

Strategic Plan - Action Plan for 2013-2014 – progress from April 2013 to March 2014 – App 3

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.

Each of these has actions and outputs which are included in an annual Action Plan – see following pages for more information about the Action Plan for 2013-2014, and for an update on the progress being made to achieve these outcomes. These actions were agreed at the July 2013 meeting of CBC's Cabinet.

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:

- **Continue to work to automate benefits processes internally -**

New automation has been completed for processing rent increases from Housing Associations which improves the performance of the benefits assessing team particularly in October and April (for example, around 900 changes for April are now automated).

Additional automation has been achieved through the DWP file transmissions (Atlas) for changes in customer circumstances including maternity, severe disablement, bereavement and for carers. More automation is also under development.

- **Streamline customer journeys -**

The above automation achieves streamlined customer journeys for changes in customer circumstances and rent increases.

Customer journeys for applying for housing benefit, Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS) and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) have been reviewed, updated and streamlined.

The new Customer Support Team continues to join up services for customers by offering a 'one solution' service for welfare benefits, housing benefits, housing support and financial support.

- **Increase the uptake on online services for benefits -**

Online application for housing benefits, LCTS, DHPs and student discounts is now at an all-time high of over 85% of total applications made.

Online DHP applications are now the preferred method of applications as used by customers and Housing Associations. These online applications have been a contributory factor in CBC meeting the DHP budget which helps customers with their extra housing costs. The Council was awarded £40,000 from the Government as a result of its good performance in the use of DHP budgets.

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Reducing, reusing and recycling our waste

Key actions here include plans for our Shrub End Depot 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.

- **Food waste for all homes and plastic collections service from flats introduced across the borough –**
Food waste collections were successfully introduced to all households during October and November 2013. The project plan was met, with all households receiving their food waste kits on time and collections starting as scheduled to 69,000 households.

The delivery of plastics collections to flats is being delivered on a site-by-site basis along with the introduction of food waste. This will commence during 2014.

- **Proactive work with local residents to encourage reductions in household waste and increases in recycling –**
Zone Wardens have been involved in the delivery of recycling containers throughout the borough, including the introduction of food waste containers. Wardens also hold events in communities, especially rural, to allow residents to collect containers close to where they live. This will be developed further to include garden sacks following the need to develop alternatives for residents to collect containers following the closure of Angel Court.

Further to this Zone Wardens actively educate residents on recycling and domestic waste. This can involve anything from understanding where their boundary is, putting out excessive amounts of black bags to rubbish being left in front gardens and bulky collections. Wardens now work directly with Team Leaders to allow a flow of information on properties with excessive domestic waste. Full year results are 902 Household Waste Education and 254 Recycling Education events.

- **Options appraisals produced on Depot improvement and future of Trade Waste service -**
Options for the improvement of Shrub End Depot continue to be explored. Various potential routes exist and timescales vary on each option. This is an ongoing project. Regarding the Trade Waste service this now forms part of the Commercial work programme and work has already commenced with external advisors to develop options.

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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** - In 2013/14 96 new affordable homes were delivered. The target of 400 homes is a three year target and to date 229 homes have been delivered, (133 in 2012/13 and 96 in 2013/14). In 2014/15 we will need to deliver 171 affordable homes to achieve our target. Although ambitious we are still on track to achieve the target.
- **Qualifying sites¹ achieve the percentage of affordable housing, as stated in Housing Policy or through a viability study for each site** - For 2013/14 a total of 10 qualifying sites had legal agreements settled which specified the affordable housing contribution due on that site (nb work may not have started/is due within 3 years). The affordable housing contribution by site is set out below:

Total number of homes on the 10 qualifying sites	Number of affordable homes due if 35% affordable policy applied	Number of affordable homes actually secured	Commuted sum to provide affordable homes off-site in lieu of on-site for these 10 sites
805	281	176 (22%)	£1,195,410

- **Implementation and monitoring of progress of the Empty Homes action plan –**
 - A total of 103 empty homes were bought back into use during 2013/2014 as a result of intervention by the Council.
 - The 10% discount on council tax for second homes was removed, and the full council tax charge is now due on second homes.
 - Homes which have been empty and unfurnished for two years or more now have to pay 150% of the council tax charge.
 - Empty homes checked as part of the New Town Day of Action.
 - The [‘report an empty home’](#) button on the CBC website has been used six times. All of these properties were known to CBC.
 - “Empty Homes Rescue” leaflet produced and put on website, publicising the availability of grants of up to £20,000 to bring empty homes back into use through the Colne Housing/HCA funded scheme.
- **To update the housing trajectory and ensure an adequate supply of housing land** - Annual update of housing trajectory was completed in December 2013. This demonstrates that the five-year land supply (for the period 2013/14 to 2017/18) is expected to deliver 4621 new dwelling units, against a target of 4,368.

¹ Qualifying sites means sites of 10 units or more in Colchester, Stanway, Tiptree Mersea and Wivenhoe or 3 units elsewhere.

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 the Local Highways department (ECC), we will produce an interim Air Quality Action Plan. This plan will set out what the borough and the county intend to do to improve air quality within our Air Management Areas –**

Interim Air Quality Action Plan completed, submitted to, and agreed by DEFRA together with the 2013 Local Air Quality Management Progress report. The Plan sets out how CBC and ECC will improve air quality for example through Bus Quality Partnerships, CBC Fleet Management, implementation of 'park and ride' and promotion of effective railway and travel planning.

- **Continue with our behavioural change project – 'love your car' –**

A successful application to DEFRA for the 'love your car' project enabled a multi-media publicity campaign to encourage walking, car sharing and local shopping. A Flash Mob event was held in Culver Square to promote walking for short journeys with the subsequent online video receiving more than 2000 website hits. The campaign was linked in to WOMBAT, the borough's only car sharing club with 'love your car' branded car parking spaces now to be provided in Council car parks to incentivise car sharing.

- **Commence work to produce a Low Emission Strategy for the borough. This piece of work will include a Low Emission Zone Feasibility Study (project to be completed 2014- 15)**

Air Quality specialists have carried out a baseline emission study of the whole borough. This study maps all major roads and industrial processes for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter less than or equal to 10 microns and 2.5 microns (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}). The strategy sets out the pollution hotspots (including Air Quality Management Areas) in the borough. The study also built upon the results of CBC's 'Further Assessment 2012', all recent Local Air Quality Management reports, and ECC traffic data to provide detailed evidence of traffic flows and composition. These findings will now inform the development of a Low Emission Strategy (LES) to address the hotspot areas identified.

Improving our streets and local environment – continued...

Enabling community ownership and active participation actions:

- **Deliver 3 Community Days of Action in various neighbourhoods** – In addition to the two days of action that took place earlier in the year, a further day of action took place in Mile End in March 2014 with 24 agencies participating to tackle the top 3 issues: parking, dogs/dog fouling and highways problems (pot holes, pavements in need of repair, high volumes of traffic/dangerous vehicles). Work throughout the day resulted in 45 roads being patrolled and 2 fixed penalty notices issued for parking offences, 2 stray dogs caught and reunited with their owners, another dog was micro-chipped and a dog behavior expert was on hand to provide responsible dog ownership to the public. For the first time on a day of action, residents were able to report highways issues directly to ECC via the CBC engagement unit, and a 'road traffic collision scenario' took place outside Queen Boudica School to highlight road safety issues and first aid, supported by road safety advice and pedestrian training, which was provided to both schools during the day by ECC road safety team. The area received an extensive clean-up, resulting in nearly 3 tonnes of rubbish/litter being removed and an underpass was cleaned and repainted. A variety of other community engagement and enforcement activities also took place throughout the day.
 - **Engage with schools to raise awareness around environmental issues and increase the number of schools participating in litter picks and Junior Warden schemes** – The Tiptree heath Junior Warden scheme is now fully up and running and an excellent relationship with the school has been developed. The Junior Warden project has two main aims:
 - 1) To engage with young people at an age where we can influence their decisions and behaviours in the community
 - 2) Give young people a greater understanding of their environment and to help encourage a sense of pride and responsibility.This is a long-term behaviour change programme, outcomes are aimed at embedded change by secondary school age. We have 12 schools engaged in regular litter picking as well as other activities such as Eco Bugs, and we also help with walking buses which gives us the opportunity to talk with the children.
 - **Introduce a pilot in the Town Centre to enforce reductions in littering during the evening / night time economy hours** -. We have procured the services of an external enforcement agency on three occasions during the year. This trial enforcement activity works well when used as part of a targeted enforcement programme and will be considered again in the future for specific activities carried out as part of the Essex Wide Litter Campaign.

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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.

- **Develop and implement a Night Time Improvement Plan and retain Purple Flag Accreditation** - Purple Flag accreditation was awarded to Colchester in July 2013. The accreditation process led to some actions for all organisations involved in managing the town centre after dark. It has been developed into a Purple Flag Action Plan, monitored quarterly by the Responsible Authorities Group.
- **Deliver a Night of Action in the town centre** - Colchester's second Night of Action took place from 8pm and 4am on 30 November, to provide a high visibility presence and reassurance for those using the Town Centre on a Saturday evening. The event was attended by the Essex Police and Crime Commissioner and 3 CBC Group Leaders. During the event, 8 arrests were made, joint premises visits were carried out to check licensing conditions and safety legislation, 10 fixed penalty notices were issued for littering, amnesty bins were provided for the disposal of drugs and a passive drugs dog was in operation with officers at entrances to premises.
- Officers from the Council's Environmental Protection and Health and Safety teams have undertaken a targeted initiative to work collaboratively with licensees to reduce noise levels inside and outside licensed premises in the borough. Premises were visited to ensure awareness and compliance with licence conditions in addition to other noise legislation enforced by the Council. Workplace noise assessments were also reviewed to ensure employees were protected from exposure to excessive noise levels.
- **Initiate the Street Drinkers outreach project in partnership with the April Centre** – An outreach worker has been employed at Open Road since October 2013. He is working in partnership with the police and Colchester Borough Home's ASB team in order to ensure the street drinkers receive an offer of support, education and enforcement.
- **Continue Zone activities to reduce anti-social behaviour** – Zone wardens have intervened in 211 ASB incidents, from neighbour disputes to dog issues, cluttered communal housing areas to noise. Each ASB incident is used as an opportunity to influence behaviour change. Wardens visit empty social housing to reduce squatting and discourage groups of drinkers and drug users. They have further developed their links with Essex Police and attend a fortnightly tasking meeting where issues of ASB can be tabled.
- **Partnership working to enable Zones to utilise enforcement powers to tackle flyposting** -. A new process has been implemented with Planning since 1 July, to allow our Wardens to advise Planning of all associated information / evidence of flyposting. The offender is given two days to remove the notice, if not the Planning Team take on the responsibility for prosecutions. 190 enforcement actions have taken place so far using this process, with the businesses being made aware of their responsibility to remove the posters.

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Enabling local communities to help themselves

Our key actions for this priority are to enable communities to improve or develop new facilities such as community centres, sport and recreational facilities and for Zone Teams to identify and engage with formal and informal community groups within the borough.

- **Continued use of S106 Funding for community developments** – A variety of community facility, open space, sport and recreational facilities and improvements are being delivered through funding from S106 agreements. Projects include working with Town and Parish Councils to deliver improvements in local halls, in response to increasing demands generated by increases in resident population. Over £430,000 has been allocated to community projects during 2013-14. These range from Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliance building works in New Town to the creation of new community space in Stanway.
- **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** – Strategy commissioned in March 2014 and expected to report by 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 a range of community events in this period aimed at encouraging a sense of community, providing opportunities for social engagement and supporting behaviour change. As an example the teams support neighbourhood coffee mornings or activity sessions for elderly people. These are aimed at keeping fit, as well as socialising and getting out of the house. These can sometimes be the only interactions available to many older people who live alone. Teams also support and work with members of the community to enable clubs for a range of age groups and interests. Two examples in St Anne's include a dance club and an allotment club. The Zone teams work with Youth Clubs and the general aim is to support the implementation, but then hand over the ongoing running of the clubs to the local community.

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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. Another key action is to support and contribute to the Essex Families Pilot aimed at working with partners to support vulnerable families.

- **DCLG Street Homeless Project with April Centre to be continued and monitored** - Thirteen rough sleepers were supported from October to March 2014 in Colchester through the outreach project. The recruitment of Homelessness Co-ordinator and two part-time workers took place to ensure that rough sleepers do not spend a second night out. In particular there has been particularly challenging outreach work carried out with entrenched rough sleepers in the North of the town. Action Complete.
- **Deliver ‘Crucial Crew’ programme to Year 6 pupils across the borough and a further ‘Crucial Crew’ for older people** – In 2013 Crucial Crew for young people delivered personal safety education to more than 1,500 Year 6 children from 53 schools across the borough. The safety scenarios included road, crime, anti-social behaviour, fire, internet, rail, drugs and alcohol. Plans for the 2014 event are underway with provisional dates of 2–13 June. The first ‘Crucial Crew’ for Older People took place in April 2013. It was opened by the Police and Crime Commissioner and included information on potential dangers related to crime, fire, trading standards and environmental health. It was attended by more than 110 older people and included a range of partners from the public and private sector. The feedback was very positive.
- **Launch a new ‘Keep Safe’ project in the town centre** – This new project was successfully launched in the town centre on 6 June. The scheme currently has signed up 25 venues, and a total of 130 members. Action complete.
- **Update CBC’s Safeguarding training records and complete audits in line with ESCB and ESAB requirements** - To date, over 70% of staff have completed the Council’s “Level 1”, service-appropriate, safeguarding awareness training - and this proportion is increasing. A programme of “Level 2” training for those who work “predominantly” with children or vulnerable adults has begun. In October 2013 the Council submitted to the Essex Safeguarding Boards its first remote ‘Section 11’ safeguarding audit which assessed 8 ‘standards’ in regard to the safeguarding of both children and vulnerable adults. This process plays a key part in the discharge of the Council’s legal obligations under the Children Act 2004. In fully meeting 32 of 36 ‘standards’, Colchester performed well amongst district councils in Essex.
- **Award of agreed Welfare Grant Programme funding to key Voluntary Sector Partners supporting the delivery of CBC’s priorities** - £231,132 voluntary welfare funding has been awarded for 2013-2014 to support voluntary and community groups that assist the Council in meeting its strategic priorities - especially with regard to supporting vulnerable groups, engaging with the voluntary sector and enabling local communities to help themselves.

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

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 Parkrun celebrated its first anniversary on 5 April 2014. The free, timed 5km runs continue every Saturday, organised and managed by a Core volunteer group. There have been 54 runs with 7,920 participants. The average weekly attendance is 147 with the biggest attendance being 221. An average of 15 volunteers from the parkrun "community" take on roles to help stage the run each week.
- **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** - Following detailed discussions a grant agreement has been signed between CBC and CSoG, with the first half of the £174k already transferred to CSoG. Work has begun on the extension and is expected to be completed towards the end of the summer 2014.
- **Chair the Active Colchester Network and ensure the agreed action plan is delivered** - CBC continues to Chair the Active Colchester group and also maintains good links with Active Essex. An Action Plan for 2014/15, based on £10,400 funding from Active Essex will help to deliver a sports festival, work place challenge, inclusive sport activities and a funding workshop for local sports clubs.
- **Increase participation and income in line with FSR objectives by improving the capacity for customers to book sport and leisure activities online, capacity for customers to self-serve at Leisure World Colchester and introducing 'MyLeisureWorld' card** - My Leisure Card was launched on 24 April 2013 in line with the 'go-live' date of the new Welcome Zone at Leisure World Colchester. At 31 March 2014, 79% of adult customers are now Leisure Card holders. Up to end of March 2014 150,436 tickets were transacted through the Self-Service Kiosks by 4,687 individual adult Leisure Card holders and 20,336 Web bookings have been made by 1,477 individual adult Leisure Card holders. Of all the activities available to be booked online, 24% are being made online. Improvements to the system will be looked at as part of the changes from the UCCFSR and with the introduction of possible new ways to communicate with our customers such as use of apps etc. A loyalty points system was introduced from 1 January 2014 where Leisure Card holders receive points per £ spent at Leisure World which can be redeemed on a range of activities and products.
- **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** – A variety of open space sport and recreational facilities and improvements being delivered through funding from S106 agreements. The new outdoor gym in Castle Park is due to be delivered in the summer of 2014, together with enhanced toddlers play provision.

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** – Approval and distribution of the £231,132 voluntary welfare grant funding has been completed. Full details of the awards recipients and activities and benefits that are expected in return for these grants were included in the portfolio holder report at the start of the year.
- **Transfer the management of assets and services to the voluntary sector where this can achieve improved services and efficiencies** – Unfortunately due to a fire at the Garrison Gym the transfer of this building to the community was been delayed. However, a contractor has now cleared the site of debris and next steps are being agreed.

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.

- **Continue to support the delivery of Greyfriars Hotel and East Hill House conversion** – Work continues on Greyfriars boutique hotel with completion now due for later this year. East Hill house has now been purchased by the owners of Greyfriars Hotel, and it will house ancillary uses to the main Greyfriars building.
- **Development of the first Phase of the Severalls site** – Development ongoing.
- **Progress the delivery of a Masterplan for the Cuckoo Farm South / Northern Gateway to deliver new leisure facilities and jobs including development of a hotel, health and fitness centre and associated retail** – Draft Masterplan prepared for presentation at Local plan Committee in June 2014. Lancaster Dealership on Axial way opens weekend 3 May. Inchcape Dealership on site. David Lloyd Heads of Terms reported to Cabinet 17 March. Destination management work commenced.
- **Consider approval of a planning application for North Growth Area Urban Extension** – The application was reported to Planning Committee on 26.9.13 and was approved subject to satisfactory completion of a S106 agreement. A report to Planning Committee on 20.3.14 seeks to extend the period to complete the legal agreement because of its complexity. Planning permission will be issued as soon as the legal agreement is signed by all parties. The agreement is at an advanced stage and is expected to be signed by June 2014.
- **Progress the completion of Transcoast project delivering new pontoons and community benefits-** Transcoast Project now complete including installation of new pontoons, creation of Town to Port trail and interpretation, works to Hythe bridge. Project complete, with 'lessons learnt' report underway.

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- **Progress the creation of a new public park within the Maltings Development** - Development now on site due for completion later in 2014.
- **Progress the creation of a Masterplan for the Coldoc / Fieldgates sites** - Masterplan on hold as discussions underway with key tenant for Fieldgates site. Heads of terms signed off by Portfolio holder. River walls survey completed and project has now been highlighted within SELEP Growth location.
- **Progress planning consent or Phase 2 of the St Botolph's Quarter, providing new homes and retail opportunities –** Marketing exercise completed and Curzon Cinemas Heads of Terms for Roman House redevelopment agreed by Cabinet so legal work now ongoing. Remainder of the site was remarketed and developer identified. Discussions ongoing regarding Heads of Terms.
- **Progress Town Station (Oyster) Square and Berryfield extension to transfer the outside play area back to St Thomas More school as per the legal agreement** - Berryfield project completed except further reseeding due April 2014. Town Station Square project completed and 'lessons learnt' report being prepared.

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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.

- **Continue activities to securing a minimum of 6,000ft² of flexible workspace** - European Regional Development Fund bid towards the proposed Creative Incubator in Queen Street was not awarded. Efforts continue to secure funding from a range of funding streams.
- **Progress planning consent for Vineyard Gate Shopping centre** – Heads of terms for revised scheme signed off by Cabinet in March 2014. Ongoing discussions regarding legal agreements
- **Continue to seek external funding up to £300,000 to progress aspiration of a ‘Lanes-style’ retail offering**- The ambitions around this £2.2m project have been lodged in the Economic Growth Plan for Essex which feeds into the emerging plan from the South East Local Economic Partnership (SELEP). It has also been included in the funding list for the Single Local Growth Fund with ECC, and has also been included in the Town Centre Traffic and Access Improvements for potential funding under the Essex Growth Strategy (EGS).
- **Progress delivery of superfast broadband and 4G mobile connectivity by the end of 2014** - Roll-out of 4G enabled Town Centre WiFi will occur by end May 2014, with half an hour's free daily internet and phone connectivity per user and 24/7 access to 3 websites: Colchester.gov.uk, Visit Colchester and Universal Jobmatch for jobseekers. Build-out of fixed wireless broadband across continues, and CBC has conceded a lease to our fixed broadband partner to support coverage. Past support to this partner is now leading to coverage near Abberton, with opportunities being considered to extend coverage to business parks/underserved residential areas.
- **Increase the number of partnership links relating to business, employment and skills initiatives** - The Colchester Enterprise Hub established in October 2013 graduated its first cohort of 16 new businesses in April 2014. It provides local aspiring entrepreneurs with the bespoke skills and support to enable them to convert their business idea into a new trading company. Based at Weston Homes Stadium, it has recruited 43 business mentors to help (free of charge) the new businesses become established and prosper. The second cohort specialising in digital businesses has started, with ECC funding. The third Colchester cohort starts in October 2014.
- **Work with ‘Colchester Works’ to increase the promotion and take up of employment and skills initiatives to local residents and businesses** - Colchester Works! is facilitated by CBC to bring together all the borough's employability partners to improve take-up of training and employment opportunities by jobseekers. Particular successes this year include working with a major new care home provider to ensure that 70 jobs have been targeted on local job seeking residents and facilitating the partnership between Colne Housing and Anne Clarke Associates to deliver training to residents of St Andrew's ward, especially, leading to more than 40 training and employment opportunities.

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** A weekly work club has been held during the year at the offices of a youth apprenticeship organisation based in Crouch Street for people under 25. The Council is represented in the Raising Participation Age/NEET group for Colchester and Tendring and supports the group's initiatives such its annual Careers Convention attended by 1,600 Year 11 pupils. ECC's FreeFormers initiative also provides access by the NEET Group to Information Technology jobs and has been linked in to the Waiting Room project and the youth groups supported there on Tuesday evenings.
- **Work with Job Centre Plus and other partners to maintain work clubs and continue our customer support team initiative-** There are currently six work clubs running on a weekly basis throughout the borough which means residents are able to access a club every day of the working week or visit the one closest to their home. Fifty five people have registered during the reporting period with 18 finding employment. Others have significantly increased the number of interviews they have attended. We are in the process of setting up mock interviews to add to the interview discussions that have been taking place in all clubs.
- **Work with the Adult Community College to increase the number of residents with skills for work by providing extra courses at community venues** - An employability course including job searches, CV writing and interview skills took place in the Army Welfare Centre in September. In addition, lone parents attended a training and employability information session (this group are now required to look for work) in July. This included advice on benefits, courses and family learning, volunteering and work clubs. One attendee has become a volunteer with the Credit Union and all other participants have a written Careers Action Plan. A six week employability course including job searches, CV writing and interview skills took place in Greenstead in January and two attendees were referred from the November Lone Parent event.
- **Deliver Job and Volunteers' Fairs** – Two Jobs Fairs were supported throughout the year, these events attracted around 14 employers to each, along with around 20 organisations offering training, apprenticeships, careers advice and volunteering opportunities. Overall around 800 residents visited the jobs fairs. The Council also supported the Annual Careers Convention in October attended by more than 1,200 Year 11 students from the borough.

Promoting sustainability and reducing congestion

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 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. The current submissions relate to promoting sustainable transport and supporting sustainable development and we have continually prioritised the North Colchester Connectivity Corridor in these submissions to help address the growth and traffic congestion in this area. Funding has been allocated from the New Homes Bonus for a number of transportation projects to be started in 2014/15.

- **To review the proposal to reduce traffic in the High Street in the light of ECC's unilateral decision on 11 April to suspend the experimental orders without consultation with CBC**

ECC decided to re-introduce three parts of the temporary orders and introduce CCTV cameras for enforcement. The bus lanes were reinstated as part of the temporary orders in October 2013. Temporary orders are expected to be confirmed in summer 2014. CBC continued to arrange for an independent chair and the secretarial functions for the Town Centre Monitoring Group, which was specifically set up to help monitor the impact of the traffic reduction proposals and engage with local representatives.

- **Secure funding to move forward streetscape and public realm enhancements in the town centre –**

In line with the adopted Better Town Centre SPD an Initial Project Proposal Form has been submitted to the Essex Economic Growth Strategy group to develop a project to improve the streetscape on key routes and passages in the town centre, including links from the High Street through to the core of the town centre.

- **Sustainable Transport -**

- **Commence construction of 1,000-space Park and Ride facility at North Colchester**

ECC have announced that opening Park and Ride will follow the completion of the NAR3 in December 2014. Park and Ride should open in March 2015.

- **Prepare for the delivery of the NAR2 Rapid Transit Corridor**

Detailed drawing from ECC received (April 2014) to be approved to satisfy the requirements of the planning application.

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- **Approve a solution for bus priority in the North Station Area through to the town centre –**
ECC have developed proposals in North Station Area for town centre bus priority measures. CBC has influenced the measures through the consideration of the planning application for the NGAUE. The Council will continue to engage in developing these solutions to ensure pedestrian movements in the area are facilitated. It has been agreed with ECC that north bound bus priority measures will be delivered following improvements to the A133/A134 Colne Bank Roundabout.
- **CBC to support the Colchester Travel Plan Club to promote Travel Change Behaviour –**
 - **Continue to work with existing partners, seek new partners** -Cycling has been promoted using bespoke projects for individual members and through campaigns such as the Bike Fashion Show in partnership with Culver Square, the launch of the Cycling Centurion Treasure Trail, and Cycle Colchester stalls at events throughout the summer. We have worked with the existing CTPC members to deliver their travel plan commitments and retain their Travel Plan accreditation. Through the leadership of CBC we continued to have financial support from the five main members. Two new small organisations have joined up and there is ongoing dialogue about joining the club with a further six local companies. The CTPC provided detailed information for a bid to DfT for Local Sustainable Transport Funding. The bid was submitted on 31 March 2014 which demonstrates an existing strong local partnership and the potential to grow this partnership, especially in the North Colchester Connectivity Corridor, through to the Town Centre.
 - **Promoting walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing to help address congestion, air quality and address personal health –** The DEFRA-funded air quality initiative, 'loveurcar' campaign was rolled out and included a programme of bill boards, social media updates and a flash mob video promoting walking for short trips which received more than 2,000 internet hits. The campaign is promoted through the existing Travel Plan Club members. Initial discussions have taken place with four new businesses regarding membership of the Travel Plan Club.
- **Transport strategies and Behaviour Change -**
 - **Finalise the Stanway Travel Strategy with ECC and prepare an overarching Transportation Summary Document as evidence base to inform the review of the Local Plan -** Comments on a draft version of the Stanway Travel Strategy have been supplied to ECC and we are awaiting finalised plans following a series of meetings CBC arranged with ward councillors. The Council has also developed and adopted an Access Development Brief for new housing sites in South Stanway. This has been produced to avoid piecemeal development coming forward in the area and has encouraged the developers to work together – a joint masterplan is expected. A Movement Framework has been developed in partnership with developers in the Tollgate area which will inform future planning applications.

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○ **Further enhance the Cycle Delivery SPD to ensure funding is allocated through future developer contributions mechanisms – CIL and S106**

SPD has been used to help inform CBC's position on cycling and to brief Local Highway Panel members. SPD has been used as evidence in planning applications and secured funding for facilities, including these applications:

- The Maltings, King Edward Quay Student Accommodation Unit – the scheme also includes a student travel plan which the team are developing and is thought to be the first of this type in the country
- Betts development – Ipswich Road
- Stanway Railway sidings - Halstead Road
- North Growth Area Urban Extension – foot and cycle way improvements will provide direct routes through to north station for both existing residents and the new community

● **Host a round of the Pearl Izumi Tour Series 2013 with supporting community event; review the event for future years –**

Successful round of the Pearl Izumi Tour Series hosted on 30 May 2013, with community events held in Castle Park. Event reviewed and presented to Executive Management team in September. Project completed.

● **Work with Greater Anglia and ECC on the Station Travel Plan and the Community Rail Partnership to promote sustainable travel to stations –**

The Council has maintained its excellent working relationship with Abellio Greater Anglia and this has led to significant partnership working and investment by raising the profile of Colchester. They have invested and launched 'Bike and Go' cycle hire at North station and it has been prioritised for further National Station Improvement Programme investment. An Access for All funding bid has been made for the north side. Agreement has been reached with Abellio Greater Anglia to run a campaign to promote the Sunshine Coast Line from Clacton/Walton into Colchester and to promote the refurbishment of Colchester Castle. Through the Community Rail Partnership specific roles for the Colchester Town station adopters have been identified. Their work will include maintenance of planting and artwork around the Town Station Square Area.

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** – The partnership with the Probation Service continues to be a valuable and growing one. Individual placements work very well for both the Council and the individual. Group work has increased this year, with Probation being able to respond to one-off events as well.
- **Continue (with partners) the offender management programme** – The Integrated Offender Management report for the year showed that Colchester and Tendring have lower than average re-offending rates in the county and performs well nationally. The team has continued to focus on ensuring they are engaging the right offenders. They have had a number of success stories and a number of offenders make it through a year without re-offending, and the relationship within the IOM team is strong. Funding has been used to purchase items like work boots and CSCS cards to enable individuals to get back into stable employment and stay away from offending behaviour.
- **Consider Equality and Diversity and promote tolerance and the diverse needs of our residents, reporting annually to the Policy and Review Development Panel on progress** - The Council continues to have a robust and embedded approach to equality and diversity with Equality Impact Assessments being undertaken on all policies, a dedicated resource in place, support and participation in groups and a number of activities and improvements being undertaken in services. On 4 November the Policy Review and Development Panel agreed the Council's Equality and Diversity "annual report". This provides an important body of published evidence that the Council is meeting its Public Sector Equality Duty as required by the Equality Act 2010. Staff induction training has continued, three sessions having been run since October accommodating 35 new members of staff and, on 5 November, all councillors were given the opportunity of attending a Member Development session on Equality and Diversity.
- **Continue to operate Zone working principles with a focus on local needs** -. 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, however managing demand and expectations is challenging and budget cuts in some of the traditionally County-led functions have increased workloads. Parks and Recreation has moved into the Zones management structure for the first time and the transition is going well with more integrated working.

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 the Arts Centre, Firstsite, Mercury Theatre and 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 our exciting Castle re-development project 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** - The latest tourism statistics are for the year 2012, sadly data is always lags behind. In 2012 the number of trips to the borough was 5m, which represents a 2% increase in the number of trips to the borough compared to the previous year. There was also a 1.8% increase in the value or spend from tourism which was £244m in 2012.
- **To increase the number of people employed in tourism from 3,910 to 4,100 ('full-time equivalent' [FTE] by 31 March 2014)** - In terms of tourism employment in 2012, the figure was 5,632 total estimated jobs which represents a 1.9% increase in tourism employment in the borough compared to 2011. In terms of FTEs, the figure rose by 7.8% bringing the total number of FTEs to 3,021.
- **Creative Colchester strategy / Deliver identified priorities within the Action Plan** – The Strategy has been refreshed to identify the developing creative and digital sector within Colchester and a forthcoming Market Demand Study will help to establish the best way to enhance provision for the Creative Industries. The EU-funded CURE programme (Creative Urban Renewal in Europe) has provided funding for full feasibility for the priority action on the Strategy, the Creative Business Centre, putting us in a strong position for future large capital funding bids. An enhanced 15 Queen Street website provides a directory of creatives as well as jobs, freelance and volunteering listing, and the Cultural Colchester app is approaching launch stage. Equally, CURE also funds short-term activity within the St Botolph's Quarter to develop the creative sector. A programme of seasonal events in the Quarter to encourage increased footfall in the public realm provided small community engagement grants to local groups.
- **Develop and maintain delivery mechanisms for improvement and maintenance of our heritage assets across the borough** - Heritage panels at Duncan's Gate and Balcerne Gate, produced in partnership with the Friends of Colchester's Roman Wall, have been unveiled. Interpretation of Colchester's wider heritage will be augmented by the creation of an App trail next year. Small exhibitions were installed in Hollytrees and in the Garden Room at the Minories, featuring the work of the volunteer team in conserving objects for the new displays in the Castle. The new HLF Unlocked project will showcase a new way of experiencing the museum collections of Colchester and Ipswich Borough Councils and this is well into development.
- **Deliver the Castle redevelopment project** - The Castle redevelopment project is in its final stages with the planned opening date of 2 May 2014. Princess Anne visited the castle for a preview in March and this will be followed by a number of preview events leading up to the grand opening, the first of which is 14 April. Action Complete.

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 from joint work with Invest Essex** - Total of £3.7m of new inward investment for local companies in the manufacturing, telecommunication and logistics sectors from this joint work. This is in addition to other private sector investment, such as Fenwick and Vineyard Gate.
- **Secure funding from Growing Places Fund, Integrated County Strategy investment fund, EU funding programmes, private sector partners and other sources for key projects**

This project has succeeded in securing £99,950 from the Technology Strategy Board, the UK's Innovation Agency. The TSB aims to drive economic growth nationally by stimulating and supporting business-led innovation. CBC will be working with private sector partner Smart Networked Environments (Smart NE) Ltd to explore the feasibility of connecting existing town centre technologies via a digital 'spine' in order to provide the customer/end-user with a single point of entry into town centre information.

Multiple bids submitted in March 2014 for Essex Growth Strategy funding.

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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).

- **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 new Public Health Responsibility deal is an initiative where organisations make commitments to promote/facilitate healthy lifestyles and staff wellbeing. It's an opportunity for CBC to develop its role in promoting healthy lifestyles and choices, such as through its statutory duties for food safety and alcohol licensing and through its contacts with other businesses. CBC also secured ongoing funding for the 'Big Garden' project for 2014-15 which provides horticultural therapy. It continues to participate in the Virtual Ward project which helps residents with long term chronic conditions to stay in their homes.
- **Work with our partners on the Safer Colchester Partnership to agree a partnership plan to reduce crime** – This plan has been written, agreed and is currently being monitored. It has four priorities: reducing domestic violence, reducing re-offending, reducing harm caused through alcohol, and reducing crime and the fear of crime. Action complete.
- **Encourage representation on the Safer Colchester Partnership from the new Clinical Commissioning Group** - The CCG representative has worked in partnership with CBC, Essex Police, the Postgraduate Medical Centre and victim support agencies in order to deliver a GP training event in April 2014. The event was organised to ensure GPs across Tending and Colchester had a clear definition and differentiation between sexual and domestic violence, and an outline of the police response to each and the process; knowledge of the support available for each and the referral process and knowledge of how they, the GPs, can support a victim.
- **Support the work of the Neighbourhood Action Panels** – the 7 Neighbourhood Action Panels continue to run with good attendance from police and zone managers which means issues can often be dealt with swiftly. The top issues continue to be: litter, dog fouling, parking and anti-social behaviour.
- **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** - The medical funding for 2014-15 is secure however, other revenue funding continues to be a challenge and as at March 2014 there is a current shortfall of £28,630. Funding opportunities continue to be sought. Both income and expenditure has increased compared to 2012-13 when budgets for the new and old buses were split. The old bus is in the process of being sold which is it hoped will bring in additional funding.