



Cabinet

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Report of

Chief Operating Officer

Author

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Title

The Better Colchester Strategic Plan 2020-23

**Wards
affected**

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report concerns the draft Strategic Plan 2020-23 (attached). The Strategic Plan sets the priorities for the borough and the Council for the next three years. The current Strategic Plan was published in February 2018 and is set to run to 2021.
- 1.2 Following the unanimous decision of the Council to declare a climate emergency in July 2019, and the New Strategic Priorities agreed as part of the Council's budget strategy and 2020-23 year Medium Term Financial Forecast in February 2020, the Strategic Plan needs to be reviewed and replaced.
- 1.3 The Strategic Plan is one of the core statutory elements of the Council's Policy framework, as set out in Article 4 of the Council's Constitution. It must therefore be adopted by full Council.
- 1.4 The Strategic Plan sets the framework for the Council's three-year Medium Term Financial Forecast and its Capital Programme agreed at Full Council in February.
- 1.5 This new Strategic Plan addresses the key challenges facing the borough by describing 21 priorities organised against five strategic themes which collectively form the Council's vision and reflect the priorities agreed by the Council in 2019/20:
 - Tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability
 - Creating safe, healthy and active communities
 - Delivering homes for people who need them
 - Growing a fair economy so everyone benefits
 - Celebrating our heritage and culture.
- 1.6 For the first time, this proposed new Strategic Plan goes further and sets out the key goals by which success will be measured, together with a clear set of

commitments that will be delivered in the first year of the Plan. These will form the basis for the Strategic Plan Action Plan.

2 Recommended Decisions

- 2.1 To note the progress made in delivering the 2018-21 Strategic Plan and agree that it needs to be refreshed to reflect the Council's priorities.
- 2.2 To agree the Strategic Plan 2020-23 and recommend to full Council that it be adopted.

3 Reason for the Decision

- 3.1 To enable the Strategic Plan 2020-23 to be agreed and adopted.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 The current Strategic Plan expires at the end of 2020-21 but does not reflect significant new priorities agreed by the Council as part of setting its budget strategy and Medium-Term Financial Forecast. Crucially the current Strategic Plan does not reflect the unanimous decision by Full Council to declare a Climate Emergency.
- 4.2 A new plan is required and needs to be adopted by full Council. The absence of a relevant Strategic Plan would create a significant risk of the Council failing to identify and deliver on its core priorities.

5 Background

- 5.1 The Council's Strategic Plan describes the organisation's view of the main priorities for the borough. It covers a three-year time span, although many of the issues it addresses are long-term in nature.
- 5.2 The Strategic Plan 2020-23 sets out five strategic themes:
 - Tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability
 - Creating safe, healthy and active communities
 - Delivering homes for people who need them
 - Growing a fair economy so everyone benefits
 - Celebrating our heritage and culture.
- 5.3 Each strategic theme includes several priorities, which address the key issues facing the borough and each priority includes key goals against which success will be measured, with commitments for delivery in year 1 to provide reassurance.

6 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 6.1 The Strategic Plan 2020-23 will continue to support the importance of equality and diversity in all aspects of borough life.
- 6.2 The Equality Act requires councils to have an equality objective, and the new Plan does that throughout its themes and priorities. An Equality Impact Assessment is available to view on the website [here](#), or by following this pathway from the

homepage – Our Council>How the Council works>Equality and Diversity>Equality Impact Assessments>Corporate and Improvement>Strategic Plan 2020-23.

7 Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 The themes and priorities of the Strategic Plan 2020-23 will be reflected in officer reports to councillors following its adoption by full Council.

8 Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 The Strategic Plan is a key element of the Council's continued external engagement activity. The Council will continue to ensure promotion of strategic activity via new and existing communications channels including direct, in person, in the media, on social media platforms and on its website.
- 8.2 The Council will communicate at key milestones of strategic projects to promote a strong positive reputation for the borough, with half-year updates on the website.

9 Financial implications

- 9.1 The Strategic Plan sets the framework for the Council's three-year Medium Term Financial Forecast and its Capital Programme. The priorities in the proposed Strategic Plan reflect the new strategic priorities agreed by the Council through setting its budget strategy and 2020-23 Medium Term Financial Forecast and provide a clear, coherent framework for future years.
- 9.2 The financial implications of delivering the Strategic Plan priorities are incorporated into the annual budgeting process.

10 Community Safety Implications

- 10.1 Community Safety remains a key component in this Strategic Plan. This is clearly identified in the "Create safe, healthy and active communities" strategic aim, and the priority to "improve community safety".
- 10.2 The specific goals to address issues around community safety, and the prevention of crime and disorder include:
- Work with Essex police and other partners to reduce anti-social behaviour and tackle serious crimes
 - Improve cleanliness and community safety in the town centre
 - Upgrade and extend the CCTV network to reach more places.

11 Health and Safety Implications

- 11.1 There are no Health and Safety implications from the Strategic Plan.

12 Risk Management Implications

- 12.1 As action plans to deliver the Strategic Plan 2020-23 are developed, risks will be identified and addressed.
- 12.2 The absence of a Strategic Plan, or the retention of a Strategic Plan that is no longer fit for purpose, would create risks for the Council failing to deliver on its core priorities and use of resources.
- 12.3 The introduction of a new strategic plan, one year early, is a direct response to some of the key risks in the Strategic Risk Register, such as potential impacts on spending power and partnership delivery, and it will ensure that the whole organisation is focused a clearly understood, single set of priorities.

13 Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 13.1 The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and has committed to being carbon neutral by 2030. This is one of the key reasons why the Strategic Plan needs to be replaced a year earlier than anticipated, to ensure that the Council's Strategic Plan reflects the urgency of this commitment.
- 13.2 This is clearly identified in the "Tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability" strategic theme, and the priorities and goals within that.
- 13.3 It is expected that setting out such a clear commitment to the environment and sustainability, agreeing measurable goals and year 1 commitments will enable the Council to deliver real improvement and be held to account.

Appendices

Appendix 1: The draft Strategic Plan 2020-23.

Appendix 2: Summary of policy, research and consultation – examples of sources that have informed the draft Strategic Plan 2020-23.