

KEY POLICIES AND ACTIONS FOR 2004/2005

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report formally sets out the main areas of policy development for 2004/2005. It identifies the main projects to be progressed and implemented and also highlights the main areas of service development/change. Lastly it suggests areas to Members that might be appropriate for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to consider in 2004/2005 and outlines the timetable for establishing the budget for 2005/2006.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 With the budget agreed at Full Council on 27th January and with the Council Tax set at tonight's meeting, it is opportune for Members to formally agree to the main areas of the Council's work programme for 2004/2005. At the same time, Members can consider the programme relating to the monitoring of the 2004/2005 budget and the preparation of the 2005/2006 budget. Members might also like to consider those policy, resource and service issues which might be appropriate for examination by the Overview and Scrutiny process in 2004/2005.
- 2.2 Such an approach is in line with the budget and policy framework procedure rules now contained in the Council's approved constitution. It also provides a transparent and closer linkage between the Council's budgetary process and work programme.

3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The majority of the Council's work is governed by statute and is driven by legislative requirements. At the same time, there are some local discretionary elements which are fed in through the budgetary process.
- 3.2 The attached appendices A, B and C make no attempt to cover all the Council's functions. Instead, they focus on the "headline" areas of work for the forthcoming year. Appendix A deals with the policy framework, Appendix B with the main projects, and Appendix C with service development/change. In each of the Appendices, the linkage to one or more of the Council's six corporate aims listed below, is also given.

1. To provide quality cost effective services
 2. To work towards a safer and more caring community
 3. To promote a green and sustainable environment
 4. To encourage a thriving economy
 5. To improve the quality of life for people in the District
 6. To maintain and enhance the local heritage and culture
- 3.3 Subject to any Member comments on the programme, the intention would be to publicise its content in the next edition of Rochford District Matters. This again would be in line with the Council's approved constitution.
- 3.4 Any feedback received from this exercise can then be looked at within the context of the preparation of the 2004/2005 Corporate Plan/Best Value Performance Plan, which needs to be considered and approved by Full Council in June.
- 3.5 Given the work programme outlined and the issues coming before Council in the foreseeable future, Appendix C outlines some suggestions for Members to consider in terms of suitable topics to be examined by the Overview and Scrutiny Process in 2004/2005. The list is not exhaustive and there might be other matters that Members feel should be given greater weight. However, in determining those areas for consideration, Members need to take into account the capacity of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the timetable available.
- 3.6 Finally, Appendix E sets out the process and timetable for monitoring the 2004/2005 budget and preparing the 2005/2006 budget for Members' information. As with this Council year, the intention is to combine the half-yearly review of the budget with the half-yearly review of the work programme as contained in the Corporate Plan/Best Value Performance Plan. In this way, it is envisaged that Members can be kept advised of progress on both the budget and the work programme.

4 RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 It is proposed that Council **RESOLVES**
- (1) that the work programme for 2004/2005, as set out in Appendices A, B and C and the public consultation on its content, as outlined in the report, be agreed.
 - (2) that those areas of work, with or without amendments, for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny process, as outlined in Appendix D, be agreed.

- (3) That the programme for the monitoring of the 2004/205 agreed budget and the development of the 2005/2006 budget framework, as outlined in Appendix E, be noted.

Paul Warren
Chief Executive

Background Papers:

None

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Appendix A

Policy DevelopmentReplacement Local Plan (3, 4, 5 & 6)

Second Deposit	April-May 2004
Inquiry	Late 2004 at earliest

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

Prepare Local Development Scheme	Autumn 2004
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Community Strategy (5)

Final Strategy agreed by LSP	March 2004
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Look at feeding relevant aspects into Corporate Plan/Best Value Performance Plan and 2005/2006 budget process

Housing Strategy (2 & 5)

Strategy agreed as fit for purpose	June 2004
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Housing Business Plan (2 & 5)

Plan agreed as fit for purpose	June 2004
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Private Sector Renewal Strategy (2 & 5)

Strategy agreed	December 2004
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Asset Management Plan (1 & 5)

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Performance Indicators	July 2004
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Update Asset Management Plan	July 2004
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IEG Statement (1 & 3)

Agree IEG 4	October 2004
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Capital Strategy (1)

Agree revised Capital Strategy July 2004

Corporate Plan/Best Value Performance Plan (1)

Agree 2004/2005 Plan June 2004

Risk Management (1)

Report on progress to Finance and
Procedures Overview and Scrutiny March 2004

Internal Audit to review processes and controls May/June 2004

Approval of Annual Assurance Statement July 2004

Licensing Policy (2 & 5)

Draft agreed May 2004

Consultation June/July 2004

Final Policy (subject to legislation) September 2004

Animal Welfare Charter (2 & 5)

Draft agreed March 2004

Consultation May 2004

Final Charter agreed July 2004

Appendix B

Main ProjectsCherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park (3 & 5)

Consolidation and expansion of the Park over a period –
in tandem with local plan proposals

Ongoing

Investigation and development of a Trust to oversee and
safeguard the Country Park. To be formally considered
by Council

July 2004

Rayleigh Windmill (5 & 6)

Awaiting decision on Planning Grant
application

May 2004

Commence Planning process

July 2004

Bid to Heritage Lottery Fund

August 2005

Start Project (if successful)

May 2006

Clements Hall (5)

Complete works

July 2004

New Park Leisure Centre (5)

Secure Planning Permission

July 2004

Commence work on site

Late 2004/
early 2005

Centre complete

Late 2005

Public Convenience Refurbishment (5)

Hockley Woods

Oct 2004

Pooles Lane/Southend Road/Great Wakering

Oct 2004

Council Office Review (1)

Rochford Reception completion August 2004

Rayleigh Civic Suite – lift and toilets late 2004

Sports Pavilion Upgrade (5)

Report to Committee May/June 2004

Implementation of works from Aug 2004

Electronic Records Management and Workflow

Half yearly reports starting Oct 2004

Completion Late 2006

Appendix C
Comprehensive Performance Assessment

Inspection February 2004

Action Plan agreed June/July 2004

Investors in People (1)

Informal Assessment May 2004

Compliance with IIP August 2004

Web Site (1 & 5)

Committee minutes/agendas/reports online March 2004

Online GIS (geographical information system) April 2004

Public access to planning applications April 2004

NLIS level 3 electronic land charge searches March 2004

Freedom of Information Act (1 & 5)

Comply with FOI legislation January 2005

Local Service Agreement (1)

Report to Committee on progress on any Arrangements with Essex County Council Ongoing

Public Service Agreement Indicators (1)

Review performance of key indicators agreed with Essex County Council and progress Oct/Nov 2004

Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (1, 2 & 5)

ECC Funding received April 2004

Staff in place Aug 2004

Operational from Oct 2004

TRO/Residents Parking Review Jan/Feb 2005

Trial of Sheltered Housing Management (2 & 5)

Final consultation	March 2004
Evaluation and report	April/May 2004
Implement future arrangements (if changed)	June 2004

Implementation of Transfer of Licquor Licensing (2 & 5)

Dependent on legislation	Summer 2004/ Summer 2005
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Second Air Quality Review (3 & 5)

Detailed assessment	May-July 2004
Final report submission	October 2004

Housing Option Appraisal (1 & 2)

Initial Residents Involvement and participation	March-July 2004
Housing Needs Study	By July 2004
Stock Condition Study	By Sept 2004
Further resident involvement and participation	Sept 2004- Jan 2005
Stock Option Evaluation	By Dec 2004/ Jan 2005
Further Consultation	Jan/Feb 2005
Sign Off	Feb 2005

Succession Planning – Organisation Restructure

Examine alternatives	by April 2005
Agree on Way Forward	by July 2005

Appendix D

Issues for the Overview and Scrutiny Process

Finance and Procedures Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- ◆ Oversee continued progress on the Local Plan
- ◆ Oversee Roll-out of year 3 community transport
- ◆ Twice yearly presentations by ServiceTeam (re refuse collection and street cleansing)
- ◆ Twice yearly presentations by Essex County Council Highways re Performance
- ◆ Monitor and review operation by Anglian Water of Stambridge Sewage Treatment Works
- ◆ Conclude the work around the Environment Best Value Review
- ◆ Oversee Implementation of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement
- ◆ Oversee implementation of the Contaminated Land Strategy
- ◆ Monitor progress/implementation of actions arising from the Best Value Review of Public Regulation, Inspection and Protection

Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- ◆ Twice yearly presentations by ServiceTeam (re grounds maintenance)
- ◆ Twice yearly presentations by Holmes Place on the Leisure Contract
- ◆ Recommend an elderly housing and support strategy to the Council
- ◆ Conclude a review of policies and services in respect of young people
- ◆ Development of policy framework and service responses in respect of gypsies/travellers
- ◆ Monitor progress/implement actions arising from the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy and input into the production of a new strategy for March 2005

- ◆ Monitor the respective action plans in respect of Emergency Planning and Crime and Disorder Reduction Best Value Reviews.
- ◆ NHS Scrutiny studies
- ◆ Development of policy on empty homes
- ◆ Monitor progress on development and implementation of the Housing Strategy and the Stock Option appraisal process
- ◆ Monitor progress on implementation of the Homelessness Strategy

Appendix E

Closure of accounts approved	June 2004
Consultation with Local Chambers	October 2004
Members AwayDay around half yearly review	Oct/Nov 2004
Half Yearly Review and Review of Budget Strategy	Nov 2004
Final views from Chambers	Dec 2004
Ongoing issues relating to Budget Strategy	Nov-Jan 2005
Members AwayDay on 2005/2006 Budget	Dec/Jan 2005
Budget Setting meeting	Jan 2005
Council Tax set	Feb 2006