

Strategic Plan - Action Plan Half Year Performance Report April – September 2014

Colchester Borough Council (CBC) has set out an overarching vision for the borough in The Strategic Plan 2012-2015:

Colchester, the place to live, learn, work and visit

Within this, there are a number of broad aims:

Colchester as a vibrant borough with a bright future wants to be known for:

- Leading for the future
- Creating opportunities for all its residents
- Inspiring and innovating
- Being cleaner and greener
- Listening and responding.

This Strategic Plan 2012-2015 also has a number of priority areas and outcomes to be achieved in two categories as below:

Leading our communities	Delivering high quality, accessible services
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regenerating our borough through buildings, employment, leisure and infrastructure• Improving opportunities for local business to thrive including retail• Giving local people the chance to improve their skills• Promoting sustainability and reducing congestion• Showing tolerance and changing behaviours to create better local communities• Supporting tourism, heritage and the arts• Bringing investment to the borough• Working in partnerships to help tackle health and crime issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivering an efficient benefits service• Reducing, reusing and recycling our waste• Providing more affordable homes across the borough• Improving our streets and local environment• Tackling anti-social behaviour and using enforcement to support priorities• Enabling local communities to help themselves• Supporting more vulnerable groups• Providing sport and leisure for all, alongside good quality green spaces and play areas• Engaging with the voluntary sector

The actions in this Action Plan were approved by Scrutiny Panel on 8 July and Cabinet on 30 July 2014.

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Delivering high quality, accessible services

The priorities in this section of our action plan are about actual delivery of direct services either through our own Council resources or using others to provide services.

Delivery of an efficient benefits service

Key performance measures and actions include efficient benefit processing services and effective implementation of Universal Customer Contact FSR leading to improved customer journeys and increased online take up.

- **Streamline customer journeys**
 - Facilitate self-scanning options at library and community hub and at the Greenstead local housing office
 - Introduce online enquiry forms to replace open email enquiries

Scanning facilities are now available at both locations; self-scanning is programmed for quarter four. Residents can upload evidence from home via the Council's website. Enquiry forms have been implemented and are improving the online enquiry process.

- **Improve outgoing customer contact to reduce customers using our in-person and telephony channels**
 - Review and rewrite system-generated letters
 - Replace non-statutory letters from officers with email and telephony contact

The above actions are programmed for quarter four.

- **Improve web content and increase the uptake on other online services for benefits**
 - Improving the benefit areas of the website
 - Developing benefit online accounts for customers

New improved top tasks website launched September 2014. Demonstrations of a new online accounts system are underway. Procurement of a suitable solution and subsequent implementation will be achieved during quarter four. Email addresses are being collected and will be used to encourage residents to use this facility. E-billing will also feature as part of this work and will ensure that a proportion of council tax accounts are in place by April 2015.

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Reducing, reusing and recycling our waste

Key actions here include plans for the Service to provide improvement, income, efficiencies and partnership working opportunities for the future along with implementation of recycling educational activities, progress of Section 46 enforcement and the introduction of plastic recycling collections from flats.

- **Develop a new Waste Strategy for Colchester -**

Cabinet has agreed new Terms of Reference for the Waste Task and Finish Group. These ask the Group to assist the Cabinet in considering the future of the recycling and waste collection service and report back to Cabinet by June 2015. The group will be considering types of waste collection, frequencies and materials to be collected looking at high performing authorities. There will be a particular regard to reducing waste sent to landfill.

- **Plastic collections and Food Waste service from flats introduced where locations can be agreed -**

A range of different containers for the collection of food waste and plastics from flats has been identified and trial containers are being arranged with suppliers. These will be placed at different locations in the Borough and monitored for their effectiveness paying attention to contamination rates and usage. As each are designed differently feedback from users will be gained to decide on the best option to roll out.

- **Proactive work with local residents to encourage reductions in household waste and increases in recycling -**

Zones have completed 116 recycling education visits at doorsteps at half-year, for people recycling incorrectly. The majority of these are generated from the new process of Team Leaders (drivers) passing intelligence to Zones. Zones have further undertaken 250 Household Waste education visits which can involve anything to understanding where their boundary is, putting out excessive amounts of black bags to rubbish being left in front gardens and bulky collections. Zones further educate primary school children in the hope that they will take the message home. We are involved in nearly all 66 primary schools in Colchester, with 3 Junior Warden Schemes, a new learning based project called 'The 3 R's' and taking part in Crucial Crew. Specific work is undertaken with Essex University to try and combat the issues that arise when students move in / out of their accommodation.

- **Planning Service – For all new developments, planners continue to consider adequacy of bin storage areas for refuse and recycling, the distances and routes that materials will need to be carried on collection days and accessibility for dustcarts -**

Refuse and recycling facilities are required as planning conditions on all new dwellings when not shown on the plans. This is a standard model condition used by planners. We also continue to consider carry distances for both residents and waste collection workers, as well as swept paths for dustcarts on new housing developments.

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Providing more affordable homes across the borough

Key actions here include the use of our own land and assets to facilitate the building of new affordable housing, in line with Housing Policy. We also aim to ensure the Housing Trajectory demonstrates a 15-year supply of housing sites, including a 5-year supply of deliverable sites and we will undertake a range of measures to bring empty homes back into use.

- **400 new affordable homes to be built over three years -**

At the half year point for 2014/2015 a total of 127 affordable homes had been delivered. This is in line with expected delivery for this year and exceeds total delivery (96 homes) for 2013/2014. This brings the total so far against the three-year target of 400 to 356 affordable homes. Delivery over three years is expected to achieve the target set against a backdrop of challenging economic and funding conditions.

- **Qualifying sites¹ achieve the percentage of affordable housing, as stated in Housing Policy or through a viability study for each site -**

At the end of September 2014 a total of 5 qualifying sites had legal agreements settled which specified the affordable housing contribution due on that site. The affordable housing contribution required changed from 35% on qualifying sites to 20%. Therefore, sites between April and June 2014 were subject to the 35% contribution and sites after that (and in the future) subject to the 20% contribution. The affordable housing contribution is set out below:

Total number of homes on the 2 qualifying sites	Number of affordable homes due if 35% affordable policy applied	Number of affordable homes actually secured	Commuted sum to provide affordable homes offsite in lieu of on-site for these 2 sites
119	42	10	£194,260

Total number of homes on the 3 qualifying sites	Number of affordable homes due if 20% affordable policy applied	Number of affordable homes actually secured	Commuted sum to provide affordable homes offsite in lieu of on-site for these 3 sites
1654	476	240	£653,415

¹ Qualifying sites means sites of 10 units or more in Colchester, Stanway, Tiptree, Mersea and Wivenhoe or 5 units elsewhere.

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- **To update the housing trajectory and ensure an adequate supply of housing land -**

Based on available data, the number of new homes delivered in Colchester Borough from 1st April to 30th September 2014 was 350. At the time of writing the data for the number of completions in September from the National House Building Council was not available therefore; this number is lower than the actual number of homes built over that period. Although the eventual figure may be below the half-year target of 532 (based on the new revised corporate target of 1,065 homes per year) it should be read in context: the annual house building cycle is historically lower in the summer months before increasing over the autumn and furthermore the house building market is still considered to be returning to normal economic conditions post-recession.

The new target of 1,065 is now used to reflect changes to national planning policy relating to how local housing targets should be calculated. The Council has an up to date five year housing land supply based on this new target which will be published in the Annual Monitoring Report in December 2014.

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Improving our streets and local environment

Improved street cleanliness and shifting resources to increase responsiveness to environmental and cleanliness issues is a key action here along with Enabling Community Ownership to facilitate communities taking an active role in keeping their local environment clean, tidy and loved. Developing and maintaining strategic partnerships (Essex County Council [ECC], Bus and Rail operators) to help deliver improvements in air quality and sustainable transport infrastructure is an important action to improve our local environment.

Cleanliness and air quality actions:

- **In partnership with ECC we will produce a Final Air Quality Action Plan and Low Emission Strategy. The plan will set out what the Borough and County Councils intend to do to further improve air quality within Air Quality Management Areas -**
Colchester Borough Council has designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) due to elevated concentrations of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) in the vicinity of several roads in the Borough. Road transport emissions are a major contributor to these elevated concentrations. The Council has submitted and had accepted by DEFRA an 'Interim Air Quality Action Plan' and the Council has recently completed a modelling review of air quality in the Borough. The Borough's final Air Quality Plan is currently being developed in partnership with Essex County Council as the Highways Authority.

- **Produce a Low Emission Strategy for the Borough to identify and implement measures that will reduce transport emissions of NO₂, whilst also reducing emissions of particulates, noise and CO₂ -**
Colchester Borough Council received DEFRA Air Quality Grant funding to develop a Low Emission Strategy (LES) to reduce harmful emissions from road transport, while simultaneously seeking reductions in greenhouse gas emissions where feasible. The LES forms part of the Borough's Final Air Quality Action Plan update, and provides an integrated approach to optimising all Council powers to influence the simultaneous reduction of road transport emissions of oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), particulates and greenhouse gases, including the strengthening of public private partnerships to achieve shared aims.

The modelling and the source apportionment study identified buses as a significant contributor to the excess levels of Nitrogen Dioxide in the town centre. This information was used to support the Council's recent application to the Clean Vehicle Technology Fund for funding to deliver a Low Emission Strategy – Bus Project. The bid, made in partnership with First Essex Bus Group, was successful and the Council was awarded £194,000 to deliver the project. The Clean Vehicle Technology Fund award will be used by First Essex Bus to fit selective catalytic reduction technology, which is proven to reduce vehicle emissions by over 80%. A particulate trap will also be fitted to eliminate most of the harmful particulate matter emissions along with cooling fans to improve fuel efficiency. The upgraded EURO 3 standard buses will be in service and operating within the town centre by January 2015.

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- **To undertake a consultation with members of the public, and key stakeholders for the LES and Air Quality Action Plan -**
When the draft Air Quality Action Plan has been finalised we will undertake consultation in accordance with statutory procedures.

- **Support Essex-wide Litter Campaign in Colchester -**

Ten areas were targeted to monitor the success of the campaign in Colchester. In seven out of the ten areas there was an overall decrease in litter of 27%. Of the litter dropped in these areas, 46% was smoking and dog related. In the final three areas there was an overall increase in litter of 91%. Of the litter dropped in these areas, 90% was smoking and dog related. In these areas we believe that the school holidays and increase in tourist visitors had an effect on the results. We have identified that smoking related litter is most predominant with it being 68% of all the litter collected over the campaign period; we therefore are going to look at potential campaigns that could target this issue in partnership with 'Keep Britain Tidy'. We can now target those areas that had an increase in litter such as working in partnership with the businesses near by.

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Tackling anti-social behaviour and using enforcement to support priorities

Our key actions for this priority include the achievement of Purple Flag accreditation, thereby recognising excellence in the management of town centres in the evening and at night and to raise standards and improve the experience of Colchester town centre after dark. We also want to focus and continue working with partners to deal with anti-social behaviour in its widest sense, including issues relating to noise, graffiti, litter and dog fouling as well as more traditional anti-social behaviour, with the emphasis on behaviour change rather than just enforcement. We aim to work with local communities to reduce anti-social behaviour and promote pride.

- **To work in partnership with the Tactical Operations Group and continue with the Noise from Licensed Premises Project -**

The Tactical Operations Group has met regularly and has allowed for targeted enforcement of certain identified premises. The Noise from Licensed Premises Project has continued. The Environmental Protection Team and the Health & Safety Officer have carried out seven inspections of licensed premises. The premises visited were all identified as cause for concern by the Tactical Operations Group and four of the premises required re- visits to ensure that the actions identified by Officers had been completed.

- **To carry out a review of enforcement activity undertaken by the Weekend Noise/Environmental Health Service to include associated policies and procedures to ensure robust and effective action is taken against non compliant premises -**

The Weekend Noise Service (WNS) has responded to 111 noise complaints and carried out 181 monitoring visits, mostly involving town centre premises. As a direct consequence a wide range of enforcement action has been taken under the provisions of planning, taxi licensing, smoking and noise legislation. Notably, the Environment Protection Team applied for its first Review of a Licensed Premises, upon receipt of the file which included a significant number of witness statements from WNS Officers the owners took immediate action to evict their tenants operating the business.

- **Introduce a planned programme of enforcement action in the Town Centre to support local retail, regeneration and night time economy -**

The Council took part in a successful multi-agency visit, under warrant, of a premises that is now closed. Early indications show a significant drop in night time economy alcohol-related incidents in Colchester town centre for the first four months of the current financial year compared to the same period for the previous year. This amounts to a reduction of 21% over the comparable period, with Serious Violent Crime at 3% of the total incidents. Three premises are currently on Police improvement plans and a further premises is expected to be moved to an improvement plan within the next few weeks. Improvement plans had been shown to reduce problems at the premises and as a result three possible reviews have been avoided for the time being. All zones send every Warden into Town Centre for 1 day a month with the brief to provide enforcement / education as deemed appropriate. Planned action days/ evenings to tackle litter issues have been used when there is a peak in activity. These are in partnership with Essex Police.

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- **Licensing: Work in partnership with the Police and other responsible authorities to co-ordinate and contribute to a regular Tactical Operations meeting to share premises related intelligence and agree actions to direct and enforce the management of licensed premises -**

There is a regular monthly meeting between the licensing authority and the other responsible authorities for licensing and this has been key to improving partnership work and achieving results. The top tasks list, considered at the monthly meetings in 2014 identified 22 premises with issues and this has risen to 29 with premises being added by various responsible authorities. The position in relation to these premises is currently as follows:

- 12 premises we now have no problems following work by the various agencies
- 13 premises are the subject of active engagement either by one of the Council teams, the police or other enforcement partners
- 4 premises remain on a watch list but do not currently require active enforcement

- **Develop and implement a Night Time Improvement Plan and retain Purple Flag Accreditation -**

The Chairman of the Licensing Committee and the Licensing Manager attended the Purple Flag self-assessment evening and officers are working closely together to support this scheme. Zones have supported the purple Flag inspections with additional enforcement and cleansing actions. Purple Flag Reaccreditation application submitted on September 12th – outcome expected in late 2014.

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Enabling local communities to help themselves

Our key actions for this priority are to enable and empower communities to help themselves by supporting more development, ownership and volunteering. This includes improvement or development of more community-run facilities such as community centres, sport and recreational facilities.

- **Continued use of S106 Funding for community developments -**

Total amount of S106 payments received April to September 2014 is £18,185 for borough projects and £37,268 for ward projects. £3,740 distributed to community groups at ward level April to September 2014. Building works grant paid to 5 groups in order to keep their buildings in good order to deliver borough wide services to residents. Total amount awarded was £32,975

- **Development of a borough-wide sports strategy in conjunction with Sport England in order to plan for new sport and leisure facilities and activities in North Colchester and elsewhere in the borough and to get greater benefit from existing facilities -**

The Council has commissioned consultants to carry out a study to provide evidence to support funding bids for new sports, recreation and open space facilities and to support the development of planning policies in Colchester's new Local Plan. Consultants have now completed consultation with the majority of sports providers and will start analysis of data, with completion scheduled for December 2014.

- **Community Services to work collectively to develop, support and enable community-led activities and clubs, and to encourage a supportive local environment for community activities -**

Zone Wardens have enabled 506 community events in this period. This can range between events that encourage a sense of community and social engagement through to behaviour change. These are activities where the community are a key part of the overall sustainability of the project. A summary of these activities so far this year are: setting up of youth clubs in Boxsted and Monkwick, successful hand over of a youth club in Tiptree; assistance in setting up a neighbourhood watch scheme in Highwoods; Young peoples dance class handed over in Mersea; and assistance with the Eagle rock café which is a local community centre aiming to unite the civilian and military communities on the shrub end estate.

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Supporting more vulnerable groups

The main actions identified to help support vulnerable groups include working with partners in the voluntary sector and sub-region to provide new specialist support services to prevent households becoming homeless, and to support and develop skills within vulnerable groups in respect of confidence and assertion to support independent living and safety.

- **Deliver ‘Crucial Crew’ programme to Year 6 pupils across the borough and a further ‘Crucial Crew’ for older people -**
Crucial Crew was delivered between Monday 2nd and Friday 13th June 2014 at the Weston Homes Community Stadium, Colchester. 63 schools attended bringing 1968 year 6 pupils from across the borough. Each child was educated on seven Community Safety Scenarios namely, Road Safety, Rail Safety, Fire Safety, Recycling, Internet Safety, Anti Social Behaviour and Smoking Awareness. This was a multi agency event supported by Essex County Council, Essex County Fire & Rescue, Essex Police, Anglian Community Enterprise, British Transport Police, Colchester Borough Homes and Colchester Borough Council Zone Team.

- **Update CBC’s Safeguarding training records and complete audits in line with ESCB and ESAB -**
The Council has continued to meet this objective through a wide range of initiatives which particularly benefit vulnerable groups within the Equality Act’s ‘protected characteristics’. These initiatives will be detailed in the Council’s ‘Annual Update’ report due to be published in January 2015. The Diversity Steering Group continues to meet to embed Equality and Diversity into the council’s day-to-day business.

The proportion of staff having successfully completed ‘Level 1’ Safeguarding training (or equivalent) has continued to increase to over 75% of staff. Face to face ‘external’ training has been provided for all staff who work ‘predominantly’ with children or with vulnerable adults. Designated Safeguarding Officers have met at quarterly meetings to help refine procedures and processes. Preparation has continued for the completion of revised external audits due on 30 January 2015.

- **Award of agreed Welfare Grant Programme funding to key Voluntary Sector Partners supporting the delivery of CBC’s priorities -**
A total of £210,558 awarded to a wide range of organisations that support vulnerable residents in Colchester Borough through the Voluntary Welfare Grant programme.

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Providing sport and leisure for all, alongside good quality green spaces and play

Our key actions here are to develop a sport and leisure service that embraces new technology and responds to customers' needs in order to improve access to services so that sports participation is increased. We also want to enable communities and work with partners to deliver better open spaces and leisure and work with local sports clubs, leisure providers and other partners to deliver projects that build on the energy and excitement resulting from the 2012 Olympic and Paralympics.

- **Continue and increase participation in the Park Run event in Colchester as part of the national initiative -**

Colchester Castle Park Run celebrated its first anniversary in April. As of 6/9/2014, 72 events have taken place with 11,287 participants with an average attendance of 158.

- **Continue to work with Colchester School of Gymnastics to realise their extended facility following the upsurge of interest brought on by the London Olympics. This includes using CBC's S106 funding -**

CSoG had plans drawn up to double size of the gym enabling them to take on most of the 1000+ children on their waiting list. CBC agreed a grant of £174k from S106 (Royal London sports centre area), given in two instalments and subject to a grant agreement, building began in January 2014. Project was completed on time and to budget with grand opening held on 3 August.

- **Chair the Active Colchester Network and ensure the agreed action plan is delivered -**

A CBC Officer Chairs the Active Colchester Network. Meetings take place quarterly, with the chair also attending Active Essex Network Chairs meetings. Action Plans have resulted in funding secured for a variety of projects including free sports sessions for people with disabilities at Leisure World, leader led bike rides and incentives to join in national Workplace Challenge during January – March 2014.

- **Increase participation & income in line with FSR objectives by improving the capacity for customers to book activities online, capacity for customers to self-serve at Leisure World Colchester and introducing 'My Leisure World' card**

The Web bookings system was changed at the end of July 2014 to direct customers straight to the online bookings system and this has increased online customer user numbers by over 31.5%.

A loyalty points system and price differential for Leisure Card customers was introduced in January 2014 encouraging customers to sign-up and this has proved successful, with over 25,000 Leisure Card holders at end of August 2014. The Leisure World App for mobile phones was launched in September, making it easier for customers to check availability and book classes. In the first week, 384 customers downloaded the app and 199 class bookings made using this method.

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- **Continue to investigate opportunities and Improvement work with our parks and open spaces, including the new outdoor gym in Castle Park and agreed use of Open Space S106 funding -**

S106 funding has been used to deliver a variety of open space projects including enhanced children's play and in conjunction with Town, Parish and Community Councils creating new and improved facilities for new and existing residents. The Olympic Legacy project at Castle Park has been completed offering outdoor gym opportunities in a well used location between the park and Colchester Leisure World. New sand based play facilities have been introduced within the Upper Castle Park and proving to be extremely popular.

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Engaging with the voluntary sector

Our key aims are to look for opportunities to transfer the management of assets and services to the voluntary sector where this can achieve improved services and efficiencies, and to work with the voluntary sector to address strategic issues, support communities and groups and further strengthen partnerships.

- **Award of agreed Welfare Grant Programme funding to key Voluntary Sector Partners supporting the delivery of CBC's priorities -**

The grant was distributed after negotiating service level agreements to:- Age UK £11,083, Citizens Advice Bureau £101,791, CCVS £45,000, CTWR (core running cost) £7,738, Colchester and Tendring Women's Refuge (TWR) (outreach) £21,528, Nightshelter £8,948, Grassroots £1,366, Rural Community Council Essex £685, SHAKE £12,419 a total amount of £210,558 awarded.

- **Transfer the management of assets and services to the voluntary sector where this can achieve improved services and efficiencies -**

The Community Halls in Partnership consortium are continuing to successfully run Abbots Activity Centre since its transfer to them last year. The Garrison Gym rebuild, after the fire in 2013, is scheduled to commence early summer 2015, once a formal tender process to select a contractor to carry out the external works has been selected. The Abbey field community group who will become the tenants of this new facility will complete the internal refit once the external works have been completed.

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Leading our communities

This section of the action plan is about influencing others in a range of functions where the Council does not have direct responsibility for delivery, but knows that these things are vital to the future of the borough and its residents.

Regenerating our borough through buildings, employment, leisure and infrastructure

This is arguably one of the most challenging but important priorities for the Council in the current climate. The main actions here are to support the delivery of the key regeneration sites, and bring back existing buildings into use including stalled sites to deliver new homes and jobs. We also aim to bring forward the regeneration of key areas in the borough to provide enhanced community facilities and infrastructure, including public spaces, by working in partnership with the public and private sectors.

Sheepen Road feasibility -

New Homes Bonus funding secured feasibility studies into a new office development on the Sheepen Road car park. A potential tenant already exists and negotiations have continued leading to agreed heads of terms. Full business case will be reported to new Revolving Investment Fund Committee.

- **New funding bids through SELEP, TSB and EU -**

- South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) funding secured for Colchester Transport Packages including the Town Centre
- SELEP funding secured for Business Parks broadband
- Technology Strategy Board (TSB) funding bid secured £100k for feasibility of a Digital Spine in collaboration with local company 'Smart NE'
- European Development Regional Development Fund (EDRF) project pipeline being developed in collaboration with Essex County Council ahead of the forthcoming EU funding round

- **Continue to support the delivery of Greyfriars Hotel and East Hill House conversion -**

Refurbishment works underway with both Greyfriars and East Hill House. Works monitored by Town Centre Steering Group.

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- **Development of the first Phase of the Severalls site -**

Development already commenced with homes being sold.

- **Progress the delivery of a Masterplan for the Northern Gateway to deliver new leisure facilities and jobs including development of a hotel, health and fitness centre and associated retail -**

Masterplan consultation completed with report to committee being drafted. Heads of Terms agreed with David Lloyd Limited and legal agreements being drafted. GVA appointed to carry out viability work associated with the relocation of the Rugby Club. Destination Strategy interim report completed. Final site at Axial Way under offer to Lookers car dealership.

- **Consider approval of a planning application for North Growth Area Urban Extension -**

Planning permission granted with no judicial review. We are currently working on conditional discharge. A start is anticipated for spring 2015.

- **Progress negotiations with developers for Phase 2 to include progressing planning consent, sign development agreement**

Sale has yet to be agreed between HCA NEPFT and a prospective purchaser. Discussions are currently on going in order to secure funding for NAR2 bus way.

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Improving opportunities for local business to thrive including retail

Key actions for this priority include the implementation of key projects within the Better Town Centre Programme Plan, including delivery of the new Creative Business Centre providing flexible work space and network and business support facilities for a priority growth sector. Also, to deliver the Colchester Digital Strategy and develop local networks and business support to enable Colchester businesses to start up and to grow.

- **Facilitate collaborative working between COLBEA (Colchester Business Enterprise Agency) and the Colchester Enterprise Hub to help increase the number and survival rates of new business start ups in the borough -**
Incubation space available at COLBEA for new companies being formed by the Colchester Enterprise Hub 'Entrepreneur Programme'. COLBEA currently has 52 businesses as tenants employing 136 people. The overall rate of churn (businesses moving out and new businesses moving in) is 30%. In 2013/14 COLBEA advised 639 clients thinking of starting a business.
- **Completion of refreshed Colchester Economic Growth Strategy -**
 - Evidence base underpinning strategy completed
 - Consultation with public & private sector partners underway – completion November 2014
 - Draft of final strategy for CBC sign off – December 2014
- **Promote and encourage SMEs to use the energy switching service linked to the Big Community Switch –**
Promotion on going using different channels including social media.
- **Progress plans for development of a Creative Incubator providing circa 22 workspace units for start up businesses**
 - Phase 1 funding secured (£1.5m) secured for the Creative Business Centre
 - Phase 2 funding plans underway including securing an operator
- **Progress development agreement and planning consent for Vineyard Gate Shopping centre -**
Scheme currently being reviewed by the Council.
- **Continue to work with the independent retail sector to deliver partner-based local initiatives -**
Working with the Colchester Retail Business Association (CORBA) and the Colchester Christmas Group to deliver projects that will drive increased footfall and retail expenditure.

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- **Progress delivery of superfast broadband and 4G mobile connectivity by the end of 2014 -**
 - Delivery of broadband for Business Parks will be accelerated following the recent award of SELEP funding
 - Urban & Rural Broadband wireless deployment using the Town Hall tower – October 2014
 - Town Centre Wi Fi infrastructure installed – awaiting final Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) connectivity – delay escalated to the highest level of the major telecommunication provider concerned
 - Deployment of improved wireless broadband by County Broadband currently established in West Bergholt, and now extended to villages in/around Abberton Reservoir

- **Increase the number of partnership links relating to business, employment and skills initiatives -**

The Colchester Eastern Enterprise Hub 'Entrepreneur Programme' has recruited 45 business mentors drawn from key businesses across the Borough. These mentors are providing their expertise (free of charge) to aspiring entrepreneurs as they turn their business idea into the creation of a new company.

The Colchester Enterprise Hub secured additional funding from Essex County Council to run two cohorts in 2014 specifically tailored to 20 people aspiring to start new creative businesses.

The Colchester Enterprise Hub in collaboration with the University of Essex, Essex County Council and Colchester Borough Council recently launched a 'Gaming Hub' based at Parkside on the University Knowledge Gateway. The Gaming Hub will enable students to develop and commercialise games and applications with intensive on site mentoring provided by 'Shark Infested Custard' a leading player in the industry.

- **Work with 'Colchester Works' to increase the promotion and take up of employment and skills initiatives to local residents and businesses -**

'Colchester Works' brings together over 40 key local organisations involved in employability and skills, recent joint bid (£50k) submitted to the Department of Work & Pensions to assist people aged 18-24 to gain employment.

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Giving local people the chance to improve their skills

Our key actions here are to work with the Adult Community College and Job Centre Plus to increase the number of residents with skills for work by providing extra courses in community venues. We also want to help reduce the number of young people aged 18 to 24 in the borough who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) and increase the take-up of Apprenticeships in the borough.

- **Work with Colchester NEET Group (including ECC) to deliver work/training initiatives that will benefit the Colchester NEET group and help to reduce the cohort numbers -**

The Colchester NEET Group which included ECC, Colchester Institute and local Secondary Heads has been disbanded, projects to reduce the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training will be led by 'Colchester Works'.

- **Work with Job Centre Plus and other partners to maintain work clubs and continue our customer support team initiative -**

The Council, Jobcentre Plus and Colchester Borough Homes have now signed up to a Local Support Framework which will set foundations to support resident's advance of the introduction of Universal Credit. The framework highlights partnership work that will support residents to get back into work to improve their circumstances whilst supporting the most vulnerable.

- **Work with the Adult Community College to increase the number of residents with skills for work by providing extra courses at community venues -**

Two Lone Parent "Back to Work events" have been held at the Community College, in partnership with Jobcentre Plus. These events replaced Back to work interviews, usually taking place at the Job Centre and resulted in thirteen Lone parents attending to receive information on what is available at the College, Family Learning, Work Clubs and volunteering. From these events, one resident went on to a volunteer role with the Credit Union, six booked Information, Advice and Guidance Sessions and four signed up for education programmes.

- **Deliver Job and Volunteers' Fairs -**

Skills and Employment Fairs were delivered in March and September 2014 with 380 and 420 residents attending respectively. Following the September event, we are already aware of seven people being offered employment, as a direct result and fifteen people signing up with the Adult College for Careers Advice.

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Promoting sustainability and reducing congestion

Our key actions for this priority are to support the reduction of unnecessary traffic in the town centre. We also aim to use the public realm strategy to develop a package of measures to enhance the vitality and economic prosperity of the area. We want to develop, with Essex County Council (ECC), the sustainable transport infrastructure for the North Colchester Connectivity corridor and deliver Travel Change Behaviour programmes with transport providers to help address congestion and air quality issues. We also aim to review the Nottingham Declaration strategy and develop a new Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

We have continued to lobby partners such as ECC and Abellio Greater Anglia for investment into Colchester. We expect a number of announcements in response to funding submissions made in 2013/14 and if successful this will influence the programme and activity in 2014/15.

- **Develop a new Environmental Sustainability Strategy for Colchester -**

Public consultation for the ESS ended on the 9th October 2014. A strategy document, delivery plan and evidence base are being drafted so that the review process is completed by the end of this year. Work to support environmental sustainability has been taking place including a sustainability event called 'Leading Landlords of Colchester' which took place at the Weston Homes Stadium on the 9th October 2014. Over 60 delegates took part in finding out about making homes more energy efficient, and the wider benefits for tenants of installing energy efficiency measures.

- **Prepare an overarching Transportation Summary Document as evidence base to inform the review of the Local Plan -**

Draft document started as part of the Local Plan Review process. Transportation statements are being developed as part of the Local Plan Issues and Options document. 2011 Census Travel to work data has been analysed to understand commuting patterns in Colchester. Initial discussions had with Transport Infrastructure providers to provide transport evidence.

- **To improve access to the town centre for sustainable transport and in the town centre to improve the environment for people by reducing traffic, seek funding to improve streetscape and access for sustainable transport -**

Colchester has supported funding submissions to the Local Enterprise Partnership and Government. Approximately £15m has been allocated to Colchester through the Local Growth Fund for investment in transportation to support growth. Working with ECC to ensure that funding is directed to CBC priority areas.

- **Support the delivery of a Park and Ride service from North Colchester to the Town Centre by releasing the land for construction and work with Essex County Council, local businesses and organisations to maximise the use of Park and Ride**

Licence signed with ECC to allow contractor on the site for delivery in March 2015. Lease drafted allowing ECC to use CBC land for 40 years for park and ride. CBC has raised with ECC how best we can help promote park and ride to potential users.

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- **Work with the public transport operators, bus and rail to improve services in Colchester -**

Successful bid made with First Buses securing £194,000 to improve emissions from bus diesel engines.

Plus bus integrated bus and rail season ticket promotion launched with bus and rail operators. Working with Abellio Greater Anglia to deliver a Cycle Point with increased cycle parking at Colchester (north) by April 2015. Also developing with Abellio Greater Anglia National Station Improvement Programme revisions to the north side station building, disabled access and improved forecourt.

- **Continue to work with and provide leadership to public and private sector organisations to develop Travel Change Behaviour programmes to help address congestion, air quality and personal health issues -**

Walking challenge successfully completed at Severalls Business Park (May) and new contacts made through project will be pursued to determine interest in travel planning. First Loveurcar share bays installed in October. New Cycle Colchester website launched.

Support for existing Colchester Travel Plan Club members ongoing including Bike Week (June) and support for University Fresher's Fayre (October). ECC, CBC, Defence Support Group, University, and Primary Care Trust continue to actively participate in sustainable transport.

- **Develop strategies to increase the level of investment in sustainable transport and infrastructure to help deliver sustainable development, including transportation in economic, environmental, land use strategies -**

The first rapid Electric Vehicle charging point was installed in Colchester with agreement of Community Stadium (July). Working with the Maltings Student accommodation unit to deliver a targeted an innovative travel plan including way finding using an existing app developed for the University. Working with developers through Planning Performance Agreements and Pre-application discussions to ensure that sustainable transport is included as part of their development proposals. Briefs have started to be developed for the new homes bonus projects.

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Showing tolerance and changing behaviours to create better local communities

Our key actions for this priority is to work with partners to successfully introduce a new integrated offender management programme to reduce repeat crime. We also want to develop and agree a service level agreement with the Probation Service to enable positive use of the Community Payback scheme. We have an overarching aim to promote tolerance and work with partners and communities to meet the diverse needs across the borough, and consider equality and diversity implications in our policies on those with protected characteristics (age, disability, gender, race, religion, belief, pregnancy, maternity, marriage, civil partnership, sexual orientation, gender reassignment).

- **Work with Probation Service to enable Community Payback scheme to continue –**

Zones have utilised the Payback Scheme for clearing up West Mersea beach after the tidal surge earlier in the year; painting old play areas; a regular schedule of maintenance in the church yard areas within the town centre; alleyway clearances; we have an individual placement weekly and further Zones have assisted three of the last five placements to become employed locally.

- **Consider Equality and Diversity and promote tolerance and the diverse needs of our residents -**

'Showing tolerance and changing behaviours' is one of the Council's 'equality objectives'. These are required by the 'specific duties' contained within the Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010. The Council has continued to meet this objective through a wide range of initiatives which particularly benefit vulnerable groups within the Equality Act's 'protected characteristics'. These initiatives will be detailed in the Council's 'Annual Update' report due to be published in January 2015. The Diversity Steering Group continues to meet to further embed Equality and Diversity into the council's day-to-day business.

- **Continue to operate Zone working principles with a focus on local needs -**

Zone working has been running since October 2011. The main principle of being able to respond to the needs of a smaller community is now embedded and works well. The model has provided a more efficient and responsive way of working. It has been reviewed and endorsed by Executive Board and also a Scrutiny Panel in the last year. Cabinet, Councillors and Senior Managers continue to be very supportive of the approach and continue to share their views on where it works well and what can be developed which will form part of ongoing plans.

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Supporting tourism, heritage and the arts

Our key actions are to work with partners and local industry businesses to increase the economic impact of tourism in the borough. We also want to work in partnership with Colchester Arts Centre, Firstsite, the Mercury Theatre and the Museum Service to provide leadership and support to deliver the Creative Colchester strategy and increase skills, jobs, community development and forge new links between cultural, creative, tourism and hospitality sectors. We have the Castle re-development and the associated interpretation of the wider heritage in the borough and our aim to deliver increased visitor numbers, and encouraging day visitors to overnight/weekend stay visitors.

- **To increase trips to the borough and spending while here -**

Full data for this target will be available in December 2014. However, Colchester Castle has just been awarded the best Large Attraction of 2014 in the Essex Tourism and Hospitality Awards and Q1 & 2 figures are well ahead of targets for both visitor numbers and income. A Visitor target of 51,822 by quarter two actually achieved 60,057 and an income target of £250,323 achieved £328,206.

- **Creative Colchester strategy / Deliver identified priorities within the Action Plan -**

Data will be available in December 2014.

- **Develop and maintain delivery mechanisms for improvement and maintenance of our heritage assets across the borough**

Following the pilots last year, further heritage panels have been commissioned for six sites in the borough as part of the Colchester Castle and Wider Heritage HLF project. The sites are: St John's Abbey, St Botolph's Priory, Lexden Mount, Gosbecks Archaeological Park, Holy Trinity Church and Gryme's Dyke. These sites and a panel at East Gate should all be in place for the start of the 2015 tourist season. The Museum Service is also continuing to work in partnership with the Friends of Colchester's Roman Wall on a wall walk and a further ten panels are in preparation to accompany the three already in place or commissioned. The long standing Local Management Agreement with English Heritage remains in place and a particular focus at present is improving access at St John's Abbey Gatehouse where a metal handrail will be installed shortly. Also at St John's Abbey Gatehouse the Museum Service continues to support the Colchester Catholic Heritage Group who has taken a particular interest in this historic site. Repair work at Mersea Barrow, funded by English Heritage and coordinated by the Museum Service, has seen electric light installed inside the entrance passage of this Roman burial mound and close working continues with the Mersea Island Museum who organise regular guided tours of the site. In July 2014 the finds from Mersea Barrow were lent to Mersea Island Museum and are now on display thereby increasing public access to an important part of the island's heritage. Early indications suggest that Heritage Open Days in September, coordinated in Colchester by the Museum Service, saw a record number of visitors to the borough's heritage attractions, many of which are not regularly open.

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Bringing investment to the borough

Our key actions are to work with Invest Essex to promote the Colchester offer and attract inward investment into the borough. Work with the Integrated County Strategy and Haven Gateway Partnerships to secure the infrastructure investment identified in Colchester's Local Investment Plan and target 20 companies in key growth sectors to secure additional investment in the borough in excess of £1m. We aim to secure funding from Growing Places Fund, Integrated County Strategy investment fund, Europe, private sector partners and other sources for key projects.

- **Secure new inward investment into the borough in excess of £2m -**

Target exceeded combining new inward investment from County Broadband (Telecommunications infrastructure) and Bowens (media and film equipment manufacturer).

- **Secure funding from Growing Places Fund, Integrated County Strategy investment fund, EU funding programmes, private sector partners and other sources for key projects -**

- Growth Hub funding (Business Support) being sought in collaboration with Essex County Council
- Appointment of Funding Coordinator to lead on identifying funding opportunities, bid writing, securing partners and project delivery
- SELEP funding secured for Colchester Transport Packages including the Town Centre
- SELEP funding secured for Business Parks broadband
- Bids made for SELEP Growth Deal Phase 2 ahead of submission to the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) on October 3rd 2014
- European Development Regional Development Fund (EDRF) project pipeline being developed in collaboration with Essex County Council ahead of the forthcoming EU funding round
- SU Ports Phase 2 and Interreg funding being investigated
- Continue to work with and lobby the Integrated Growth Forum (formerly Integrated County Strategy)

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Working in partnerships to help tackle health and crime issues

Our key actions include working with our partners on the Safer Colchester Partnership to agree a plan to reduce crime and support the Neighbourhood Action Panels we also aim to develop our partnership with Essex Probation Service. We want to work with Public Health at ECC to coordinate and integrate our public health work with the wider agenda and the Public Health Outcomes framework, and to develop partnerships with other local health organisations, including North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

- **To promote the Weekend Noise/Environmental Health Service as a resource to internal and external agencies including the Police, Trading Standards and Fire Brigade. To establish joint working protocols and cross referral mechanisms to support a more effective multi-agency response to criminal activity and matters likely to give rise to negative health outcomes -**

The Weekend Noise Service (WNS) continues to be promoted to the Police, Fire Brigade and Trading Standards via the Tactical Operational meeting and referrals continue to be received. The WNS worked in partnership with the Environment Agency to catch a known offender dumping wood waste in Haven Road, despite being served an injunction. The team also regularly receives referrals from Licensing, Planning Enforcement, Smoking Enforcement and more recently the Zone Teams within the Council.

- **CBC will continue to review its approach to supporting the Health Agenda given the new Local Authority responsibilities. We will develop agreed partnership priorities and targets, where applicable, and seek funding opportunities to support a more preventative health agenda -**

The work of the Warm Homes Project continues to support residents to improve the energy efficiency of their properties, which in turn can have a direct impact on their health and well-being. We continue to work with external agencies to bring funding into the borough to tackle energy efficiency and fuel poverty. The Project Officer dealing with Homelessness continues to deliver a service, whereby various professionals discuss residents who may 'slip through the net' in terms of homelessness and has assisted with the creation of a website to provide information to young people to educate them on the issues of homelessness. This work can have a direct impact on health.

- **Encourage representation on the Safer Colchester Partnership from the new Clinical Commissioning Group -**

The Clinical Commissioning Group have agreed to attend the SCP meetings, however their attendance has been very limited to date. The Chair of the Partnership continues to work with the CCG to encourage their regular attendance and input.

- **Support the work of the Neighbourhood Action Panels -**

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Zone Managers attend NAP meetings, providing a face to face meeting opportunity with key members of local communities. NAP attendance has always been variable across the different zones. In the past 2 months, Police attendance has been sporadic and as from 1st October 2014 it has been confirmed that Police will no longer commit to any future NAP meetings due to their restructure and the introduction of local weekly street meetings; there have been a number of questions and concerns from NAP members regarding the new format and how 'legal' issues will be reported to the police if they arise during NAP meetings. NAP meetings have been booked up until the end of March 2015 and continue to run as BAU currently, however this may be reviewed in light of the police withdrawing from these meetings.

- **Seek ongoing support for the SOS Bus from both the Safer Colchester Partnership and the North East Essex CCG to ensure the service is maintained and clinical cover provides access to treatment -**

Both the Safer Colchester Partnership and Essex CCG have funded the SOS Bus for 2014-15.