

APPENDIX

Our key priorities for 2005/2006

To provide quality, cost effective services we will

- Focus on those activities highlighted in our Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) Improvement Plan. These activities include:
 - Producing a new Corporate Strategy by April 2006. **Still at very early stage.**
 - Continuing our programme of Member training and development throughout the year to improve our decision-making process – **now underway.**
 - Reviewing and implementing a new system of managing performance by March 2006 to improve transparency and accountability around the delivery of projects and services. **This report represents an early stage in the process.**
 - Developing our workforce capacity throughout the year. Key measures for us will be the impact of our staff training and development programmes and other elements of our HR policies in terms of:

Performance improvement in individual services
Audit half yearly position statement

- Internal promotions - **Audit end of year figures**
- Staff turnover - **Audit end of year figures**
- Sickness rates - **Audit end of year figures**
- Reviewing the workings of our Overview & Scrutiny and Planning Committees, with changes being implemented from May 2006 – **now underway**
- Securing specific service improvements in the areas of council tax/housing benefit, homelessness and recycling
- Key targets for this year are
 - Council Tax/Housing Benefit
 - Reduce the time to process new claims to 30 days – **currently performance is at around 24.5 days**
 - Increase recovery of housing benefit overpayments to 55% - **currently performance is at 13% (this figure gives the percentage of total debt recovered in the current quarter so far)**

- Homelessness
 - Reduce the number of vulnerable households in temporary accommodation by 5% - **Figures for the end of last year show that the number has actually grown by about 1.6%, due to the lack of permanent affordable rented housing becoming available. We are developing schemes to help homelessness households into private sector tenancies and working with housing associations to develop new homes for rent.**
 - Increase the proportion of homelessness cases processed within 33 days, to 87% - **currently performance is at 94%.**
- Recycling
 - Expand kerbside recycling to 95% of households. **Currently at 86%**
 - Increase the proportion of waste recycled or composted to 18%. **Figures available show 14%. (However, this is for the final quarter of 2004/2005).**

- Overall, we will work to increase the number of statutory indicators in the two top quartiles nationally, by 5% year on year for the next two years. In 2003/2004, 59% of indicators were in the top two quartiles: for 2004/05 we are aiming to increase this to 62%, and for 2005/06 to 65%. We recognise that this is extremely challenging and we will therefore review our progress at that time. **Await year end figures.**
- Roll out an electronic records management and workflow system across the Authority from April 2005 for completion by March 2007. This will allow more flexible working and provide customers with better access to services. **Electronic Records Management currently being trialled in Planning, followed by Revenues and Benefits.**

To provide a safer more caring environment we will

- Provide affordable homes to meet local needs

Specifically, we will complete the refurbishment of Hardwick House to provide 22 homes for rent by October 2005 and provide 30 new units for the frail elderly by February 2006 – **work on site is progressing well.**
- Commence the development of 27 new-build flats for rent on the former Reads nursery site in Rawreth Lane by October 2007 – **this scheme is still on target.**

- Work with partners to finalise a series of detailed action plans in conjunction with the district-wide Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy by September 2005. Our key target is to secure a 13.5% reduction in crime during the period 2005-2008 **scheduled meetings taking place to knit together the action plans from partnership agencies**

To provide a green and sustainable environment we will

- Complete the roll out of our kerbside recycling scheme to the majority of properties in the District by December 2005 – **Awaiting outcome of a DEFRA bid for a smaller collection vehicle and then aim to bring remaining properties on to the scheme in November 2005.**
- Introduce a “buy-in” green waste initiative available to residents from July 2005 – **Scheme approved and will be operated by Green Recycling within enrolment now available and collections starting Monday 4th July 2005.**
- Implement our environment initiatives programme in relation to weed control, grass verges, rubbish dumping and graffiti from August 2005 – **Work to start in July/August following Member agreement to proposals.**

To encourage a thriving local economy we will

- Develop and evaluate options to secure additional parking in and around our main centres by November 2005. **Work now in early stages.**
- Provide information and services to promote increased recycling by local businesses by December 2005 **Contact number on website – link will contain fact sheets etc. when available, with the intention to hold meetings with businesses from September.**
- Implement a street enhancement scheme covering Websters Way in Rayleigh, with completion by August 2005. **Work commencing 18th July.**

To improve the quality of life in the District we will

- Complete work on the new Rayleigh Leisure Centre by May 2006 – **Work on site commenced and is due for completion by next May 2006.**
- Extend Rochford Cemetery through completing the purchase of additional land by next summer 2006 – **Soil and drainage surveys commissioned, negotiations underway with landowner for acquisition of land.**
- Review an extension of decriminalised parking enforcement and residents’ parking schemes, rolling out changes from February 2006 – **the Council have canvassed the views of Parish Councils and other stakeholders. This information has been transmitted to Essex County Council Highways Division and**

Essex Police for comment with a view to finalising this matter in November 2005

- Provide a replacement skateboard ramp at Clements Hall by October 2005 — **investigating further sources of funding, on programme.**

To maintain and enhance our local heritage we will

- Complete our renovation of the Windmill building by September 2005 – **Work on programme**
- Complete the provision of an adjoining scented garden area by November 2005 – **Planning permission obtained 26th May 2005, works to commence by 1st September 2005.**