

5 'FROM VISION TO REALITY'

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ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

5.1 ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

5.1.1 Our Vision

Our vision is “to make Rochford District the place of choice in the county to live, work and visit”.

We want to create an environment that is vibrant, inclusive, safe, sustainable and modern while retaining the essential characteristics of the salt marshes, rivers, woodland, open countryside, villages and market towns that make Rochford what it is today. We see the District as a place with high quality natural and built environments that retain their distinctiveness, foster civic pride and where all have access to quality accessible services.

We will:

- Build on the heritage, cultural and economic strengths of our area and the sense of identity and civic pride of our people
- Improve the quality of life for people in our communities and play a full role in the sustainable growth and prosperity of our County.

In particular, we will utilise our position within Thames Gateway South Essex to promote the District as the “green part” of the sub region.

5.1.2 Our objectives to deliver the vision for the District

We will:

- Provide an excellent cost effective frontline service for all our customers
- Work towards a safer and more caring community
- Provide a green and sustainable environment
- Encourage a thriving local economy
- Improve the quality of life for people in our district
- Maintain and enhance our local heritage

Our Values (the way we will work in pursuing these objectives)

- Be an open, accountable, listening, responsive Council
- Put the customer and citizen at the heart of everything we do, delivering services in a caring and sensitive manner
- Coordinate the management of resources with an emphasis on sustainability
- Value the contribution of partners, employees and citizens, trusting each other and working collaboratively.

Whilst we recognise we do have some specific strategic and service delivery functions, we recognise that we cannot achieve our objectives alone. As a community leader, the Council has ambitious plans for the development of the District and will work with other partners and stakeholders, from the public sector, private and community and voluntary sectors to realise our ambitions.

So given our vision, what does the District Council wish to see achieved and what are its priorities?

Objective - Provide an excellent cost effective frontline service for all our customers.

Over the next five years, we will

- Deliver our Access to Services Strategy
- Deliver the Workforce Development Plan to improve the Council's leadership capacity, the skills and capacity of the workforce, the organisation as a whole, be an exemplar of good practice in employment and offer competitive pay and rewards.
- Utilise our partnership structures with other public sector partners, private sector and the voluntary sector to deliver continuous service improvement at affordable costs.
- Aim to resolve 80% of our customer queries at the first time they contact us and work to ensure our customers get to the right person first time.
- Maintain our high customer satisfaction rates overall and in key service areas, and remain in the upper quartile nationally when compared to other local authorities.

By 2017

- Develop our website to ensure full interactivity so that our communities have access to and influence the services provided by the Council on their behalf.

Objective – Work towards a safer and caring community

Over the next five years, we will

- Through the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, achieve sustainable levels of crime reduction by tackling crime and the causes of crime, targeting specific issues and particular problem areas where appropriate.
- Through the Local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, develop initiatives, which, as well as addressing the specific issue of antisocial behaviour, help to reduce the fear of crime within the communities which make up Rochford District.

- With Partners, implement a series of initiatives aimed at providing more alternative facilities specifically for young people, with the intention to secure at least one new facility per year.
- Ensure that community facilities provision and access to these is considered in all new major residential development.
- Continue to support the Disabled Facilities Grant process
- Continue to support the Handyperson and Handygardening schemes for the elderly
- Continue to support Wyvern Community Transport and the Disabled Taxi Voucher scheme
- Continue to support and develop Rochford and Rayleigh Association of Voluntary Services as the district-wide organisation responsible for promoting and developing the voluntary and community sector in the District
- Continue to support the STAR Partnership as a key local delivery group in the voluntary and community arena in terms of developing and progressing specific local community initiatives
- Continue to support the Local Citizens Advice Bureau as an important local facility for the provision of impartial advice and guidance.

By 2017

- Be perceived as the Safest District in the County
- Work with our health partners, to ensure that a new satellite health facility is delivered in Rayleigh.

By 2021

- Work with our health partners, ensuring that a network of health service provision is developed and accessible across the District.
- Ensure a number of housing alternatives are in place to cater for the growth in the elderly population, with a range of packages of care and support on offer.

Objective – Provide a green and sustainable environment

Over the next five years, we will

- Work on reducing the Council's own carbon dioxide emissions by 30% (based upon 2005 baseline)
- Roll out the new contract for waste collection and recycling from April 2008 with a target of achieving at least a 50% recycling rate within the 5-year period.
- Through the Council's Local Development Framework, ensure that the future development of the District up to 2021 is planned and carried out in a sustainable fashion.

By 2017

- Implement an Adapting to Climate Change Action Plan, to drive action, monitoring and review.
- Work on reducing the Council's own carbon dioxide emissions by 60%
- Be seen as a key player locally in terms of delivering the sustainability agenda and influencing the decisions of both residents and local employers on this agenda
- Secure a recycling rate of at least 60% per year
- Aid the County Council in identifying and delivering a new recycling and waste management centre for residents in the District with improved access.
- Through the planning process, to have secured many examples of high quality design homes, that include water retention and renewable energy features.

Objective – Encourage a thriving local economy.

Over the next five years, we will

- Help deliver the potential of London Southend Airport and its environs through provision of a Joint Area Action Plan in partnership with Southend Borough Council
- Fund two major town centre studies of Hockley and Rochford to aid the regeneration of those two centres
- Work with the County Council as highway authority, to look at potential solutions to the current congestion problems across the District to ensure the highway infrastructure becomes 'fit for purpose' and at the same time, discuss with them the public transport network to ensure a more frequent, reliable and comprehensive system with better linkages between bus and rail
- Through the Local Development Framework process, seek to develop policies which result in the replacement of the old and poorly located industrial estates within the District. At the same time, identify the provision of new employment areas.
- Use the Local Development Framework process to secure the long-term future of the wharfage at Baltic Wharf as an employment area and ensure that appropriate access infrastructure is put in place.

By 2017

- Help promote the development of London Southend Airport and its infrastructure as a regional airport facility catering for up to 2.5 million passengers per year.

By 2021

- Secure improved road infrastructure East-West through the District with easier access to the A127 and A13
- Secure improved road access to Wallasea Island and Baltic Wharf

- Secure improved public transport provision through the Thames Gateway South Essex Rapid Transit system
- Achieve the relocation of poorly sited industrial estates away from housing areas
- Secure the establishment of a new employment park in the west of the District with easy access onto the main transport networks.

Objective – Improve the Quality of life for People in our District

Over the next five years, we will

- Develop the Council's communication and consultation framework to ensure that the views of the wider community, and sections within it who are not normally engaged, are taken into account in the decision making process
- Develop our Access to Services strategy and its implementation to ensure that we have taken into account the needs and preferences of all sections of our community when designing and delivering services.
- Achieve level 3 of the Equality Standard for local government by September 2008, with the aim of achieving level 5 by the end of 2010.
- Develop the Council's Area Committee structure as a means of public engagement and communication
- Develop further our partnership structures to continually engage and respond to our communities.
- Continue to refurbish our play areas through our rolling programme of playground improvements
- Ensure that play provision and access to it is considered in all new major residential developments.
- Ensure that community facilities provision and access to these is considered in all new major residential developments.
- Expand Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park both west and east and secure access from Cherry Orchard link road, and improve footpath and cycle access.
- Continue to improve and upgrade our parks and open spaces through a rolling programme of open space refurbishment
- Expand Swayne Park to the area to the rear of the new Rayleigh Leisure Centre and develop that area for new sports pitch provision.
- Support the RSPB in its proposals to secure the Wallasea Island wetlands project for bird watching and other recreation
- Secure the delivery on average of 50 affordable housing units per year through the auspices of Rochford Housing Association
- Agree a Choice Based lettings policy for the Council by October 2008.
- Proceed with and complete the extension to Rochford Cemetery in Hall Road, Rochford

By 2017

- Secure a range of new mixed housing developing on several large-scale sites linked to local infrastructure upgrades and connected to public open space.
- Increase the recreational usage of the Roach Valley as a green lung by development of the Cherry Orchard and Hockley Woods footpaths and bridleway network
- Through working with Essex County Council, further develop the walking, cycleway and bridleway network within the District, with a focus on opening up and developing the access network alongside the rivers.
- Pursue green tourism initiatives with increased provision of bed and breakfast and hotel accommodation to facilitate staying in the countryside
- Further develop the area for leisure, recreation and tourism to complement Southend's tourism offer.

By 2021

- Ensure our 'Green' offer as part of Thames Gateway South Essex is easily identifiable
- Seek to ensure that the Wallasea Island Wetlands project by RSPB is fully operational
- See that further marina development is secure and operational on the River Crouch

Objective – Maintain and enhance our local heritage

Over the next five years, we will.....

- Develop a rolling programme of events and activities which celebrate our local heritage and culture.
- Further develop Rayleigh Windmill as a community heritage facility and its use for weddings and civil ceremonies.
- Utilise the Local Development Framework process to support and enhance our built heritage of listed buildings and Conservation Areas.

By 2017

- Secure the pedestrianisation of Rochford Market Square and the promotion of the town for "Arts and Crafts" and specialist markets.
- Develop 'Heritage' initiatives at appropriate locations across the District as part of the District's tourism offer.