

# Corporate Plan

2014/17







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## Foreword from Leader / Chief Executive

Rochford is a District located in south east Essex. We live in a beautiful, scenic area bounded by the River Crouch to the north and the urban areas of Southend and Castle Point to the south. We see the District as a place that has many strengths; a diverse environment characterised by substantial areas of attractive countryside; a rich heritage which includes many iconic buildings; strong and vibrant communities; a local economy that is growing in stature assisted by the development of London Southend Airport; and a crime rate that is among the lowest in the East of England.

This plan sets out the priorities for the Council and outlines how we will address the challenges ahead over the next three years. We are committed, along with our partners, to work with residents, community groups and businesses to overcome these challenges and seize upon opportunities to ensure we improve the quality of life for local communities.

Along with other public sector organisations, the Council has and continues to face significant financial challenges. Consequently, we have had to achieve savings whilst maintaining our range of services to our residents. Elected Members, partners and staff have worked hard to approach this challenge innovatively and, as a result, we have achieved this aim in the majority of cases. Going forward the challenge is to continue to innovate as a Council and continue to work collaboratively with our partners. For example, there is a need as an organisation to become more commercially minded which will, in turn, reduce our reliance on Government grant.

Despite these challenges, the Council continues to perform well. Highlights include:

- Regaining the top recycling Council in the Country accolade;
- Rochford Arts Trail being named the East of England overall winner at the Towns Alive 2013 Awards;
- The Revenues and Benefits Team retaining their Customer Service Excellence Standard, following an annual review;
- Retaining Investors In People (IIP) Gold status; and
- Member Services retaining the Charter Award for Elected Member Development

Building on these achievements, over the next three years we will concentrate our efforts on delivering innovative and high-quality services under three key priorities:-

**Place, Homes, and Economic Growth.**

The Council has historically achieved a high level of resident satisfaction with our services and the expectation is that this Plan will set the ambition, vision and outcomes to allow this to be maintained in the years to come.



Cllr Terry Cutmore  
Leader of the Council



Amar Dave  
Chief Executive

## Vision, Values and Behaviours



The Council has adopted a 'vision' which will inspire the organisation to continue to deliver its services to the high standards that have been set.

To achieve this vision we will focus on three key themes, Place, Homes and Economic Growth.

We will work to the following set of values which we consider to be important for the District:

- Rising to the challenge
- Delivering in unity
- Committed to the community

The Council's behaviour enables it to meet its values and both drive the culture of the Council to achieve its overall objectives.

The behaviours (shown in purple, with the values shown in green and the vision in yellow) are to think commercially, take up challenges, learn, deliver, be proactive and innovative.



## What is the Corporate Plan?

The Council's Corporate Plan sets out our priorities for the next three years. The Plan is linked into, and complements, the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and budget process. The MTFS sets out a clear framework for our financial decision making.

The Corporate Plan and its delivery is reviewed and updated annually. It takes into account national, regional, county-wide and local priorities. We use a range of information and intelligence to set priorities, including the results of internal and external consultation exercises.

Internally, the Corporate Plan is underpinned by Divisional Plans and individual staff and team priorities are picked up through our Performance Review process. The Corporate Plan is not a list of all the things we do. Instead, it sets out the 'headline' themes and provides clarity around where we intend to concentrate our activity. The Plan should be read in conjunction with our Annual Report, which is published in July, and gives details of how we have performed over the past year.



Listed Milestone

## Long Term Themes

Over the next three years we will continue to improve our services to local communities and enhance the difference we can make to the local economy and the environment. Three themes have been identified which will act as the focus for this improvement – Place, Homes and Economic Growth. The three themes are intended to complement each other. For example, housing growth in the area will have a positive impact on the local economy. Conserving the District's high quality local environment will ensure the District is a place people both want to live and invest in.

## Place

We want a District that is vibrant, inclusive, safe and sustainable which retains the essential characteristics of its market towns, villages, open countryside, woodland, rivers and salt marshes.

We are committed to our communities. We intend to raise the profile of the District by working with partners to develop a distinctive programme of events, targeted at residents and visitors alike. Our District has a unique heritage which should be showcased. We also want to keep our District clean and tidy by promoting a positive street scene ensuring that our streets, roads and verges are well maintained.

Knowing that feeling safe is an important priority for our residents the Castle Point and Rochford District Community Safety Partnership will be supported to continue to deliver one of the lowest crime rates in the East of England. We will also ensure that statutory public safety duties are carried out to a high standard and that the District is as safe as possible when emergency situations occur.

We want to help our residents to develop and maintain active and healthy lifestyles. The Council is committed to providing a wide range of leisure activities and facilities for all ages and ensuring its open spaces are accessible to all for recreational activities.

The District has a unique and beautiful environment which should be protected and enhanced. Future development needs to be carefully managed and, at the same time, open spaces protected for the benefit of both residents and visitors.



Wallasea looking across to Burnham-on-Crouch

Rochford Hall

Southend Airport Railway Station



## Place

What we will do	How we will achieve it	Timescale
Protect and enhance the District's character and heritage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure new development respects the District's local character through the development management process.</li> <li>Maintain a list of the District's heritage assets and ensure these are protected from inappropriate alterations.</li> <li>Ensure up-to-date plans and policies are in place that protect the District's heritage and characteristics whilst accommodating the District's development needs.</li> </ul>	<p>As and when planning applications are made.</p> <p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Draft New Local Plan complete by March 2016. Final version adopted by September 2017.</p>
Protect and enrich our local environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective management of contributions from developers towards community infrastructure.</li> <li>Ensure joined up approach across service areas and partners to development.</li> </ul>	Review current arrangements by December 2014. Revised arrangements in place by March 2015.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and deliver a vision for the Upper Roach Valley enhancing the biodiversity of the area.</li> </ul>	January 2015.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain effective environmental regulation.</li> </ul>	Review March 2015.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Declare Rayleigh Air Quality Management Area. This is designed to improve air quality.</li> </ul>	Autumn 2014.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect recycling material and meet obligations. Materials Recovery Facility contract awarded.</li> </ul>	May 2015.
Promote and enhance a sense of pride in our District.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with commercial partners to enable a series of events across the District. Develop a calendar with partners.</li> </ul>	First event August 2015. Annual Review.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote a positive 'Streetscene'. Maintain clean and tidy roads and verges.</li> </ul>	Campaign in place from April 2014.
Ensure that the community feels safe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-ordinate the activities of the Castle Point &amp; Rochford Community Safety Partnership ensuring its objectives are delivered.</li> </ul>	Annual plan implemented from April 2014.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivery of the Health &amp; Safety and Food Safety Plans.</li> </ul>	Approved by June 2014.

## Place

What we will do	How we will achieve it	Timescale
Develop an active and healthy community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with Essex County Council, Sustrans (a charity promoting sustainable transport) and Southend on Sea Borough Council to develop a network of cycle paths across the District and around the airport.</li> </ul>	Feasibility study by September 2014
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work in partnership with Active Rochford, Castle Point &amp; Rochford Health and Wellbeing Board and Clinical Commissioning Group to address identified priorities.</li> </ul>	Annual Plan in place from April 2014 reviewed annually.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a wide range of high quality facilities, activities and services through the leisure contract.</li> </ul>	Annual Review.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver an Open Spaces Strategy to clarify our aims in managing such areas.</li> </ul>	Approved by July 2014. Annual Review.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refresh the Ageing Population Strategy to fully reflect the work the Council undertakes to support older residents.</li> </ul>	Complete by September 2014.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through membership of the South East Essex Children's Partnership Board, work with County Council, Castle Point Borough Council, Health Service, Police, Schools and the Voluntary Sector to ensure that quality services and provision are in place to meet the needs of children and young people in the District.</li> </ul>	Attendance at the quarterly meetings of the Children's Partnership Board and input into the work included in the Essex Children, Young People and Families Plan.
Work with partners to improve the infrastructure of the District.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of current working arrangements with Essex County Council Highways to achieve improved outcomes for the District in respect of all highway issues, from major infrastructure improvements to issues such as pot holes.</li> </ul>	Delivery by March 2015.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a Community Infrastructure Levy for the District, which will require developers to make financial contributions towards infrastructure.</li> </ul>	Community Infrastructure Levy adopted by March 2016
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce a Transportation Strategy Supplementary Planning Document that will clearly state to infrastructure providers (including the Highways Authority) the Council's transport priorities.</li> </ul>	Transportation Strategy Supplementary Planning Document adopted by January 2016.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the emergency plans for the District to ensure we work with other partners in order to help and support those affected.</li> </ul>	September 2014.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a Surface Water Flood Forum to work closely with other key organisations and the community to find cost effective, innovative solutions to surface water flooding problems in the District.</li> </ul>	Forum in place. Local schemes under development.



## Homes

The Council has ensured the appropriate planning framework is in place through the production of its Core Strategy and accompanying planning documents. The focus must now transfer from plan and policy to delivery as well as ensuring plans are kept up to date.

In the March 2014 budget statement, the Government restated its commitment to build additional homes. The provision of new homes in the District will have positive short-term impacts on the local economy and must be managed to protect the District's environment and character. We will work with partners to provide a range of quality new housing for our communities, including affordable homes for those residents unable to buy or rent in the private market. We will ensure new developments respect the District's character and environment and are accompanied by the appropriate infrastructure to support them. We will continue to provide advice and assistance to residents who need help to find suitable solutions to their housing issues, and support the housing needs of the most vulnerable members of our community.



## Homes

What we will do	How we will achieve it	Timescale
Provide new homes to meet local need, including additional affordable homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage/support developers to deliver homes on sites with planning consent.</li> </ul>	From commencement of individual planning applications.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure up-to-date, viable plans are in place to manage future development appropriately; and take a positive pro-active approach to delivery of those plans, including monitoring of delivery.</li> </ul>	Draft New Local Plan complete by March 2016; final version adopted by September 2017. Delivery of current plans ongoing. Development delivery reported annually.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with partners to identify housing requirements in terms of number, type and location.</li> </ul>	December 2014.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement policies in relation to requirements for affordable housing on new development sites.</li> </ul>	Ongoing in response to planning applications.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Council and other public organisation owned land to identify development opportunities.</li> </ul>	March 2015.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate the potential for the Council to develop land either alone or in partnership.</li> </ul>	March 2015.
Ensure new housing developments are high quality environments in which people want to live, and which respect the District's environment and existing character.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure up-to-date plans and policies are in place that guide housing development to the most sustainable locations and protect less sustainable areas from inappropriate development.</li> </ul>	Core Strategy and Allocations Plan already in place. Draft New Local Plan complete by March 2016; final version adopted by September 2017.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure up-to-date plans are in place to manage design of development and to ensure development does not adversely affect the District's character or environment.</li> </ul>	Development Management Plan adopted by September 2014.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work positively with developers to ensure developments meet the standards set by the Council.</li> </ul>	In response to planning applications and pre-application enquiries.



## Homes

What we will do	How we will achieve it	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with local residents to ensure public participation in the planning process so that future development accounts for the views of the community.</li> </ul>	Integral to preparation of Council plans and in consideration of individual planning applications.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take enforcement action against unauthorised development where appropriate.</li> </ul>	On response to unauthorised development.
Minimise the number of Empty Homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective monitoring of Council tax discounts and exemptions.</li> </ul>	Reviewed annually.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the Thames Gateway South Essex Empty Homes Scheme.</li> </ul>	Reviewed annually.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an Empty Homes Strategy.</li> </ul>	December 2014.
Reduce homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review homeless prevention and housing advice services.</li> </ul>	July 2014.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the use of bed and breakfast accommodation.</li> </ul>	Commencing July 2014; increasing through to 2016.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the supply of self-contained temporary accommodation units.</li> </ul>	First additional units July 2014; further additional units continuing to be provided through to 2016.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of the Council's housing allocation scheme.</li> </ul>	March 2015.
Promote energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify fuel poverty.</li> </ul>	December 2014.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with partners to improve home energy efficiency.</li> <li>Promote the Council's home improvement grant scheme; ensure the scheme is targeted at those most in need, and assists the most vulnerable members of the community.</li> </ul>	Already in place. To be reviewed annually.

## Economic Growth

Economic Growth is crucial to the vitality of the District, and key to ensuring the right balance between essential development and preservation of the environment.

We will rise to this challenge through our Economic Growth Strategy. This sets out plans for business support, helping businesses to grow; support for new business start-ups; promoting inward investment opportunities and funding sources; and to show how we will be driving economic development forward to make the most of the opportunities that the District has to offer. Plans for the development of significant new employment sites are in hand (London Southend Airport and Environs Joint Area Action Plan – JAAP) and we are committed to supporting our town centres through adoption of Town Centre Action Plans. We will also link in with plans put forward by the Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership.

Economic growth and prosperity is linked to new housing provision and we will be reviewing our adopted Core Strategy to roll forward planning policies for housing and employment to 2031. We want to ensure that people have the opportunity to both live and work in the District reducing reliance on commuting out of the District.

We will deliver a Tourism Strategy for the District with actions to show how we can increase the duration of time that short term visitors will spend in the District, how we can increase the range of attractions available to visit, and how we can promote environmentally friendly tourism where we encourage schemes that positively protect the environment but which are, at the same time, tourist attractions. Other initiatives will include preparing a series of guided walks to showcase our attractions, encouraging bed and breakfast provision through positive planning policies and, seeking improvements to the footpath and cycling networks.





## Economic Growth

What we will do?	How we will achieve it	Timescale
Help grow new and existing businesses by ensuring the right conditions are in place to attract employment and development. We will work with our partners to deliver infrastructure improvements that serve businesses' needs, and increase visitor numbers in the town centres across the District.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formation of 'Town Teams' to promote the Districts' town centres.</li> </ul>	Creation of new Town Team for Rayleigh is underway – Proposals for Rochford and Hockley to be progressed – December 2014.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage business start ups and make it as easy as possible to locate a business in the District.</li> </ul>	Business Summit to ensure we are providing the services needed by local businesses and to build good relationships with the entrepreneurial community. Action plan to be prepared by July 2014. Following summit with businesses in Autumn 2014.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the costs of operating business in the District through targeted schemes and incentives.</li> </ul>	Targeted events to be organised including school visits through March 2015.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage entrepreneurial talent</li> </ul>	Work with Council's Planning Team on plan implementation 2014-17.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advance the business development aspects of the town centre plans.</li> </ul>	JAAP – adoption in autumn 2014. Partnership with Southend Council to progress implementation – 2014-2017.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote and develop the business park as part of the Joint Area Action Plan, as well as additional employment land in the District.</li> </ul>	Support rural businesses through flexible planning policies for development; prepare a rural business support strategy by September 2014.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support rural businesses.</li> </ul>	Prepare Empty Shops Strategy by September 2014.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and deliver an Empty Shops Strategy.</li> </ul>	Prepare a schedule setting out infrastructure capacity issues by March 2015
Develop tourism. Attract as many visitors to the District as possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Tourism Strategy in collaboration with Visit Essex to include Wallasea Island Wild Coast project.</li> </ul>	Tourism Strategy December 2014.
Implement the Thames Gateway South Essex Economic Growth Strategy to enable funding for new infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with partners to seek financial resources from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP).</li> </ul>	The SELEP funding programme runs for 6 years from 2014.



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