	Yes
BV2	The level of the Commission for Racial Equality's Standard for Local Government to which the Authority conforms	Level 1	1	Level 1	Level 1	Level 0
BV6	The percentage turnout for local elections	27.80%	4	56.1%	36.1%	31.3%
BV8	The percentage of undisputed invoices paid within 30 days	97.32%	1	94.4%	92.1%	87.0%
BV9	Proportion of Council Tax collected during the year	99.1%	1	98.3%	97.5%	97.0%
BV10	The percentage of business rates which should have been received during the year that were received	98.0%	3	99.2%	98.7%	98.0%
BV11	The percentage of senior management posts filled by women	25.0%	2	32.0%	21.0%	15.8%
BV12	The number of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence per full time equivalent employee	9.39	2	8.3	9.5	10.8

Indicator	Description	Rochford		Results of East of England District Councils		
		2001/02 Results	Quartile Ranking (1=Best)	Upper Quartile	Median	Lower Quartile
BV13	Voluntary leavers as a percentage of staff in post	11.7%	3	9.0%	11.0%	13.3%
BV14	Early retirements (excluding ill health retirements) as a % of the total workforce	0%	1	0.1%	0.3%	0.5%
BV15	Ill health retirements as a % of the total workforce	0.4%	1	0.4%	0.6%	0.8%
BV16	The percentage of					
	(a) staff declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act disability definition compared with	6.7%	1	5.3%	3.2%	1.5%
	(b) the percentage of economically active disabled people in the authority area	10.23%				
BV17	Percentage of					
	(a) minority ethnic community staff compared with	0.4%	4	1.9%	1.3%	0.5%
	(b) the percentage of economically active minority ethnic community population in the area	1.66%				
BV62	The proportion of unfit private sector dwellings made fit or demolished as a direct result of local authority action	0.98%	4	4.8%	1.6%	1.0%
BV63	Energy efficiency – the average SAP rating of local authority owned dwellings	56	2	63.0	55.0	52.4

Indicator	Description	Rochford		Results of East of England District Councils		
		2001/02 Results	Quartile Ranking (1=Best)	Upper Quartile	Median	Lower Quartile
BV64	The proportion of private sector dwellings that have been vacant for more than 6 months at 1 st April 2001 that are returned into occupation during 2001/2002 as a result of action by the local authority.	0.84%	2	1.9%	0.8%	0%
BV65	(a) The average weekly costs per local authority dwelling of management (ranked as cheapest is best)	£11.01	3	£10.10	£11.40	£12.80
	(b) The average weekly costs per local authority dwelling of repairs (ranked as cheapest is best)	£14.74	4	£10.60	£11.70	£13.50
BV66	Local authority rent collection and arrears:					
	(a) proportion of rent collected	98.5%	1	98.1%	97.5%	96.8%
	(b) rent arrears of current tenants as a proportion of the authority's rent roll	1.33%	1	2.3%	2.7%	3.0%
	(c) rent written off as not collectable as a proportion of the authority's rent roll	0.1%	1	0.2%	0.3%	0.6%
BV67	Proportion of homelessness applications on which the authority makes a decision and issues written notification to the applicant within 33 working days	52.83%	4	92.0%	84.0%	72.2%
BV68	Average re-let times for local authority dwellings let in the financial year (days)	55	4	27.0	34.0	40.0

Indicator	Description	Rochford		Results of East of England District Councils		
		2001/02 Results	Quartile Ranking (1=Best)	Upper Quartile	Median	Lower Quartile
BV69	Percentage of rent lost through local authority dwellings becoming vacant	1.6%	4	0.9%	1.4%	1.6%
BV71	The number of local authority dwellings receiving renovation work during 2001/2002 as a proportion of the number needing renovation work at 1 st April 2001					
	(a) renovation work under £5000	48.0%	2	55.3%	4.03%	36.2%
	(b) renovation work over £5000	0% (none required)	Not applicable	15.0%	2.2%	1.0%
BV72	The percentage of urgent repairs completed within Government time limits	90.98%	4	96.0%	93.8%	91.0%
BV73	The average time taken to complete non-urgent responsive repairs (days)	5.41	1	10.5	17.0	20.8
BV76	Security: whether the local authority has a written and pro-active strategy for combating fraud and error which embraces specified initiatives including those sponsored by the Department of Social Security, which is communicated to all staff regularly	No	4	Yes	Yes	Yes
BV77	The average cost of handling an HB or CTB claim, taking into account differences in the type of claim received	£72.44	3	£61.80	£72.10	£81.60

Indicator	Description	Rochford		Results of East of England District Councils		
		2001/02 Results	Quartile Ranking (1=Best)	Upper Quartile	Median	Lower Quartile
BV78	Speed of processing:					
	(a) Average time for processing new claims (days)	42	1	42.0	55.6	71.3
	(b) Average time for processing notifications of change of circumstances (days)	13.25	2	9.6	13.3	24.0
	(c) Percentage of renewal claims processed on time	71.56%	2	78.6%	68.8%	39.9%
BV79	Accuracy of processing:					
	(a) Percentage of cases for which the calculation of the amount of benefit due was correct on the basis of the information available to the determinations	96.4%	3	98.6%	97.0%	94.8%
	(b) Percentage of recoverable overpayments (excluding Council Tax Benefit) that were recovered in the year	63.33%	2	64.6%	52.6%	39.0%
BV82	Percentage of the total tonnage of household waste arisings					
	(a) which have been recycled	6.08%	4	12.6%	10.6%	7.2%
	(b) which have been composted	1.89%	2	4.4%	1.0%	0%
BV84	Kg. of household waste collected per head	410.7	2	355.0	410.7	462.0

Indicator	Description	Rochford		Results of East of England District Councils		
		2001/02 Results	Quartile Ranking (1=Best)	Upper Quartile	Median	Lower Quartile
BV85	The cost per square kilometre of keeping relevant land, for which the local authority is responsible, clear of litter and refuse	£105,842	4	£24,373	£53,930	£85,610
BV86	Cost of waste collection per household	£30.11	3	£26.80	£30.10	£34.00
BV88	Number of collections missed per 100,000 collections of household waste	122	4	14.4	30.5	74.0
BV91	Percentage of population served by a kerbside collection of recyclables or within 1 kilometre of a recycling centre	93.83%	3	100%	95.0%	90.0%
BV106	Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land	30.6%	4	63.0%	55.5%	32.0%
BV107	Planning cost per head of population	£12.03	3	£8.80	£11.10	£13.80
BV108	The number of advertised departures from the statutory plan approved by the authority as a percentage of total permissions granted	2.17%	4	0%	0.5%	1.1%
BV109	Percentage of applications determined within 8 weeks	79%	1	71.0%	64.3%	51.0%
BV110	Average time taken to determine all applications (weeks)	9.78	2	9.3	10.4	13.4
BV112	Score against checklist of planning best practice:-	40%	4	77.8%	63.0%	56.0%
BV114	Does the local authority have a local cultural strategy?	No	3	Yes	No	No

Indicator	Description	Rochford		Results of East of England District Councils		
		2001/02 Results	Quartile Ranking (1=Best)	Upper Quartile	Median	Lower Quartile
BV116	Spend per head of population on cultural and recreational facilities and activities (higher spending ranked best)	£28.42	1	£26.50	£18.40	£13.90
BV126	Domestic burglaries per 1,000 households	4.67	1	6.0	8.3	11.2
BV128	Vehicle crime per 1,000 population	2.13	1 st	7.3	10.7	14.4
BV156	The percentage of authority buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled people	9%	3	33.0%	20.0%	7.0%
BV157	The percentage of interactions with the public, by type, which are capable of electronic service delivery and which are being delivered using internet protocols or other paperless methods	33.6%	3	44.0%	36.7%	26.0%
BV164	Does the authority follow the Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice in rented housing	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No
BV166	Score against a checklist of enforcement best practice for environmental health / trading standards	5%	4	70.0%	53.8%	39.0%
BV173	Has the local authority established a corporate strategy to reduce crime and disorder in their area? Yes / No. If no, has the authority established a timetable for doing so?	Yes	1	Yes	No	No
BV174	The number of racial incidents recorded by the authority per 100,000 population	0	1	0	1.0	8.1

Indicator	Description	Rochford		Results of East of England District Councils		
		2001/02 Results	Quartile Ranking (1=Best)	Upper Quartile	Median	Lower Quartile
BV175	The percentage of racial incidents that resulted in further action	0	Not applicable	100%	100%	100%
BV176	The number of domestic violence refuge places per 10,000 population which are provided, or supported, by the Authority	1	1	0.7	0.1	0
BV177	Is the authority part of a Community Legal Service Partnership?	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	Yes
BV179	The percentage of standard searches carried out in 10 working days	93.96%	3	100%	100%	90%

section 12

corporate governance

Corporate governance - our statement of assurance

The authority is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. In discharging this accountability, Members and senior officers are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of the authority's affairs and the stewardship of the resources at its disposal. To this end, the authority has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles, and reflects the requirements, of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework *Corporate Governance in Local Government: A Keystone for Community Governance*. A copy of the code is on our website at www.rochford.gov.uk or can be obtained from the Council Offices at Rochford or Rayleigh.

During the year, the authority has started to put in place appropriate management and reporting arrangements to enable it to satisfy itself that its approach to corporate governance is both adequate and effective in practice. Specifically, it has adopted a risk management policy, which will be implemented over the coming period. The Corporate Policy Officer has been given responsibility for:

- Overseeing the implementation and monitoring the operation of the code;
- Reviewing the operation of the code in practice;

- Reporting annually to the Finance and Procedures Overview and Scrutiny Committee on compliance with the code and any changes that may be necessary to maintain it and ensure its effectiveness in practice.

In addition, the Audit and Process Review Manager has been given the responsibility to review independently and report to the Finance and Procedures Overview and Scrutiny Committee annually, to provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the code and the extent of compliance with it.

Following the assessment of the arrangements we have in place, we are satisfied that, except for the matters listed below, they are adequate and are operating effectively.

We report that there are several aspects of the code of corporate governance that are not yet in place. The main areas of non-compliance are:

- Undertaking a detailed risk assessment both at corporate level, and within each directorate, and establishing appropriate control monitoring procedures for identified risks
- Amending the authority's purchasing strategy to incorporate new requirements for assessing risks

- Amending the authority's purchasing strategy to incorporate new requirements for assessing risks in dealings with suppliers and partners.
- Formal adoption of a community strategy.

Over the coming year we will be taking steps to address the above matters to further enhance our corporate governance arrangements.

We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our first annual assessment and will review their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

Signed

P. Webster
Leader of the Council

P. Warren
Chief Executive

on behalf of the Members and senior officers of Rochford
District Council

section 13

if you would like to know
more

If you would like to know more

This plan provides full details of what we have been doing during the past year and will be doing in the years ahead. We have not produced a glossy document because we did not feel the additional cost was justified. However, we hope that you have found it informative.

Our auditors will be reporting on it, and a copy of this report may be obtained by contacting Mrs Diana Petts (see below). It can also be viewed on our website at:

www.rochford.gov.uk

We would also welcome any thoughts you may have on the content or format of either this plan or the summary document that appeared in the Spring edition of Rochford District Matters. Please write to Mrs Petts at our Rochford offices or contact her on:

01702 318031

diana.petts@rochford.gov.uk

If you would like any information on particular services or have any comments to make on these services the following officers should be contacted:

Council tax, housing benefit, council tenancies and business rates	Steve Clarkson 01702 318005 steve.clarkson@rochford.gov.uk	Environmental health, homelessness and housing advice	Graham Woolhouse 01702 318044 graham.woolhouse@rochford.gov.uk
Our contracts for leisure, refuse, street cleaning and grounds maintenance	Dave Timson 01702 318110 david.timson@rochford.gov.uk	Planning and development control	Shaun Scrutton 01702 318100 shaun.scrutton@rochford.gov.uk
		Elections, committees and our web site	Sarah Fowler 01702 318135 sarah.fowler@rochford.gov.uk

For other services, either refer to our A-Z of services in Section 2 or contact:

Council Offices, South Street, Rochford SS4 1BW

01702 546366

Information Centre, Civic Suite, Hockley Road, Rayleigh SS6 8EB

01702 318150

information@rochford.gov.uk