

# Cabinet Meeting

**Moot Hall, Town Hall, High Street,  
Colchester, CO1 1PJ**

**Wednesday, 01 September 2021 at 18:00**

**The Cabinet** deals with the implementation of all Council services, putting into effect the policies agreed by Full Council and making recommendations to Full Council on policy issues and the budget.

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**COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**Cabinet**  
**Wednesday, 01 September 2021 at 18:00**

Leader and Chairman	Councillor Paul Dundas (Conservative) Councillor Crow (Conservative) Councillor Ellis (Conservative) Councillor Laws (Conservative) Councillor Lissimore (Conservative) Councillor B. Oxford (Highwoods Independent)
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**AGENDA**  
**THE LIST OF ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING**  
**(Part A - open to the public)**

**Please note that Agenda items 1 to 5 are normally dealt with briefly.**

**Live Broadcast**

Please follow this link to watch the meeting live on YouTube:

[\(107\) ColchesterCBC - YouTube](#)

**1 Welcome and Announcements**

The Chairman will welcome members of the public and Councillors to the meeting and remind those participating to mute their microphones when not talking. The Chairman will invite all Councillors and Officers participating in the meeting to introduce themselves.

**2 Urgent Items**

The Chairman will announce if there is any item not on the published agenda which will be considered because it is urgent and will explain the reason for the urgency.

**3 Declarations of Interest**

Councillors will be asked to say if there are any items on the agenda about which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest which would prevent them from participating in any discussion of

the item or participating in any vote upon the item, or any other pecuniary interest or non-pecuniary interest.

#### **4 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Cabinet will be invited to confirm that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2021 are a correct record.

**07-07-21**

7 - 18

#### **5 Have Your Say! (Hybrid meetings)**

Members of the public may make representations to the meeting. This can be made either in person at the meeting or by joining the meeting remotely and addressing the Council via Zoom. Each representation may be no longer than three minutes. Members of the public wishing to address the Council remotely may register their wish to address the meeting by e-mailing [democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk) by 12.00 noon on the working day before the meeting date. In addition a written copy of the representation will need to be supplied for use in the event of unforeseen technical difficulties preventing participation at the meeting itself.

There is no requirement to pre register for those attending the meeting in person.

#### **6 Decisions Reviewed by the Scrutiny Panel**

The Councillors will consider the outcome of a review of a decision by the Scrutiny Panel under the call-in procedure. At the time of the publication of this agenda, there were none.

#### **7 Strategy**

##### **7(i) Year End April 2020 to March 2021 Performance Report - 2020-2023 Strategic Plan Action Plan** 19 - 66

Cabinet will consider a report providing details of progress in delivering against the Council's Strategic Plan for 2020-2023 at the end of 2020-2021.

##### **7(ii) Year End April 2020 – March 2021 Performance Report Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and Other Performance News** 67 - 92

Cabinet will consider a report providing details of performance against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2020 - 2021. The report also includes other performance news.

8	<b>Communities</b>	
8(i)	<b>Policy Panel recommendations on options for Covid-19 Commemorations</b>	93 - 94
	Cabinet will consider recommendations made by the Policy Panel at its meeting on 4 August 2021 regarding commemorations relating to Covid-19.	
9	<b>Economy, Business and Heritage</b>	
9(i)	<b>Unlocking the Potential of Colchester's High Street and Town Centre</b>	95 - 96
	Cabinet will consider a motion that was submitted to Council on 14 July 2021 and stands referred to Cabinet.	
9(ii)	<b>Colchester Town Deal</b>	97 - 98
	Cabinet will consider the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Panel in respect of Town Deal at its meeting on 17 August 2021.	
10	<b>Resources</b>	
10(i)	<b>External funding from North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (NEECCG) and East Suffolk and North Essex Foundation NHS Trust (ESNEFT)</b>	99 - 104
	Cabinet will consider a report inviting it to accept funding from the Health Alliance and to distribute it to a number of voluntary and charitable sector recipients.	
10(ii)	<b>Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman – Annual Review Letter 2021</b>	105 - 112
	Cabinet will consider a report providing details of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review Letter on the number of complaints it has received regarding Colchester Borough Council for 2021.	
10(iii)	<b>Colchester Commercial Holdings Ltd: recommendation from Governance and Audit Committee</b>	113 - 120
	Cabinet will consider a recommendation from the Governance and Audit Committee regarding Colchester Commercial Holdings Limited..	
11	<b>General</b>	

- 11(i) **Policy Panel recommendations on the Panel's future Work Programme** 121 - 122

Cabinet will consider recommendations made by the Policy Panel at its meeting on 4 August 2021 regarding its future work programme.

12 **Exclusion of the Public (Cabinet)**

In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in accordance with The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 to exclude the public, including the press, from the meeting so that any items containing exempt information (for example personal, financial or legal advice), in Part B of this agenda (printed on yellow paper) can be decided. (Exempt information is defined in Section 100I and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

**Part B**  
**(not open to the public including the press)**

13 **Resources - Part B**

13(i) **The Operational Model for the Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) Fibre Networks**

Cabinet will consider a report setting out the proposed operational model for the Local Full Fibre Network.

## **CABINET**

### **7 July 2021**

*Present:* - Councillor Dundas (Chairman)  
Councillors Crow, Ellis, Laws and B. Oxford\*

*Also in attendance:* Councillors Colman\*, Cory\*, Fox, Goss\*, Harris\*, Pearson\*, Scordis, Warnes\* and J. Young\*

- *Attended remotely*

#### **575. Attendance**

The Chair announced that Councillor Lissimore had sent apologies for the meeting and Councillor B. Oxford was attending remotely as she was currently self-isolating. Although she could take part in the debate and answer questions, under the current legislation she could not vote on any item.

#### **576. Minutes**

*RESOLVED* that the minutes of the meetings held on 26 May 2021 and 9 June 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

#### **577. Have Your Say!**

Councillor Harris attended and with the consent of the Chair addressed the Cabinet to express concern about the impact of Covid 19 on the Council's finances over the next two or three years. In respect of Middlewick, would the Cabinet note that residents of Berechurch opposed the sale of the Ministry of Defence land at Middlewick and would the MP would use his ministerial influence to take the sale off the table. Concern was also expressed that the amendments to the Liveable Neighbourhoods programme would take Berechurch and Monkwick out of the plan, which would be to the detriment of those communities.

Councillor Dundas, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, indicated that whilst he regretted the sale of the land at Middlewick by the Ministry of Defence, the sale had been motivated by the fact that the site was included in the Local Plan. Issues around Council finance in the medium term would be dealt with later in the meeting.

Councillor J. Young attended remotely and with the consent of the Chair addressed the Cabinet to note that the investment in Greenstead was still part of the Town Deal and to express her full support for the Heart of Greenstead project. Concern was expressed about the failure of the Joint Committee of the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) to appoint a Chair at its meeting on 24 June 2021. This was having an impact on public safety

as it meant decisions on schemes which were delegated to the Chair were unable to be taken. This needed to be resolved urgently.

Councillor Crow, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, explained that he had been unable to attend the Joint Committee meeting. However, an Extraordinary Meeting of the Joint Committee of the NEPP was being called in order that a Chair be appointed.

Councillor Goss attended and with the consent of the Chair addressed the Committee. In respect of concerns about grass cutting, the recent growth of verges was a result of the recent weather conditions, and it was appreciated contractors were doing their best. However, incorrect information had been put out on social media claiming incorrectly that the number of cuts had been reduced. There had been issues with the quality of the cutting which he had reported, and litter was being mowed up rather than picked beforehand. The Fixing the Link scheme near the Albert Roundabout did not seem to be progressing, even though it would fit in well with the strategic work that Essex County Council was currently undertaking. It was noted that locality budgets had been reinstated to £2000 per Councillor. It was surprising that this funding had not been allocated to the River Colne, given previous concerns expressed on the issue.

Councillor Dundas, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, indicated that if locality budgets were not spent, the funding could be reallocated to different priorities. It was indicated that a written response would be sent on the issues relating to grass cutting and the Fixing the Link project.

A written statement from Councillor G. Oxford was read to the Cabinet suggesting that each ward should produce its own list of sites that would be planted with wildflowers and plug plants, with each ward list ratified by the Environment and Sustainability Panel. Concerns were expressed about the grass cutting service which needed to radically improve. The reinstatement of locality budgets was supported. Given that Colchester was already a city, there was no need to apply for City Status. Commercial bollards needed to be installed to protect Council sites. Holy Trinity Church needed to be protected. Concerns were also expressed about kerbless streets and whilst support was expressed for the concept of the Youth Zone, no suitable site had yet been identified. In respect of St Marks Community Centre, this was welcome and it was hoped the scheme would proceed quickly. The support of the new administration for the scheme was welcomed.

Councillor Crow, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, expressed his enthusiasm for the policy of wilding. It was important to review and learn from what had been achieved so far. There were several pilot sites from which important information on management techniques were being gathered. It was also important not to over promise or overstretch resources, and whilst the idea of a wish list of sites was attractive, it was important to take time to get the policy right. It was the intention to consult with ward councillors about their respective wards.

Councillor Fox attended and with the consent of the Chair, addressed the Cabinet to ask the Leader of the Council where was the twenty point plan for the new administration he had promised to publish.



Councillor Dundas, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, indicated that a twenty point plan had not been promised, but that the budget report before the Cabinet set out the administration's priorities.

A written statement from Councillor Goacher was read to the Cabinet stressing the need to continue to support the Woodland and Diversity Project and expressing alarm about comments from a Cabinet member calling for increased mowing. There was a catastrophic decline in UK wildlife, some of which was due to increased development and intensive farming methods. Leaving some areas for wildflowers would create oases for wildlife. The Council needed to be clear that for most areas mowing patterns had not changed, and where it had it was for the benefit of nature. Some residents appreciated the benefits of leaving areas unmowed. The Council needed to set an example and lead on this issue.

Councillor Dundas, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, and Councillor Crow, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, emphasised the administration's support for the policy of wilding and the Woodland and Diversity Project. The comments referred to were not made by a Cabinet member and referred to the mowing of areas that were not being left wild.

Councillor Scordis attended and with the consent of the Chair, addressed the Cabinet about the Hythe. Since the 1990s, industry had left the area and been replaced by housing. However, despite the house building, the area had seen little investment. The Quay had been neglected by both Essex County Council and Colchester Borough Council with no real plan in place. Much of the housing had been taken over by student landlords, leading to a transient population. Crime and graffiti were issues that blighted the area. There were few amenities. Where had the section 106 money from the housing developments been invested? The Council could look to regenerate the area by turning the Moors into a nature reserve. The section of the river flowing through the Hythe was also neglected. The creation of the Hythe Task force was a positive step, but it was important that the Council had a vision for the future of the Hythe. Cabinet should work with ward councillors for the area to look at future plans for the Hythe to help transform the area.

Councillor Dundas, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, indicated that he supported the suggestion that the Hythe should be a high priority for the Council. Councillor Ellis, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning explained that he would be happy to work with the Hythe ward councillors on these issues. He would look into the allocation of section 106 funding in the Hythe.

## **578. Budget Strategy 2022/23 and Transformation**

The Chief Operating Officer submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor King attended and with the consent of the Chair, addressed the Cabinet to welcome the report which showed the stability of the Council's finances. He did not support increasing locality budgets as it was the only saving which members could collectively agree upon and make themselves. There had been an under lying

improvement in the finances and it had not been necessary to draw down £1 million of reserves.

Councillor Dundas, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, thanked Councillor King for his positive comments. Locality budgets were a means of getting investment directly into the heart of local communities. In terms of the overall budgetary position, this had been helped by significant support from central government. The position would be improved following 19 July as leisure facilities would begin to generate profit.

Councillor Fox attended and with the consent of the Chair, addressed the Cabinet, to ask what consultation had been undertaken on proposals to bid for City Status and how much would be spent on the bid. Some residents and groups identified Colchester as a town and any bid needed support across the community. Neighbourhood Plans had also been identified as a priority for the new administration, but no funding had been allocated to support this.

Councillor Dundas explained that the administration was looking at developing a package of support for those areas seeking to develop Neighbourhood Plans. In respect of City Status, Councillor Laws, Portfolio Holder for Economy, Business and Heritage, explained that soundings had been undertaken on support for a bid for City Status. Much of the work on the previous bid was still relevant. It was prudent to set aside some funding in the budget to support a bid, although it was not anticipated that it would all be needed. It was also prudent to set aside funding for events to mark the Platinum Jubilee.

Councillor Warnes attended and with consent of the Chair, addressed the Cabinet to welcome the reinstatement of Councillor locality budgets to the original £2000. Could the Portfolio Holder confirm if the allocation of genuinely affordable social housing would continue to reflect the needs-based banding as set out in the Council's current choice-based allocation policy? Could it also be confirmed that the Council's commitment, agreed by the previous administration on the recommendation from the Alternative Methods of Service Delivery Task and Finish Group, to actively promote community transport to serve destinations not reached by private bus companies. Support was expressed for the views of Councillor Harris on the withdrawal of Berechurch and Monkwick from the Liveable Neighbourhoods Programme.

Councillor Ellis, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning confirmed that allocation of social housing would continue to reflect the needs-based banding in the current allocations policy. He would look at the issues raised about community transport. Councillor Dundas stressed the difficulty for non-transport authorities in dealing with issues relating to bus services and he hoped the forthcoming Bus Strategy would make issues clearer.

Councillor Pearson attended and with the consent of the Chair, addressed Cabinet. The recommendation to use £500K of New Homes Bonus to support Covid impacts and recovery was noted. The Conservative group had previously opposed the use of New Homes Bonus to support the budget.

Councillor Dundas explained that this funding had been allocated in the budget in previous years as Covid recovery support. He supported the principle that New Homes Bonus should be spent on mitigating the impact of new homes, but there was not the flexibility in the budget

process to suddenly remove this element and reallocate it now.

Councillor Dundas then introduced the report. The proposals in the report were aimed at using a relatively small amount of money and using it to boost the local economy and support Covid recovery. Locality budgets were spent quickly and directly in local communities. It also provided a commitment to wilding and the Woodland and Diversity Programme, and there was also support for core services, such as extra funding for Neighbourhoods Services and the upgrade of the Shrub End depot. There was also support for the Stanway and St Marks Community Centres. Budget workshops would continue and all Councillors were urged to attend.

Councillor Laws emphasised the importance of the funding to improve the condition of the public realm, which was crucial as the Council built back from Covid. Councillor Ellis highlighted the additional resources that were being put into planning enforcement, and Councillor Crow, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, stressed the support for policies which would contribute to addressing climate change.

*RESOLVED* that:-

- (a) The budget strategy and timetable as set out in the Chief Operating Officer's report be approved.
- (b) The use of £500k of New Homes Bonus carried forward into 2021/22 as set out in Section 6 of Chief Operating Officer's report be approved.
- (c) The proposed programme to transform Council Services be approved.

#### *REASONS*

It is a statutory requirement to set a balanced budget for 2022/23.

To agree a transformation approach to the 2022/23 budget strategy.

#### *ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

None, because it is a legal requirement to balance the budget. Also, failing to transform would not result in the positive lessons learned during the Pandemic being harnessed and could put core services at risk.

### **579. Colchester Town Deal**

The Assistant Director, Place and Client Services, submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Nick Chilvers addressed Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 5(1) of the Meetings General Procedure Rules in respect of Holy Trinity Church, in particular how the £517,000 allocated would be spent. Clarity on the definition of Trinity Square and what the funding allocated for that would be spent on was also requested. The church had been

neglected and the grounds needed maintenance, which it was anticipated could be provided relatively cheaply and be funded from the revenue budget. It should be the central focus for Christmas lighting and art could be hung on the railings. The Council often concentrated on major projects, but the public would welcome a number of smaller improvements.

Councillor Laws, Portfolio Holder for Economy, Business and Heritage thanked Mr Chilvers for his comments, which he supported. He was aiming to make the most of Holy Trinity Church and was excited by the Town Deal funding. The funding would be used to lever in further funding. The suggestion of using the railings to hang artwork was welcomed. There was an aim to reinstall lighting so it could be lit at night, and the long term aim was for Community 360 to occupy the building.

Councillor Coleman attended and with the consent of the Chair, addressed the Cabinet in respect of Youth Zones. He had introduced the concept of Youth Zones to the Council after visiting a Youth Zone in Barking, and the previous administration had supported the inclusion of the Youth Zone in the Town Deal bid. Youth Zones brought many benefits to young people including physical and mental health and academic and careers support. They gave access to a wide range of sports and other pursuits and helped improve self-esteem. They also brought wider community benefits such as reduced anti-social behaviour and crime, improved academic and health outcomes and increased town centre footfall. Other towns had made the provision of a Youth Zone an absolute top priority. A site and funding were available but a car park was being prioritised instead. It was a concern that schemes that were the responsibility of Essex County Council Highways were being prioritised at the expense of the Youth Zone.

Councillor King attended and with the consent of the Chair, addressed the Cabinet to highlight the issues around the financing of a Youth Zone. The projected capital costs for a Youth Zone were £8.4 million of which half would be raised by Onsite. The Council's commitment could be reduced through external funding such as the Town Deal, Youth Investment Fund or the Levelling Up fund. £1 million was already set aside in the capital programme. Therefore, the capital commitment was small compared to the Council's overall borrowing. The revenue costs after taking account of Onsite's contribution through fundraising was about £400K per annum. Therefore, a Youth Zone was affordable. The Youth Zone model had proved robust and sustainable through the pandemic.

Councillor Cory attended and with the consent of the Chair addressed the Cabinet and stressed the Council's ability to lead and deliver ambitious policies and projects and that the Council should not be deterred from pursuing a Youth Zone because it was a Tier 2 authority. For too long there had been reduced investment in youth services and the consequences of this had been exacerbated by the Covid 19 pandemic. Key health partners supported the concept. If the Council did not go back to the Town Deal board to retain the £2.1 million allocation for a Youth Zone an opportunity to deliver the Youth Zone would be lost. He had outlined how he and partners would be prepared to support him on this issue.

Councillor Fox attended and with the consent of the Chair addressed the Cabinet to express concern about the allocation by the Town Deal Board of £500,000 for the former Essex County Hospital site. This site had received planning permission for redevelopment

of 120 units of which only 4 were affordable, which was way below the Council 's policy. There was concern that this funding would just be absorbed by Essex County Council with no real benefit to Colchester.

Councillor Ellis, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning, responded that he shared the concerns and highlighted that this had been a complicated scheme on which there had been viability issues. He would be looking at the process of negotiations with developers and how this impacted on compliance with Council policies on affordable housing

Councillor Person attended and with the consent of the Chair addressed the Cabinet to welcome the statement that the aim of the Town Deal was to create safe and healthy communities. However, there was nothing in the Town Deal funding for Berechurch, although indicators showed it was an area of high deprivation. Could the Leader of the Council explain how he intended to level up this deserving part of the town?

Councillor Dundas explained that there had been geographic criteria around the Town Deal funding. There would be further opportunities to secure external funding. The Council could bid through the Levelling Up fund. A bid had not been submitted this year as it was likely to be unsuccessful as Colchester had not identified as a Tier One Authority, and those were likely to be favoured in the first round. He would be happy to help areas that were not included in the Town Deal and to look at specific projects.

Councillor Scordis attended and with the consent of the Chair addressed the Cabinet to express concern about the amount of funding given the Town Deal Board to Essex County Council projects. It was disappointing that St Botolph's was losing funding for regeneration. The area was very run down and in need of regeneration, and for those arriving at Colchester Town station it was the first area of Colchester they saw. The loss of funding for Livable Neighbourhoods for New Town was also regretted and it was a concern that £1million had been identified for Jumbo, which was in private ownership. Safeguards needed to be put in place to protect any public investment in Jumbo. The Town Deal Board should be encouraged to reconsider their decisions on the funding allocations.

Councillor Dundas explained that Essex County Council had made a key contribution to the Town Deal bid, including considerable officer support. It was anticipated that section 106 funding would be made available to help fund regeneration of St Botolph's. Councillor Laws explained that the funding for Jumbo would not be given to the private owner. Discussions had begun on the terms on which the owner may be prepared to sell. However, the funding was allocated in order to lever in further funding. This was a once in generation opportunity to secure and protect Jumbo and to find a way of securing public access to it.

Councillor Dundas introduced the report and responded to the Have Your Say comments raised about the Youth Zone. The Cabinet had had a tour of a Youth Zone and were very impressed by the concept and the administration had not abandoned the idea of securing a Youth Zone in Colchester. The Council needed to take into account the cost of the land to build a Youth zone. The ongoing revenue costs were significant. Most authorities which had built Youth Zones were tier one authorities, which meant it was a different magnitude of challenge for the Council to fund a Youth Zone. In reaching its decision the Town Deal Board had looked at the deliverability of the projects. There was concern that if funding

was allocated to projects that could not be delivered quickly, then the funding would be lost. The previous administration had not found a site. Britannia car park had initially been identified and then withdrawn to secure car parking income and for heritage issues. Other sites were being looked at but Onsite did not feel they were optimum. There was no identified, secured site enabling the project to proceed quickly if funding was available. Significant capital and revenue funding needed to be found. If the revenue funding allocated in the MTFF was proceeded with, other services would need to be cut. Youth provision was a County Council function and not a core Borough Council function, and any expenditure by the Council on a Youth Zone would need to be justified to residents on that basis. Also, existing youth services outside the town centre also needed funding and the diversion of funds to the town centre would need to be justified. If the Council were to proceed with a Youth Zone it would require cross party support and an understanding that it would require some difficult choices.

Councillor B. Oxford, Portfolio Holder for Communities, expressed concern about the provision of a Youth Zone in the town centre, rather than supporting youth provision in all wards, and the dangers of proceeding whilst there was still uncertainty over the costs and other sources of funding.

Councillor Ellis highlighted although the previous administration had been working on the Youth Zone, it had not been championed effectively and there was not widespread knowledge of it and the potential benefits. In view of the sums involved, there needed to be some cross-party work in raising the profile before final decisions were made. Councillor Dundas indicated he would also raise the benefits of Youth Zones with Essex County Council again.

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (a) The final list of projects and their financial parameters (see paragraph 5.5 of the Assistant Director's report) be noted, including noting those projects which are confirmed within the programme as 'Fast Track', and further noting those projects which will not be funded within the reduced Town Deal funding envelope.
- (b) The approach to retaining all projects within the Town Investment Plan and seeking further future funding opportunities to enable these to progress later be noted.
- (c) The principle that the work in remainder of 2021-2022 financial year to develop business cases for all projects is undertaken 'at risk' i.e., before the first payment from Government which is anticipated April 2022 be agreed; noting that the Council will gain further surety from Government in coming months; reducing risk as this work progresses through business case development.
- (d) Colchester Borough Council's ongoing commitment to the Town Deal Programme in the role of Accountable Body, including contributing to and overseeing the development of a suite of business cases that build on the project concepts that were submitted within the Town Investment Plan; throughout 2021-2022, and its ongoing role as secretariat to Town Deal Board, be agreed

**REASONS**

Approval to proceed to the next phase of the 'We are Colchester' programme including the development of business cases will enable the programme to draw down the funding from Government and move the projects into delivery. This programme will greatly boost Colchester's opportunities to realise its economic development, place-making, inward investment, and regeneration ambitions now and on a long-term basis, through delivery of a specific programme of coherent, targeted interventions.

## **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

No alternative options have been presented to Cabinet. Town Deal is recognised as a once in a generation opportunity for Colchester, and there are no other current or anticipated sources of funding and investment of comparable size and scope. Some of the interventions included in the Town Investment Plan see Town Deal as the funder of last resort as they are unlikely to attract suitable investment from other sources; and cannot be funded within the Council's resources, particularly in the light of the current financial situation arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **580. Renewal of Colchester and Ipswich Museums Services Joint Committee Agreement**

The Assistant Director, Communities, submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor Laws, Portfolio Holder for Economy, Business and Heritage, introduced the report and highlighted that Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service was a unique partnership. It was an excellent example of cross authority working and brought benefits of economies of scale. It enabled the service to attract high quality and high-profile exhibitions. It also provided a range of services beyond traditional museum services, such as assessing archaeological impacts of planning applications, and its assets made a valuable contribution to the public realm. He paid tribute to the officers working in the service.

**RESOLVED** that the Colchester and Ipswich Museums (CIMS) Joint Committee Agreement be renewed for the period 1 August 2021 – 31 July 2027.

## **REASONS**

The Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service (CIMS) was formed in 2007 via a Joint Committee Agreement for 2007-2018. The agreement designates Colchester Borough Council as the employing authority for CIMS and empowers CIMS to operate the museums service on Ipswich Borough Council's behalf. The Joint Museums Committee (JMC) is the main governance mechanism for the service. The 2007-2018 agreement was updated and revised in 2015 to cover the period 2015 – 2021.

Since its formation, CIMS has enjoyed significant success in both Ipswich and Colchester and the nature of the combined service is seen in the sector as an exemplar of good practice. The future is anticipated to include the major redevelopment of Ipswich Museum and continued involvement in the Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation

scheme.

The 2015 – 2021 Agreement ends on 31 July 2021 and, following consultation with senior officers and the relevant Portfolio Holders, it is proposed that the agreement be renewed.

## **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

To choose not to renew the Agreement. The resulting uncertainty and impact on staffing, systems, budget, and external funding, notably from Arts Council make this an inadvisable option. Instead, a short-term Agreement could allow the requisite time for consultation and a feasibility study looking at alternative models of operating.

### **581. St Marks Community Centre, Mill Road**

The Assistant Director, Communities submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Jocelyn Laws addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 5(1) of the Meetings General Procedure Rules to welcome the progress on the proposed new St Mark's Community Centre. It would be an important addition in this area of Highwoods and would complement the community facilities in the south of the ward. Clarification was sought on how the Council's involvement in the centre would be managed long-term and if the Council would retain the freehold over the longer term and the length of the lease.

The Centre needed to be fit-for-purpose to meet modern demands, and it was noted that it would connect to the new Heat Network at the Colchester Northern Gateway. As well as being a sustainable development it was very important that the building was fully accessible for the full range of impairments and to cater for users of all ages. What steps were being taken to ensure that this project met the criteria of a sustainable building that would be fully accessible for all residents?

Health and wellbeing needed to be put at the heart of communities, including supporting residents to keep active and tackling issues such as social isolation. To ensure that St Mark's meets the needs of all residents, what measures were being taken to encourage and facilitate inclusive and accessible consultation with residents at all stages of development?

Councillor B. Oxford, Portfolio Holder for Communities, responded and introduced the report to the Cabinet. This was a much-needed facility for this part of Highwoods, which was lacking in amenities, and ward councillors had made significant efforts to secure it. Myland Community Council had been offered the opportunity to manage the building but had declined. The Council would retain the freehold with a long lease of possibly 200 years, but this had not finally agreed. St Lukes Church, in conjunction with the diocese, would be responsible for the day to day running of the community centre. The Trustees had decided that the centre should be a new build facility which would ensure it was both sustainable and fully accessible. There would also be a changing places facility. Trustees



and ward Councillors had worked hard to keep residents informed. Architects were working on plans which would be consulted on over the next few months.

*RESOLVED* that authority be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Communities for the appointment of construction contractors and associated suppliers. This would ensure the efficient and timely appointment of construction contractors and associated suppliers where relevant to ensure procurement and programme timelines are adhered to. This would enable effective delivery of the scheme.

#### *REASONS*

To ensure a seamless delivery of the programme in accordance with timelines

#### *ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

Decisions on the appointment of contractors to be made by Cabinet.

### **582. Member Development Group Annual Report 2020-21**

The Assistant Director, Corporate and Improvement Services, submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor Dundas, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, introduced the report. It was noted that moving the training offered to Councillors online because of the pandemic, had increased the take up of training and development. It was noted there was still quite a divergence in the attendance at sessions, and that 10 per cent of Councillors had not attended any sessions. Attendance at training and development sessions was encouraged, and the value of the budget workshop in particular was stressed.

*RESOLVED* that:-

- (a) The report of the Member Development Group on the work of the Group in the 2020-21 municipal year be received and noted.
- (b) The Council's reassessment for Charter Status should be scheduled for December 2021.

#### *REASONS*

The Member Development Group is required to report to Cabinet on an annual basis. This provides Cabinet with an opportunity to review the work of the Group and the provision of member development.

#### *ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

No alternative options were presented to the Cabinet.

### **583. Progress of Responses to the Public**

The Assistant Director, Policy and Corporate submitted a progress sheet a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

*RESOLVED* that the contents of the Progress Sheet be noted.

#### *REASONS*

The progress sheet was a mechanism by which the Cabinet could ensure that public statements and questions were responded to appropriately and promptly.

#### *ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

No alternative options were presented to the Cabinet.

**1 September 2021**

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Assistant Director – Corporate and Improvement</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Richard Block</b> ☎ 506825
<b>Title</b>	<b>Year End April 2020 to March 2021 Performance Report - 2020-2023 Strategic Plan Action Plan</b>		
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards		

**1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides details of progress in delivering against the Councils Strategic Plan for 2020-2023 at the end of 2020-2021.

**2. Recommended Decisions**

- 2.1 To confirm satisfactory delivery against the Strategic Plan Action Plan and that the Council has made satisfactory progress in meeting its strategic goals.

**3. Reason for Recommended Decision**

- 3.1 To ensure the Council has robust performance management of delivery against key strategic goals.

**4. Alternative Options**

- 4.1 No alternative options have been presented to Cabinet.

## **5. Background Information**

- 5.1 The Council has agreed a new Strategic Plan covering 2020-2023. This report provides a review of progress against the Strategic Plan covering 2020-2021.
- 5.2 Details of progress made in delivering against each aim is shown in the report at Appendix 1. This shows that despite the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic, significant progress has been made in delivering against each of the themes of the Strategic Plan.

## **6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications**

- 6.1 Progress and improvement of these and many of the actions within the Strategic Plan Action Plan support our aims of improving both services and the lives of everyone in the borough. Where required, specific Equality Impact Assessments will exist for policies and activities rather than for individual performance indicators or actions. Progress on the Council's Equality Objectives are included within the Strategic Plan Action Plan Update.

## **7. Strategic Plan References**

- 7.1 The Strategic Plan Action Plan demonstrates delivery of across all the current Strategic Plan priorities.

## **8. Consultation**

- 8.1 The report's contents do not have any direct implications, however, the Strategic Plan and priorities were agreed using the results of significant research and taking into account previous public consultations.

## **9. Publicity Considerations**

- 9.1 The performance report contains progress in delivering key goals of the Strategic Plan Action Plan and it is important that residents and businesses are made aware of these. Many of the achievements will have been publicised during the year but the report and related information will also be published on the Performance and Improvement section of the Council's website.

## **10. Financial implications**

- 10.1 All achievements detailed in the Strategic Plan Action Plan were delivered from within existing approved budgets and as such, there are no new financial implications associated with this report.

## **11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications**

- 11.1 There are actions within the Strategic Plan Action Plan which aim to improve community safety and as such this report provides progress updates in this area.

## **12. Health and Safety Implications**

- 12.1 There are no direct health and safety implications associated with this report.

## **13. Risk Management Implications**

13.1 There are no direct risk management implications associated with this report.

#### **14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications**

14.1 Tackling the Climate Challenge and leading sustainability is a key theme of the Strategic Plan and the report at appendix 1 provides details of the progress in delivering the associated goals.

#### **Appendices**



## Colchester Strategic Plan Action Plan (SPAP) 2020 – 2023 Year End Report covering April 2020 – March 2021

### Themes:

**Tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability**

**Creating safe, healthy and active communities**

**Delivering homes for people who need them**

**Growing a better economy so everyone benefits**

**Celebrating our heritage and culture**

### **Tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability:**

Respond to the Climate Emergency

Conserve and enhance biodiversity

Enable more opportunity for walking and cycling around Colchester

***During 2020/21 we will***

### **Respond to the Climate Emergency**

#### **Goal**

#### ***Achievements***

Reduce carbon emissions to help achieve a net zero Carbon footprint for Council Services by 2030.

Direct emissions were reduced by 5.4% (351.4 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e) between financial year 2018-2019 and financial year 2019-2020. An updated figure will be reported on in due course working with the Carbon Trust in 2021.

A new role, Sustainability & Climate Change Manager, was created to drive the Sustainability and Carbon reduction commitment forwards and has been in operation since September 2020.

A draft Sustainability and Climate strategic themes document was developed to form part of a Sustainability and Climate Challenge strategy with key staff and partners.

	<p>An internal Climate Opportunities Working Group (COWG) was established to champion organisational change needed to achieve net zero emissions by 2030.</p> <p>The Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) has been updated for the 2021-2023 period from across services and companies with more than 50 actions, organised under 8 strategic themes approved by the Environment Sustainability Panel.</p> <p>The Carbon Trust have been commissioned to provide tailored advice to CBC and our companies' work to promote decarbonisation of assets and provide a pathway with targets/milestones identified to reach net zero by 2030.</p> <p>An off-setting strategy for local investment is starting to be considered.</p>
Environment and sustainability embedded within all Council decision making and the adaptation and recovery from Covid-19.	<p>Several projects have been identified for the next steps with the Carbon Trust to help advance plans for carbon reduction for our assets.</p> <p>All CBC projects have completed the new Climate Emergency Checklist implemented in late 2020. Learning from this process led to new Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Guidance with assessment process.</p> <p>This is to be rolled out across all new projects developed in CBC and in the Amphora Companies.</p> <p>In addition, all Town Deal projects will trial a new sustainability and environmental decision-making tool and evaluated upon completing Town Deal project designs.</p> <p>A planning checklist is currently being consulted upon for inclusion into the local validation list.</p> <p>Procurement colleagues are exploring when to begin to incorporate environmental and carbon reduction into their procurement policy update, but a first contract was awarded with some consideration of this amongst the introduction of "social value".</p>
Air quality across Colchester is improved.	<p>Public engagement completed and summary report produced.</p> <p>No vehicle idling campaign CAREless pollution launched on the 8 October 2020 to coincide with National Clean Air Day.</p>



	<p>Planning permission granted for Roadside signage in Brook Street, East St and Eastgates and road signs installed. Psychological evaluation into the effectiveness of the road signage is being carried out.</p> <p>A Feasibility study into Countdown timers at traffic light timers has been carried out.</p> <p>Partnership working with Anglian Ruskin University and Essex County Council to explore how Bikeability in Schools can be enhanced.</p>
Continue to support residents to reduce, reuse and recycle their waste.	<p><b>Waste and recycling generated from homes</b></p> <p>Covid-19 has had an impact on the amount of waste material that residents generate in their homes. The Council aims to encourage residents to reuse, recycle and compost 53% of all material. However, the disruption of the pandemic on resources and operations impacted the services received at the beginning of the year. As a result there has been a slight decline in figures to approximately 52%.</p> <p>In addition, there has been an increase in all waste materials generated by residents too.</p> <p><b>Recycling equipment</b></p> <p>In response to recycling equipment stockists closing due to the pandemic, a universal doorstep delivery service for Recycling Equipment was launched utilising redeployed staff from other areas of the council. Customers can order 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. From beginning June to end February 2021 the service received and delivered almost 30,000 orders. A more sustainable solution to the provision of equipment is being explored and a new pilot 'Click and Collect' service for garden waste recycling sacks will be launching in April. Residents on sack collections will be able to order replacement garden sacks online and collect them from the visitor centre at High Woods Country Park. Initially this new service will be trialled for four weeks. If successful, the council will look to continue to offer the Click and Collect service, including a wider selection of recycling containers and more pick up locations.</p> <p><b>Assisted and exemptions</b></p> <p>This year officers have completed a limited review of approximately 130 customers who were receiving the assisted service but for whom there was no record of the application. As a result of the review approximately 50% of these customers were confirmed as needing an Assisted</p>

Collection and the remainder ceased. Improvements to the processes of applications are being considered and developed into further plans.

### **Calendar**

The council is launching into 2021 without a printed calendar. Over 51% of our residents have already opted into paperless billing to reduce their impact on the environment. A leaflet was included with this year's council tax bill, explaining the reason why the Council has taken this decision and it provided a quick three-step guide to downloading the calendar. The leaflet also contained information on textile recycling restarting in April, alongside a small change to the glass and cans collection. Work is ongoing to develop more personalised and improved access to refuse and recycling information for residents.

### **Performance reporting**

Improvements have been made around performance reporting and monitoring. This is part of a large programme of work that will be developed and delivered more in the coming year. The first steps in cleansing and automating addresses and routes has been completed and will be the foundation for the programme.

### **Communications, engagement, and website**

Strong marketing and communications campaigns undertaken, including Recycling Week 2020; Compost at home communication campaign; autumn recycling messages on social media such as recycling windfall fruit in food waste (rather than garden waste) and leaves; @LoveFoodHateWaste campaign messages; supported @Love Essex's #ZeroWasteWeek social media campaign; coronavirus pandemic waste/recycling safety messages; eco-friendly Christmas tips; Be A Better Recycler focus on can/glass separation, paper/plastic and garden waste; 2021-2022 recycling calendar created in accessible online PDF format; re-launch textiles collections with Essex Textiles; eco-friendly Easter tips.

The business waste web pages have been improved, including a sales focussed approach to creating an enquiry form, to help local businesses to recycle and dispose of their rubbish responsibly.

	<p>The customer experience for reporting a missed bin online has been overhauled and vastly improved. The results are that there has been no negative feedback received about the online reporting tool, and when a surge of reports was made during the lockdown/COVID peak last year, all additional reports were made online rather than via the phone/email.</p> <p>A Chatbot was introduced to the Waste and Recycling web pages to help customers quickly find the 4 most used online processes. Customer engagement with the chatbot has been impressive, with an average of 60 chat interactions per day. This shows a desire and need for residents to engage with our website to receive support.</p> <p>See below regarding material collection methods.</p>
<b>Conserve and enhance biodiversity</b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b><i>Achievements</i></b>
Minimise the environmental impact of our activities.	<p>Several of our higher emission assets are identified, with the top 3 being Leisure World, fleet and affordable housing. Each of these are under consideration on how to reduce carbon emissions with some plans already in progress.</p> <p>The fleet now has a strategy in place which includes timeframes for decarbonisation of vehicles.</p> <p>A decarbonisation plan for Leisure World is to be developed in 2021.</p> <p>A strategy for decarbonising sheltered housing is underway, and the first site is approaching redevelopment phase; this work ties in with the 2021 Asset Management Strategy and new Business Plan.</p> <p>A review of the Carbon Management Plan (CMP) 2016-2020 is complete with some actions to be rolled into the upcoming CMP for 2022-2027.</p> <p>Working with the Carbon Trust on a Carbon Management Plan for 2022-2025, which will be completed in 2021.</p>

	<p>Project proposals developed for housing improvements and the decarbonisation of Rowan House to reduce asset and travel emissions are well advanced and entering towards delivery phases.</p> <p>See the first goal above on the development of the new Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Guidance and process.</p> <p>Guidance for environmentally smart procurement has been developed and the policy and process will be updated this year.</p>
Enhance environments to create more space for nature to grow and thrive through greening and natural seeding.	<p>In a move away from just planting trees as approached by the team in year one, this workstream now encompasses planting of trees, shrubs and hedgerows, and other activities that aim to reduce environmental impact on green spaces, ecology, and biodiversity, such as meadows and reduced chemical use.</p> <p>Whilst public planting days could not be achieved this year, planting and tree distribution has still gone ahead in some form, and by the end of March 2021, the Council will have achieved 14,000 trees planted. With each site, assessments have been undertaken to ensure the right balance and minimal impact on biodiversity, ecology, and existing use of the space. Whilst planting has been on existing public open space, the planting has ensured that these areas can continue to be used (dog walking, sports use), whilst being enhanced by tree/hedge planting and habitat creation.</p> <p>A Greening Colchester policy document has been approved and agrees a new approach for the Council with regards to verge and weed maintenance. In addition to the Council's commitment and delivery to the phased removal of the use of glyphosate-based products, this policy also set out to stop or reduce grass cutting in specific areas. The intention being that changing the management regime in this way can improve the biodiversity and visual amenity of the grass verges, whilst also enabling the Council to manage these areas to be left to re-wild and be developed as wildflower areas or left to naturalise as woodland. Across 14 open spaces approx. 1.5 ha (hectares) in total will be left to naturalise with the potential to establish 4,700 trees at 1 tree per 3m<sup>2</sup> over the next 10 years. The cutting frequency of the grass verges on some of the main routes into Colchester such as the Avenue of Remembrance, Clingo Hill and Cymbeline Way will be changed to one grass cut per year and managed as wildflower verges.</p>

	Green flag award achieved at Castle Park, High Woods Country Park and Colchester Cemetery and Crematorium.
Discover, nurture and enable the work led by communities that promotes biodiversity.	<p>Public engagement is a key part of our work. Covid-19 has had an impact on the ability to undertake this work in the current year. However, lots of work has taken place to involve and encourage our local community to love and care for the environment even with the restrictions in place. This has included changes and improvements to the <a href="#">Woodland and Biodiversity Project website</a>, which is regularly updated on progress of the project and provides other information.</p> <p><b>Trees for Years</b></p> <p>Whilst the traditional Trees for Years event could not proceed this financial year owing to the Covid-19 restrictions it has been rescheduled to commence at the revised date of November 2021, National Tree Week and it is intended that this will launch the new planting season for 2021-2022. The last Trees for Years event took place in 2020 and so it will still in effect be an 'annual' event.</p> <p><b>Schools</b></p> <p>Local schools have been engaged to design signage for 'no mow' areas across the borough. Activity packs with information about the project, and templates for signage were sent to schools along with guidance for seed gathering activity. Future plans include engaging schools to take part in bee and butterfly counts.</p> <p><b>Building a volunteer network</b></p> <p>Volunteers for year one of the project were recognised through a "thank you" video posted on to the Council website and social media, on International Volunteer Day on 5 December 2020. Prior to national lockdown restrictions being implemented the public were asked to sign up to volunteer for public planting days, with over 100 volunteers registered. The details of these volunteers have been retained to allow future engagement with key project initiatives and for the network of volunteers to grow and grow.</p> <p><b>Together We Grow</b></p>

	<p>Together we Grow is a community Interest Company based in Colchester. It aims to improve the lives of communities by helping people and nature to grow together. The organisation led on the Public Planting Events in year one of the project and was so successful at building up a team of committed volunteer tree planters that they were asked to fill the same role for Year 2. They have successfully delivered some planting days in collaboration with their work with refugees, with positive impact on health and wellbeing for those involved.</p> <p><b>Stakeholder group</b></p> <p>Considering the renewed focus of the project and to further ensure the direction and sustainability of the project, the Council has formulated an informal stakeholder group. The informal group has helped to challenge and therefore influence the refocusing of the project, ensuring the objectives and principles of the project are sound. It is hoped that support like this, or similar, will continue into year three from the existing and other groups, with a particular focus on greater collaboration and engagement.</p>
<p>Plant native species and manage our woodlands, meadows and greenspace whilst sustaining existing habitats.</p>	<p>The Woodland and Biodiversity Project has planted 145 standard trees on public green spaces, 12,125 tree whips in our parks and countryside sites and 1,840 whips were supplied to local Town and Parish Councils for planting on their green spaces.</p> <p>Across 14 open spaces approx. 1.5ha (hectares) in total will be left to naturalise with the potential to establish 4,700 trees at 1 tree per 3m<sup>2</sup> over the next 10 years.</p> <p>See comments above regarding Greening Colchester policy</p> <p>Fully biodegradable spiral rabbit guards have been used this year to protect the trees being planted.</p> <p><b>Essex Forest Initiative</b></p> <p>The Council is working with the Essex Forest Initiative which was created in October 2019 by Essex County Council to commit to planting £1 million worth of trees over five years to combat climate change by locking up carbon in the environment. They are looking to work with all interested Local Authorities within Essex to achieve this aim and have partnered with the Woodland Trust in providing native tree stock at a heavily subsidised cost to any Local Authority which has plans to plant woodland on their land.</p>

	<p><b>Woodland Trust</b></p> <p>The Project has also partnered with the Woodland Trust; the UK's largest woodland conservation charity and who have planted 47million trees since it first began in 1972. It has agreed to supply the Project with a total of 10,350 tree whips, canes, and rabbit guards completely free of charge for planting in February and March this year.</p>
Work alongside communities to maintain clean, green neighbourhoods and urban spaces that we all look after and enjoy.	<p><b>Edible Community Orchard</b></p> <p>A small number of residents in Greenstead have planted up wooden troughs outside the community centre with fruit and vegetables. There is scope to plant fruit trees on Magnolia Fields when the volunteer group grows.</p> <p><b>Wivenhoe Project</b></p> <p>CBC were approached by Wivenhoe Town Council (WTC) who have been working on areas in Wivenhoe that they would like to see left to grow as wildflowers, and then cut and cleared at the end of September. Working with WTC, a template document is being produced which can enable and guide Town and Parish Councils in changing grass cutting regimes to develop wildflower areas and improve biodiversity. The document takes organisations through the various aspects of changing the grass cutting regime, identifying any potential concerns, outlines the project brief, how the changes can be monitored and recorded, and how any data collected can be documented.</p> <p><b>Community groups</b></p> <p>Relationships have been formed with several local community groups such as Eco-Colchester, En-form Colchester, Transition Wivenhoe and Rowhedge Going Greener to see if they wish to get involved in the Woodland Project. Site meetings have been held with the Lexden Conservation Group regarding the tree-planting for Spring Lane Park and the Keep the Green Clean group to do the same for the Greenstead Slopes planting.</p> <p>The Colchester Natural History Society surveyed several of the planting sites to assess their suitability for tree planting in relation to any wildlife habitats already present on the land. Written reports have been supplied to the Council by the Society making a number of recommendations and in response to these changes were made to the exact location of some</p>

	of the tree planting areas and additional areas of grassland were left to grow long in an attempt to improve the biodiversity of the open spaces.
<b>Enable more opportunity for walking and cycling around Colchester</b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b><i>Achievements</i></b>
Work with partners to implement strategies and develop measures to reduce traffic in the town centre.	<p>Influenced Essex County Council (ECC) on their Safer Greener Healthier bid submission to Department for Transport (DfT) on walking and cycling routes into and through the town centre to help with social distancing and enabling more people to choose to access the town via healthy and sustainable means.</p> <p>Worked with ECC and stakeholder groups on designs to implement the measures.</p> <p>Investigating opening a secure cycle parking facility in the town centre including location and operational requirements.</p> <p>Worked with and influenced Essex County Council on the Colchester Future Transport Strategy ready for consultation.</p> <p>Working with partners to promote sustainable travel behaviour change, healthier lifestyles and reduce car dependency including through Colchester Travel Plan Club network supporting encouraging and influencing employees and students to travel sustainably through the implementation of work place Travel Plans.</p> <p>Working with developers to develop Travel Plans and refresh and update existing Travel Plans through the planning process.</p> <p>Air Quality behaviour change project continuing to look at ways in which air quality can be improved in the Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) including by promoting walking and cycling for short journeys.</p>
Improve facilities and routes for cyclists and walkers to enable active travel behaviours, healthier lifestyles and reduce car use.	Worked with Colchester Cycle Campaign on review of the Colchester Cycling Delivery Strategy, Supplementary Planning Document, and its alignment with the ECC Colchester Cycling Action Plan.



	<p>Working with colleagues and developers to ensure walking and cycling measures are delivered through the planning process and via S106 contributions including:</p> <p>Improvements to Rowhedge Trail including improvements to path surface (S106 funded); Commissioning and installing Colchester Town Station signage Worked on Fixing the Link alternative plans to enhance the walking route from Colchester station to the town centre Worked with ECC and Stanway Parish Council on improving the walking and cycling links from Stanway to Tollgate Wayfinding study from and to University accommodations, the university and town centre delivered (S106 funded).</p> <p>Study completed on provision of secure cycle parking facility in the town centre and in residential areas.</p> <p>ParkActive being set up for 'last mile' active travel alternative (repurposing long stay car parks as park and walk).</p> <p>New Parking Strategy in final stages of completion, with a focus on environmental car park charges rather than hourly space rental.</p>
<p>Ensure major regeneration projects put physical activity, cycling and walking at the forefront of development.</p>	<p>Colchester Northern Gateway (CNG) Sports Park construction was completed in November 2020 and will open as Covid restriction lift, on 26 April 2021.</p> <p>New cycleways and pedestrian links are constructed on approach to the Sports park, along Boxted Lane, Severalls Lane and over Junction 28 of the A12.</p> <p>The Walk "Phase 1" was completed in October 2020, with Phase 2 scheduled for start in April 2021 once the rugby club have moved.</p> <p>Project Initiation Documents (PIDs) have been embedded with sections on sustainability.</p> <p>Cycling has been included in several projects in the town centre, including "Grow On Space" in Queen Street, Vineyard Gate and Britannia concepts,</p> <p>Plan being prepared to engage and embed behavioural change.</p>

<b><i>During 2020/21 we will</i></b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b><i>Achievements</i></b>
Establish a new Environment and Sustainability Panel to oversee our work to tackle the climate emergency.	<p>A new Environment and Sustainability Panel was established and ran throughout 2020-2021 so that their work programme completed.</p> <p>A draft Forward Plan will be developed when the panel resumes after elections.</p>
Complete the phasing out of Glyphosate herbicide in Council operations.	<p>The agreed action plan has now been delivered to stop the general use of Glyphosate weedkiller in Council operations. Since April 2020, the Council has stopped spraying:</p> <p>In all children's play parks (74 sites)</p> <p>In around West Mersea beach huts (384 huts)</p> <p>On the Recreation Ground, off Old Heath Road</p>
Embed environment and sustainability impact assessment and prioritisation in all recovery, project and programme management.	<p>Climate Emergency is now embedded in all three core project management documents in the new project management environment.</p> <p>Monthly project progress reports now include a Climate Emergency (CE) Red, Amber, Green (RAG) status with supporting narrative.</p> <p>Review of Climate Checklist completed with a new Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Assessment Form and Guidance being rolled out to CBC staff and Amphora companies to demonstrate move towards monitoring of environmental impact and reduction of carbon emissions of major development work along with clear messaging of benefits/positive outcomes of these actions for residents.</p> <p>New projects will trial the new sustainability and carbon assessment form and guidance through 2021.</p>
Roll out use of eCargo bikes with Council teams, local businesses and partners.	<p>£136k funding received in May 2020 following a successful bid to the Energy Savings Trust to trial 25 eCargo bikes and 5 eTrailers with local businesses and organisations.</p> <p>Procurement exercise undertaken and all eCargo bikes and eTrailers received by December 2020.</p>

	<p>55 members of staff and the community trained to Bikeability level 3, a requirement of the grant for all eCargo bike users.</p> <p>13 eCargo bikes and etrailers handed over to 10 local eCargo Bike Champions on long term loan for carrying out their business/operations by November 2020. In exchange they provide CBC with monthly monitoring feedback and assistance with marketing and publicity.</p> <p>6 eCargo bikes and 3 eTrailers available for use by CBC staff.</p> <p>An eCargo bike and trailer is available at both Highwoods Country Park and Castle Park. Volunteers and staff at Highwoods Country Park and Castle Park were inducted in use of their eCargo Bike and eTrailer but regular usage of the bikes has been low due to the pandemic restrictions limiting volunteer work.</p> <p>Climate, Transport and Sustainability team have been using the other eCargo bikes and discussing with other CBC teams how the bikes could be used in their work.</p> <p>Preparations completed for enabling short term loans to local businesses of the 6 'general pool' eCargo bikes. Launched in November 2020 but actual loan outs delayed due to Covid lockdown as Bikeability training was put on hold.</p> <p>Project with the Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID) is being progressed to have two eCargo bikes available for town centre businesses and CBC staff to use on an as and when needed basis.</p> <p>3428 miles have been completed by CBC staff and our project Champions by eCargo Bike/Trailer in Colchester to end of March 2021.</p>
<p>Model the Council's carbon footprint in detail and develop a detailed Carbon Management Plan to 2030.</p>	<p>Scope 1, 2 and 3 footprint analysis undertaken in collaboration with the Carbon Trust.</p> <p>The carbon footprint has been identified and yearly monitoring of direct emissions in place with a current downward trend.</p> <p>Identification of key 'step change' projects awaiting project development and funding, whilst other projects are rolling out across the capital programme.</p> <p>Detailed Carbon Management Plan for 2022-2027 brief to be developed.</p>

<p>Implement sustainable changes to waste and recycling collections that support improved staff wellbeing.</p>	<p><b>Material collection methods</b></p> <p>Textile collections were paused because of the pandemic and to enable the council's Recycling and Refuse service to focus its resources, time and capacity on collecting primary materials, such as residual and food waste. It also enabled us to review the textiles service and explore other opportunities. A new partnership has been developed with Essex Textiles, ensuring that we are best matching the service before the pandemic, the expectations of residents and demonstrates good value for money. Residents will experience little or no change from the pre-pandemic service, except for using additional blue bags, which will be collected every blue week. These blue bags will be delivered with the annual clear bag deliveries made in April, before Essex Textiles recommences the service with its own crews.</p> <p>As collection crews continue to keep up with the extra recycling that is being produced while everyone is at home more, residents are being asked to help the council's collections run smoothly by separating glass and cans into different boxes. This will be required from 1 June 2021. Residents can use a second green box or a similar sized box of their own, as long as it's not cardboard. A communication and engagement campaign is underway.</p>
<p>Commence construction of the Northern Gateway Heat Network.</p>	<p>The 5 Boreholes were completed and successfully tested in 2020.</p> <p>Heat network pipes and chambers linking the boreholes was constructed from July to October 2020 and more will be completed in 2021.</p> <p>Planning permission was obtained for the energy centre.</p> <p>The procurement exercise for the Energy Centre was opened and bids will be evaluated in 2021 to start construction of the Energy Centre.</p>
<p><b>Creating safe, healthy and active communities:</b></p> <p>Build on community strengths and assets</p> <p>Tackle the causes of inequality and support our most vulnerable people</p> <p>Provide opportunities for young people</p> <p><b><i>During 2020/21 we will</i></b></p>	

Build on community strengths and assets	
Goal	Achievements
Take an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Approach and work alongside communities to build a borough where people are more empowered, self-sufficient, healthy, active, happy and doing what they enjoy.	<p>Covid19 response included community led approaches across the borough supporting most vulnerable with food deliveries, medicines and befriending schemes.</p> <p>Successful 'One Colchester' approach to Winter Resilience through coldest months.</p> <p>New 'One Colchester' Community Hub being finalised.</p> <p>'One Colchester' partnership working together across all sectors including voluntary and community sector to support and keep people safe.</p> <p>A range of initiatives and community led activities underway across the borough featured in priorities linked to climate change and biodiversity.</p> <p>Stanway Parish Council taking ownership of new Community Facility and agreed land transfer of open spaces.</p> <p>One Colchester, Communities Can, approach going through governance Spring 2021 and planned launch in summer to link to ABCD awareness and training rolled out across Council and partners.</p>
Encourage belonging, involvement and responsibility in all Colchester's communities and neighbourhoods.	<p>One Colchester Commissioned Asset Mapping completed, and refresh planned for every 6 months. Data will be used to inform the systems work.</p> <p>Phase 2 of the Anglian Ruskin University qualitative research is underway to follow up and understand impacts of Covid19 on Community Assets and their members.</p> <p>Awareness and training of ABCD delivered across system and more planned.</p> <p>New strategic approach agreed through 'One Colchester' in development to encourage ABDC across the whole system.'</p> <p>A huge range of initiatives and asset transfers underway to support more local control and ownership.</p>

Work with our partners to make volunteering and community involvement as easy as possible.	Thousands of additional volunteers engaged and supporting communities throughout the last 12 months, many specifically supporting the most vulnerable during Covid19 pandemic.  'One Colchester' approach led by Community 360 (C360) to recruit and support volunteers across the Borough. This has created new opportunities and simple mechanisms for recruitment.
Maximise developer contributions (such as Section 106) and other funding mechanisms to help fund community infrastructure.	Active engagement carried out with community groups, voluntary groups and Town and Parish Councils, to agree a S106 project plan for each ward, in preparation for receipt of S106 developer contributions.
<b>Tackle the causes of inequality and support our most vulnerable people</b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b><i>Achievements</i></b>
Work alongside Public Health to take steps that mitigate Covid-19 infection risks and control outbreaks across the population.	<p>'One Colchester' system approach to outbreak control led to successful and joined up approach maximising the resources. This included working with Colchester Business Improvement District, University, Parish and Town Councils, Police, Health Colleagues, Voluntary Sector and many others.</p> <p>Clear Guidance uploaded to Council Website. Legislation and interpretation shared with businesses. New outbreak plan to be released in April 2021</p> <p>Letters updating all businesses with legislation changes sent 8 times since March in relation to government control.</p> <p>Over 2,900 complaints in relation to non-compliance, resulting in nearly 800 investigations.</p> <p>Over 1,000 requests for advice responded to.</p> <p>Night-time and daytime visits undertaken weekly and over weekends. Including all sites. Renewed focus from 29 March 2021.</p> <p>Full Enforcement taken against 12 pub/restaurant. Including one business losing their licence</p>

<p>Support residents to do the things they enjoy doing to stay healthy, happy and physically active.</p>	<p>Community Response continues to support the most vulnerable and 'Community Response' Pack remains updated to share relevant information, advice and contacts.</p> <p>Use of the Local Development Pilot (LDP) and system partners at identify key areas of actions and invest in activity area to encourage inactive residents in the most deprived areas to become more active.</p> <p>Work with 'One Colchester' and continue to lead the 'Alliance Be Well' domain so issue is covered by a system solution.</p> <p>Regular collaboration with Town and Parish Clerks.</p> <p>Provision of beautiful, safe open spaces and play areas across the Borough.</p> <p>Encourage active lifestyles and continued working with communities and partners to improve access to walking, cycling and open spaces.</p>
<p>Enable access and involvement in community green space, countryside sites, sport, and leisure facilities.</p>	<p>Preparation has been taking place to open the new Northern Gateway Sports Park for opening on 26 April at a reduced capacity, should government guidelines allow. Residents and visitors will be able to purchase memberships, explore the site, breath in the open green spaces and enjoy a take-away coffee.</p> <p>Our 'soft launch' marketing campaign is underway and we're encouraging residents to follow our social media accounts. Growing our social media following will underpin future marketing plans. Paid for advertisement will be complimenting the social media pages, including digital and radio. Two press releases are scheduled ahead of opening. Should government guidelines allow, we hope to fully open the Northern Gateway Sports Park in June. This will be celebrated with an open day and a 'full launch' commercially driven marketing campaign.</p> <p>All green and open spaces have remained open. However, due to restrictions imposed, play parks and other outdoor activity areas were required to be closed during Covid lockdown. On the lifting of these restrictions, officers have put in place careful measures to ensure that these could be opened safely.</p> <p>Arrangements with volunteer and 'Friends' groups have been reviewed to ensure that they too have been Covid safe after the lifting of restrictions and these activities have now restarted.</p>

<p>Support people to live in healthy homes that meet their needs.</p>	<p>Continuation of the Senior Occupational Therapist in Housing Project in to 2020-2021.</p> <p>Introduction of the Fast-Track Disabled Facilities Grant to support Hospital Discharge and Admission Avoidance.</p> <p>A process &amp; form review is underway as part of the migration to the Assure system. Our go live for the new system has been delayed but is now currently planned for August/September 2021 and we hope to see efficiencies at this point.</p> <p>Process applications for licences for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO). 61 licences issued in Q1 and Q2 of 2020-2021. Total of 133 licences for HMOs issued in 2020-2021.</p> <p>Take a robust enforcement approach against owners of unlicensed Houses in Multiple Occupation. 2 Civil Penalty Final Notices issued in Q1 and Q2 of 2020-2021 against landlords of an unlicensed HMO totalling £40K. Total of 3 CPN Final Notices issued to value of £60K Civil Penalty Notices issued in 2020-2021 against landlords operating unlicensed HMOs. In addition, 4 Notices of Intent to issue a CPN served in 2020-2021 to the value of £48K, likely to be issued with Final Notices in 2021-2022.</p> <p>Investigate complaints of housing conditions and take appropriate enforcement action to remove serious housing hazards. 134 visits/inspections/assessments completed in Q1 and Q2 of 2020-2021. Total of 344 visits/inspections and assessments completed in 2020-2021 reduced from previous years due to different ways of working due to pandemic.</p> <p>94 dwellings improved in Q1 and Q2. Total of 179 dwellings improved by the work of the Private Sector Housing Team in 2020-2021</p> <p>63 serious housing hazards removed in Q1 and Q2. Total of 220 serious housing hazards removed by the work of the Private Sector Housing Team in 2020-2021</p> <p>2 Prohibition Orders served in 2020-2021 for homes/parts of homes unsuitable to be lived in.</p> <p>5 Improvement Notices served under Housing Act 2004 in 2020-2021</p> <p>2 Abatement Notices served under Environmental Protection Act 1990 in 2021-2021 with works carried out in default of owner on 1 property.</p>
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	<p>Unfortunately, 3 prosecution cases withdrawn as no longer appropriate to pursue, due to delays with court system caused by pandemic. But 1 simple caution issued.</p> <p>Promote awareness and collaborative working with partners across the wider system to ensure residents are supported and to ensure that housing is considered as a wider determinant of health. Training session arranged with Citizens' Advice for Q3. Meeting arranged with ECC Social Care Q3.</p> <p>Awareness sessions held with wide range of organisations including Essex University Law Clinic, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, Community 360 (C360) various teams, Green Doctor Service, CBC and CBH teams including Benefits and Development Control.</p> <p>To seek out opportunities for alternative funding to increase resource within the team. Where resources allow, take a proactive enforcement approach to legislation that safeguards people living in the private rented sector. Including:</p> <p>The requirement to belong to a property management redress scheme. 3 Notices of Intent and 2 Final Notices served in Q1 and Q2 of 2020-2021</p> <p>Total of 7 Notices of Intent issued in 2020-2021 with 1 Final Notice being cancelled as company liquidated and one upheld at Appeal. £5K income</p> <p>Electrical Safety Regulations</p> <p>No progress to date in this area, but planned for Q1 of 2021-2022</p> <p>A project to tackle excess cold in rented homes</p> <p>Unable to undertake this project in 2020-21 due to lack of resources</p> <p>A project with Essex Fire Service to ensure the safety of dwellings above high risk commercial units</p> <p>Project in planning stage - looking at potential funding opportunities to provide additional staff resource for this.</p>
Supporting the most vulnerable residents through our One Colchester partnership.	<p>Collaborating with 'One Colchester' partners such as Community360, Colchester Borough Homes, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Age Concern, to co-design and co-produce projects to support our most vulnerable residents such as winter warmth project 2020-2021</p> <p>Building trusted, open and transparent relationships with community leaders from diverse communities such as our black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) and Faith communities.</p> <p>Engaging with these community groups through listening events and regular dialogue. Co-</p>

	<p>production of initiatives to support those most in need (1) Older persons activity packs - encouraging activities in the home and providing awareness around falls prevention (2) Activity packs and food parcels for younger people - encouraging physical activity and healthy eating during the school holidays.</p> <p>The use of external funding to support our most vulnerable residents – through the Local Delivery Pilot (LDP), North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)</p> <p>Safer Colchester website updated to include information on Covid-19 related issues, alongside information on staying safe, hidden harms (such as domestic abuse), hate crime and anti-social behaviour.</p>
<b>Provide opportunities for young people</b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b><i>Achievements</i></b>
Provide positive opportunities for young people to engage with their local community and do things that interests them, keeps them safe, makes them happy and supports improved mental wellbeing.	<p>Youth Zone has been included in the Towns Fund programme which has awarded the Borough £18.2m for a range of projects.</p> <p>Covid19 has brought about unexpected financial challenges for the Borough Council and while our ambition and the Towns Fund provides hope and determination to still deliver a Youth Zone finding a suitable location and securing commitment from other Public Sector partners including ECC to the annual £400k revenue commitment is critical over the next 6 months.</p>
Support the creation of strong, safe, and friendly communities that care about each other.	<p>Design, production and updating of the Community Response Pack and Residents Contact Pack.</p> <p>Ensuring Town and Parish Councils are engaged and supported through regular engagement, contact and involvement in local decision-making processes.</p> <p>Re-launch of the Rural Crime Toolkit and Rural Community Safety Fund to provide communities with ideas, information, support and funding to make their neighbourhood a better place to live.</p>

	<p>Re-launch of Keep Safe for Colchester; a free scheme helping vulnerable residents to feel safer and more confident out in the town.</p> <p>For 2020 in light of COVID pandemic and home-schooling, Virtual Crew was replaced by an online support page (located on the Safer Colchester website) for children and young people. This included information and support relating to Gangs &amp; Knife Crime, Internet Safety, Bullying / Online Grooming &amp; Anti-Social Behaviour. There is an ongoing review of Virtual Crew in order to launch a revised scheme for 2021.</p>
Work with Essex Police, Colchester Borough Homes, Essex Youth Service and other partners to reduce anti-social behaviour and tackle serious crime.	<p>Working together through the Multi Agency Coordination Panel (MACP) partners have targeted individual criminals and used their combined powers to disrupt the criminal in addition to the criminality. This approach has seen one Organised Crime Group archived. Emerging groups are under review on a bi-monthly basis.</p> <p>Closures/partial closures have been conducted by CBH to tackle drugs and anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO's) to tackle anti-social behaviour in the Town Centre, including Car Parks and outlying areas such as East Bay, have all been extended in 2020 for a period of 3 years.</p> <p>Working alongside Violence and Vulnerability Unit (VVU) to establish projects to improve designated areas for the residents, bringing about longer-term benefits, reducing their likelihood of becoming serious violence offenders and thereby reducing serious violence.</p>
Work alongside our partners to improve cleanliness and community safety in the town centre.	<p>Town Centre Action Plan (TCAP) partnership meetings held weekly to continue to discuss individuals causing (or vulnerable to) anti-social behaviour, hotspots and problem solve issues. New Action Plan produced May 2020 to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of activity.</p> <p>Joint working with the Police and the Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID) to help businesses safely re-open within Covid-19 guidelines.</p>
Upgrade and extend the CCTV network to reach more places.	<p>CCTV infrastructure was installed on site between July 2020 and April 2021, with the project closure due in June 2021.</p>

	<p>The project started on time and remains on budget, with over 100km of cable installed, expanding the coverage from the town other parts of urban Colchester including the new Sports Park at the Northern Gateway.</p> <p>The first arrests were made with assistance from CCTV in the early weeks of deployment, with the improved picture quality being beneficial immediately.</p> <p>A number of non-working cameras were replaced with new cameras.</p>
<b><i>During 2020/21 we will</i></b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b><i>Achievements</i></b>
Fully support Public Health England's Covid-19 Outbreak Control Plans, specifically deploying Environmental Health Officer resources and working with Community360 to continue Shielding where necessary.	<p>Clear Guidance uploaded to website. Legislation and interpretation shared with businesses. Maintain throughout 2020 New outbreak plan to be released in April 2021</p> <p>Letters updating all businesses with legislation changes sent 8 times since March 2020.</p> <p>Over 2,900 complaints of non-compliance, resulting in nearly 800 investigations.</p> <p>Over 1,000 requests for advice responded to.</p> <p>Night-time and daytime visits undertaken weekly and over weekends. Including all sites. Renewed focus from 29 March 2021.</p> <p>Full Enforcement taken against 12 pub/restaurant. Including one business losing their licence</p>
Facilitate ABCD sessions and awareness within communities, system leaders and members to discover and connect the assets that exist and are mobilised within neighbourhoods.	As per above training and awareness has commenced at the Senior and Leadership level and will continue to roll out further in line with the new Communities Can.... approach from Summer 2021 across CBC and other system partners.
Coproduce investment proposals and deliver interventions that support our vulnerable residents to be more	Continue to support community groups with the co-production of applications for funding and identify possible opportunities for improvement in the most deprived areas.

physically active through the Essex Local Delivery Pilot.	
Deliver the new Stanway Community Facility for the benefit of the local community.	Long lease proposal agreed by CBC Cabinet and Stanway Parish Council. CBC Estates team drafting the terms of lease.
Work with partners to support victims of domestic violence.	<p>£500K funding secured (by CBC as Lead Authority) from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to support Recovery Refuge, Community based support and Resettlement programme, specialist support for children/young people affected by domestic abuse, and review/implement new housing interventions for the period April 2020 – March 2021.</p> <p>Both CBC and Safer Colchester Partnership websites Domestic Abuse information updated on a regular basis.</p> <p>Internal front-line staff and Designated Safeguarding Officers encouraged to complete a Domestic Abuse E-learning Course (also shared with partner organisations including churches and faith groups).</p> <p>Alpha Vesta online workshops (funded by the Police Fire Crime Commissioner) promoted internally, completed by Community Safety Team and promoted to members of Community Safety Delivery Board.</p>
Work in partnership with Essex County Council to support vulnerable people to live in homes that promote independence and wellbeing.	<p>Continued engagement with Essex Well Homes Group to share good practice.</p> <p>Developing the Senior Occupational Therapist in Housing role.</p> <p>Integration of the Health and Housing Partnership into all council services.</p> <p>Scoping options with ECC to work collaboratively to ensure that private and social rented homes used for Supported Living Schemes and similar schemes are appropriately assessed before being used and free from serious housing hazards.</p>
<b>Delivering homes for people who need them:</b> Increase the number, quality and types of homes Prevent households from experiencing homelessness	

<p>Create new communities and adopt a new Local Plan that delivers jobs, homes and the infrastructure to meet the borough's future needs</p> <p><b><i>During 2020/21 we will</i></b></p>	
<p><b>Increase the number, quality and types of homes</b></p>	
Goal	Achievements
<p>Deliver 30% affordable housing across all our mixed tenure housing sites.</p>	<p>Work started on site on the first housing site in July 2020 and will deliver the first homes for beneficial use in April/May 2021.</p> <p>Contracts have been signed to retain 2 properties for affordable homes owned within the Councils Housing Revenue Account (HRA) upon completion.</p> <p>Offers have been accepted on the first 3 private sale homes built by the companies.</p> <p>Highway issues have been resolved at the Northern Gateway South site and the 350 homes here will continue to progress in 2021-2022.</p> <p>Exploration of 2 new sites has been agreed at Cabinet in March 2021, with up to 190 homes being explored at Vineyard Gate and Britannia Car Park.</p>
<p>Deliver 380 affordable council and housing association homes by 2023.</p>	<p>In 2020-2021, 101 affordable homes were delivered in Colchester, which included 59 homes purchased by the Council. The remaining 42 homes were delivered by housing associations.</p>
<p>Improve existing Council homes to keep them in good repair and improve energy efficiency.</p>	<p>The Housing Improvement Programme has slowed during the pandemic due to the nature of the work (being in people's homes). Safe working practices have been put in place for various works including where tenants may be more vulnerable.</p> <p>Works are continuously reviewed and regularly reprogrammed to attempt to catch up as restrictions reduce. The programme was on track prior to lockdown 1, and will be caught up as soon as practical to do so.</p>

	<p>A review of the current Asset Management Strategy has commenced and will be completed by the end of summer 2021, following consultation with tenants and leaseholders. This will help to inform future viability and prioritisation of work for the Councils Housing Stock.</p>
<p>Deliver new low/zero carbon Council homes for our residents.</p>	<p>Construction of 24 new Council homes started in 2020-2021 and these are being built to “Future Homes 2025” principles making them the most energy efficient homes that the Council has built to date.</p> <p>£4.5m of “Climate Emergency Response Works” were agreed at Cabinet in July 2020 and this extra investment will increase the EPC ratings of our most inefficient, older, homes and help tackle fuel poverty and inequality.</p> <p>The “100 homes” project to acquire 100 additional council homes included work to improve the energy performance of the homes.</p>
<p>Ensure all new homes delivered by the Council are designed to a high quality across all tenures.</p>	<p>As above, the current collection of new homes will be the most energy efficient homes we have constructed as a Council and this will be furthered with the next forthcoming projects in the various programmes. The HRA Homes are built to “Future Homes 2025” principles ahead of this being mainstream practice. They have no gas boilers and are using air source heat and other energy efficiency measures.</p> <p>Accessibility is also being prioritised. There are several Part M Category 2 properties, with features such as level access showers. Fully adapted properties will be in “Phase 3” of the Garages Sites now being explored.</p>
<p>Continue to improve and modernise Council owned housing for older people.</p>	<p>Elfreda House is now empty and ready for demolition. Existing tenants were successfully moved/re-homed with good relationships and communications maintained throughout. The building was used during 2020 as part of the ‘everyone in’ scheme for housing rough sleepers during the pandemic. The contract for works, to demolish and re-build, is about to be awarded and construction will then commence with the successful contractor.</p> <p>Further work on the next phases of the sheltered housing review agreed by Cabinet in July 2020 is underway, this will prioritise a pipeline for the next decade. The Asset Management review taking place in 2021 mentioned previously, alongside a new HRA Business Plan, will</p>

	reflect the current new build and improvement programmes ensuring that they are affordable and viable.
<b>Prevent households from experiencing homelessness</b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b><i>Achievements</i></b>
Work with partners to implement the 2020-2025 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy delivery plan.	The actions in the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Delivery Plan are being implemented. A review meeting with partner organisations has been set up to capture the achievements over the first year of the Strategy. The updated Delivery Plan and Progress report will be published on the Colchester Borough Council website.
Intervene early to prevent homelessness and work in partnership with other organisations to sustain people's accommodation.	From April 2020 to the end of March 2021 homelessness was prevented for 187 households and during the same period 136 households were assisted into accommodation under the relief duty.
Tackle rough sleeping in the borough.	<p>From April 2020 to the end of March 2021 the Rough Sleeping Team have worked with 161 people who have been provided with support, advice and assistance.</p> <p>During the same period, 101 rough sleepers or those at risk of sleeping rough have been accommodated in the private rented sector, supported housing, social housing or reconnected back to locations where they have a local connection and support networks. These figures include people that have been provided with emergency accommodation during the Covid 19 public health emergency. CBC and CBH were supported by partner organisations who provided additional support, health services and food for rough sleepers whilst they were living in the emergency accommodation.</p> <p>The specialist supported housing for rough sleepers, based on "Housing First" principles and funded by Colchester Borough Council, continues to provide housing and support to rough sleepers so that they do not return to the streets.</p> <p>In addition to the £119,429 revenue funding from the Government's Next Steps Accommodation Pathway (NSAP), Colchester Borough Council, in partnership with Peabody (a</p>



	housing association), successfully bid and were awarded £315,192 capital and revenue funding as part of the same programme, to provide longer term supported accommodation for rough sleepers.
<b>Create new communities and adopt a new Local Plan that delivers jobs, homes and the infrastructure to meet the borough's future needs</b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Achievements</b>
Create a Development Plan Document for Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community to include zero carbon emissions in the community development and green procurement.	Joint work has commenced with Tendring District Council. Initial stage will review and update evidence base. Link road progressing under Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) and planning application submitted. Engagement website launched and a number of consultations have taken place with Wivenhoe Town Council and a Parish Council group.
Establish a Delivery Vehicle and investment package for the next phase of the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community.	Members from the three Authorities have met and confirmed their commitment to achieving the principles of Garden Communities for this particular site as well as confirming the intent to resource the work necessary. Governance arrangements, programme and resource implications continue to be developed.
Develop the Colchester Northern Gateway as a sustainable place to live, work and play.	<p>The Sports Park was completed in November 2020 and will now open on 26 April 2021 as it was subject to Covid restrictions. Highway works have improved walking and cycling with 2 new cycleways along Boxted Road and Severalls lane, as well as dedicated crossings over Junction 28 of the A12 roundabout/slip roads.</p> <p>The Walk commenced in July 2020 and "Phase 1" completed in October as planned. "Phase 2" starts in April 2021 will be completed in the summer. This provides an attractive, tree-lined, avenue dedicated to walking and cycling through the heart of the Northern Gateway connecting to existing communities.</p> <p>The Heat Network was successfully tested, with construction of the pipes and chambers well advanced. A procurement exercise also commenced to appoint a contractor to build the Energy Centre in 2021.</p>

	Turnstone have gained a new planning permission reflecting changing markets and agreements between the Council and Turnstone were reviewed at Cabinet in March 2021 so that this development can proceed into construction phase.
Ensure the Council has a good supply of land available for new homes and business.	<p>Adopted Local Plan provides for housing land up to 2023 and adequate employment land.</p> <p>Emerging Local Plan will allocate sites to provide land for housing and employment up to 2033 and beyond</p> <p>Section 1 of the Local Plan adopted and Section 2 hearings scheduled for April 2021</p>
Create great places to live through the provision of new homes with infrastructure and facilities that support sustainable living and promote health and wellbeing.	<p>Progress is being made towards adoption of new Local Plan and several NP's have been adopted.</p> <p>Planning applications have continued to be determined and will deliver new homes and infrastructure.</p>
<b><i>During 2020/21 we will</i></b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b><i>Achievements</i></b>
Agree "Phase 2" sites for development by Amphora Homes and undertake feasibility and viability assessments.	Cabinet agreed to consult and engage on two chosen sites, at Vineyard Gate and Britannia Car Park, in March 2021. There has been some early feasibility work on these sites, and architects have been appointed. The 2 sites could deliver approximately 190 homes, as well as playing a key part of the recovery and transformation of the town centre through sustainable, liveable neighbourhoods.
Adopt section One of the Local Plan.	Section 1 of the Local Plan was adopted on 1 February 2021.
Deliver the first mixed tenure housing site built by the Council at Creffield Road.	Construction started in July 2020 and progresses has remained on time and budget with completion due in April 2021. The Council and Amphora have exchanged legal documents to secure the retention of 2 Council owned homes. Amphora have accepted three offers on the private market homes, all of which are proceeding at the end of year. This demonstrates a

	smooth and well managed, high quality development, that was well-received in planning and construction phases and is now proving attractive to the market as it nears completion.
Deliver 100% Council homes at Military Road (8 homes).	Planning permission was obtained, and a procurement exercise has completed. Construction started in January 2021 and completes at the start of 2022.
Deliver up to 16 new Council homes on the Council's garage sites.	<p>Work commenced on the first site at Hardings Close (Aldham) in September 2020 and these will be available at the end of May 2021.</p> <p>The other 2 sites, at Buffett Way and Scarfe Way have been tendered, a contract awarded and work commenced on site in January 2021.</p> <p>All 16 homes will be ready in 2021 to benefit families on the local housing needs register.</p>
Increase the supply of affordable housing by purchasing 100 former council owned homes by 31 March 2022.	In 2020-2021, a total of 25 properties were purchased and became part of the Council's housing stock and will be let at social rents. A further 21 homes are in the process of being purchased. We are on track to buy 100 homes by the end of March 2022.
Accelerate construction on Council projects to enable recovery from Covid-19.	<p>Following market engagement, the construction contracts for 8 construction projects were accelerated during the initial lockdown and, brought forwards steadily spaced to provide tender opportunities and protect/create local employment. This included housebuilding and broadband/CCTV, as well as "The Walk". Response rates were good, with strong local interest resulting in the award of several contracts to local businesses employing Colchester people.</p> <p>More construction contracts were then rolled out in the later lockdown period, including within the Housing Investment Programme (HIP), the Energy Centre, Poolview, and others.</p> <p>A social value scoring system was introduced, which requires local economic benefits, such as labour and materials, to be included by bidders. In addition, the Council sought lists of local businesses before contracts were issued and notified them how to register interest in upcoming contracts and that opportunities would emerge so that they were aware, without prejudicing the fair and competitive bidding process.</p>
<b>Growing a better economy so everyone benefits:</b> Enable Economic Recovery from Covid-19 ensuring all residents benefit from growth	

<p>Work with partners to deliver a shared vision for a vibrant town</p> <p>Create an environment that attracts inward investment to Colchester and help businesses to flourish</p> <p><b><i>During 2020/21 we will</i></b></p>	
<p><b>Enable Economic Recovery from Covid-19 ensuring all residents benefit from growth</b></p>	
Goal	Achievements
Ensure our borough becomes stronger post Covid-19 by supporting businesses to recover, adapt and build resilience.	A significant level of direct and indirect advice, support and emergency grants were provided to local businesses to support them through the pandemic. This includes an enhanced and tailored business support and advice offer, delivered by Colchester Business Enterprise Agency (Colbea), enabled through CBC funding.
Work with partners to facilitate a high skill, high wage, low carbon workforce.	CBC has maintained ongoing engagement with Partners including South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP, Colchester Institute, University of Essex, and Essex County Council to encourage and promote skills training and upskilling of the existing and new workforce. This includes for example signposting digital skills training, to help local people act to the changing economy. Several other initiatives to help local talent retention and stimulating the tech sector of the economy have moved forward this year – including additional investments (including part of the Town Deal) and work towards a business case for a new Care Tech hub in North Essex.
Develop opportunities to ensure the new economy is greener, sustainable and more resilient.	The Town Deal coupled with wider investment such as DfT's 'Emergency Access Travel Fund' include significant investment into Colchester for initiatives encouraging adoption of active and sustainable travel modes. These include new high-quality cycleways, liveable neighbourhoods, and new high-quality public realm, which are being planned now. New working space is being built and more explored; to help local people in the knowledge economy work locally after the pandemic, rather than out-commuting to distant offices, reducing travel and thus pollution.
Work with our partners to enable Colchester town centre to be a more vibrant, resilient and adaptable to future change.	Collaboration with the BID and other partners including Essex County Council has been strengthened through the pandemic. Town Deal accelerated £1m investment secured is enabling delivery of targeted public realm projects which will enable Colchester to be a more vibrant town centre; these are now moving into delivery phase.
Transform the Northern Gateway as a hub for improved wellbeing, physical	The Sports Park completed in November 2020 and opens on 26 April 2021. The Walk commenced in July 2020 and completes in Summer 2021. CNG South will commence

activity, jobs, housing and renewable energy.	construction in early 2022. Turnstone is also agreed and will move into construction phase, whilst the Energy Centre will also commence in 2021 and is currently progressing through the tender process to award a contract for this built (with the pipework and chambers already installed in 2020)
Address the inequality of access to Gigabit Broadband in communities.	<p>Over 100km of broadband cabling has been delivered in 2020-2021. There is now a direct link from London to Colchester and the Metronet has commenced development.</p> <p>Broadband deployment works started in July 2020 and will complete mid-2021.</p> <p>The High Street works were coordinated with ECC and deployed early, before the town centre “re-opened”, in order to allow the pavement repairs to follow on with minimal disruption to the re-opening town centre businesses.</p> <p>The Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) Project has led to over £10m of private investment being secured from VX Fiber who have also started deploying ultrafast broadband into our most deprived wards using our new network and parts of Council owned sites for equipment. These areas would otherwise not be provided for by the open market for many years.</p> <p>Other opportunities are beginning to emerge as this innovative project becomes more recognised within the telecoms industry, putting Colchester on the map.</p>
Tackle local skills shortages working with businesses, University of Essex, Colchester Institute and other partners.	Engagement has continued with Partners including SELEP, Colchester Institute, University of Essex, and Essex County Council to encourage and promote skills training and upskilling of the existing and new workforce. The Town Deal includes investment in digital hub(s) which will bring significantly expanded skills provision, upskilling the local workforce and helping them adapt to change, with more roles now requiring digital skills.
<b>Work with partners to deliver a shared vision for a vibrant town</b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b><i>Achievements</i></b>
Agree a Town Deal with partners and the Government to attract significant new investment.	On behalf of We Are Colchester (Town Deal) Board, our Town Investment Plan was submitted on 31 October 2020. This culminated in an £18.2m award to Colchester as part of the 3 March

	<p>2021 budget statement, bringing hope and cause for optimism in our communities and businesses, in an otherwise very difficult year.</p> <p>Furthermore, this new board, which was established and facilitated by CBC, has provided a strong and visible platform for investment; starting with, but not limited to Town Deal. Through this mechanism, CBC and partners will seek additional / catalyst funding to support all the projects identified in the TIP where possible, which may include a 'Levelling Up Fund' (LUF) application.</p>
Collaborate with the town centre Business Improvement District (BID).	Collaboration with the BID and other partners including Essex County Council has continued. This included a considerable amount of recovery work to re-open the town centre following government restrictions including funding for a number of projects. This work supported the re-openings and provided confidence in the town centre as a destination.
Continue to regenerate Colchester Town Centre using Council assets, aligned private investment, the Town Deal and Town Investment Plan.	Our Town Deal application led to Colchester securing £18.2 million of additional / catalyst funding for projects identified in the TIP. Additionally, SELEP Local Growth Fund (LGF) awarded £3.77m for the new Grow-on scheme at 43 Queen Street (former bus depot site).
<b>Create an environment that attracts inward investment to Colchester and help businesses to flourish</b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b><i>Achievements</i></b>
Ensure our strategy for inclusive economic growth supports the ambitions outlined in the North Essex Growth Strategy, the Local Industrial Strategy and our Town Deal.	The work on the Town Deal will inform the Colchester Economic Strategy (refresh is due later in 2021 once the new Strategic Economic Growth Manager is in post). This planned work will also respond to the growth ambitions of the North Essex Growth Strategy and the 'Economic Recovery & Renewal Strategy' (which has now superseded SELEP's Local Industrial Strategy), and adopted Local Plan Part 1.
Ensure a good supply of employment land and premises to attract new businesses and allow existing firms to expand and thrive.	<p>Up to date local plan in place that allocates sufficient land.</p> <p>Up to date local plan in place that contains policies to encourage economic growth.</p> <p>Approval of applications in line with policies adopting a flexible approach where necessary.</p>

	Temporary measures were introduced to facilitate businesses reopening in a COVID secure manner without needing permission. Flexible approach to enforcement to allow businesses to operate.
Encourage green technologies and innovative solutions to the Climate Emergency.	Council received funding for 25 electric cargo (eCargo) bikes and electric trailers from Energy Saving Trust to contribute to decarbonising the Council's fleet, as well as the fleets of ten local businesses.
Maximise the Social Value benefits derived from third party contracts.	From October 2020, the Council started issuing tenders using the Social Value framework developed by the SVP and tailored for Colchester. Given the time needed for submission of bids, evaluation and award of contracts before the period of work starts, it is anticipated that reporting on the delivered benefits will be available towards the end of 2021-2022.
Ensure the Council's assets continue to contribute to economic growth and opportunity. Develop a decarbonisation financial strategy and investment plan.	Work on the Asset Management Strategy is progressing. There are a number of projects that have emerged during 2020/21 and will emerge in 2021-2022 for Council-owned sites, including Rowan House, Vineyard gate, Britannia cark, Leisureworld, several Northern Gateway sites, and others to follow.
<b><i>During 2020/21 we will</i></b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b><i>Achievements</i></b>
Develop and agree the Council's Economic Recovery plan.	The Council's full Recovery Plan has been developed and implemented. It was pre-scrutinised by the Scrutiny Panel at the meeting in August where no major changes were identified. The plan was approved by Cabinet on 2 September 2020 and the plan monitored on a regular basis. Alongside many other actions that support economic recovery from Covid 19, our successful Town Deal award of £18.2M in March 2021 (plus £1M of additional accelerated funding) forms a major part of the economic 'cell' of the plan (see below).

Agree the Town Deal bid and Town Investment Plan (TIP) submission with partners.	Town Deal – Town Investment Plan was submitted 31 October 2020. This has led to Colchester securing £18.2 million of additional / catalyst funding for projects identified in the TIP.
Deliver the Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) project.	As above, commenced in July 2020 and has the first customers connected. Roll out continues into mid-2021.
Work in partnership to support our Business Improvement District (BID).	More extensive and effective collaboration and engagement than before has been done this year, working with the BID and other partners including Essex County Council and SELEP to ensure effective and joined-up working on initiatives to boost business, the town centre and smaller economic centres in the Borough.
Providing enhanced support to businesses through Covid-19 working with business networks to direct appropriate interventions.	Extensive, effective, and well-targeted direct and indirect support to business has been provided by CBC to help build resilience. This includes CBC providing funding to Colbea to provide additional and tailored advice.
Commence 'The Walk' and provide the attractive main pedestrian and cycle boulevard through Northern Gateway South.	As above, commenced in July and continues on time and in budget.
Complete and open Colchester Northern Gateway Sports Park.	As above. Completed November 2020 but the opening has been delayed by national Covid restriction and will now open on 26 April 2021.

<b>Celebrating our heritage and culture:</b> Agree and implement a new Cultural Strategy that supports our cultural assets Strengthen Colchester's tourism sector and welcome more visitors each year Protect, enhance and celebrate Colchester's unique heritage <i><b>During 2020/21 we will</b></i>	
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Agree and implement a new Cultural Strategy that supports our cultural assets	
Goal	Achievements
Work with partners to deliver a collaboration Cultural Vision and Ambitions for the borough with Delivery of Strategy in 2021-2022.	<p>This project was halted temporarily during the procurement phase in April 2020. The Council remained committed to the delivery of a Cultural Strategy for Colchester. However, the entire cultural and creative community in the Borough, from National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) to grassroots level, was and continues to be massively impacted by Covid, and faces ongoing challenges into the future. Therefore, the assumptions underpinning the original scope and the desired outcomes needed to be revisited with key local stakeholders and Arts Council England (ACE), as the major investors in culture in the Borough.</p> <p>Consultation with major stakeholders including Ace, Creative Colchester and the Colchester based National Portfolio Organisations, took place over autumn 2020 as planned.</p> <p>A revised brief and timeline was agreed and following a competitive tender process specialist consultants Counterculture were appointed at the end of March 2021. They will work with the Council and partners on the Strategy between April - October 2021 with an estimated final delivery date of November 2021.</p>
Agree the key milestones and investment necessary to deliver the strategy.	Budget and milestones agreed. See above. Investment Strategy resulting from the work will form part of future budget setting discussions.
Continue to provide sustainable grant funding to support Mercury Theatre, Firstsite and Colchester Arts Centre (CAC) and help the sector to adapt and recover from the impact of Covid-19.	<p>Three-year grant funding commitment agreed for 2020-2023.</p> <p>2020-2021 Strategic Arts Partner grants front loaded at the beginning of year in line with Arts Council England (ACE) to support organisations through Covid.</p> <p>Additional match funding committed to unlock Cultural Recovery Fund Kick Start funding for in train capital project at CAC. CAC subsequently received grant of £128, 182 from the Fund.</p>
Identify further opportunities to improve the cultural offer for residents and visitors.	Covid 19 has hugely impacted the cultural sector, severely disrupting normal operations for freelancers, organisations and businesses. At the onset of lockdown, the Creative Colchester Board and Project Group combined to meet online every two weeks (normally every 2 months), to provide additional representation and support for the sector. The relevant Director and PfhS from CBC Leadership attended to update representatives, signpost to grants, other funding and

	<p>listen to concerns. Meetings reverted to bi monthly in 2021, but replacing Project Group meetings with a regular public forum open to all those working in the creative sector.</p> <p>Grants for the Creative Events Fund were awarded in February 2020 for a wide range of activity across the arts and the Borough's communities. Due to Covid restrictions the majority did not take place in 2020, and grants have been held over until summer 2021 onwards. However, a number of projects were repurposed and delivered either online or in a socially distanced format, providing cultural opportunities for residents and financial support to arts practitioners and organisations during this challenging time.</p>
<b>Strengthen Colchester's tourism sector and welcome more visitors each year</b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b><i>Achievements</i></b>
Promote Colchester's heritage and visitor attractions to increase visitor numbers and to support jobs.	<p>2019-2020 saw the highest visitor numbers at the Castle since 2015 (a peak following the 2014) redevelopment), despite the museums closing in March due to COVID. The Castle and VIC reopened after lockdown on the 23 July (although the Natural History Museum and Hollytrees remain closed due to staffing and social distancing restrictions). They were amongst the first in the country to do so with even many nationals not reopening until late August and September. Prior to the second national lockdown, the Castle saw visitor numbers approach 70% of the previous year – far higher than the majority of like organisations that typically saw between 25% and 40% of pre-COVID visitor numbers. The display of the Turner masterpiece, 'Walton Bridges' in September helped sustain those numbers.</p> <p>The Natural History Museum reopened for October half-term thanks to funding from the Culture Recovery Fund. This grant (£84,500) has also allowed the service to develop a number of resources, notably in terms of fundraising to assist with the museums' recovery.</p> <p>School visitor numbers were very low although the service has responded by creating a digital Schools offer and 360 tour which is anticipated to be a useful legacy well into the future.</p> <p>Prior to the January lockdown, the Service was able to deliver a fully booked, and socially distanced Christmas grotto, attracting 1,227 children and parents.</p>
Expand the events programme to encourage more visitors and position	Events programmes were hugely disrupted by Covid. Most events had to be cancelled or postponed in 2020 although some were successfully managed with social distancing rules in

<p>Colchester as a destination for major events.</p>	<p>place in more permissive summer 2020 periods. This has been managed well and now re-commencement of weddings and events have had to be flexibly implemented with ever-changing safety advice.</p> <p>Events are now being booked for 2021 including Olly Murs in Castle Park, the Nearly Festival, Oktoberfest and other events all keen to return as soon as safely possible.</p> <p>The Women's Tour of Britain cycling event will take place in Colchester in October 2021 (and again in 2022). This will boost the town centre economy and provide social value, being a, internationally televised event with world and Olympic champions competing. Colchester's profile will benefit from such events.</p>
<p>Work with partners and the Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID) to improve the public realm for residents and visitors.</p>	<p>In focusing on recovery and reopening of the town centre, the Council and Our Colchester have worked closely with many partners (such as Essex County Council) and set up working groups across organisations.</p> <p>The Council collaborated with these partners on messages of information, reassurance and support to businesses, residents and visitors to the town centre. This has included promotional activities to support the reopening of the local economy, such as the launch of "Shop Local" in Colchester, a Facebook campaign promoting businesses that have remained open and/or changed their business model due to Covid-19 restrictions; digital messaging on social media and a digital 'Welcome Back Colchester' leaflet and printed distribution of that leaflet to around 45,000 urban households, within three miles of the town centre.</p> <p>The hashtag #WelcomeBackColchester has also been used on social media to highlight the steps being taken to make the town centre safe and to reassure people it is safe to come back to the High Street.</p> <p>In addition, the highways authority for Colchester (Essex County Council) have undertaken a 'Safer, Greener, Healthier' campaign across the County to support town centre recovery. In Colchester this has seen temporary measures such as increased cycle and footway widths, reduced speed limits and restrictions on vehicles that can access the High Street.</p>

Funding has been provided to the BID to support the installation of parklets at 5 locations in the High Street, providing additional space to the footway and outdoor seating areas. In addition, provides the opportunity for introducing trees and planting to this urban area.

Throughout the lockdown period, public conveniences have remained open and heightened cleaning regimes have taken place. Public enforcement has also continued to be carried out.

In partnership with Essex County Council, a comprehensive programme of joint replacement, slab replacement, deep cleaning and surface sealing has been undertaken on the full extent of the footways extending the length of the high street.

A competitive tender process has been undertaken and a new Christmas lighting scheme will be implemented this year.

Officers are working with the BID and other key stakeholders to undertake a tourism signage replacement programme.

Green Heritage award has been achieved for Castle Park.

To support Councils to help their local high streets get safely back to business, on 24th May, central Government announced a new fund. The aim of the funding was to enable the safe reopening of High Streets and other commercial areas, and to provide a safe trading environment for staff and shoppers. The focus of the funding was on the building of resilience and adaptability of traders in the context of the economic impact of Covid-19. Officers have worked with the BID, Wivenhoe, Tiptree, Mersea and Dedham Councils to develop action plans and identify the support required to open High Streets safely using this fund. It has contributed towards a Specialist Campaign Officer to deliver the plans, installation of signage, hand sanitisers, TV and social media adverts. More work is planned, particularly following the latest announcement of the extension of the fund.

The Town Deal Bid / Town Investment Plan incorporates improved public realm through specific projects within the Town Deal Boundary, in both the accelerated £1m phase (now in delivery), and the main award.

Improve the information available to Visitors through the launch of a new improved Website.	New <a href="http://www.visitcolchester.com">www.visitcolchester.com</a> website launched August 2020 with improved functionality (particularly for mobile devices) and content. Design includes extensive use of video recycled from the Colchester tourism ad and newly commissioned for the project.
<b>Protect, enhance and celebrate Colchester's unique heritage</b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Achievements</b>
Enhance and promote our heritage by better revealing our assets by supporting projects and initiatives to increase public awareness and access to their heritage in daily life.	<p>Structural works on the Roman Church have been completed and the monument is protected. A new interpretation panel has been produced and will be installed at the Roman Church in late May.</p> <p>Heritage Manager working with Civic Society to deliver appropriate commemoration for Capt Jones and Lt Pinto. A new interpretation panel has been produced and will be installed at St Botolph's Churchyard in late May. Further interpretation is being developed, initially for Capt Jones with that for Lt Pinto dependant on the future of Holy Trinity Church. The required consents will be sought shortly ( Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) and faculty).</p> <p>An interpretation panel on Priory street (Bastion 5) has been installed and the panel for the Balcerne Gate replaced</p> <p>An options appraisal of the Town to Port trail is in progress and will report shortly.</p> <p>The Heritage Manager/ Heritage officer delivered a digital programme for Heritage Open Days in 2020. 14,827 people were engaged online by 14 films (10 of which produced by the museum service) and 7 venues opened for socially distanced visits, including the Roman Circus Centre. The Castle also provided a special offer in lieu of the usual open day. Planning for HODs 2021 is well advanced, but dependant on the progress with managing Covid-19.</p>
Continue to deliver a major exhibition at Colchester Castle bi-annually.	Decoding the dead is a project supported by Arts Council Designation funding. The exhibition in the summer of 2021 is anticipated to feature the results of scientific analyses of early Roman remains in Colchester commissioned by the museums service in partnership with the University of Reading. Due to the associated human stories and scientific investigation the exhibition and other outputs (such as a 'FutureLearn' online course) should attract significant public and media interest. The Service is collaborating with the media company, 'History Hit' to further promote the exhibition through film and podcasts.

	It is anticipated that the display will assist in the recovery of Castle admissions, income and contribute to the wider Colchester economy through tourism.
Encourage and support the use of our Heritage sites for Community events, activities and theatre.	<p>The Castle team have worked hard to identify activities (new and existing) that can be hosted safely. The Escape room experience were reinstated in-between lockdowns and bespoke tours introduced including 'Dark Tours' for Halloween.</p> <p>With support from a grant from the Department for Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS) 'Culture Recovery Fund' the Natural History Museum reopened for October half-term before closing again for the November lockdown. A partnership has been established with Bernado's and Virgin Care and the Natural History Museum will now be a centre every Monday for the Essex Health and Wellbeing Service that provides an important parenting support service for the local community.</p> <p>C360 were awarded £14k from a successful grant application (in partnership with CBC) to Architectural Heritage Fund. This has enabled the first stages of feasibility work towards the development of a new Community Hub which also safeguards this Grade I listed building and opens up opportunities for heritage interpretation of the Anglo Saxon Tower, the oldest standing building in Colchester Town Centre. Town Deal will now be able to provide most, or all of the match funding needed to take this project to final delivery.</p>
<b><i>During 2020/21 we will</i></b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b><i>Achievements</i></b>
Develop and agree approach to delivering a new Cultural Strategy in collaboration with partners and commission work.	<p>Consultation with major stakeholders including Arts Council England, Creative Colchester and the Colchester based National Portfolio Organisations, took place over autumn 2020 as planned.</p> <p>A revised brief and timeline was agreed and following an open tender process specialist consultants Counterculture were appointed at the end of March 2021. They will work with the Council and partners on the Strategy between April - October 2021 with an estimated final delivery date of November 2021.</p>

Complete the Mercury Rising project.	Construction work is complete on this project, and it is processing throughout final sign off procedures, the theatre have moved back in and will re-open as soon as they can safely do so.
Deliver Decoding the Dead in Colchester.	<p>Decoding the Dead is externally funded helping to mitigate against the risk of delivering an exhibition at a time when social distancing may still be in effect. The exhibition will help to restore visitor figures and income to pre-COVID levels, subject to COVID related restrictions. Under normal circumstances a 10% increase would have been anticipated. The media friendly news stories generated by scientific analyses on ancient human remains should also have a legacy in improving the profile of the museum service. Collaborations with 'History Hit' and Dan Snow is expected to encourage physical visits as well as a digital reach of hundreds of thousands of people.</p> <p>The project will provide a blueprint for future collaborations with university partners.</p> <p>Digital outputs such as a 'Future Learn' course in partnership with the University of Reading should engage in access of 10,000 students internationally. The co-produced elements of the project will also better engage the community and assist in our objectives linked to Arts Council whose funding will continue to be critical to the service.</p>
Launch a new Visitor Website.	<p>Website launched August 2020 supported by a Google Ad words campaign. Despite very reduced activity on the old site during the initial Covid lockdown period, and traditional drivers of usage such as events and accommodation being severely curtailed by the crisis, rolling year statistics initially showed a 10.9% increase in users as at end Sept 2020 (representing an additional 34K users) driven by the improvements to the site and post lock down pent up demand. Unfortunately, the subsequent lockdowns with a ban on travel, the cancellation of events and the closure of accommodation, attractions and hospitality again slowed usage of the site drastically during autumn/winter 20/21. However, as at end of March 2021 usage is beginning to climb again (up 34% on the previous March) as lockdown restrictions ease and new planned content is added. This includes two new digital walking trails with historic themes, Roman Walls and The Siege Of Colchester which together were downloaded over 1,400 times between launch in mid-March and the end of the month.</p> <p>The official Visit Britain TXGB booking platform has been added to the site with recovery funding from VB and will go live in April 2021.</p>

Work to deliver a scheme redevelopment for Vineyard Gate car park to showcase the Town Wall and provide a welcoming arrival point for visitors to the historic town with interpretation and on-site presentation of surviving archaeology and heritage assets.	Very early (RIBA Stage 1) Feasibility work has commenced on this site, with Cabinet agreeing to progress work on a housing-led scheme to create a “liveable neighbourhood. Amphora Homes are leading this project through 2021 and architects Ash Sakula hve created a well-received concept scheme that restores the historic street pattern and creates a vibrant public space adjacent the town wall, with 70 homes and active ground floor uses.
Seek grant funding and implement schemes to enhance Balkerne Square and St Nicholas Square as new public spaces to showcase the adjacent assets.	£1m accelerated Town Deal funding has been secured, with these schemes now in community engagement and final design phase.



**Extract from the draft minutes of the Scrutiny Panel meeting of 20 July 2021**

**306. Year End April 2020 – March 2021 Report; 2020-23 Strategic Plan Action Plan**

The Panel considered a report providing details of progress in delivering against the Council's Strategic Plan for 2020-2023 at the end of 2020-2021. Richard Block, Assistant Director, Corporate and Improvement Services, introduced the report and emphasised that the report demonstrated an incredible amount of progress and delivery against all strategic plan priorities. There was considerable evidence of recovery from the Covid 19 pandemic. It was emphasised that the Action Plan reported on the priorities for the last municipal year, and priorities for the current year were dealt with elsewhere on the agenda.

A member of the Panel sought clarification on the breakdown of the figures for affordable homes delivered by the Council in 2020-21.

In discussion, a member of the Panel queried how far the Climate Emergency declaration was embedded in the Strategic Plan and Action Plan, citing that when he had tried to call in a Portfolio Holder decision on the purchase of caged tipper vehicles on the grounds that the vehicles being purchased were not sustainable electric vehicles, he had been advised that the decision was not contrary to the Strategic Plan Action Plan.

In response it was stressed that "Tackling the Climate Challenge and Leading Sustainability" was the first priority in the Strategic Plan and the report provided considerable detail of achievements which addressed that priority. In addition, there had been a number of factors that had influenced the decision on the purchase of the tipper vehicles, including that the purchase of electric vehicles would have required a significant capital investment in the depot at Shrub End, and there had been a long term commitment to the purchase of electric vehicles.

The Panel emphasised the importance of pressing ahead with projects supporting this priority, such as wilding, and delivering new initiatives such as the collection of film and plastics as recyclable material. The Panel considered that there was a need to focus in particular on the communication with residents on these issues. For example, some residents were unhappy with the policies on wilding and unmown areas and there was a need for clear communications to explain these policies so residents understood the reasons behind them. This should lead to increased buy in and support for such policies.

It was suggested that in line with the priority of Creating Safe Healthy and Active Communities, there would be merit in the Panel exploring the Council's policies and procedures on allotments as there seemed to be confusion as to the number of plots that were free. Allotments had proved to be a particularly valuable resource for

residents during lockdown. It was agreed that the that the Portfolio Holder should be invited to provide a response to the Panel on how the current allotment provision and policies aligned with Strategic Plan objectives of wellbeing. If the Panel had further queries, it could consider adding the issue to its work programme.

*RESOLVED that:--*

(a) The progress in delivering against the Council Strategic Plan at the end of 2020-21 be noted.

(b) The Portfolio Holder for Communities be invited to provide information to the Panel on how the current allotment provision and policies aligned with Strategic Plan objectives of wellbeing.

*RECOMMENDED to CABINET* that it raise the profile of communications on environmental and sustainability issues.

**1 September 2021**

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Assistant Director – Corporate and Improvement</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Richard Block</b> ☎ 506825
<b>Title</b>	<b>Year End April 2020 – March 2021 Performance Report Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and Other Performance News</b>		
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards		

## **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides details of performance against Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) for 2020 - 2021. The report also includes other performance news.

## **2. Recommended Decisions**

- 2.1 To review performance against Key Performance Indicators and where Key Performance Indicators have not been met that appropriate corrective action has been taken.

## **3. Reason for Recommended Decision**

- 3.1 To review year end performance for 2020 – 2021 and ensure robust performance management of key Council services.

## **4. Alternative Options**

- 4.1 No alternative options have been presented to Cabinet.

## 5. Background Information

- 5.1 The Council has agreed key performance indicators which it uses as part of its Performance Management Framework to help monitor progress and improvement. This report provides an update on the Council's Key Performance Indicators and a review of other performance achieved throughout the reporting period.
- 5.2 The report at Appendix A features an improved graphical presentation of year-to-date performance, previous year performance and targets.
- 5.3 At the year end point for April 2020 - March 2021, the overall position was that 6 targets were achieved (or 'green'), and 7 did not meet the target in full ('red').
- 5.4 Of the six KPIs that have been achieved ('green' KPI's), it is worth noting that some have been exceeded. This is particularly the case in relation to Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Scheme (KPI K1B1) where residents are receiving benefit after an average of four and three days processing time, respectively.
- 5.5 Targets for processing all types of Planning applications have been exceeded. Sickness levels have improved significantly at 5.28 days (this time last year the rate was 8.76 days).
- 5.6 Targets have not been met for seven indicators ('red' KPIs) due to impacts from the Covid-19 pandemic. These are:
- K1H1 Net Additional Homes Provided
  - K1H3 Full Homelessness Duty Owed
  - K1H4 Rent Collected
  - K1H5 Average time to re-let Council Homes
  - K1R2 Business Rates (NNDR) Collected
  - K1W1 Residual Household Waste per household
  - K1W2 Household Waste Reused, Recycled and Composted
- 5.7 Net additional homes provided has been severely impacted by the pandemic. The lockdown in March 2020 stalled housebuilding and figures for Q1 reflect this. Changes in construction methods because of the pandemic also meant delivery was slower than normal for the remainder of the year.
- 5.8 The Full Homelessness Duty Owed target should be treated with caution as there is no nationally recognised standard for measurement and no baseline data. The current measure shows those who have a full homelessness duty owed as a proportion of those who have had a personal housing plan. Analysis of the data suggested the current target was not realistically achievable. This KPI has been revised and a new more meaningful measure has been adopted for the current year.
- 5.9 Rent collection has been affected by removal of sanctions (eviction ban); increasing number of tenants claiming Universal Credit (around 1400) or living on reduced income and a small number of tenants who have high levels of arrears with collection being 1.17% lower than the previous year. Colchester

Borough Homes Approach to collection throughout the pandemic has been to “collect with care” providing significant support with benefit and money advice.

- 5.10 The average time to re-let Council Homes has also been affected by the pandemic. Performance affected by CBC main contractor for Empty properties furloughing staff during pandemic. Works continued through the CBH Direct labour team, however risk assessments, shielding staff, shortage of supplies (plaster, kitchens etc), delays with property clearance and tenant circumstances (Covid related) led to delays.
- 5.11 As expected, the collection for business rates is significantly below target and last year's figures. Several large businesses have fallen into administration and not all of those affected by the pandemic were eligible for government grants or relief. The team have focused on distributing grants rather than formal recovery of late or no payments.
- 5.12 Residual household waste significantly increased because of lockdowns. This increased the amount of residual waste that residents could present for collection. Since services have been restored, residents have continued, in general, to generate more residual waste than previous years. This is likely to be impacted by more residents working from and/or spending more time at home, in addition to the impact of non-essential shops being closed and online shopping being more prevalent.
- 5.13 Recycling KPI's have also been affected by lockdowns combined with additional safety measures introduced to protect staff. This resulted in the implementation of different collection policies and a pause on collecting some materials. This in turn also impacted the recycling rate in the earlier months of the financial year when the collection of paper, plastic and garden waste was paused. Since restarting the services, we have seen the recycling levels return to a similar level as previous years.
- 5.14 In addition to the performance described above, the Council has again received numerous awards and accreditations, and these are highlighted at the end of Appendix B.

## **6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications**

- 6.1 Robust performance management of key Council Services supports the aims of improving both services and the lives of everyone in the borough. Where required, specific Equality Impact Assessments will exist for policies and activities rather than for individual performance indicators or actions.

## **7. Strategic Plan References**

- 7.1 There are no references to the 2020 – 2023 Strategic Plan.

## **8. Consultation**

- 8.1 The report's contents do not have any direct implications regarding consultation.

## **9. Publicity Considerations**

- 9.1 The performance report contains measures for our key performance indicators. Many of these are used to monitor the performance of our services, and as such these may be of public interest. The report and related information are published on the Performance and Improvement section of the Council's website.

## **10. Financial implications**

- 10.1 The financial implications of the action plans to deliver the indicators form part of the budget setting process.

## **11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications**

- 11.1 Many of the KPI targets reported above ensure that Council Services that have a positive impact on Health and Wellbeing are delivered effectively.

## **12. Health and Safety Implications**

- 12.1 There are no direct health and safety implications associated with this report.

## **13. Risk Management Implications**

- 13.1 There are no direct risk management implications associated with this report.

## **14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications**

- 14.1 The KPI's relating to recycling and the levels of residual waste collected are the key indicators that contribute to Environment and Sustainability.

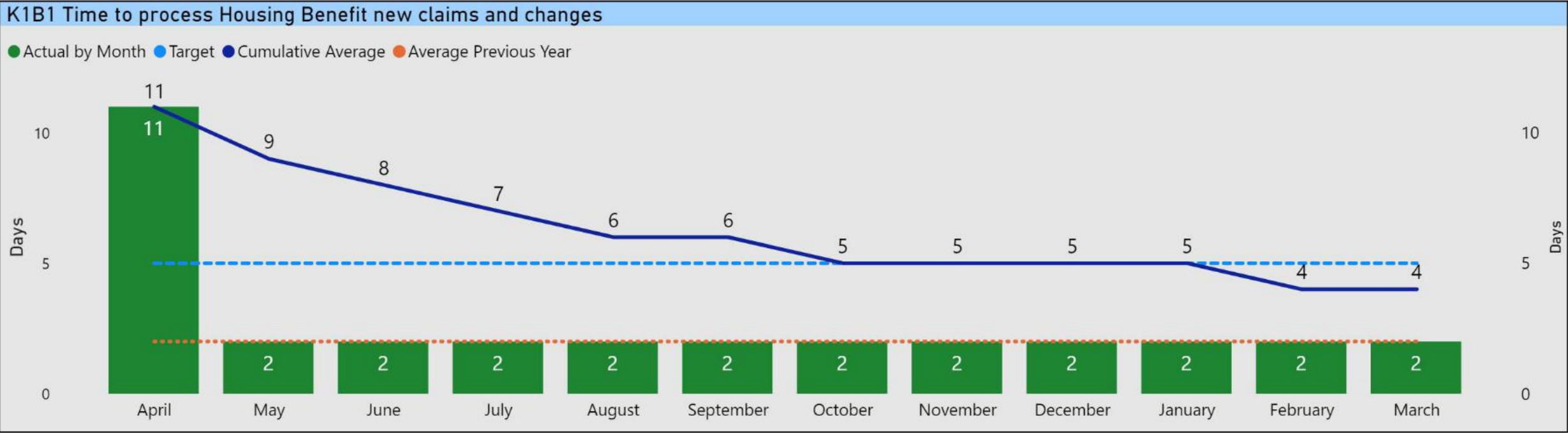
## **Appendices**

- A. [KPI Year End Report covering April 2020 – March 2021.](#)
- B. [Awards and Other Performance News covering April 2020 – March 2021.](#)

# Corporate Key Performance Indicators Year End Report April 2020 - March 2021

K1B1 Housing Benefit	→
K1B1 LCTS	→
K1H1 Additional Homes	→
K1H2 Affordable Homes	→
K1H3 Homelessness	→
K1H4 Rent Collected	→
K1H5 Re-lets	→
K1P1 Planning Apps (Majors)	→
K1P1 Planning Apps (Minors)	→
K1P1 Planning Apps (Others)	→
K1R1 Council Tax	→
K1R2 NNDR	→
K1R3 Sickness	→
K1W1 Residual Waste	→
K1W2 Recycled Waste	→
K1W3 % of Scheduled Collections Made	→





Cumulative Average against Target

4✓

Target: 5 March

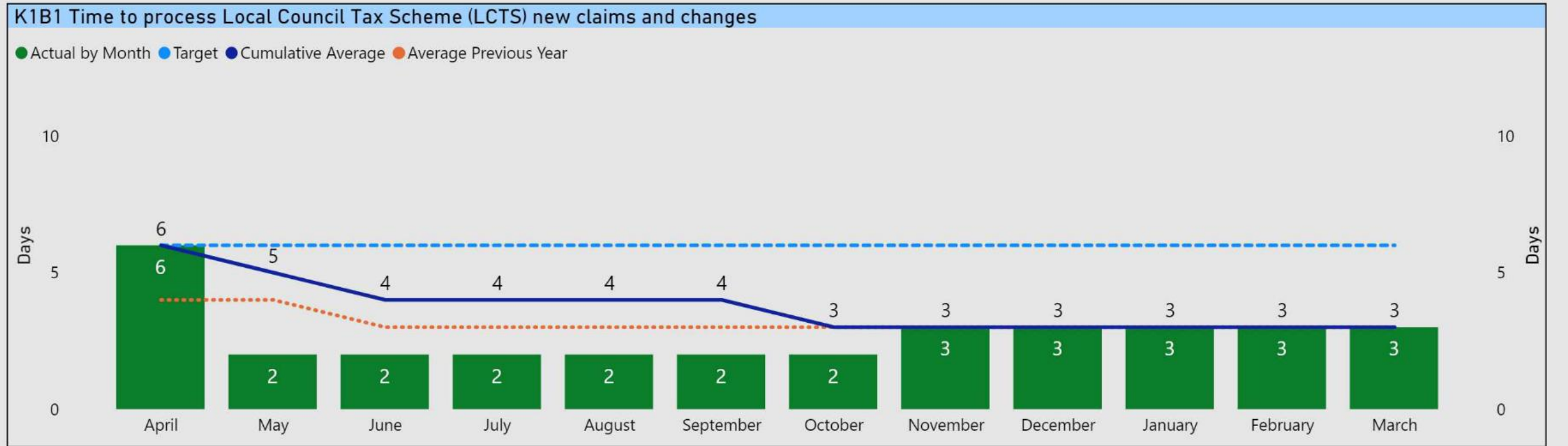
Supporting Narrative

The team has performed exceptionally well during the pandemic year exceeding the target for processing housing benefit applications and changes. Housing benefit has been awarded quickly to residents to help them with financial difficulties. The teams’ performance is ranked in the national top quartile and is the best in Essex.

Target 2021-2022

5





Cumulative Average against Target

3✓

Target: 6 March

Supporting Narrative

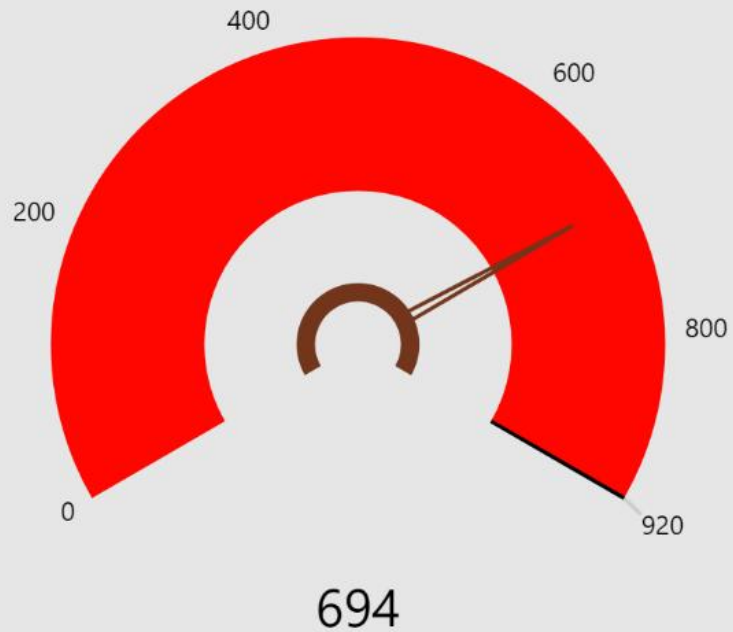
Despite a significant increase in the number of new applications and assessments due to the pandemic, the team has again performed exceptionally well exceeding the target for processing local council tax support (LCTS). LCTS has been awarded quickly to residents to help them with financial difficulties.

Target 2021-2022

6



K1H1 Additional Homes Provided



Actual towards Target

694!

Target: 920  
March

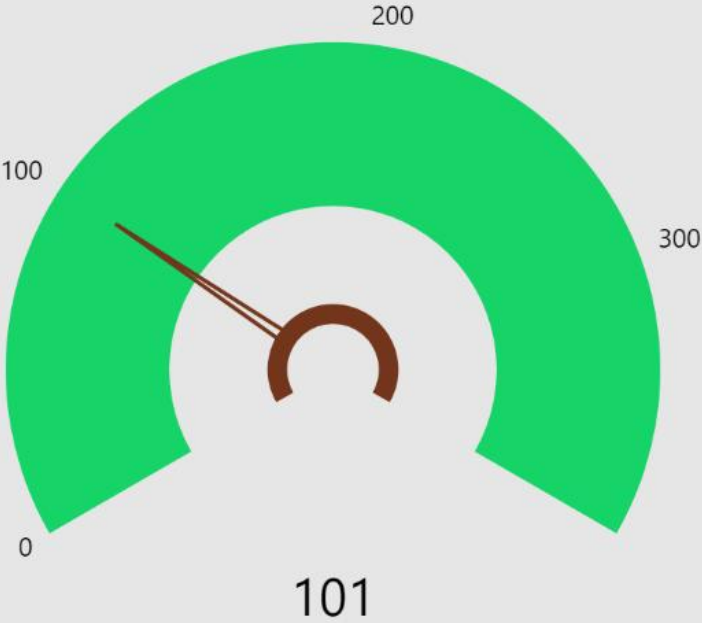
Supporting Narrative

The lockdown in March 2020 stalled housebuilding and figures for Q1 reflect this. Changes in construction methods as a result of the pandemic also meant delivery was slower than normal for the remainder of the year. The housing market remains buoyant however and delivery is expected to pick up. Previous over delivery in recent years should ensure there are no penalties from under delivery in 2020/21.

Target 2021-2022

920

K1H2 Affordable Homes Delivered over Three Years



Actual against Year Two Target

101

March

Supporting Narrative

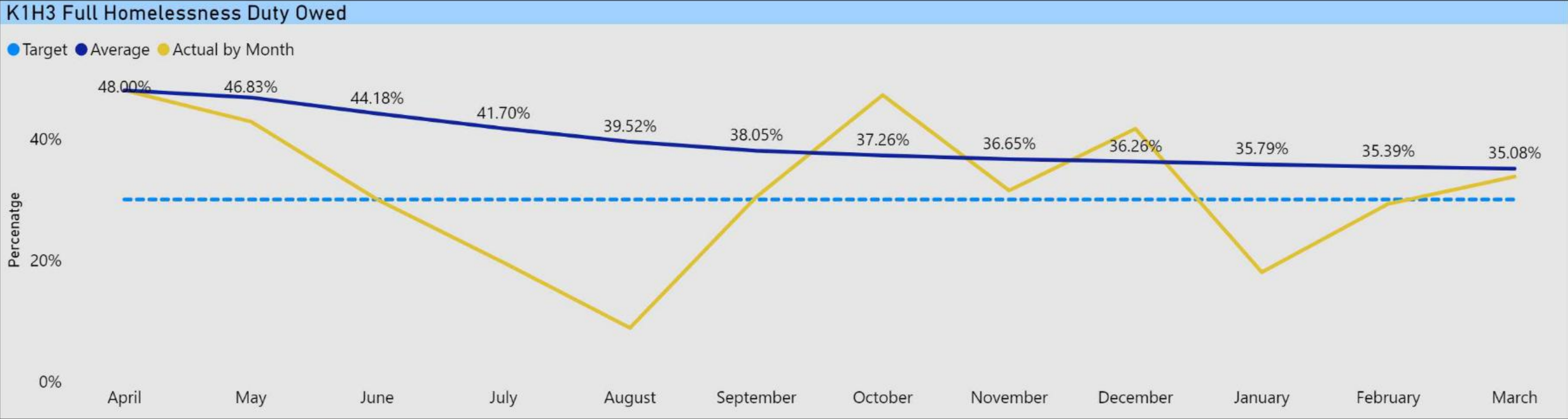
Affordable housing delivery remained on track to achieve the 3-year target with only 15 affordable homes delayed in 2020-2021 due to the global health pandemic. These delayed homes are expected to be delivered in quarter 1 of 2021-2022.

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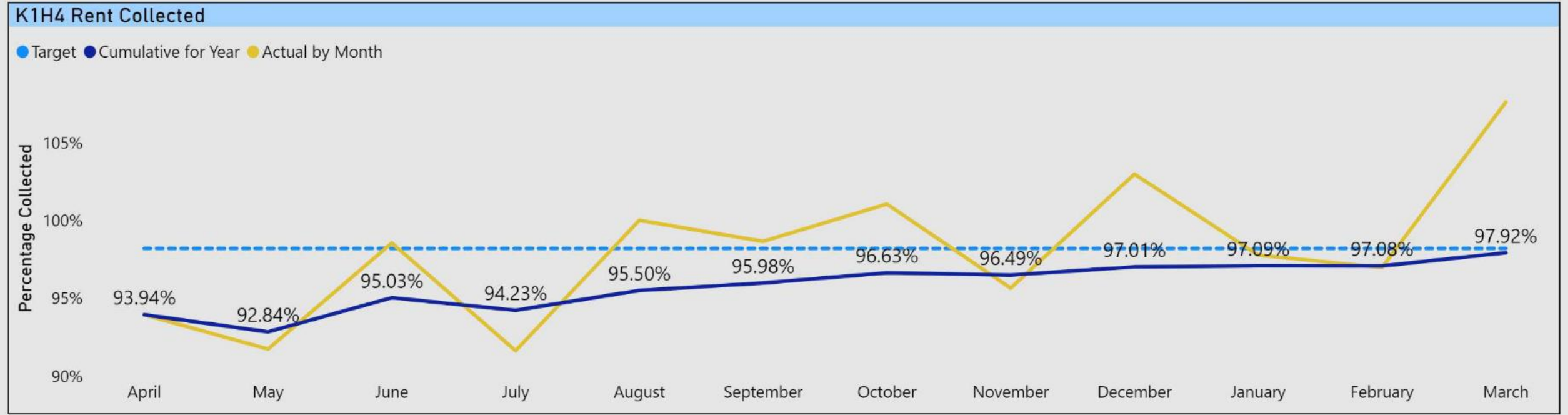
Target 2020-2023

380





Cumulative against Target	Supporting Narrative	Target 2021-2022
<div>35.08%!</div> <div>Target: 30%</div> <div>March</div>	<div>185 households were accepted as homeless with a duty to house. Covid pandemic reduced options for relieving homeless, in the Private sector. The eviction ban (ends June) was intended to reduce pressure on homeless services; however, number of presentations is comparable with previous years.</div>	<div>New format but without a target</div>



Cumulative against Target

97.92%!

Target: 98.20%

March

Supporting Narrative

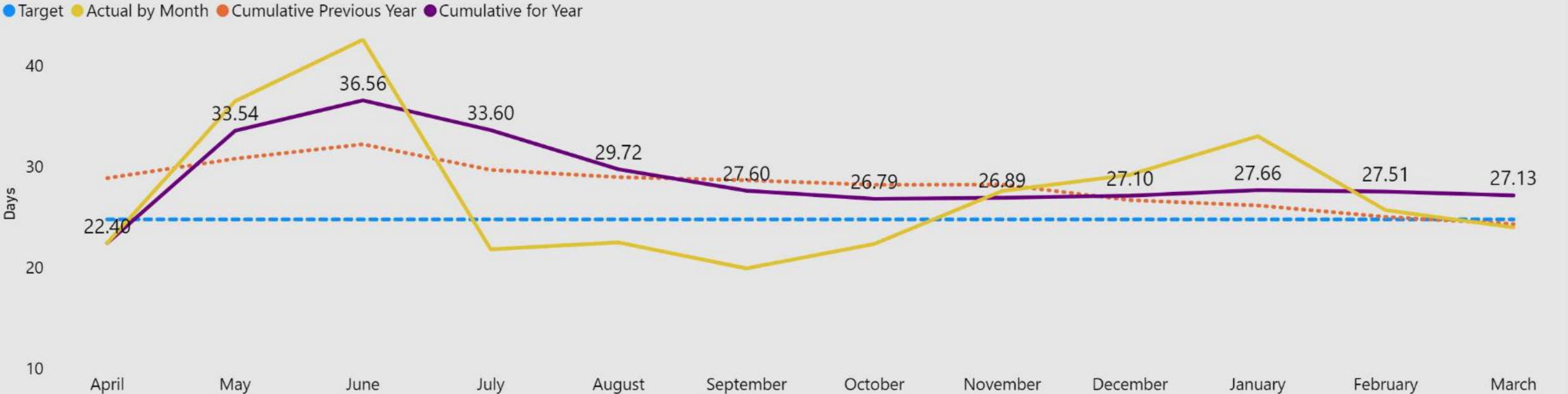
Rent collection close to target - has been affected by removal of sanctions (eviction ban); increasing number of tenants claiming Universal Credit (around 1400) or living on reduced income and a small number of tenants who have high levels of arrears. Collection down 1.17% on previous year. CBH Approach to collection throughout the pandemic has been to “collect with care” providing significant support with benefit and money advice.

Target 2021-2022

98%



K1H5 Average time to re-let Council Homes



Cumulative against Target

27.13!

Target: 24.75  
March

Supporting Narrative

177 General needs lettings were made during the year (only 19 of which were 3 bed homes). Performance affected by CBC main contractor for Empty properties furloughing staff during pandemic. Works continued through the CBH Direct labour team, however risk assessments, shielding staff, shortage of supplies (plaster, kitchens etc), delays with property clearance and tenant circumstances (Covid related) led to delays. Benchmarking demonstrates this to be good performance when compared to other providers.

Target 2021-2022

25

K1P1 Processing of Planning Applications - Majors



Average against Target

98.81%✓

Target: 85%  
March

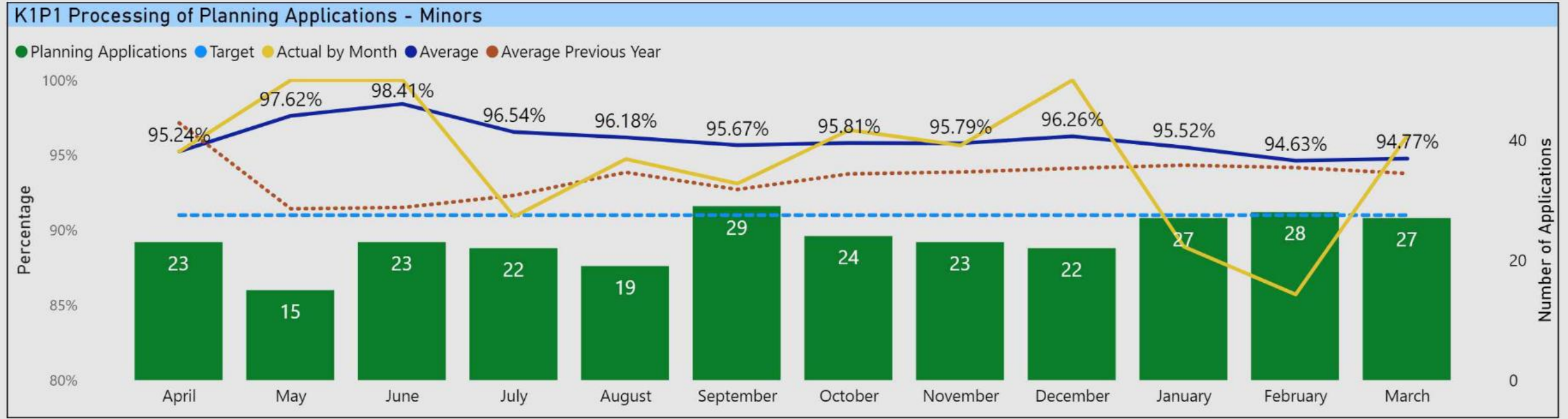
Supporting Narrative

The team achieved a consistently high level of decision making for major applications, 57 major applications were determined during this period, performance is on track and targets are being met.

Target 2021-2022

85%





Average against Target

94.77%✓

Target: 91%  
March

Supporting Narrative

The team achieved a consistently high level of decision making for minor applications, 282 minor applications were determined during this period, in a category that includes applications up to 10 new dwellings, commercial development of up to 1,000 square metres of floorspace, or sites with areas of up to 1 hectare, performance is on track and targets are being met.

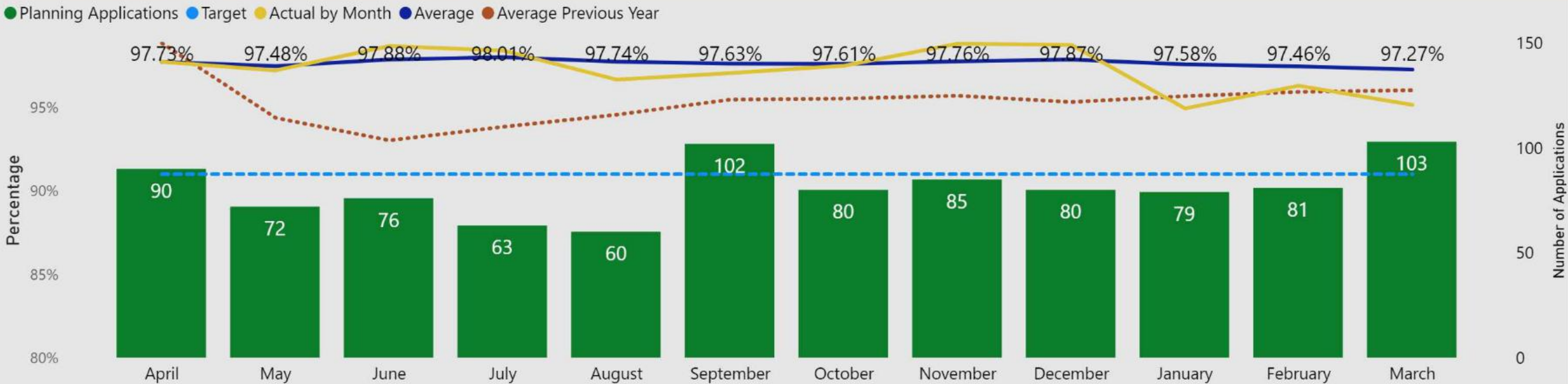
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Target 2021-2022

91%



K1P1 Processing of Planning Applications - Others



Average against Target

97.27%✓

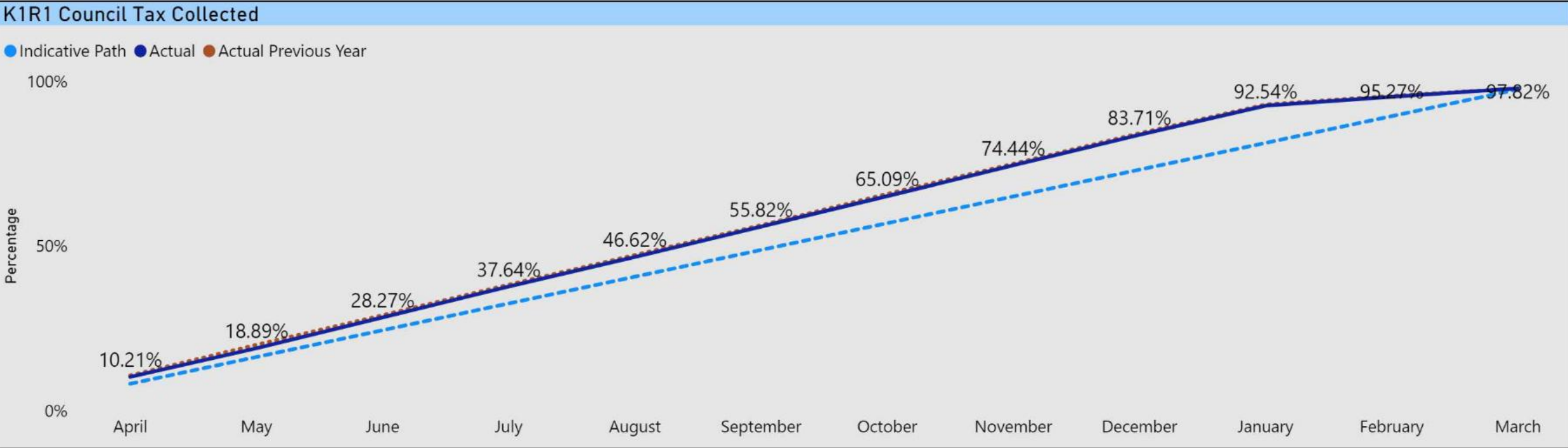
Target: 91%  
March

Supporting Narrative

The team achieved a consistently high level of decision making for “other” planning applications, with over 971 applications determined during this period, in a category which includes householder extensions, changes of use, adverts and lawful development certificates. This category saw the highest number of applications and forms the bulk of the planning work. Performance is on track and targets are being met.

Target 2021-2022

91%



Actual against Year End Target

97.82%✓

Indicative Path: 97.50%  
March

Supporting Narrative

The team have worked incredibly hard this year supporting those struggling to pay their council tax due to the pandemic. They have done this whilst still maintaining an excellent overall council tax collection rate. This year's collection rate exceeds both the original pre- pandemic target set and the previous years' collection rate. The team are very proud of their achievement. The team have also collected an additional £4mn compared to the previous year and the tax base continues to increase significantly every year.

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Target 2021-2022

96.50%





Actual against Year End Target	Supporting Narrative	Target 2021-2022
<div>90.36%!</div> <div>Indicative Path: 98.50% March</div>	<p>As expected, the collection for business rates is significantly below target and last year's figures. Several large businesses have fallen into administration as well as many severely affected by the pandemic but not eligible for government grants or relief. The team have focused on distributing grants rather than formal recovery of late or no payments. A recovery plan is being developed and will be implemented during 2021/22.</p>	<div>90%</div>

# K1R3 Sickness Rates in Days



## K1R3 Sickness Rates (Rolling Figures)



### Actual against Target

5.28✓

Target: 8  
March

### Supporting Narrative

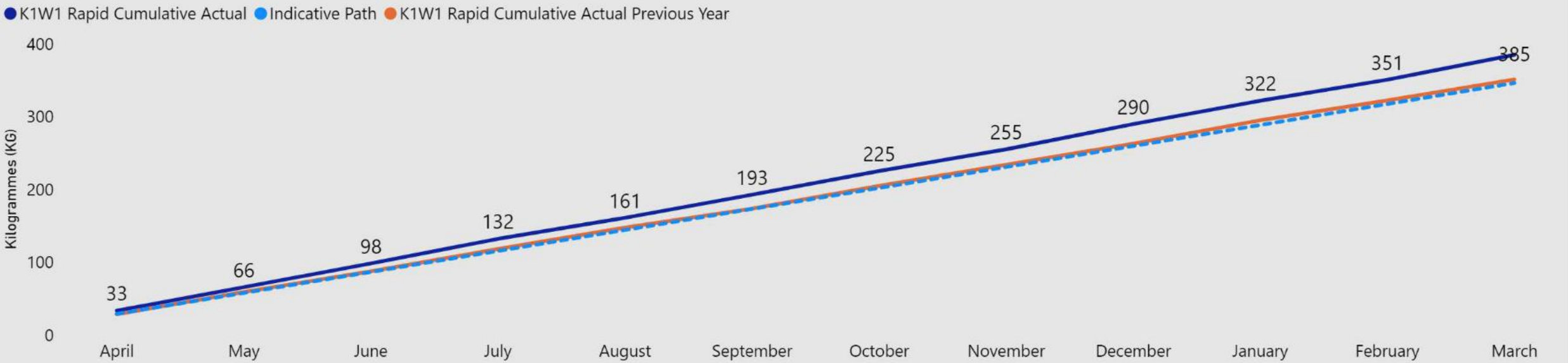
Despite the pandemic, our sickness absence has reduced significantly and is well within the target of 8 days. This reduction coincides with periods of lockdown, social distancing, homeworking for office-based staff, face coverings and handwashing advice. Sickness absence will continue to be closely monitored as lockdown measures ease.

### Target 2021-2022

8



K1W1 Residual Household Waste per Household



Actual against Target

384.75!

Indicative Path: 346

March

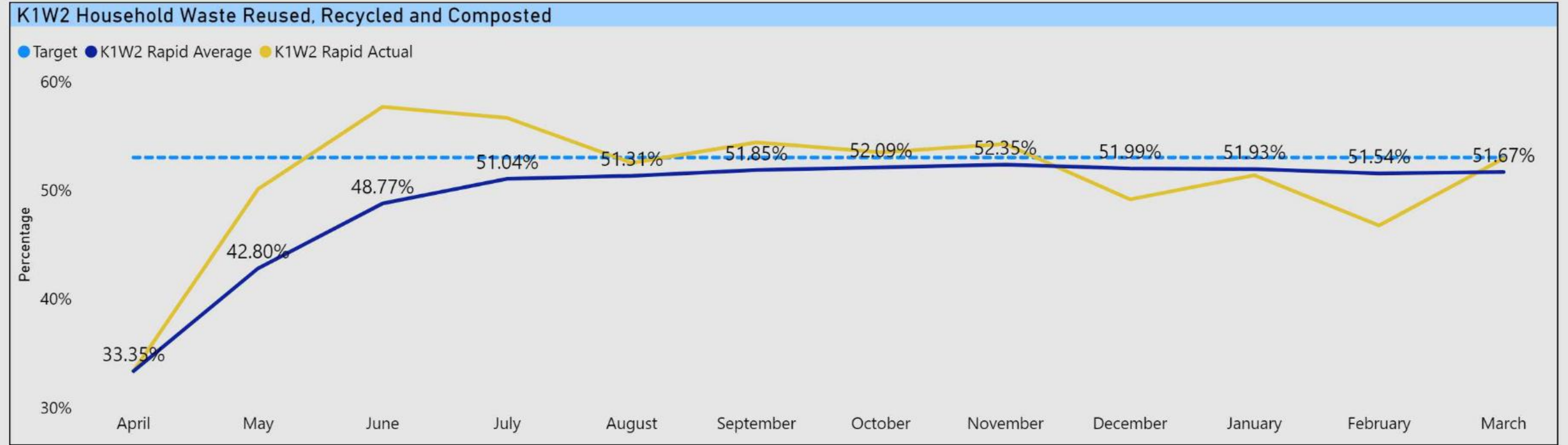
Supporting Narrative

The first lockdown in March 2020 and the impact of safety measures introduced to protect staff meant the implementation of different collections policies and a pause on some materials. This increased the amount of residual waste that residents could present for collection.

Since services have been restored, residents have continued, in general, to generate more residual waste than previous years. This could be a possible out of more residents working from and/or spending more time at home, in addition to the impact of non-essential shops being closed and online shopping being more prevalent.

Target 2021-2022

346



Average against Target

51.67%!

Target: 53%

March

Supporting Narrative

The first lockdown in March 2020 and the impact of safety measures introduced to protect staff meant the implementation of different collections policies and a pause on some materials. This impacted the percentages in the earlier months of the financial year when the collection of paper, plastic and garden waste was paused. Since restarting the services, we have seen the percentage of material at a similar level as previous years.

Target 2021-2022

53%





#### Average against Target

99.93!

Target: 99.94%

March

#### Supporting Narrative

The changes to the service at the beginning of the year as a result of the measures introduced to protect staff from the Covid-19 pandemic made an impact on the performance of the service. The increased tonnage of material that the crews were required to collect, with no additional resource, along with a need to use temporary or agency staff as a result of shielding, self-isolation and sickness, did have an impact on performance. As services have been recovered and stabilised, along with staff returning to work, performance has improved and continues to...

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#### Target 2021-2022

99.94%





## Item 10 Appendix B. Other performance news

- **Awards and accreditations**

The highlights are summarised here and are also shown on [www.colchester.gov.uk](http://www.colchester.gov.uk) in the [achievements](#) section

<b>Achieved April 2020 to March 2021 – full-year report</b>	
<a href="#">Working Well award</a>	The Council has achieved level 3 of this accreditation from <a href="#">Provide</a> , in supporting staff with health and wellbeing issues. This is the <a href="#">top level</a> , which recognises that the organisation “demonstrates long term, sustained commitment and creative development and engagement of staff”. <b>March 2021</b>
<a href="#">Town Deal Fund</a>	Colchester was selected as one of 101 towns across the country that could apply. The bid was submitted by ‘ <a href="#">We Are Colchester</a> ’, a partnership involving public, private and voluntary organisations, formed in January 2020. These ambitious and dynamic plans to help deliver long-term economic growth for Colchester are a step closer, following the award of £18.2m from the government’s <a href="#">Town Deal Fund</a> . <b>March 2021</b>
<a href="#">"We're good to go" Visit Britain/Visit England</a>	We received recognition under this scheme that our venues follow government and industry COVID-19 guidelines. This includes Colchester Castle and Natural History Museum, and events held by Amphora Trading, the Council’s events company. <b>February 2021</b>
<a href="#">Customer Service Excellence standard</a>	<p>The Council’s Contact and Support team were awarded the Customer Service Excellence standard for the third year in a row, following a rigorous assessment day.</p> <p>Customer Service Excellence is a government-backed industry standard that tests in depth those areas that research has shown are a priority to customers, with a particular focus on delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism and staff attitude. Achieving the standard gives us formal recognition of our commitment to, and delivery of, customer service. This helps confirm to our residents, current and potential customers and staff both the quality of the service and the support they will receive should they contact Colchester Borough Council. <b>February 2021</b></p>
<a href="#">Driving Innovation – Environmental Sustainability</a>	<p>The Council was featured in the 2020 Environmental sustainability report from Microsoft, a testament to the work which the organisation is achieving on Dynamics, ICT Strategy and our focus on commitment to climate change.</p> <p><i>“Colchester Borough Council provides services to 192,500 residents, from licensing to recycling. The Council is using Dynamics 365 to unify its data, like the recycling tracking system that provides reporting via Power BI, showing data like heatmaps of problem spots for collections or where residents need more encouragement to recycle. The insights derived from Power BI close the loop for development, providing KPIs that help the Borough improve both the app and recycling services to improve landfill diversion rates”. <a href="#">(page 52)</a>. <b>February 2021</b></i></p>

<a href="#">Covid-19 support</a>	The Council was ranked third best in the country for the distribution of Covid-19 Discretionary Business Support Grants, in data released by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. The data showed that Colchester had distributed 92% of the amount of Discretionary Grants allocated. <b>January 2021</b>
<a href="#">UK IT Industry Awards</a>	The Digital Access Support Team were finalists for Best Public Sector IT Project. It was a real achievement to be in this national shortlist – fellow finalists included DVSA, DEFRA and DWP, with the award going to HMRC. <b>November 2020</b>
<a href="#">LGC awards</a>	<p>Colchester won the Entrepreneurial Council category of the LGC Awards 2020.</p> <p>The LGC awards are dubbed the ‘biggest celebration of excellence in local government’, and this year’s competition saw a record number of entries.</p> <p>The <b>Entrepreneurial Council</b> award showcases the work of the Council’s wholly-owned commercial companies Colchester Amphora Trading Ltd (CATL), Colchester Amphora Energy Ltd (CAEL) and Colchester Amphora Homes Ltd (CAHL) since their formation in 2018.</p> <p>Colchester was also shortlisted in two other categories: Driving Growth and Digital Impact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>Driving Growth</b> entry highlights the Council’s key role, alongside its wholly-owned commercial companies Colchester Amphora Trading Ltd (CATL), Colchester Amphora Energy Ltd (CAEL) and Colchester Amphora Homes Ltd (CAHL), in helping to create strong foundations to boost economic development and prosperity in the borough.</li> <li>• Colchester Amphora Trading’s entry in the <b>Digital Impact</b> category follows its work to deliver the new ultrafast broadband network currently being rolled out to businesses and homeowners in the town centre. <b>October 2020.</b></li> </ul>
<a href="#">Park Mark Plus</a> - British Parking Association (BPA)	The Council’s <a href="#">Priory Street Car Park</a> is only the second car park in the country to receive <a href="#">Park Mark Plus</a> status. Building on the BPA’s Safer Parking scheme, the new Park Mark Plus award recognises only the highest-quality car parks. The award assesses a range of criteria, including services, operations, design and build. To qualify for the award, car parks must already have the BPA’s <a href="#">Park Mark award</a> and meet the <a href="#">Disability Parking Accreditation</a> criteria. <b>October 2020</b>
<a href="#">Green Flag Awards</a>	Castle Park, High Woods Country Park and Colchester’s Cemetery and Crematorium have received Green Flag Awards. Green Flags set a benchmark of standards for management and maintenance of publicly accessible urban and countryside parks, and they promote the community value of green spaces. As well as receiving its 18th Green Flag award, Castle Park has also once again been awarded <a href="#">Green Heritage Site</a> status, which recognises its work to promote its historic surroundings. <b>October 2020</b>

<a href="#">Municipal Journal (MJ) awards 2020</a>	<p>The Council was named '<b>Best Commercial Council</b>' in one of the major events in the public sector calendar. Judges recognised the Council's vision in establishing its commercial trading companies through Colchester Commercial Holdings Ltd and its three subsidiary companies: Colchester Amphora Energy Ltd; Colchester Amphora Homes Ltd, and Colchester Amphora Trading Ltd.</p> <p>Judges singled out achievements to date, which include the delivery of a nationally-significant carbon-cutting District Heat Network at Colchester Northern Gateway; a £95 million borough-wide housebuilding programme, which combines private housing with 30% council-owned homes for affordable rent; delivery of the 76-acre Colchester Northern Gateway Sports Park, and deployment of ultrafast gigabyte broadband to new homes and businesses across Colchester.</p> <p>Cezara Cosma was highly commended in the <b>Rising Star</b> category. Initially joining as a Housing Benefit temp, Cezara is now the Council's contact and support manager. This category is "a great way of recognising new talent which is really important for local government." With Lily Etherington's <a href="#">2019</a> commendation, staff in the Council's Customer directorate have been finalists in two of the three years since this category's launch. <a href="#">October 2020</a></p>
<a href="#">Local Government Information Unit</a>	<p>The Council features as a 'locally led place-shaping in action' case study in the LGiU's 'Power down to level up – resilient place shaping for a post-Covid world' report. <b>October 2020</b></p>
<a href="#">District Councils' Network</a>	<p>The Council features as case studies in these three national reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Transformation in localities</a> Working with integrated care systems case study about the Council's long-standing engagement with the wider health and social care sector is on page 11 of this District Council's Network/Grant Thornton report.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Case Study Report: How districts have continued to deliver during Covid-19</a> The Council's <a href="#">Covid-19 Community Response Pack</a> is featured on page 3's "information sharing and support", with its "Support for places and High Street adaptation" contribution to business recovery on page 10.</li> <li>• <a href="#">District councils and the Private Rented Sector: Working Together to Improve the Health and Wellbeing of Tenants and the Local Economy</a> The Council's work in "Protecting Guardians under Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Management Regulations" is shown as a case study on page 11. This case has clarified that properties occupied by guardians can fall within the definition of an HMO, the requirement to be licensed and to comply with HMO Management Regulations, and that legal action can be taken if landlords fail to address poor living conditions and a lack of adequate facilities in buildings occupied by property guardians. <b>Autumn 2020</b></li> </ul>

<a href="#">National Federation of ALMOs – NFA</a> Homelessness report / Best Practice Briefing	Colchester Borough Homes features as a case study of how “highly adaptable organisations have been able to shape their services on demand” and use their “Everybody in” Covid-19 response as an opportunity to form closer working relationships with other services and develop much closer and more effective partnership working. This approach has helped to sustain the emergency accommodation with successful pathways for move-on”. <b>September 2020</b>
<a href="#">LABC - East Anglia building excellence awards 2020</a>	The Council had three entries shortlisted as finalists - Best Partnership with a Local Authority Building Control Team - Invent Architecture and Design; LABC Construction Professional of the Year - Mike Bamberry of Mersea Homes; Best Extension or Alteration to an Existing Dwelling - Second Pits, Monks Eleigh (A partner application dealt with by Colchester). <b>September 2020</b>
<a href="#">LEXCEL</a>	Legal Services have been re-accredited following the Lexcel standard’s annual inspection, for the 20th consecutive year. Lexcel is the Law Society's legal practice quality mark for excellence in legal practice management and excellence in client care. <b>June 2020</b>
<a href="#">GeoPlace Gold Performance Awards</a>	These awards recognise best practice and outstanding address data management by local authorities who have consistently maintained the highest level of data quality. Land, property, street and address information is used to connect different services across the Council – giving communities and individuals a ‘property-level view’ of the services available to them. <b>June 2020</b>
<a href="#">Active Essex - one in a million award</a>	Joanne Besant, Community Response Team Leader, received this for being a strong advocate for encouraging her Community Enabling colleagues to look after their mental health and wellbeing, by ensuring they were supported and active whilst at working at home during the pandemic. <b>June 2020</b>
<a href="#">British Parking Association (BPA)</a>	Richard Walker, our Parking Partnership Manager has been re-elected, through a vote by its Council of representatives, as a Director (Local Authorities’ Representative) on the BPA Board. The Board develops strategy, oversees the objectives and management of the Association. <b>April 2020</b>
<a href="#">Certificate from High Sheriff of Essex</a>	Awarded to the Council “in recognition of great and valuable services to the community during the Covid-19 Pandemic.” <b>April 2020</b>

### Other sources of performance data

**Datashare** – a wide range of Council performance data is available 24/7 via the online Datashare tool on the Council’s website [here](#). Categories include spending, business rates, democracy, housing, land, parking, planning, licensing, recycling and waste. The system which sits behind Datashare is being replaced in 2021 to improve resilience and make best use of changing technology. This will help in maintaining open and accessible information for the public, businesses and other interested parties.

**Annual reports** – the Council produces annual reports on its performance in various areas. These are brought into one place on the Council’s website [here](#) for ease of reference, and to make it easier for the public to find which annual reports are available.

**Single Data List** -this is a list of all the datasets that local government must submit to central government. The list is reviewed and updated annually. Local authorities are not obliged to provide any data which is not on the list without extra funding.

**Minute extract from Policy Panel meeting on 4 August 2021: Policy Panel recommendations on options for Covid-19 Commemorations**

*RECOMMENDED* to CABINET that: -

- (a) The idea of a remembrance festival, that can be replicated across the Borough, is developed, with a programme for the event and how that can be shared with the community;
- (b) A community celebration event is arranged, working with other agencies such as the emergency services;
- (c) A design for a memorial bench and wording for the plaque is drawn up;
- (d) The Assistant Director Environment and the Corporate Governance Manager set up a small working group of relevant officers and representatives of other organisations, such as One Colchester and the BID, to ensure that Covid commemorative activities are co-ordinated throughout the Borough and not all actions remain the responsibility of the Council.

*RESOLVED* that an update report be submitted to the Panel at its meeting on 22 September 2021, summarising the ideas raised by the Panel at its meeting on 4 August 2021 and including ways to consult and collect public opinions and ideas and, if possible, information on costings of different options raised.



## Unlocking the Potential of Colchester's High Street and Town Centre

The motion below was submitted to Council at its meeting on 14 July 2021 by Councillor Fox and Councillor Goss. As the motion related to an executive matter and Council did not vote to suspend Council Procedure Rule 11(2), the motion stands referred direct to Cabinet.

*This Council believes that healthy high streets are essential for community cohesion, civic pride, employment, shopping, services and leisure. But many shops and businesses were struggling even before the Covid pandemic: high street retail employment fell in more than three-quarters of local authorities between 2015 and 2018 according to the Office of National Statistics and more than half of all UK consumers were shopping online before the pandemic. Colchester's Town Centre has fared better than many High Streets across the country but has lost many shops that were valued by residents and visitors alike.*

*This Council notes that retail is among the sectors most affected by the coronavirus pandemic, and retail workers have been on the frontline of the crisis throughout. The almost complete shutdown of non-essential shops between March and June 2020 has hit businesses hard, and the need for social distancing has changed the way many businesses operate, reducing footfall. The pandemic has accelerated what, in many cases, has been a longer trend of lower footfall and changing shopping habits. As the Portas Review a decade ago acknowledged, the form and function of many high streets needs to radically change if they are to adapt and survive.*

*This Council welcomes the willingness of Government to acknowledge the problems and come forward with initiatives in response to these challenges such as the furlough scheme, the Covid support business loans, and the High Street Taskforce. However, as the Treasury Select Committee stated in 2019, the current system of Business Rates places an unfair burden on "bricks and mortar" businesses compared to online ones, and the Business Rate system needs radical overhaul. This council also welcomes the Town Deal funding secured by a range of partners to deliver £18.2million of investment in Colchester.*

*This Council resolves to:*

- *Write to the Government to urge them to undertake an urgent review of business rates in order to support high street businesses recover from the pandemic and level the playing field between online and high street businesses, to make it fair and sustainable for all.*
- *Explore the creation of Community Improvement Districts to reconnect communities with the levers that drive economic development in town centres and create an equal partnership of business and community organisations to galvanise action at a local level.*
- *Make any data held by the council on ownership of high street properties public and in an accessible format, so that community groups seeking to buy empty shops through a community share offer have the information they need to do so.*
- *Make full use of s215 planning enforcement powers where empty units are attracting antisocial behaviour or creating an eyesore on the high street.*
- *Proactively contact landlords of vacant premises, working with the Colchester Business Improvement District, to explore meanwhile use options and/or encourage alternative rental models (e.g. turnover rather than market rent) to enable new co-operatives, SMEs, social enterprises and community businesses to open their doors on the high street.*



**Colchester Town Deal: recommendations made by the Scrutiny Panel at its meeting on 17 August 2021**

*RECOMMENDED to CABINET that: -*

- (a) The Scrutiny Panel takes on the role of scrutinizing the Council's role and actions as Accountable Body for Colchester's Town Deal programme, including oversight of Risk Management and scrutiny of financial decisions;
- (b) Cabinet investigates ways to increase the amount of funding the Council contributes into pursuing the creation of a Youth Zone, alongside the Town Deal allocation of funding for youth services provision.

*RESOLVED* that the Scrutiny Panel conducts pre-decision scrutiny of the individual business cases for the projects within the Town Deal programme, according to the Council's policies and scrutiny and oversight rules, as these business cases are drafted and brought forward.



<b>Report of</b>	<b>Assistant Director of Communities</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Scott Danielsen</b>
<b>Title</b>	<p style="text-align: right;">☎ 2878</p> <b>External funding from North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (NEECCG) and East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust (ESNEFT)</b>		
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards		

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 New funding from system partners in health – the North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (NEECCG) and East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust (ESNEFT) has been granted to tackle inequalities in health and wellbeing in the borough, thus providing us with an opportunity to increase capacity to deliver improved outcomes for our residents in the period of recovery from COVID-19. The funding totals £1,029,000 (though £464,000 of this has been earmarked for the voluntary and community sector). Similar funding has been granted to Tendring District Council.
- 1.2 The CCG on behalf of the NEE Health Alliance is keen to ensure that funding allocated for inequalities is closely linked to the work of the the local Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) and Council projects to reduce duplication and to support the alignment of our strategies to tackle inequalities linked to the Live Well domains, to ensure that Colchester does not miss this important opportunity this decision is for the Council to take receipt of funding for the provision of some key services as well as disseminating that funding on to other system partners on behalf of the funding bodies. The Council is a full and active partner in the Health and Wellbeing Alliance and supports partnership working principals and ensuring the best use of public funds within our communities. A Cabinet decision is required due to the level of funding involved.

## 2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 It is recommended that we accept the funding on behalf of the Health Alliance and distribute it as per Health Alliance agreement.

## 3.0 Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 This significant amount of funding is very welcome. It provides the means to address key strategic priorities for CBC and our wider partners, through the delivery of tangible workstreams. This vital funding is critical to addressing the existing health inequalities, exacerbated by Covid and adding much needed capacity to the charity and voluntary sector in Colchester and NE Essex, and, ultimately delivering improved outcomes in health and wellbeing for our residents while tackling deep-rooted inequalities.

## 4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 To reject the offer of additional funding from our health system partners. Or ask them to seek an alternative mechanism of distribution.

## 5. Background Information

- 5.1 Inequalities in health and wellbeing in Colchester are stark, both within the Borough and when the Borough is compared with county, regional and national averages. For example, while deprivation overall in Colchester is close to the national average, the picture within the Borough is more mixed. Life expectancy is 8.6 years lower for men and 8.0 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Colchester than in the least deprived areas. Despite our overall middle-of-the-road standing in deprivation, Colchester has the third highest suicide rate among all second tier and unitary authorities in England.
- 5.2 In Tendring, our partner district in the North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance ('the Alliance'), the situation is often worse, for example, Tendring includes the most deprived area in England and has England's second highest suicide rate. Life expectancy is 10.6 years lower for men and 7.8 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Tendring than in the least deprived areas.
- 5.3 Recognising the direct links between reducing health inequalities and the role played by wider system partners, including the Borough Council, Voluntary and Community Sector, Health Funding has been allocated to both Colchester and Tendring to tackle deep-rooted inequalities across the North East Essex Region. A similar amount of funding has been granted to Tendring District Council - our partner council in the Alliance with whom we are working increasingly more closely in addressing health inequalities.
- 5.4 Reducing inequalities, particularly as they relate to the health and wellbeing of our residents - is a key priority within CBC's Strategic Plan. Furthermore, it is a key for our partnerships in ONE Colchester, the Sport England Local Delivery Pilot ("LDP") and the Alliance, as well as other partners across the system such as Essex County Council through the Levelling Up Agenda.
- 5.5 The Health Alliance have recently created an Inequalities Sub-group that reports directly to the Alliance Strategy Group. Colchester is well embedded within these structures with the Director for Partnerships currently holding the chair of the Strategy group, and Assistant Director for Communities, chair of the Inequalities sub group.
- 5.6 Covid-19 has had a detrimental effect on individuals and communities across our borough, but, it's impacts have been uneven and have often served to exacerbate existing inequalities, as outlined in Professor Marmot's Covid-19 report 'Build Back Fairer'. The impact of Covid-19 has made system-wide work to reduce inequalities and lessen their impact even more pressing.
- 5.7 This new funding from system partners in health provides us with an opportunity to continue and build on work to address these inequalities and deliver improved outcomes for our residents. The Council plays a key system leadership role based on our unique knowledge and understanding of the communities we serve.

Across the system in North East Essex, the Marmot policy objectives, first articulated in the initial Marmot report on inequalities in health published by the Coalition government in 2010, are accepted as guiding principles. They are:

- Giving every child the best start in life

- Enabling all children, young people and adults to maximize their capabilities and have control over their lives
- Creating fair employment and good work for all
- Ensuring a healthy standard of living for all
- Creating and developing sustainable places and communities
- Strengthening the role and impact of ill-health prevention.

- 5.8 While some work is already underway across the system, capacity remains stretched, and therefore the funding will ensure that this advances for the benefit of all our residents. The funding provides us with a huge opportunity: the means to deliver workstreams that meet our shared objectives.
- 5.9 £464,000 of the funding is earmarked for the charity and voluntary sector, and £200,000 from ESNEFT is earmarked for the Neighbourhood Integrated Care Service (NICS) contract, a further £365,000 remains, which is to be spent by March 2023. Of this £365,000, £165,000 will directly support the Councils In-House 'Healthy Homes' programme, with a further £200,000 to support our wider work on tackling inequalities through funding existing and, crucially, additional resource.
- 5.10 This funding will therefore both support new voluntary sector and community led work, as well as augment existing work within CBC and system partners, thereby ensuring the capacity and skills to address these complex challenges.
- 5.11 The funding breaks down as follows:

Amount	Funder	Purpose	Spend deadline
£464k	CCG	Realising Ambitions Programme	All monies to be paid directly to voluntary & charitable organisations to continue the Asset Based Approach. Organisations identified by CCG, CBC, C360 & Tendring CVS
£200k	CCG	Inequalities programme	31 March 2023
£200k	ESNEFT	Inequalities programme – focus in NICS contract and community engagement	31 March 2023
£165k	CCG	Inequalities programme – Healthy Homes	31 March 2023

- 5.12 To provide an example of allocation of the Realising Ambitions CCG funding, the following range of recipients and programmes are included:
- Colchester and Tendring Youth Enquiry Service: Family Focus- Improving Mental Health To provide counselling and coaching to young people and their families in Colchester, in partnership with Find Your Spark. £30,000
  - Colchester Gateway Clubs: Advocacy and Support Project Towards staff costs for an Advocacy and Support Project for adults with both learning disabilities and mental health problems across Colchester and Tendring. £36,234
  - Families in Focus: Family Support to North East Essex families of CYP with any SEND Towards the provision of family support in NE Essex in addressing special educational needs and disabilities. £28,000
  - Headway Essex: Brain Injury Adapted Psychotherapy Counselling To provide Brain Injury Adapted Psychotherapy Counselling for over 2 years. £25,000

- Home-Start Colchester: Recipe4Health To run a project for disadvantaged children in Colchester teaching them how to be physically and mentally healthy. £10,000
- Ministry of Parenting CIC: FLASH Triple A To pilot a programme in Colchester that supports parents of children with additional needs who are self-harming. £15,367
- Open Road: Substance Misuse and Mental Health Support To provide mental health and substance misuse support to the LGBTQ+ community in Colchester and Tendring, in partnership with Outhouse East. £19,600
- Outhouse East To fund the salary of a part-time youth worker at a Colchester based charity, focused on supporting the local LGBTQ+ community. £30,000
- Re Engage: Colchester Social Gatherings To create a new support group and two additional friendship groups for over 75s living in Colchester. £17,800
- Royal Association for Deaf People: Talk More To set up support groups for deaf people suffering with their mental health in Colchester and Clacton. £15,000
- Tendring Mental Health Support: To provide support for people with acute mental health problems and their carers/family members, in partnership with Essex Carers Support. £52,500
- Wellies-On CIC To fund a full time mental health worker for an agriculture support charity that works with vulnerable children and adults in Colchester. £35,000
- Ark Family Resource Centre: Talking Helps To run therapeutic support sessions to improve mental health for young people and their mothers affected by domestic abuse in Harwich. £30,000
- Citizens Advice Bureau, Tendring: Believe and Achieve To provide employability and skills workshops for clients at the Mental Health Hub, in partnership with Signpost. £17,250

5.13 The funding will allow us to further focus on areas such as reducing inequalities in digital access, ensuring joined-up hospital discharges, ensuring a health living environment, and a more holistic approach to complex cases that span multiple departments and agencies. The funding will allow the Council and partners to deliver workstreams central to reducing pressure on both primary and secondary healthcare in the area, reducing pressure on internal CBC resources, increasing capacity in the voluntary sector and increasing services to vulnerable populations.

## **6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications**

6.1 There are no further implications on equality, diversity and human rights beyond those listed in Section 5.

## **7. Strategic Plan References**

7.1 This funding directly contributes to objectives under the 'Creating safe, healthy and active communities' theme within the 2020 – 2023 strategic plan, specifically addressing these priorities:

- Build on community strengths and assets
- Tackle the causes of inequality and support our most vulnerable people

## **8. Consultation**

8.1 Not applicable

## **9. Publicity Considerations**

9.1 Rejecting the funding would likely have negative publicity implications.

**10. Financial implications**

10.1 The health system funding will have no additional financial implications in and of itself.

**11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications**

11.1 The funding directly addresses health, wellbeing and community safety as outlined in Section 5.

**12. Health and Safety Implications**

12.1 No negative implications.

**13. Risk Management Implications**

13.1 Not applicable

**14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications**

14.1 Not applicable.





1 September 2021

Report of	Monitoring Officer	Author	Andrew Weavers 282213
Title	Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman – Annual Review Letter 2021		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman produces an Annual Review Letter on the number of complaints it has received regarding each local authority. This report provides details of Colchester Borough Council's Annual Review Letter for 2021.

## 2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To note the contents of the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter for 2021.

## 3. Reasons for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 To inform the Cabinet of the contents of the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman's Annual Review Letter relating to Colchester Borough Council for 2021.

## 3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 No alternative options are presented.

## 4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman issues an Annual Review Letter to each local authority. The Annual Review Letter for Colchester for the period ending 31 March 2021 is attached to this report at Appendix 1.
- 4.3 It is worth noting that anyone can choose to make a complaint to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman. Accordingly, the number of complaints is not an indicator of performance or level of customer service. In most instances there was no case to answer. The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman will normally insist that the Council has the opportunity to resolve the complaint locally through its own complaints procedure before commencing its own investigation.
- 4.4 The Annual Review Letter states that at the end of March 2020 the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman took the unprecedented step of temporarily stopping its casework in the wider public interest, to allow authorities to concentrate efforts on vital frontline services during the first wave of the Covid-19 outbreak. Casework was restarted in late June 2020, after a three month pause. Accordingly, this needs to be taken into account when comparing performance data with previous years.

- 4.5 The Governance and Audit Committee has an overview of Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman investigations, and the contents of the Annual Review will be reported to the Committee in due course.

## 5. Key Headlines

- 5.1 There were no findings of maladministration or public interest reports issued against the Council.
- 5.2 The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review Letter focuses on the outcomes of complaints and what can be learned from them. The statistics are on 3 key areas:

**(i) Complaints upheld** - The Ombudsman upholds complaints when it finds some form of fault in an authority's actions, including where the authority accepted fault before it investigated.

**(ii) Compliance with recommendations** - The Ombudsman recommends ways for authorities to put things right when faults have caused injustice and monitor their compliance with its recommendations. Failure to comply is rare and a compliance rate below 100% is a cause for concern.

**(iii) Satisfactory remedies provided by the authority** – In these cases, the authority upheld the complaint and the Ombudsman agreed with how the authority offered to put things right. The Ombudsman encourages the early resolution of complaints and credit authorities that accept fault and find appropriate ways to put things right.

The Ombudsman compares the three key annual statistics for each authority with similar types of authorities to work out an average level of performance.

	Period ending 31/03/21	Period ending 31/03/20
Complaints Upheld	No detailed investigations carried out	1
Compliance with Ombudsman's recommendations	No recommendations due for compliance	100%
Satisfactory remedies provided by the authority	No detailed investigations upheld	0

- 5.3 The following table provides a comparison of complaints and enquires received.  
(NB. categories are those used by the Ombudsman)

Year	Benefits and Tax	Corporate and other services	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Highways and Transport	Housing	Planning and Development	Other	Total
2020/21	2	1	4	4	1	3	0	15
2019/20	3	1	5	3	6	2	0	20
2018/19	0	1	4	0	5	10	0	20
2017/18	1	1	5	2	8	3	1	21
2016/17	2	0	2	0	5	7	0	16
2015/16	3	2	3	2	6	8	0	25

5.4 The following table provides a comparison of decisions made.

Year	Incomplete or Invalid	Advice Given	Referred back for Local Resolution	Closed after Initial Enquiries	Detailed Investigations			Total
					Not Upheld	Upheld	Uphold Rate	
2020/21	1	0	5	7	0	0	N/A	13
2019/20	2	0	9	6	3	1	25%	21
2018/19	2	1	4	10	3	3	50%	23
2017/18	1	2	8	5	4	1	20%	21
2016/17	0	1	4	5	2	1	33%	13
2015/16	2	3	12	4	1	1	50%	23

5.5 The following table shows Colchester's performance compared with other Borough and District Councils in Essex.

Name	Complaints Upheld % (numbers)	Compliance with recommendations	Satisfactory remedies provided by Council (numbers)
Basildon	0% (0)	None	None
Braintree	None	None	None
Brentwood	67% (2)	100%	0% (0)
Castle Point	100% (1)	100%	0% (0)
Chelmsford	0% (0)	None	None
Colchester	None	None	None
Epping Forest	67% (2)	100%	0% (0)
Harlow	100% (1)	100%	0% (0)
Maldon	0% (0)	None	None
Rochford	50% (1)	100%	0% (0)
Tendring	0% (0)	100%	None
Uttlesford	100% (1)	None	0% (0)

## 6. Strategic Plan References

6.1 The lessons learnt from complaints to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman link in with our Strategic Plan aims to be efficient accessible, customer focused and always looking to improve. Having an effective complaints process helps us to achieve the Strategic Plan's themes of a Wellbeing, making Colchester an even better place to live and supporting those who need help most.

## 7. Publicity Considerations

7.1 Details of the Annual Review Letter are published on the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman's website and will also be published on the Council's website.

## 8. Financial, Equality, Diversity and Human Rights, Consultation, Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management and Environmental and Sustainability Implications

8.1 No direct implications.



# Local Government & Social Care OMBUDSMAN

21 July 2021

*By email*

Mr Pritchard  
Chief Executive  
Colchester Borough Council

Dear Mr Pritchard

## **Annual Review letter 2021**

I write to you with our annual summary of statistics on the decisions made by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman about your authority for the year ending 31 March 2021. At the end of a challenging year, we maintain that good public administration is more important than ever and I hope this feedback provides you with both the opportunity to reflect on your Council's performance and plan for the future.

You will be aware that, at the end of March 2020 we took the unprecedented step of temporarily stopping our casework, in the wider public interest, to allow authorities to concentrate efforts on vital frontline services during the first wave of the Covid-19 outbreak. We restarted casework in late June 2020, after a three month pause.

We listened to your feedback and decided it was unnecessary to pause our casework again during further waves of the pandemic. Instead, we have encouraged authorities to talk to us on an individual basis about difficulties responding to any stage of an investigation, including implementing our recommendations. We continue this approach and urge you to maintain clear communication with us.

## **Complaint statistics**

This year, we continue to focus on the outcomes of complaints and what can be learned from them. We want to provide you with the most insightful information we can and have focused statistics on three key areas:

**Complaints upheld** - We uphold complaints when we find some form of fault in an authority's actions, including where the authority accepted fault before we investigated.

**Compliance with recommendations** - We recommend ways for authorities to put things right when faults have caused injustice and monitor their compliance with our recommendations. Failure to comply is rare and a compliance rate below 100% is a cause for concern.

**Satisfactory remedy provided by the authority** - In these cases, the authority upheld the complaint and we agreed with how it offered to put things right. We encourage the early resolution of complaints and credit authorities that accept fault and find appropriate ways to put things right.

Finally, we compare the three key annual statistics for your authority with similar types of authorities to work out an average level of performance. We do this for County Councils, District Councils, Metropolitan Boroughs, Unitary Councils, and London Boroughs.

Your annual data will be uploaded to our interactive map, [Your council's performance](#), along with a copy of this letter on 28 July 2021. This useful tool places all our data and information about councils in one place. You can find the decisions we have made about your Council, public reports we have issued, and the service improvements your Council has agreed to make as a result of our investigations, as well as previous annual review letters.

I would encourage you to share the resource with colleagues and elected members; the information can provide valuable insights into service areas, early warning signs of problems and is a key source of information for governance, audit, risk and scrutiny functions.

As you would expect, data has been impacted by the pause to casework in the first quarter of the year. This should be considered when making comparisons with previous year's data.

### **Supporting complaint and service improvement**

I am increasingly concerned about the evidence I see of the erosion of effective complaint functions in local authorities. While no doubt the result of considerable and prolonged budget and demand pressures, the Covid-19 pandemic appears to have amplified the problems and my concerns. With much greater frequency, we find poor local complaint handling practices when investigating substantive service issues and see evidence of reductions in the overall capacity, status and visibility of local redress systems.

With this context in mind, we are developing a new programme of work that will utilise complaints to drive improvements in both local complaint systems and services. We want to use the rich evidence of our casework to better identify authorities that need support to improve their complaint handling and target specific support to them. We are at the start of this ambitious work and there will be opportunities for local authorities to shape it over the coming months and years.

An already established tool we have for supporting improvements in local complaint handling is our successful training programme. During the year, we successfully adapted our face-to-face courses for online delivery. We provided 79 online workshops during the year, reaching more than 1,100 people. To find out more visit [www.lgo.org.uk/training](http://www.lgo.org.uk/training).

We were pleased to deliver an online complaint handling course to your staff during the year. I welcome your Council's investment in good complaint handling training and trust the course was useful to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M King', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael King  
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman  
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

Complaints upheld
The Ombudsman carried out no detailed investigations during this period
Compliance with Ombudsman recommendations
No recommendations were due for compliance in this period
Satisfactory remedy provided by the authority
The Ombudsman did not uphold any detailed investigations during this period

**NOTE:** To allow authorities to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, we did not accept new complaints and stopped investigating existing cases between March and June 2020. This reduced the number of complaints we received and decided in the 20-21 year. Please consider this when comparing data from previous years.



**Extract from the draft minutes of the Governance and Audit Committee meeting on 27 July 2021**

**268. Annual report of Colchester Commercial Holdings Limited for 2020/2021**

Andrew Tyrrell, Client and Business Manager for Colchester Borough Council, and Paul Smith, Group Commercial Director for Colchester Commercial Holdings Limited (CCHL), attended the meeting to present the report and assist the Committee with its enquiries.

The Committee heard that CCHL was the Council's principle commercial company, with three subsidiary companies underneath it; Colchester Amphora Energy Limited, Colchester Amphora Homes Limited and Colchester Amphora Trading Limited. The Council is the sole shareholder for CCHL and the Amphora Companies, and as such retained control over their strategic direction and what it was hoped that they would achieve. The companies have been active for the past three years and have recorded two successful first years where the expansion dividend targets had been achieved, before a difficult third year which was adversely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, the impact of which has been felt across all sectors and activities of the companies. Although some of the areas of operation of the companies, such as Helpline, had been able to provide a positive reaction to the pandemic, other areas, such as events, has been badly affected. It was, however, highlighted that the companies had been set up with a diverse range of activities in order to provide resilience which had been particularly important during the pandemic, and which had allowed a dividend to be paid to the Council in year three. Although it was particularly difficult to predict the future, it was considered that under the circumstances the companies have provided a relatively successful financial return in the year.

One of the key elements of the companies was that they maintained a public sector ethos, in support of the Council's Strategic Priorities, including the provision of affordable homes and the commencement in construction of the heat network which will be one of the largest of its type in the United Kingdom. The Committee heard that the Council had received two awards in 2020 which both related to the setting up of the companies and the decisions that the Council had taken in 2018; the Local Government Chronicle's 'Entrepreneurial Council of the Year', and the Municipal Journal's 'Best Commercial Council' award. The prestigious awards provided external acknowledgement of the achievements of Colchester Borough Council.

Paul Smith advised the Committee that although the previous year had been a difficult one, CCHL had still been able to deliver a dividend of £226,000. The achievements of the Capital Projects Team were highlighted, with a key achievement being the delivery of the completed Northern Gateway Sports Park, partially funded by secured partnership funding from British Cycling and Cricket totalling £690,000. In addition to this, work had been completed on the infrastructure design of the Colchester Northern Gateway project, including highways outline approval and the development of a hybrid planning application. Amphora Trading had also provided support for the strategic priorities of the Council, including development and community engagement with the creative industries, and helping the Council secure

£3.7m funding from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership in relation to the development of the Queen Street Bus Depot site. It was confirmed to the Committee that the commercial companies were set up to support the strategic priorities of the Council and this included ensuring that any grants that were awarded to the Council were allocated to the scheme that they were intended to support.

With regard to the work of the Estates and Asset Management Team, the Committee heard that this team managed all commercial leases of the Council and during the pandemic all tenants had been managed in accordance with Government requirements. The Council's property investment portfolio was worth in the region of £42.5m, and a high rent collection rate had been achieved in spite of the pandemic.

The restrictions on mass gathering which had been in place over the preceding year had a major impact on the events and weddings which had been able to be held, with associated impact on revenue from the Events business. The impact of the pandemic had been managed as far as was possible through the delivering of weddings where permitted and rescheduling events in line with Government advice, and a successful bid had been made to the Cultural Recovery Fund for £90,000 to support recovery from Covid. The opportunity had been taken to review the operation of the Events business during the pandemic, and events would now be run as cashless events to improve safety and efficiency, and the Old Library building had been brought back into use for events.

The Helpline service had proved to be an essential service for local residents over the past year, through both monitoring and the use of its 'lifting' service which assisted customers who had experienced a fall, and it was emphasised that this was a local service provided by local people. With regard to the sports and leisure activities of the companies, the Committee heard that the Sports Park had opened, and Leisure World had been operating as far as was possible in accordance with Government guidelines.

Some of the key priorities for 2021-2022 were highlighted to the Committee, including the completion of the first phase of Colchester Northern Gateway South infrastructure such as The Walk and the Western Access Road, and the achievement of outline planning approval for all uses including residential, commercial, and healthcare.

Work was to continue with Colchester Amphora Trading leading development of S.106 funded community buildings at Stanway and North Colchester, as well as the development of the new St Mark's Community Centre and the scheme at the Queen Street Bus Depot together with public spaces in the town centre such as St Nicholas Square and Balkerne Gate. The deployment of the 'metronet' was being project managed by the companies, and this aimed to provide super-fast broadband and support the continued development and improvement of the closed circuit television (CCTV) network in the town.

Through the forthcoming year, the management of the Council's estate and assets would continue, with the aim of limiting the loss of rental income and securing the

letting of office space at Rowan House which was currently undergoing improvement works.

It was intended that there would be a recovery of the events programme in line with Government guidelines, and it was noted that the demand for weddings had been high following the easing of restrictions. Development of relationships with external public bodies would continue, together with the development of the hospitality offering at the Town Hall.

With regard to the CCTV and Helpline services, the Town Centre CCTV system would be upgraded to a fully digital system with increased coverage and capability, and there would be a digital upgrade of the Helpline operating system to facilitate the expansion of digital services to customers.

Turning to Colchester Amphora Energy, the Committee were advised that in the preceding year the feasibility of the Northern Gateway's Micro Grid which would provide sustainable green energy to the Sports Park and the Northern Gateway. A tender for the installation of the Northern Gateway's Heat Network had also been issued. In the forthcoming year, it was intended to commence construction of the Energy Centre, and to carry out stage 2 of the feasibility report into the Micro Grid which formed part of the ongoing work to support the sustainability aims of the Council.

The Committee heard that Colchester Amphora Homes had made a number of key achievements during 2020-2021 which included the redevelopment of the Creffield Road site into six apartments (two with affordable rent) and two, three bedroom, houses to be completed by July 2021. Construction was proceeding on three garage sites at Buffett Way, Scarfe Way and Hardings Close, with completion due by August 2021 and January 2022 and a review of Phase 2 development sites had been carried out. Looking ahead to 2021-2022, it was hoped that Creffield Road Sales would be complete by August 2021 and progress would be made on the Military Road and Northern Gateway South sites.

With regard to the financial position of CCHL, it was anticipated that profit for redistribution in the forthcoming year would be relatively modest due to the impact of the pandemic, but that this would significantly increase in the years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, as housing stock became available for sale.

The activities and achievements that had been highlighted to the Committee were described as an illustration of the diversity of what the companies had achieved, together with an indication of future activities. The business plan of CCHL was to expand in a controlled manner to ensure that the company could continue to meet the demands of the Council.

Councillor Willetts offered his congratulations on the achievements of CCHL, and noted that CCHL was a national leader in the way it conducted its business, with the dividend realised contributing to the Council's provision of essential services. The Committee were reminded that the Governance and Audit Committee was interested

in the activities of the companies, but also in their financial operation as the Shareholder Committee for CCHL Councillor Willetts noted that CCHL charged the Council a management fee to carry out many of its activities, while at the same time paying the Council for rent and other services, and he wondered what difference the adjustment of any of these fees would make to the dividend available at the end of the financial year. He sought assurance that the dividend of £226,000 that had been paid was the best that could have been achieved under the circumstances.

Paul Smith responded by confirming that the Shareholder Committee could consider what it wished to achieve from the companies, and whether a low or high dividend was sought. He explained by way of example that the Amphora companies did receive a management fee from the Council to cover the internal services provided back to the Council, and in return made use of a number of council services, such as human resources, office space, IT, Fleet, etc which were governed by a number of Service Level Agreements (SLAs). The Companies therefore bare its own operating costs which were no longer accounted for in the Council's budget, as well as hiring services from the Council in addition to delivering a dividend back to the Council. The Committee heard that it was possible to carry out a segmented analysis to explain clearly the management of the different SLAs in effect and their impact on the dividend, but that any information provided in this regard would be subject to commerciality and would have to be presented to the Committee once the public had been excluded.

Councillor Willetts expressed his opinion that the companies were run as very high quality organisations in terms of their management and the services offered, and he wondered whether the level of quality negatively impacted on the dividend available, and whether more profit could be obtained by providing the same services at a medium level of quality.

Paul Smith explained that the companies were heavily governed by the Council by virtue of the Governance and Management Agreements which were in place, and under these agreements, the manner in which the companies were able to procure and operate was tightly controlled. Additionally, of huge importance was the fact that the housing company had been set up to always deliver 30% affordable housing which will impact on the returns that the housing company will be able to make in the future. It was pleasing to note that the companies were doing everything possible to return the highest dividend while at the same time supporting the processes of the Council, local planning policy and Strategic Priorities

Councillor Willetts enquired whether it would be beneficial for the companies to be able to procure goods and services on the open market, and whether this would allow for increased dividends to be paid. It was confirmed that the companies could expand the business with external customers, and it was for the shareholder to consider the future of the company's expansion. To realise the maximum benefit of the companies, they would need to evolve a medium and long term business plan for the CCHL Group to be financially stable in their own right, and not dependent on funding from the Council.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Tate, Andrew Tyrrell confirmed that the broadband network was being rolled out to cover the whole of Colchester, with the Council owning the metronet that was being installed to receive the broadband signal which it would then distribute around Colchester town. The proposed scheme would not cover rural areas due to the cost of the cabling and infrastructure required, however, the Committee were informed that the Council had used its social housing estate in the urban area to link to parts of Colchester that would otherwise not have been serviced by the open market, and as a result of this Greenstead had received broadband access which it might otherwise not have received for ten years. Councillor Willetts noted the inherent difficulty in balancing the need to deliver a profit by providing as many people with access to broadband as possible, with the needs of providing the rural areas with this support.

Councillor Fox enquired about the long term future of Colchester Amphora Homes and future sites that may have been identified for development. He noted that Cabinet had agreed to consult on two different sites, which were the Vineyard Gate and Britannia Road car park which it was hoped would be able to deliver approximately 190 homes, and he enquired what activity would take place in the forthcoming year to deliver these homes.

Andrew Tyrrell confirmed that both sites were still under consideration, together with development in the town centre which had the potential capacity to provide a link between the developments. In terms of the future pipeline of development opportunities, the development at Northern Gateway South represented three to four years of work which would provide 350 homes, and additional sites had been identified in the Local Plan. It was acknowledged that no matter how much land was owned, it would eventually run out, and work is continuous to identify suitable sites for future development.

Councillor Lissimore, Portfolio Holder for Resources, confirmed to the Committee that the Council wished to take as holistic approach as was possible in approaching this issue by liaising closely with as many other local authorities and land owners as possible with the view to obtaining the greatest benefit possible for the people of Colchester. Councillor Fox was pleased to hear this but wondered whether or not bringing additional land into play would create a delay in delivering the homes already identified. Councillor Willetts pointed out that the purpose of the current report before the Committee was to review the year past, but it was Councillor Fox's opinion that the future success of the companies, which the Committee had been asked to consider, was dependent on a constant pipeline of work which would enable the retention of key staff and the continued growth which had been identified as a commercial target. Councillor Lissimore gave an assurance to the Committee that every site that had been identified was to be examined in detail to provide the best return in terms of both profit and social benefit to the people of Colchester.

Councillor Oxford sought clarification on the number of dwellings that were to be built in the Northern Gateway South development. He expressed his pleasure that the Old Library was now being used as a venue, however, he questioned the appropriateness of the picture of a bride and groom being outside the Mayors

Parlour. He asked whether it was intended to provide ultra-fast broadband to Highwoods and Mile End.

It was confirmed that the Council would not be able to provide a fibre broadband network to Highwoods as this area had been contracted to British Telecom, who would be providing the service there. The Panel heard that Colchester Amphora Housing would be providing three hundred and fifty homes at the Northern Gateway South Development, however, the total number of dwellings that would be provided would be seven hundred and twenty five.

In response to a question from Councillor Burrows, Paul Smith confirmed that the events business had been cash driven, particularly with regard to the purchase of food and refreshments at events, and that during the pandemic a review of the logistical difficulties had been considered. A recommendation had been made via an internal audit, and the period of lockdown had been used to transform the way in which payments were taken by the events company, which had necessitated installing a new till system.

Councillor Willetts reminded the Committee that it was being asked to both review the performance of CCHL, and to consider making recommendations to Cabinet in respect of the performance management arrangements of the company for the future that would help to ensure continued growth and the provision of a dividend to the Council.

Paul Smith suggested that if the Committee, acting as Shareholder Committee, wished to consider the future strategy of CCHL, then it may be appropriate to commission a detailed piece of work looking into how CCHL could seek to move away from reliance in being underwritten and funded by the Council. Without consideration being given to this strategy, it was suggested that the companies' potential for expansion and growth would very limited. The Committee were invited to suggest that due consideration be given to the provision of a report by CCHL highlighting the technicalities and legislation governing the companies, and in the light of this to identify the best method of moving forward to build balance sheet strength in the CCHL Group for long term growth and stronger performance.

Given the schedule of forthcoming meetings, it was proposed that a draft minute be prepared for approval of the Chairman and Group Spokespersons to allow the resolution to be considered by Cabinet at its next meeting on 1 September 2021, which occurred prior to the next meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee on 7 September 2021.

**RESOLVED** that:

- The Committee noted that it had reviewed the performance of CCHL (and its subsidiaries) during 2020/21, having regard to the performance information for the year.
- Cabinet be requested to commission CCHL to provide a detailed report examining the best method to develop Balance Sheet strength so CCHL can

be more financially independent, while operating under the Governance and Management Agreement framework which governs the operation of the companies.





**Minute extract from Policy Panel meeting on 4 August 2021: Policy Panel recommendations on the Panel's future Work Programme**

*RECOMMENDED* to CABINET that the Policy Panel be given approval to add the following items to its work programme: -

- (a) A review of planning policies as to how and if existing planning policies are suitably guiding development toward sustainable solutions, given the Council's climate emergency declaration;
- (b) Consideration of the implications associated with the end of the £20 uplift to Universal Credit, and what local support the Council can potentially give to those on low incomes and to address financial inequality within the Borough;
- (c) Review of, and recommendations relating to, proposed Neighbourhood Services Policies (Litter Strategy, Rubbish Bin Policy, Graffiti Policy, Drone Policy);
- (d) River Strategy Development.

*RESOLVED* that the Policy Panel have agreed to the following scheduling of items for its work programme: -

- (a) An update report on Covid memorial options, including ways to consult and collect public opinions and ideas and, if possible, information on costings of different options;
- (b) A review of planning policies as to how and if existing planning policies are suitably guiding development toward sustainable solutions, given the Council's climate emergency declaration [subject to Cabinet approval of this item] on 22 September 2021;
- (e) Consideration of the implications associated with the end of the £20 uplift to Universal Credit, and what local support the Council can potentially give to those on low incomes and to address financial inequality within the Borough [subject to Cabinet approval of this item] on 24 November 2021;
- (c) Review & recommendations relating to proposed Neighbourhood Services Policies (Litter Strategy, Bin policy, Graffiti policy, Drone policy) [subject to Cabinet approval of this item] on 24 November 2021;
- (d) Queens Jubilee celebrations on 12 January 2022;
- (e) River Strategy development on 2 March 2022.

