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## KEY POLICIES AND ACTIONS FOR 2009/2010

### 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report formally sets out the main areas of policy development for 2009/2010. It identifies the main projects to be progressed and implemented and highlights any areas of service development/change. It also identifies issues on which the Council may wish to request consideration by the Review Committee and outlines the timetable for establishing the budget for 2010/2011.

### 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 With the budget agreed at Full Council on 27 January and the Council Tax rate being set at the meeting on 19 February, it is now opportune for Members to formally agree to the main areas of the Council's work programme for the coming year.
- 2.2 At the same time, Members can consider the programme relating to the monitoring of the 2009/2010 budget and the preparation of the 2010/2011 budget. Members' views are sought on those policy, resource and service issues which might be appropriate for examination by the Review Committee, although it will be for that Committee to determine its work programme in 2009/2010.

### 3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 As Members are aware, a large proportion of the Council's work is governed by statute and is driven by legislative requirements. In a number of the key service areas there are national targets and standards to meet and, where appropriate, more local targets have also been set. Satisfaction rates with the Council have traditionally been high when compared nationally and the Council's image, in comparative terms, is a positive one. Public expectations continue to rise. At a time when the impact of the credit crunch, and recessionary pressures, are having a negative effect on the Council's income streams and putting pressure on resources in key service areas such as benefits and homelessness, balancing the Council's budget, not just for 2009/2010 but over the 5 year life cycle of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), has proved extremely challenging.
- 3.2 Key projects for the Council in the coming year will be the continuing work around the Local Development Framework and its various stages, together with other key planning supporting documentation such as the Joint Area Action Plan for the Airport and its Environs and the Town Centre Action Plans for Hockley and Rochford, plus the commissioning of a new study for Rayleigh Town Centre. Our Access to Services work will progress, with further changes coming forward for detailed consideration and decision. We will continue with the work at Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park, now that we have secured purchase of the enlarged area. We will also progress our work around the Rochford Cemetery extension.

- 3.3 In last year's Key Policies and Actions report we said that a key focus for the Council would be around achieving 'step change' in our recycling rate, on the back of the contract renewal process in relation to refuse collection. We have certainly achieved that, with our monthly recycling rate now regularly exceeding 60%, compared to 19% this time last year. We also flagged up our CPA re-inspection as a key challenge and again, through achieving a 'Good' rating, we met our expectations in this area.
- 3.4 With the budget for 2009/2010 now set, we have recognised the difficult economic and financial times we find ourselves in. There are no new growth items as such; no new initiatives. It is more about continuing to focus on the key priorities and programmes identified in our 'Vision to Reality' and last year's Corporate Plan, although there may be some reprogramming over time as we work within the parameters of our agreed MTFS.
- 3.5 We have rationalised our objectives from 6 to 4 and our key actions and initiatives will be prioritised around them in a revised version of the Corporate Plan, which is now being reviewed and updated for member consideration. The 4 key objectives revolve around 'Making a Difference' to:-
1. Our Public
  2. Our Communities
  3. Our Environment
  4. Our Local Economy
- 3.6 The key elements of the Council's work programme will be publicised through the press, the web and through Rochford District Matters, using other medium as appropriate.
- 3.7 The attached appendices A, B and C make no attempt to cover all the Council's functions. Instead, they focus on the 'headline/priority' areas of work for the forthcoming year. Appendix A deals with the policy and strategic framework. Appendix B covers the main projects and Appendix C, the key areas of service development/change. In each of the appendices, the linkage to one or more of the Council's four corporate objectives outlined above is given.
- 3.8 Given the work programme outlined and the issues coming before Council in the foreseeable future, Appendix D outlines those topics suggested for study by the Review Committee. However, in requesting subjects for consideration, Members need to take into account the capacity of the Review Committee and note that it sets its own agenda.
- 3.9 Appendix E sets out the process and timetable for monitoring the 2009/2010 budget and preparing the 2010/2011 budget for Member's information. The intention is to combine the half-yearly review of the budget with a half-yearly review of the work programme in November. There will also be a mid year

Performance report on all our main Performance indicators. In this way, it is envisaged that Members can review progress on both the budget and the work programme at a critical stage during the financial year and make any adjustments that might be appropriate to ensure key targets are met or reassessed.

- 3.10 Finally, Appendix F sets out a list of events, for Members' reference, which will impact on the Authority during the year. It is not all-encompassing, but does attempt to capture the key activities which the Council will be involved in.

#### **4 RECOMMENDATION**

4.1 It is proposed that the Council **RESOLVES**

- (1) that the work programme for 2009/2010, as set out in Appendices A, B and C and the public notification of its content, as outlined in the report, be agreed.
- (2) that those areas of work, with or without amendments, for consideration by the Review Committee, as outlined in Appendix D, be agreed.
- (3) that the programme for the monitoring of the 2009/2010 budget and the development of the 2010/2011 Budget, as outlined in Appendix E, be noted.
- (4) that the main events timetable outlined in Appendix F be noted.

Paul Warren

Chief Executive

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#### **Background Papers:-**

None

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If you would like this report in large print, braille or another language please contact 01702 546366.

**Policy Development Work**

Council's Corporate Plan (1-4)

- Produce an updated Plan in the light of 2009/2010 Budget Process – for consideration and approval by Executive and endorsement by Council March/April 2009

Local Development Documents (1-4)

- Finalisation of Core Strategy for submission October 2009
- Public Inquiry into Core Strategy 2010
- Adoption 2010

London Southend Airport and Environs Joint Action Area Plan (1-4)

- Publication of Preferred Options Feb 2009
- Submission Plan Finalised June/July 2009
- Adoption 2010

Hockley Town Centre Action Area Plan (1-4)

- Issues and Options Consultation Feb-April 2009

Rochford Town Centre Action Area Plan (1-4)

- Issues and Options Consultation March-May 2009

Asset Management Plan (1)

- Report on Asset Management Performance Indicators July 2009
- Review Asset Management Plan July 2009

Capital Strategy (1)

- Review and production of revised Capital Strategy July 2009

Annual Report (1)

- Prepare 2009 Annual Report for Member consideration and approval July 2009

Economic Development Strategy (1-4)

- Review and revise Strategy for Member consideration and approval April 2009

Rochford District Sustainable Community Strategy (1-4)

- Launch new strategy with Partners of the Local Strategic Partnership April 2009

IT Strategy (1)

- Review and prepare revised strategy and action plan Sept 2009

Communications Strategy (1)

- Review strategy and prepare revised action plan Dec 2009

## Main Projects

### Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park (1, 2 and 3)

- Fencing, ground preparation works, weeding etc March-July 2009
- Planning application submitted for service yard May 2009
- Installation of service compound Sept 2009

### Public Open Spaces Refurbishment Programme (1, 2 and 3)

- Programme submitted to Executive Board for consideration September 2009
- Implementation of programme Autumn 2008 onwards

### Sweyne Park Extension – Pitch Provision (1, 2 and 3)

- Groundworks, drainage, parking etc Spring/Summer 2009
- Pitches in operation From 2009/2010 season

### Youth Facilities Capital Programme (1 and 2)

- Liaison with Parish Councils and facilities identified and implemented By March 2010

### Rochford Cemetery Extension (1, 2 and 3)

- Planning application approved April/May 2009
- First phase civil engineering works Autumn 2009-Autumn 2010
- Second phase works From Spring 2011
- Extension opening Summer 2012

ICT Contract (1)

- Complete renewal process By March 2011

Equalities and Diversity agenda (1 and 2)

- Achieve Level 4 of the Equality Standard May 2009
- Achieve 'Excellence' under new equalities framework Dec 2010

Climate Change Strategy – Proposed Actions (1 and 3)

- Consideration and approval of Action Plan April/May 2009

Implement Member Training and Development Programme (1)

June 2009-March 2010

Member Development Charter Accreditation (1)

Dec 2010

**Areas for Service Development/Change**

Council Tax / Housing Benefits (1) – Work with Castle Point

- Evaluation of working options completed Sept/Oct 2009

Business Processing Re-engineering work across service functions (1)

Ongoing

Access to Services Work (1)

- Combined main and planning receptions at Rochford April 2009
- Split Switchboard and Reception From April-May 2009
- Trial extended opening hours at Rochford reception - for 6 months From April 2009



**Issues for possible consideration by the Review  
Committee in 2009/2010**

- Member role on outside bodies/benefit to the Council
- Car Parking Charges
- The Council's contribution towards safeguarding vulnerable children and adults
- Service Provision for our Ageing Population
- Role of Local Authorities in the light of the Recession – a review of best practice

**Budget Process**

Closure of Accounts	June 2009
Annual Report identifying Performance over last year, targets for 2009/2010 and main financial information of the Authority	July 2009
Completion of early review of 2009/2010 Budget around savings and possible areas for expenditure	July 2009
Draft Internal Divisional Plans produced – internal bidding system	Oct 2009
Consultation with Local Chambers/Business around potential budget items/issues	Oct 2009
Community Consultation around Budget examining potential budget items/issues	Oct 2009
Member Budget Awayday – agree budget framework	Nov 2009
Half Yearly Review of Medium Term Financial Strategy	Oct/Nov 2009
Member Awayday – Finalise priorities for Budget	Jan 2010
Budget setting for the Council is agreed	Jan 2010
Council Tax Set	Feb 2010
Key Plans and Actions Report	Feb 2010
Corporate Plan Reviewed, Updated and Agreed	Mar/April 2010
Internal Divisional Actions Plan finalised	Mar/April 2010

**Main Events in 2009/2010**

June 2009 -	European and County Elections
June 2009 -	Accounts for 2008/2009 agreed
June/July 2009 -	Joint Area Action Plan for London Southend Airport – Submission Plan finalised
May/June 2009 -	Use of Resources Assessment under new inspection/assessment regime completed
October 2009 -	LDF Core Strategy – finalised for submission
November 2009 -	First Member Budget Awayday
November 2009 -	Finalised report associated with Comprehensive Area Assessment published
January 2010 -	Second Member Budget Awayday
January 2010 -	Budget Agreed
February 2010 -	Council Tax Set