

ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL -CAPITAL STRATEGY STATEMENT

The capital strategy bring together all the needs and priorities within the District of Rochford that have an influence on the capital investment plans for the Authority. The main influences on the capital strategy are -

- **The Corporate plan and strategies of the Council** – which identifies in detail the priorities of the Council/**The Best Value Performance Plan** – which assesses performance
- **The Asset Management Plan** – which looks in detail at the condition and use of the Council's assets
- **The Housing Investment Programme** – which identifies the priorities for Housing within the District
- **The IS/ICT strategy** – which looks at the requirements and developments of new technologies, used to deliver services and progress towards e-government.
- **The community strategy** will bring together the views of local communities, the requirements of the Council and it's partner bodies.

These are all corporate documents that have been constructed by both Corporate Management Board and Operational Management Team and approved by Members. Members approve the final capital programme within the annual budget process so that competing priorities can be evaluated.

For 2002/03, rather than produce two similar but separate documents, the Council has amalgamated its Corporate Plan and Best Value Performance Plan into one. That document "Our performance over the Past Year; Our Future Work Programme", was approved in June 2002.

The Capital Strategy has not been submitted for consultation this year. In 2001 extensive consultation was undertaken to which we received only 2 questions on the document.

Corporate Plan/Best Value Performance Plan

The key objectives of the Council are

- To provide quality, cost effective services
- To work towards a safer and more caring community

- To promote a green and sustainable environment
- To encourage a thriving local economy
- To improve the quality of life for people in our District
- To maintain and enhance our local heritage and culture

The main issues identified in the combined Corporate Plan/Best Value Performance Plan that affect the capital strategy are as follows.

- Moving towards a balanced budget
- The implementation of the Council's IS/ICT strategy and E-Government strategy
- The Best Value Review of key services
- The implications of the new Leisure contract
- The implementation of the town centre enhancement programmes for Hockley, Rochford and Hullbridge
- The implementation and rollout of the Council's recycling initiatives
- The implementation of the Crime and Disorder strategy
- The refurbishment of the run down properties in West Street, Rochford
- The development of the Hardwick House site in Rayleigh and the upgrading of other sheltered housing schemes
- The creation of a new country park in the east of the district
- The renovation of the historic windmill
- Review and changes to the Council's office accommodation over the next three years in response to the Disabilities Discrimination Act, the role of IS/IT and the improvement to customer access.

Asset Management Plan

The Council will work systematically through its assets to verify the current usage and ensure that options on the future of those assets are identified. Where surplus assets are sold they will produce capital receipts. These will be made available for the Capital Strategy. Capital requirements from the asset management plan will be built into the capital strategy. From the work undertaken to date, which includes a public consultation exercise, the key issues have been identified as

- More investment in the condition of public open spaces
- The future needs of public buildings (see above)
- Issues that flow from the Council's best value programme.
- The review of assets following developments in new technologies(see above)

Housing Investment Plan

The Housing Investment plan for 2002/03 is under preparation.

The majority of expenditure in respect of Council housing is met from the Major Repairs Reserve. This is based on funds made available from the Government. These are concentrated on bringing council housing up to modern standards and undertaking large scale repairs and improvements.

Priorities are determined chiefly by technical officers on the requirements of the properties, however all items are discussed by the tenants groups prior to decisions by Members. Tenants have also been requested to identify their priorities and following this there is now a programme for the replacement of front and back doors.

For private housing within the district the Council will continue with its policy of making available grants for essential improvements and repairs for owners who qualify for financial help. The adaptation of homes for the disabled will also continue.

The Council has undertaken many partnerships with Housing Associations and will consider providing assistance for future schemes where resources allow. Associations working in the District have been approached on three major issues. Firstly the Council has a number of small sites for disposal, which are part of or adjoining to existing Council housing. Associations have made submitted ideas for their development. The Council is reviewing the future of one of its sheltered housing schemes, as there are significant costs for improvements. Associations have developed schemes, which have led to bids for funding from the Housing Corporation. The council agreed to provide funds to assist homelessness. Associations have submitted proposals for this funding and the selected partner is now in the process of purchasing properties.

IS/ICT strategy

The Government has accepted the strategy for this Council. Grant is now available of £200,000 for both 2002/03 and 2003/04. The first year programme will be determined on the following

- The priorities already identified from the above
- The scale of contribution to e-government
- The ability to implement quickly

Control and Monitoring Process for the Capital Strategy Statement

The Council needs to ensure that the capital investment, required to achieve the Council's objectives, is properly identified, members will agree the prioritised capital programme covering a three-year period matching priorities with resources available. All capital expenditure comes under the requirements of contract standing orders and financial regulations. The Council has already set up an officer working party to monitor the implementation of the capital

programme. Members receive reports on the monitoring of the capital programme.

Procurement

Most of the proposals shown in the current capital programme involve partnership working. These include Essex County Council and the relevant Parishes on the Town centre developments, with the contract let by the County Council. Our contractors with regard the repair and improvement of leisure buildings and IS/IT strategy. Funding bodies regarding the new Country Park at Blatches Farm and the renovation of the historic windmill in Rayleigh. Other bodies for items like the restoration of derelict properties in West Street, Rochford and Housing Associations in relation to non HRA housing.

Prioritisation of Capital Investment

In the light of the above Members have to decide on priorities and balance the competing demands of services and the community. Members will look at not only what is required but also what is achievable within a programme. The Council has therefore set the following key priorities and targets for the three year programme.

- **Investment in statutory and priority services** to ensure the continuation and improvement of essential services and value for money
- **Ensure that landlord and owner responsibilities are undertaken** including priority items identified through the asset management plan these include works under the Disabilities Discrimination Act.
- **Improve infrastructure** that has an influence on economic activity and the well being of the Authority. This mainly relates to the improvement of town and village centres. These schemes are in partnership with Essex County Council, the local Parish Councils and local businesses.
- **Priority items flowing from key strategy documents** including the Corporate Plan/Best Value Performance Plan and Community Plan. Emphasis is given to funding of schemes, which generates external funding. Examples are the Country Park where grant support of over £100,000 has already been received and Rayleigh Windmill, where resources have been authorised in order to attract Lottery funding.

CAPITAL STRATEGY STATEMENT – 2002 – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- The District Council is within the County of Essex and has an area of 17,094 hectares and a population of 79,220.
- Police services are provided by Essex Police and the Health Services are provided by South Essex Health Authority
- Within the District there are 13 Parish Councils and 1 Town Council. These cover the whole District
- As at March 2002 the Council had

Type of asset	Area Sq. M	Outside Sq. M	Balance Sheet Valuation £m
1871 Council Dwellings	-	-	83.18
HRA – Miscellaneous property	-	-	1.89
3 Administration centres	4,378	1,528	1.95
5 Leisure Buildings	10,038	17,491	12.65
7 Public Conveniences	188	-	0.2
7 Fee paying Car Parks		27,287	3.01
280 acres of open spaces which includes 28 playgrounds and 30 football pitches	1699	1266 *	0.8
Miscellaneous	358	241	0.4
* Hard surfaces only			

- The Council discharges its main functions through external contractors. These contracts reduce the need for capital expenditure in the delivery of these services and with the new contract covering the leisure buildings passes the responsibility for repairs, maintenance and improvements to the contractor.
- The Council employs approximately 200 whole time equivalent staff for services other than housing and 40 in respect of Council Housing.
- Except for sheltered housing the Council has no significant backlog of works outstanding to its buildings which cannot be contained in the current level of on-going programme. In sheltered housing the Council has a significant volume of work outstanding with regards the improvement of stock and the removal of shared facilities. This is currently estimated at £1.5 m.
- The Council has significant problems in relation to its revenue account. Continuous pressure has been mounted on the Government to seek better

grant support for Rochford. We currently receive the lowest grant per head of population in Essex and the 9th lowest in England. One implication of this is that capital schemes that have significant revenue implications are extremely difficult to include within the programme and capital support from revenue is extremely limited.

- Apart from the leisure contract the Council has attracted funding for the new Country Park and its IS/ICT strategy. The Council is unlikely to enter into any private finance initiatives due to the size of the Authority and the revenue implications
- Privately owned properties account for 92 % of the housing stock within the District. This reduces the need for direct support from the Council
- There is a healthy number of voluntary, community and religious groups within the District- Village and Community Halls tend to be locally funded.
- The Council is the owner of Housing and General Fund properties and has landlord and owner responsibilities in relation to them
- The District has strong links with the Essex County Council covering many services.
- The Council has partnership arrangements and partnership agreements with the Town and Parish Councils throughout the district.
- The Council supports a number of voluntary and community organisations, usually by small scale revenue support. Some of these organisations provide and maintain their own premises
- The Council regularly consults with tenant representatives regarding Council housing.
- The Council consults with the local Chambers of Trade and other organisations promoting economic activity. The Council is now a partner authority in the recently extended Thames Gateway to include south Essex and with other local partners and the private sector is developing a strategy for the Thames Gateway Partnership – South Essex.
- The Council has partnership arrangements with a number of Registered Social Landlords. Here the Council is involved in both the strategic issues and individual schemes. The Council regularly consults with them on their future plans.

- The Council has partnership arrangements with all relevant statutory bodies. Where applicable the Council will try to ensure that our policies are incorporated within their strategies.
- The Council works with Castle Point and Rochford Primary Care Trust to identify and address issues that give rise to ill health and health inequalities in the District, and participates in the production of the Local Health Plan. A joint member advisory board has recently been established involving the District Council and the Trust.
- The Council works with the Local Police, the Drug Action Team and other relevant agencies on crime and disorder issues.

The net budget of the Council is around £7.5m for 2002/03

The current capital programme for 2002/03 – 2004/05

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Investment in statutory and priority services			
Information and Communication technologies	247,000	230,000	30,000
Replacement of vehicles and equipment	176,800	71,000	30,000
Landlord and owner responsibilities			
Major repairs and improvements to operational assets including access for the disabled.	440,000	125,000	
Improvements to Infrastructure			
Working with the Parish Council, the County Council and business groups to improve town and village centres.	435,000		
Priority items – key strategy documents			
Working with the Parish Councils, the County Council and Police on crime disorder and safety issues	160,500	20,000	
Development of open spaces and play facilities	358,000	50,000	50,000

Housing Investment Plan			
Grants for house renovation and disabled adaptations	169,000	170,000	170,000
Partnership schemes with Housing Associations	287,000	167,000	167,000
Major repairs and improvements to Council Housing (Major Repairs Allowance)	1,183,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
Total Investment proposed	3,456,300	1,833,000	1,447,000

The funding of the capital programme is as follows

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
Credit Approvals from the Government	324,000	306,000	306,000
Use of Capital Receipts	1,125,427	261,000	75,000
Capital Grants	316,000	266,000	66,000
Earmarked reserves	632,873	-	-
Major Repairs Allowance (HRA)	1,058,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
Total financing	3,456,300	1,833,000	1,447,000

New Sports centre

In 2003/04 the Council has the intention of borrowing under the new freedom to borrow within prudential guidelines. This will be for an estimated £1m to part fund a replacement leisure centre in partnership with our private sector leisure contractor. This will allow the revenue cost of the scheme to be reduced. This is not shown in the table above.

Further information

Further information regarding this capital strategy can be obtained from

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Or visit the Councils website at www.rochford.gov.uk