

Scrutiny Panel Meeting

**Grand Jury Room, Town Hall, High Street,
Colchester, CO1 1PJ**

Tuesday, 14 February 2023 at 18:00

The Scrutiny Panel examines the policies and strategies from a City-wide perspective and ensure the actions of the Cabinet accord with the Council's policies and budget. The Panel reviews corporate strategies that form the Council's Strategic Plan, Council partnerships and the Council's budgetary

guidelines, and scrutinises Cabinet or Portfolio Holder decisions which have been called in.

Information for Members of the Public

Access to information and meetings

You have the right to attend all meetings of the Council, its Committees and Cabinet. You also have the right to see the agenda (the list of items to be discussed at a meeting), which is usually published five working days before the meeting, and minutes once they are published. Dates of the meetings are available here:

<https://colchester.cmis.uk.com/colchester/MeetingCalendar.aspx>.

Most meetings take place in public. This only changes when certain issues, for instance, commercially sensitive information or details concerning an individual are considered. At this point you will be told whether there are any issues to be discussed in private, if so, you will be asked to leave the meeting.

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Access

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Scrutiny Panel – Terms of Reference

1. To fulfil all the functions of an overview and scrutiny committee under section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and in particular (but not limited to):

- (a) To review corporate strategies;
- (b) To ensure that actions of the Cabinet accord with the policies and budget of the Council;
- (c) To monitor and scrutinise the financial performance of the Council, performance reporting and to make recommendations to the Cabinet particularly in relation to annual revenue and capital guidelines, bids and submissions;
- (d) To review the Council's spending proposals to the policy priorities and review progress towards achieving those priorities against the Strategic and Implementation Plans;
- (e) To review the financial performance of the Council and to make recommendations to the Cabinet in relation to financial outturns, revenue and capital expenditure monitors;
- (f) To review or scrutinise executive decisions made by Cabinet, the North Essex Parking Partnership Joint Committee (in relation to decisions relating to off-street matters only) and the Colchester and Ipswich Joint Museums Committee which have been made but not implemented referred to the Panel pursuant to the Call-In Procedure;
- (g) To review or scrutinise executive decisions made by Portfolio Holders and officers taking key decisions which have been made but not implemented referred to the Panel pursuant to the Call-In Procedure;
- (h) To monitor the effectiveness and application of the Call-In Procedure, to report on the number and reasons for Call-In and to make recommendations to the Council on any changes required to ensure the efficient and effective operation of the process;
- (i) To review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of functions which are not the responsibility of the Cabinet;
- (j) At the request of the Cabinet, to make decisions about the priority of referrals made in the event of the volume of reports to the Cabinet or creating difficulty for the management of Cabinet business or jeopardising the efficient running of Council business;

2. To fulfil all the functions of the Council's designated Crime and Disorder Committee ("the Committee") under the Police and Justice Act 2006 and in particular (but not limited to):

- (a) To review and scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions;
- (b) To make reports and recommendations to the Council or the Cabinet with respect to the discharge of those functions.

COLCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
Scrutiny Panel
Tuesday, 14 February 2023 at 18:00

The Scrutiny Panel Members are:

Councillor Dennis Willetts
Councillor Sue Lissimore
Councillor Darius Laws
Councillor Mike Lilley
Councillor Sam McCarthy
Councillor Lee Scordis
Councillor Paul Smith

Chairman
Deputy Chairman

The Scrutiny Panel Substitute Members are:

All members of the Council who are not Cabinet members or members of this Panel.

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.

1 Welcome and Announcements

The Chairman will welcome members of the public and Councillors and remind everyone to use microphones at all times when they are speaking. The Chairman will also explain action in the event of an emergency, mobile phones switched to silent, audio-recording of the meeting. Councillors who are members of the committee will introduce themselves.

2 Substitutions

Councillors will be asked to say if they are attending on behalf of a Committee member who is absent.

3 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.

4 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 registerable interest or non-registerable interest.

5 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Councillors will be invited to confirm that the minutes of the meetings held on 16 January 2023 and 24 January 2023 are correct records.

Scrutiny Panel Minutes 13 December 2022 9 - 16

Scrutiny Panel Minutes 16 January 2023 17 - 22

Scrutiny Panel Minutes 24 January 2023 23 - 32

6 Have Your Say!

The Chairman will invite members of the public to indicate if they wish to speak or present a petition on any item included on the agenda or any other matter relating to the terms of reference of the meeting. Please indicate your wish to speak at this point if your name has not been noted by Council staff.

7 Decisions taken under special urgency provisions

The Councillors will consider any decisions by the Cabinet or a Portfolio Holder which have been taken under Special Urgency provisions.

8 Cabinet or Portfolio Holder Decisions called in for Review

The Councillors will consider any Cabinet or Portfolio Holder decisions called in for review.

9 Items requested by members of the Panel and other Members

(a) To evaluate requests by members of the Panel for an item relevant to the Panel's functions to be considered.

(b) To evaluate requests by other members of the Council for an item relevant to the Panel's functions to be considered.

Members of the panel may use agenda item 'a' (all other members will use agenda item 'b') as the appropriate route for referring a 'local government matter' in the context of the Councillor Call for Action to the panel. Please refer to the panel's terms of reference for further procedural arrangements.

10 Portfolio Holder Briefing from Councillor Pam Cox [Portfolio Holder for Culture and Heritage]

- 11 **Portfolio Holder Briefing from Cllr David King [Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy]**
- 12 **Work Programme 2022-23** 33 - 48
This report sets out the current Work Programme 2022-2023 for the Scrutiny Panel. This provides details of the reports that are scheduled for each meeting during the municipal year.
- 13 **Exclusion of the Public (Scrutiny)**
In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in accordance with The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended) to exclude the public, including the press, from the meeting so that any items containing exempt information (for example confidential 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)

SCRUTINY PANEL

13 December 2022

Present:- Cllr Willetts (Chair), Cllr Laws, Cllr Lilley, Cllr McCarthy, Cllr Scordis, Cllr Smith

Substitute Members:- None

Also in Attendance:- Cllr Fox, Cllr King

375. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2022 were confirmed as a true record.

376. Items requested by Members of the panel and other Members

Councillor Willetts proposed that the Council's intended response to the LGA Peer Challenge be brought to Scrutiny Panel for consideration before a report is considered for decision by Cabinet.

The Panel considered the briefing note which it had received on the Council's approach to insurance, and its policies, noting that it did not consider that there were any indications of systematic failures and that it showed the Council had an effective approach to insurance matters. The Panel judged that the document had been useful and that further consideration by the Panel was not necessary at this time.

Owen Howell, Democratic Services Officer noted that the previously requested item on Cabinet's approach to negotiation with Alumno [regarding the previously proposed development of a mixed residential/retail site between Firstsite and Queen Street] might soon be able to be scheduled. The Chairman explained that a recent judgement had ruled that Alumno's legal action could not be taken forward, which could potentially mean that this item could soon be scheduled, subject to the Monitoring Officer's advice. The Panel discussed what exactly it would wish to see contained in that review, noting the wish to avoid covering matters which had concluded where limited value could be gained for the future. It was suggested that a review would give an opportunity to cover Cabinet decision making on what had proved to be a controversial matter, and on which details had yet to be seen, particularly in light of widespread public concern at the time. A Panel member queried whether decision making by the County Council could likewise be examined.

Councillor King, Leader of the Council, agreed that it would be reasonable for Scrutiny Panel to examine the issue to seek lessons to be learned, particularly given the controversial nature of the plans which had been previously proposed for the site in question. The Leader urged caution, as the matter [including the legal aspects] was not yet concluded, with the possibility for further legal aspects to arise. Good work was now being done with Essex County Council [ECC] and the Leader highlighted that an examination of the subject in question would necessitate going over a time and actions when the relationship between ECC and the Council was more fractious.

The Panel further considered the matter, noting that the decision-making processes could be examined, but with a view given that this was not what most people were concerned about. It was suggested by Panel members that it would not be possible to examine at this time the aspects which would be of greatest interest to the public, including whether the plans that had been previously proposed represented a good deal for the Council, or the relationship between Cabinet and Alumno during the relevant periods of time.

RESOLVED that SCRUTINY PANEL would: -

- a) Review at a future meeting the Council's intended response to the LGA Peer Challenge before a report is considered for decision by Cabinet
- b) Not, at this time, request an item regarding the Council's approach to insurance and its insurance policies
- c) Defer any consideration of the relationship and negotiations between Cabinet and Almuno, regarding the previously proposed Queen Street development, until the Monitoring Officer could provide a view as to when this would be possible, being dependent as to when this could be conducted in open public session of the Panel

377. Portfolio Holder Briefing from Councillor Fox [Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Local Economy and Transformation]]

Councillor Fox, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Local Economy and Transformation, presented highlights from work being conducted relating to his portfolio. This included the City Centre Masterplan, working with ECC and other partners to deliver for the centre of Colchester, working cross-party. The current public engagement process was nearing its conclusion and very positive responses had been received. A new Strategic Plan was also currently being worked upon, with consultations feeding into it. Budget pressures were key factors determining much of what could be included in this Plan. The Deputy Leader gave examples as to how the Council had developed and evolved, and how residents' needs and wants had also changed over time.

A new app had been developed by the Council, working with partners, to improve the reporting of issues and charting of resolutions carried out by officers. Should this prove successful, the app could be marketed for sale to other local authorities.

A list of events held for the public in Colchester was given, including cycling, concerts, art events and more. Significant challenges existed for the sport and leisure sectors. Examples included chlorine shortages for use in swimming pools like at Leisure World. Assurance was given that the Council's team was working well to ensure services kept going.

The work of officers on transformation and change was outlined. The importance of the Council championing the local economy, with its partners and the business community, was underlined. There continued to be a need to support businesses and investment across the Colchester area. The North Essex Economic Board was looking at options for training and development, such as retrofitting opportunities in house building, health and care sectors and in the development of health and care technology.

The work of the Member Development Group continued, with a new Code of Conduct being drafted, revised meeting procedure rules and the taking forward of member development plans, designed to help councillors to undertake their roles. Work had also

continued on how to make improvements based on the findings of the Charter Status process.

The Panel considered the briefing provided, with a point being made that there were now multiple centres across the Colchester area, including the traditional centre of Colchester, Tollgate and the Northern Gateway. The Deputy Leader agreed that Colchester would not be as it was in the past and outlined the benefits of out-of-town centres for retail, addressing different demands to the city core. The Council's aim was to compliment what was already in existence, rather than to cause competition, balancing different interests and maximising our regional attractions, including tourist attractions such as Wivenhoe, Dedham and Rowhedge. The Northern Gateway development would continue to pursue a mix of entertainment and sport options.

The Panel discussed the additional costs facing facilities such as Leisure World. Energy costs had increased, but there were currently no plans to reduce pool temperature. The Council had tough targets on controlling its power consumption and would look at new ways to provide heating. The Deputy Leader confirmed that he received updates from Colchester Commercial Holdings Ltd [CCHL], and the Council had governance structures in place. The Portfolio Holder himself did not directly intervene in these structures, where oversight was provided by the CCHL Board and the Council's Governance and Audit Committee. The Pandemic had had major effects on the CCHL companies, and it had been judged an appropriate time for the Council to review their structure and to see if they remained the appropriate way in which to approach the work they undertook. Such corporate structures were relatively new in local government, so it was important to review arrangements.

Answering questions as to how work was conducted with the Board of CCHL, the Deputy Leader explained that he held regular meetings with the directors of CCHL. The companies had been set up to deliver a commercial attitude, different to the approach taken to delivering other Council services. This covered a breadth of work, including providing a new energy/heating network and new housing, including some built for commercial purposes.

A Panel member gave the view that the provision of leisure and entertainment options was moving Northwards, making them harder to access for residents in the South of the Colchester area. The Deputy Leader was asked if he agreed that transport options were lacking and failing residents, especially those relying on public transport. The Deputy Leader gave assurance that there were no plans to move Leisure World or its services, with the Council acutely aware of the needs for facilities to be available for residents across the area. Sport and Leisure activities should be dispersed across the area, with a particular problem being that Colchester was under-resourced with swimming facilities, which needed to be addressed.

Agreement was given by the Deputy Leader that bus routes were outdated and that bus companies delivered the services that suited their interests, not those of residents. The planned Rapid Transit System [RTS] would provide a link from the East, into the City and then to the North. This meant that it would be a good time to review transport links across the area, and the Deputy Leader argued that there would be no point building a new bus station unless bus routes were improved and made more convenient for passengers. The Council had no power over bus provision, but it was important that the Council gave its views on what transport services were needed, even when control lay with ECC.

The Deputy Leader praised the officers who continued working to deliver services, through

a number of very challenging years, including the Pandemic and the current economic challenges. Budget constraints and inflation made it hard to deliver services and the capital programme. The Deputy Leader explained that the Council would work with CCHL and CBH to share services, and potentially with other local authorities and local organisations. This could potentially include the sharing of senior roles with others, especially where recruitment proved to be difficult. The Council remained a 'Living Wage Employer', although the cost of living had hit staff, especially those on lower pay grades. Any pay awards would be targeted at lower-income officers.

The Chairman thanked the Deputy Leader for his briefing and for answering the Panel's questions.

378. Colchester's Economic Strategy 2022-25

Councillor Fox, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Local Economy and Transformation, introduced the report and explained that the Strategy updated the Council's priorities as to how to boost the local economy, increase infrastructure (such as roads, healthcare, digital economy and broadband coverage), improve pay levels and inspire new projects.

Matt Sterling, Strategic Economic Growth Manager, explained that the Economic Strategy was closely linked to the Housing Strategy, and that it set out high-level priorities, alongside specific projects and actions and fitted these into an action plan. The three main strands of the strategy were firstly data (including economic trends, information and the strategy's evidence base), secondly engagement (with business and public sector representatives, one-to-one and partnership meetings), and thirdly an understanding of the Administration's priorities. All the priorities were intended to boost all parts of the area, urban and rural.

Inclusive economic growth was to be supported, with focus on business innovation and increasing the availability of skills. The Council aimed to leverage additional investment and infrastructure spending, whilst aiming to decarbonise and foster environmental sustainability. The Action Plan would set out how the Council intended to realise its aims.

Work was planned with ECC and the University of Essex on developing new care tech ideas and products. Detailed plans would be produced to court investments.

A digital work hub would be created to serve small technology businesses, alongside a new training hub. Details were given of grants won to increase the amount of training provided locally. A bid for the second round of levelling up funding was described. This included £20m for the city centre, and was accompanied by a bid for £500k from the rural prosperity fund.

The wide range of partnerships was described, including with the North Essex Economic Board, the University and with Colchester Ambassadors. These partnerships supported start up business and firms conducting importing and exporting.

Colbea advised on how to reduce business costs and emissions, assisted by ECC.

A Panel member raised concern that the Strategy did not contain much detail as to where the Council wanted to see Colchester in three-years-time, and what achievements it expected to see in that time, should the Strategy and action plan be carried out successfully. The Strategy did not spell out how residents of deprived areas would be

targeted and how to convert the Strategy into results.

The Strategic Economic Growth Manager confirmed that specific targets to improve life chances were a key priority for him. Regarding predictions and expected outcomes, caution was given that it was likely that the more specific predictions were, the less ambitious the plans would be. It was hard to predict the next three years, but the Strategy was to give a clear sense of what the Council would do and for what it would aim. Targets would be set for each year and progress reports produced. The Strategy committed the Council to areas of activity and annual targets would flow from that.

The Panel considered the Strategy in comparison to those of other local authorities and queried what the unique selling points were for Colchester's Strategy. It was asked whether similarities to other plans were inevitable. The Strategic Economic Growth Manager gave assurance that similarities were not surprising, given that tier 2 local authorities had the same powers as each other, the same core responsibilities and similar needs. It was elements such as the commitment to a real living wage which differentiated Colchester's Strategy from many others. The Council was performing well in achieving its targets and more information would be in the development plan and outcomes reports.

More information was requested on what would be done to encourage tourism and whether infrastructure such as the Rapid Transit System (RTS) would give opportunities for new conference facilities and tourist options. The Strategic Economic Growth Manager confirmed work would be conducted on encouraging tourism and visits, within the Strategy. Focus on specific sectors had been avoided in this Strategy, but a bespoke tourism strategy was being considered, as this was a crucial part of the local economy.

The positives shown by the Strategy were discussed, including work with the University and the growth figures shown compared to those elsewhere. Increased income and value could be used to lead to higher wages and salaries. Significant amounts had been spent on training and the tech sector already in the years examined, and large amounts of data gathered relating to this.

The Leader summarised the Strategy as a prospectus to lay out the Council's way ahead, utilising good data and good people to set how the City positioned itself. Partnership with others, including businesses, would be key and was much more effective than it had formerly been.

The Leader and officers were asked what the Council's approach would be towards the large scale migration of workers who lived in Colchester but worked elsewhere. Colchester benefited from the spending of their income, but not from their skills and labour. The Strategic Economic Growth Manager confirmed that his team had considered this issue and that it was included within the evidence base for the Strategy. The move to home working was a widespread trend and move away from commuting. This represented an opportunity to keep people in higher-paid jobs based in Colchester, but also a challenge as individuals could reside here but work elsewhere.

The Deputy Leader noted that the delivery plan would likely give the details requested by the Panel and that it would be key to see the additional funding leveraged on the back of the funding awards won by the Council. The Chairman expressed the assurance that the Panel had received from the Strategic Economic Growth Manager that metrics would be included in the delivery plan.

The Chairman thanked the Strategic Economic Growth Manager and confirmed that the Panel noted the quality and thoroughness of the report and Strategy, and did not wish to make any formal recommendations to Cabinet.

379. Half Year April – September 2022 Performance Report Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and Other Performance News

Councillor David King, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, introduced the report as a clear read, including the showing of where the Council had fallen short or faced challenges. Caution was given that, given the financial pressures, there was a need to examine budget consequences from where extremely high performance was achieved, and the opportunity cost of increasing performance in different areas. Panel members agreed with the importance of balancing performance achievements with the draw they required on officers and finances.

The Panel considered the performance indicators and it was noted that most of the 'red' KPI figures had been habitually so, and for understandable reasons. Performance on sickness leave was discussed, attributable to a number of reasons. The Panel accepted that the causes of sickness levels were not being ignored.

The Panel considered performance in collection of garden waste. It was suggested that not all residents could compost all garden waste. Richard Block, Chief Operating Officer, explained that collection of garden waste would become a statutory duty, via the Environment Act 2021, and that the Council would need to consider whether or not to charge for collections.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Panel has reviewed performance against Key Performance Indicators and, where Key Performance Indicators have not been met, ascertained that appropriate corrective action has been taken.

380. Half Year covering April to September 2022 Performance Report - 2020-2023 Strategic Plan Action Plan

Councillor David King, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, extolled the improvements in how these documents were presented, in a clearer way than in previous years. The challenge was to connect the Strategic Plan with the means to deliver and the resources available.

The Panel considered the report and the Chairman noted that no major issues were evident within it, and that any recommendations to Cabinet should only be on major issues.

A Panel member highlighted that the inflation assumption for this year had been set at 2% and that the difference between assumption and reality had serious implications for the Council. The Council continued to do its best in very difficult circumstances, but it was impossible to provide the same services on a smaller income and with higher costs. An example given was Leisure World, where energy costs were much higher and income to the Council therefore lowered.

The Leader explained that the time lag between crises and effects meant that it was likely that effects of the 'cost of living crisis' would be reflected in the coming municipal year and the new Strategic Plan. The Council was just managing at present, but services at current levels could not continue indefinitely, with the Council mindful of the stresses on residents

that council tax had.

The Panel agreed that, at present. There were no areas of concern on which it wished to make recommendations.

381. Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24

Adam Wood, Benefits and Support Manager, explained the proposal to increase entitlement from 80% up to 85%. Around 5,500 households were affected, amongst those which had been most hit by UK economic problems. The cost of this change would be around £40k extra per year, expected to be recovered elsewhere such as by reducing write-offs and recovery costs. An overview was given of the consultation responses received.

The Panel discussed the importance of payment requirements being matched to ability to pay, with a need for increased generosity on the part of the Council at this time. In response to questions, the Benefits and Support Manager confirmed that there had been an increase in cancellations of direct debit orders in the past year. A Panel member suggested that direct debits could be promoted as being the easiest way to receive automatic payment of disbursements from Government, such as the recent £150 rebate on council tax, automatically paid to those who were on direct debit schemes.

The Panel agreed that the proposed changes were necessary, the additional cost was not large, and that the Scheme should be recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDED to CABINET that the proposed LCTS scheme for 2023/24 be approved.

382. Work Programme 2022-2023

The Panel agreed two additional dates for meetings in 2022-23, for 16 January 2023 and 15 March 2023.

RESOLVED that the work programme for 2022-2023 be approved, with the addition of new meeting dates on 16 January 2023 and 15 March 2023.

SCRUTINY PANEL

16 January 2023

Present: - Councillor Laws, Councillor Lilley, Councillor Lissimore, Councillor McCarthy, Councillor Scordis, Councillor Smith, Councillor Willetts

Substitutions: - None

Also present: - Councillors Fox and King

375. Local Government Association Peer Challenge Action Plan

The Panel received a report from the Chief Operating Officer inviting it to consider the report on the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Challenge Action Plan submitted to Cabinet and inviting it to make recommendations to Cabinet. The Chief Operating Officer attended the meeting to present the report and to assist the Panel.

The Chief Operating Officer stressed the importance and impartiality of the LGA Process. The Peer Review process was a key element of sector lead effectiveness and improvement. The Peer Challenge team was constituted of senior Councillors and officers and they had met over 150 people over the course of three days. The team used a process known as triangulation whereby an issue had to be raised or mentioned three times before it was considered for inclusion in the review. The report and Action Plan addressed the key recommendations made by the Peer Review. The Peer Review Team had also given advice on a wide range of other issues which was being addressed and tracked internally.

Councillor Lilley indicated that he had received a number of queries from a resident, Nick Chilvers, relating to the Peer Review recommendations in respect of Colchester Commercial Holdings Ltd. These had been forwarded to the Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee, who as the Stakeholder Committee, were best placed to address the issues raised.

With the consent of the Chair, a written submission from Councillor Sunnucks was read to the Panel. This stressed the need for the Panel to request proper financial appraisals for all capital project items as part of the Peer Challenge actions. These needed to be hard headed examination of alternative ways of delivering the same outcomes. For example, the Heart of Greenstead project was intended to revitalise a community, but a financial analysis would reveal whether it was being done in the most cost-effective way. With the Northern Gateway project the Council needed to be tracking the pre-let situation as it was taking the majority of the risk. In terms of the investment in social housing, the Council was purchasing housing at market prices and incurring interest costs that fell short of the rent. This was unsustainable

and new approaches that reflected new market conditions were required. It was vital that these appraisals were properly scrutinised by Councillors. The projects would affect Colchester for years to come, and confused appraisals would produce wrong conclusions, as was demonstrated by the proposed West Tey Garden Community project.

The Chair explained that he believed that it was the role of the Panel to look at the overall plan of the projects rather than look at the individual projects in this level of detail.

The Chair indicated that the Panel should first consider whether the Action Plan had identified the most significant issues in the Peer Review report. It should then consider whether the projects in the Action Plan were well defined, properly scoped, with realistic descriptions of the required work and timetable.

Members of the Panel noted that not all the concerns raised by the Peer Review were addressed by the Action Plan, highlighting for example that the concerns around duplication of efforts across the different tiers of local government, scrutiny and diversity, and the recommendation that KPIs were reviewed were not referenced in the Action Plan. The Chief Operating Officer explained that the Key Performance Indicators were being reviewed so that they reflected the new financial realities. The revised KPIs would be reviewed by the Panel at its meeting in March 2023. The Chief Operating Officer reminded the Panel that the Action Plan addressed the key recommendations only and that other issues were being followed up and monitored. There was clear ownership of these issues by named officers. The document tracking these other issues would be circulated to the Panel following the meeting and could be reviewed the Panel in future if it wished. It could also recommend to Cabinet that other issues be included in the Action Plan if it felt they were particularly significant. The Peer Challenge team would review progress against their key recommendations in July, and it was open to the Panel to look again at progress against the Action Plan next municipal year, after this review had taken place.

The Panel indicated that it should look again at the Action Plan again in the next municipal year. It was satisfied that the Action Plan had picked up the most important issues identified by the Peer Review Team and that action was underway to deal with other advice and issues identified. The Panel did not consider that it was necessary to schedule a review of the work on the advice and issues below the key recommendations at this point. Members of the Panel could raise any issues they were concerned about once they had reviewed the tracking document.

The Panel then scrutinised each of the key recommendations in the Action Plan in turn.

1. Focus on City Status. Use this as an opportunity to galvanise partners, improve the Borough's economic and cultural strength and raise the voice of Colchester.

The Panel explored the relationship between this recommendation and recommendation 3. It was suggested that this item was about the work relating to the award of City Status and the creation of a framework for a higher profile and greater investment, whilst the actual work of attracting investment and prospective employers would fall under recommendation three.

Councillor King, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, explained that there had been clear discussion with the Policy Panel, other members and partners on the way ahead and the Council would be working with partners and ambassadors to make the most of what the city had to offer. Whilst they were linked there was a clear difference between this recommendation and recommendation 3. The evidence was clear that the award of City Status did give an extra sense of place. It also provided a stronger voice and higher profile with opportunities to network and influence. This translated to investment and social and well-being improvements.

In discussion Panel members explored what benefits City Status would bring to outlying areas of the City, such as Rowhedge. It was likely to generate tourism which would benefit rural and coastal areas in particular. Councillor King emphasised the importance of engaging with communities beyond the city centre. There needed to be an appreciation that Colchester now had multiple centres, including Stanway and Northern Gateway, and of the richness of different parts of the city. City Status should bring more investment and more and better jobs right across the City.

The importance of communications and marketing work was also emphasised to ensure residents remained on board. Whilst it was appreciated that resources were limited, it was important that organisations such as Visit Colchester and the High Steward were involved and this was not clear from the Action Plan. In terms of the Year of Celebration it was suggested by a member of the Panel that Colchester's Roman links were its USP and this should be exploited as far as possible. The Council should seek to learn from the experience of other towns recently awarded City Status. There had also been some missed opportunities which needed to be addressed such as signage, particularly at and from Colchester North Station, and public transport. For instance, there was scope for a Colchester card or app giving access to multiple attractions.

In response the Chief Operating Officer explained that the Council had been in contact with Chelmsford and Southend to benefit from their experiences following the award of City Status. The Panel also needed to bear in mind that the actions involved in bringing forward these recommendations were extensive and that the Panel should consider if there were particular elements that it wished to review and keep oversight of.

Councillor King thanked the Panel for the points raised which would be considered further as the work to build in City Status went forward, although it needed to be appreciated that they were not all straightforward or within the control of the Council.

The Panel considered that all the points that had been raised fell within the framework set out in the Action Plan and that therefore no recommendation was needed to be made to Cabinet in respect of this element of the Action Plan.

2. Get a firmer grip on the capital programme – manage all risks and improve your planning to ensure you have appropriate strategic finance, programme and project capacity and the resources to deliver

Councillor King explained that the capital programme demonstrated the ambition of the Council and was larger and more ambitious than other authorities of a similar size. Whilst it brought considerable benefits to the economy and thus to residents, it needed to be managed well. Cabinet had seen signs of slippage in the programme, and recent national economic problems had compounded the difficulties caused by the pandemic. A review of the capital programme was now underway, looking at the aims of the programme, funding and the level of contingency. The outcome of the review would be reported as soon as practicable.

The Panel considered that the proposed response to the recommendation was well defined and demonstrated that the issues were well understood. There was a clear timetable and an appropriate allocation of resources. There was therefore no need to make a recommendation in respect of this element of the Action Plan.

3. Co-design a compelling and longer-term place based narrative/city vision to define Colchester for the future

The Panel considered that the response to this recommendation needed to be wider than that it was defined in the Action Plan. This referenced the work on legacy from City Status and the development of the Strategic Plan. However, it considered that this needed to be much wider in scope. It should include clear links to the Strategic Plan, the City Centre Masterplan, legacy connections and address longer term place based issues such as public transport.

4. Strengthen your political and officer “leaders of place” roles and look beyond Colchester – map your anchor institutions, partners and stakeholders

The Chief Operating Officer explained that the steps set out in the Action Plan were the first step in the response to this recommendation. It was important to map key partners and anchor institutions in order to ensure officer and member time was spent effectively in building relationships. Councillor King explained that relationships were being built nationally and internationally and the Council was looking to build on the experience of the University.

The Panel considered that this response required better definition and that it would be better if it was owned by a defined officer, rather than a group. Whilst officer and executive member roles were well defined, it was suggested that non-executive

member roles were less well defined. All councillors had a role as local leaders. The Action Plan should also explain how relationships would be strengthened once the mapping process was complete.

5. Review your priorities and projects and refocus on delivering “Brilliant Business As Usual” and strengthen your corporate resources

The Panel considered that the response to this recommendation was well defined and had a clear timetable. However, it should highlight the linkages between the Strategic Plan and the budget and be more explicit as to how resources would be matched to meet corporate priorities.

The Chief Operating Officer explained that the Panel would have the opportunity to review the budget and Strategic Plan objectives and may wish to keep this recommendation in mind when it did so.

6. Strongly consider whether changing your election cycle will help you achieve your goals, ambitions and deliver improved services for Colchester residents

The Panel noted that the Working Group established by Full Council to examine options for the electoral cycle would be holding its first meeting in February 2023. The Boundary Review was a key factor in the consideration of this issue and the Panel considered that this need to be explicitly mentioned in the Action Plan and timetable.

7. Better define with your staff what “hybrid working” means for Colchester City Council and provide a clear definition. Also clarify how the new Colchester City Council values will be designed and embedded, communicating to staff how these define the Council and will help achieve Colchester’s ambition.

The Panel considered that the response to this recommendation was reasonably well defined with clear tasks and a timetable and that therefore no recommendation to Cabinet was necessary.

8. Commission an independent review of Colchester Commercial Holdings Ltd and its subsidiaries, also undertake an internal review of Colchester Borough Homes to assess whether the companies are realising the benefits they were established to deliver.

The Panel noted that actions outlined and the proposed timetable in the Action Plan, It was noted that the actions were well underway and that the initial risk assessment of CCHL was due to be reported to Governance and Audit Committee on 17 February 2023. In the circumstances, the Panel did not consider that it was necessary to make a recommendation to Cabinet.

RESOLVED that the Panel review the Peer Review Action Plan again during the course of the 2023-24 municipal year.

RECOMMENDED to CABINET that it consider the following amendments to the Peer Review Action Plan:-

(a) Recommendation 3 (*Co-design a compelling and longer term place based narrative/city vision to define Colchester for the future*) to be more clearly defined as it was wider than the sole reference to City Status in the Action Plan implied. It should include clear links to the Strategic Plan, City Centre Masterplan and legacy connections and other longer-term place based issues, such as public transport.

(b) Recommendation 4 (*Strengthen your political and officer “leaders of place” roles and look beyond Colchester – map your anchor institutions, partners and stakeholders*) to include a wider reference to the role of all Councillors as community leaders and to explain how relationships with anchor institutions, partners and stakeholders would be strengthened following the mapping exercise.

(c) Recommendation 5 (*Review your priorities and projects and refocus on delivering “Brilliant Business as Usual” and strengthen your corporate resources*) to highlight the linkages between the Strategic Plan and the budget and to show how resources will be matched to meet priorities.

(d) Recommendation 6 (*Strongly consider whether changing your election cycle will help you achieve your goals, ambitions, and deliver improved services for Colchester’s communities*) to include a timeline and highlight the Boundary Commission review as an essential milestone in the timeline.

376. Work Programme

The Chair confirmed that there were no changes required to the work programme for 2022-23 and no issues were raised by the Panel.

RESOLVED that the work programme 2022-23 be noted.

SCRUTINY PANEL

24 January 2023

Present:- Cllr Willetts (Chair), Cllr Laws, Cllr Lilley, Cllr McCarthy, Cllr Scordis, Cllr Smith

Substitute Member:- Cllr Sunnucks for Cllr Lissimore

Also in Attendance:- Cllr Cory, Cllr Fox, Cllr King, Cllr Mclean

377. Briefing by Portfolio Holder for Resources [focus on Budget 2023-24]

Councillor Mark Cory, Portfolio Holder for Resources gave a briefing on the highlights and main areas of work within his remit, which extended across all operations of the Council. Positives included the improved use of assets, via the Council's Asset Management Strategy, sweating or disposing of assets, as appropriate. Land purchases were conducted where these were prudent.

The Portfolio Holder explained that the Northern Gateway project included a new 'Health Campus' and would be a base for local organisations and new businesses.

The refurbishment of the Rowan House office was continuing, with the office being upgraded to be a low-carbon, environmentally- and economically-efficient site, with part of the site to be leased to Essex County Council. Dynamic working would continue for staff and a pay deal had been agreed with Unison, avoiding strike action.

The Scrutiny Panel was briefed on the Levelling Up Fund bid, investment into Colchester and partnership work of the Council, including with Essex County Council. Greater resilience was being sought, with difficult decisions to be taken in 2023-24's budget to ensure this. A sustainable Medium Term Financial Forecast would help ensure services, lowering costs and increasing income, minimising use of reserves and exercising restraint on use of New Homes Bonus money.

The Portfolio Holder was asked about the Council's leasing arrangements, and whether there were opportunities to simplify 'messy' leasing arrangements, such as regarding Rowan House. The Portfolio Holder agreed that there were some instances where leasing was more complicated than the Council would like. The Asset Management Strategy would be used to seek improvements to these. The leasing on Rowan House had been constructed to ensure that use and income from the lease would be advantageous to the Council.

The Panel requested information as to how the Council was improving disabled access to Council buildings such as Rowan House and the Town Hall. Rowan House access was being improved in the renovation and work was underway to fix the control mechanism in the Town Hall lift, now a replacement part had been sourced. The lift had remained safe and operable, but had required a system to be introduced for the Council's custodians to call the lift to the required floors.

The Portfolio Holder answered questions on asbestos management and removal from Council properties, giving assurance that asbestos was being managed or addressed wherever it was found. Colchester Borough Homes managed this work. There was no indication of any problems with this work, but it was being considered as part of the overall review of the work of the company.

A Panel member enquired about the financing of the Northern Gateway project. The Portfolio Holder explained that some of the project's risks had been partially mitigated by an asset strip, with simplification to be sought at the end of the leasing agreements.

The Portfolio Holder was asked how the Northern Gateway lettings were being monitored, how these were accounted for and commercial lettings treated. The Portfolio Holder explained that the Council was working with Turnstone Ltd over time to achieve the best leases possible. The Council maintained its commitment to not granting leases for retail outlets, in order to avoid competing with other centres such as Tollgate and the City Centre. Site management had been outsourced to a professional external service provider. There were still gaps on site, but it was expected that more restaurants would take units once footfall increases.

There was currently a cinema asset included within Northern Gateway, but the Portfolio Holder explained that, given the situation with Cineworld, it might be that an alternative company may end up running this asset. The Northern Gateway project would still be profitable without Cineworld, but the Council was still hopeful for greater income. The Portfolio Holder was asked if the cinema asset was an item on the project balance sheet and, if it wasn't, why it wasn't. It was also asked whether revaluation would be carried out as the project went forward. Paul Cook, Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer, offered to circulate a briefing note to cover the information required. The Portfolio Holder explained that the situation was currently under appraisal and that this would continue, so as to ensure profitability and management of the leases. The Northern Gateway was considered to be rated as Amber, in terms of project risk, due to the Cineworld situation and number of restaurant leases taken up, but the Portfolio Holder expressed Cabinet's confidence in the model for the project. A Panel member agreed that certain commercial aspects had to be confidential, but argued that the accounting for the project should be open, to inspire confidence in it.

RESOLVED that the Head of Finance would circulate a confidential briefing note to members of Scrutiny Panel on the current financial position of the Turnstone project and any potential accounting issues in advance of Full Council's consideration of the Budget for 2023-24

378. Budget 2023/24 and Medium Term Financial Forecast

Councillor David King, Leader of the Council, explained that whilst this was a hard time for all local authorities, there were positives for Colchester, such as the Town Deal projects, and work with the County Council on funding bids, led by City Council officers. Choices made within the Budget were difficult, dealing with questions as to what to cut and what to preserve, or whether to cut outgoings or increase the use of reserves. Gratitude was expressed for the constructive, cross-party response made to the challenges of the Budget setting.

Councillor Mark Cory, Portfolio Holder for Resources, agreed that this was the most challenging situation that he had seen in over fifteen years of Council service, with the necessity of accepting that the Council would need to do less whilst attempting to preserve or increase its income. The Budget process was as open as possible, and Governance and

Audit Committee had already contributed good input. Strategic decisions had been made, but smaller-scale adjustments could be considered. Assurance was given to the Scrutiny Panel that decisions had been taken to give the necessary confidence to the Council's Section 151 Officer. Whilst the Budget did include service reductions, it also included service boosts where necessary, such a widening of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme, to increase the maximum award, from 80% of Council Tax up to 85%, with a small discretionary budget for those hardest hit. A Panel member noted his approval of this approach, providing necessary support instead of pursuing arrears from those who could not afford to pay.

The Panel noted the year-on-year savings which had been made, alongside reductions in costs. Confidence was expressed in the ability of the Council to continue providing services whilst making savings.

A member of the Panel complained that he had not been provided with the figures or balance sheet which he considered to be necessary. The Panel discussed this and the Chairman underlined the Panel's need to identify and then see figures which it considered to be necessary. A reasonable balance between of detail was needed, to ensure appropriate information was provided, but in an understandable way. The Leader of the Council agreed and emphasised the Administration's wish to be transparent, having already scheduled time to go through specific details with the Panel member who had voiced concerns. Any data requested would be provided, if it were possible to do so.

The Panel discussed concerns regarding the reductions to Neighbourhood Services and members' wishes to have more details on these, including plans to charge for garden waste collection.

Paul Cook, Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer, explained how the Budget report had been laid out, giving a balance between necessary details and clarity for the public. Any extra information requested could be given at this meeting or in a later briefing note, to cover the requests. A summary of Council funding was given, but more detail could be provided. The report covered the macroeconomic situation, budget strategy and its principles for seeking long-term sustainability. The report covered a projected increase in core spending power of 3%.

The appendices were explained. Appendix A summarised the Medium Term Financial Forecast situation and it was explained that progress had been made in balancing the expected Budget for 2024-25. Appendix B provided a robustness statement, including assessment of the factors which needed to be kept under consideration and monitored. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement in Appendix C gave information on investments and loans, as well as showing the minimum income strategy. Appendix D gave a technical reconciliation for the Budget figures in the main report, with more General Fund information in Appendix F. Appendix G provided a statement of reserves and balances, avoiding use of New Homes Bonus money to support the main Budget. Risks associated with the decisions in the Budget were laid out in the Equality Impact Assessments [EQIAs].

The Chairman summarised the Scrutiny Panel's role, according to the Council's constitution, including scrutiny to ensure clarity of aims and outcomes, openness and due weight being given to all material considerations.

The Panel discussed the transformative and non-transformative savings listed. Appendix J showed £3m in transformation savings, and more information was requested to explain the figures contained within it, as well as to show how transformative and non-transformative

savings gelled together. The Head of Finance agreed to produce a briefing note to explain the requested information, including the items listed in tables D4 and D5.

The Panel discussed the challenges presented in the Budget, where an increase in income had been dwarfed by inflationary costs, and the only way to cope was to reduce service provision in order to protect core services. Concern was raised by one member that the choices as to where cuts had been made did not seem to tie in with the priorities within the draft Strategic Plan. An example were cuts proposed to Neighbourhood and Environmental Services, though those services worked on areas which had been identified as priorities for the Council. More information was requested on the choices which were being put forward, to fully show their effects and alternative options. A Panel member argued that it was hard to assess the choices without those details.

Issues were raised with the EQIAs, including on environment and waste sections. The EQIAs said there would be no implications on ethnicity, but a Panel member raised concern that plans such as to impose flat fees on garden waste collection would hardest hit the least affluent areas, which were those parts of Colchester with greatest ethnic diversity. Honesty and clarity were important, including a need to lay out where negative impacts could not be fully minimised. The Leader of the Council agreed that the EQIAs needed to reflect the issues at play.

Concerns over the plans to charge for garden waste collection were discussed, including the intention to commence this service in Winter, when demand would be at its lowest, rather than when demand was high and less elastic. The Scrutiny Panel considered impacts on recycling rates. The local rate had dropped to 52% and it was a concern that some garden waste might be put in black bags, to save collection costs, and recycling might decrease. Free compost bins were raised as a suggestion. The Leader of the Council highlighted that over half the country already had to pay for garden waste removal and, whilst it was uncomfortable to contemplate, the Council would need to ensure that it was done well, and Cabinet would be happy to consider ways to bring in a concessionary scheme if possible. Richard Block, Chief Operating Officer, informed the Panel that the two local authorities with the highest rates of recycling both charged for collection of garden waste and clarified that, if agreed in principle, the introduction of such charges in Colchester would need to come back to Cabinet for detail and debate before charging could occur. It was further clarified that the projected uptake was around 5% at the start of the scheme, this was expected to rise to around 21% uptake over the whole year. Any extra income gained would assist in improving the budget position, once start-up and running costs were covered.

A request was made for the figures from the first year of operations by other local authorities who commenced a charging scheme. Panel members also asked if charges could be dependent on Council Tax banding. More information in general was requested on uptake rates and income expected. The Leader of the Council reiterated that the expected take-up rate over the first year was 21% and underlined that the full considerations could be revisited when Cabinet came to decide upon the scheme's details. The Chairman confirmed that he would expect the details proposed, along with alternatives, to come to Scrutiny Panel for consideration. The Panel would not look for microdetail but would seek overall assurance that Neighbourhood Services would continue to be able to provide their services and deal with fly tipping or burning of waste. Councillor Adam Fox, Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Local Economy and Transformation, confirmed that he expected to bring the matter back for the Panel to consider the different schemes and proposed changes, before a decision would be made. More detail than usual had been brought with this Budget paper, due to the savings having

to be identified. The Chairman noted that technical papers would be expected later in the year and reminded the Panel that its duty at this meeting was to ensure that budget plans were joined up and that considerations had been assessed appropriately and impacts mitigated.

Expected cuts to staffing were discussed and concerns raised that officers such as Zone Wardens should not be lost. Panel members asked for more information as to which jobs would be lost, especially in Neighbourhood Services. It was also noted that response rates in the customer service team were marked to be improved, but this was queried, given that restrictions were being imposed on overtime hours. Suggestions were made by Panel members that workplace levies and leasing of private car parks might be options which could save the Council money. The Leader of the Council agreed that it was important to have officers where they were needed and gave assurance that improvements in customer service response times would be possible with new best practice and improved technology. More information would be provided when possible. In Neighbourhood Services, the proposition was for ten posts to go, although not necessarily through forced redundancies. Richard Block, Chief Operating Officer, underlined how hard decisions had been, needing to look at all options for cutting costs. £13.8m expenditure was still planned for Neighbourhood Services and cuts in other areas would be even more extreme if the Council were to ringfence spending on Neighbourhood Services.

The Scrutiny Panel considered the proposed £50k savings from cuts to Environmental Health and asked if there were any ways to increase income to avoid a need to reduce services. Mel Rundle, Safety and Protection Manager, explained the situation and gave assurances regarding the teams functions, which included private sector housing, food safety and environmental protection. It did not include licensing matters. The Team could not charge for work such as food safety and environmental protection, and savings were being sought by not replacing certain outgoing officers.

Regarding the proposed recruitment freeze, a Panel member noted that a vacancy factor assumption had already been made, and sometimes caused issues. The members of Cabinet were asked if the recruitment freeze would compound problems. The Chief Operating Officer answered that the vacancy factor allowance was a reflection of gaps between outgoing and incoming officers in roles. The freeze would mean that all vacancies would be reviewed as to whether replacement officers are needed. There would be a full assessment on each post affected. Based on a turnover rate of 15%, it was expected that this freeze would save around £500k. The Panel queried what effect this would have on morale. The Portfolio Holder for Resources explained that staff understood the severity of the budget position and wished to preserve or increase their salaries as far as possible. Officers clarified that recruitment would continue to roles where corporate risk would be increased if vacancies were maintained, or where roles are self-funded or funded from external sources.

A Panel member noted that the Council would be asking staff to take pay cuts, banning overtime and reducing fixed-term positions whilst increasing work pressures on officers, and expressed a preference for reducing the number of services provided, whilst maintaining staff conditions and improving the remaining services provided. The Portfolio Holder for Resources agreed that the Council was having to make the decision to do less, and explain the need for that decision to be made. The Leader explained that the changes to staffing followed the changes and reduction to the management team.

A Panel member requested assurances regarding item 6 on table D4 [CCHL Management fee reduction to reflect additional project management fees] and whether the situation at

the Council's commercial companies was expected to improve. The Deputy Leader of the Council clarified that the current review was being held to clarify the division of work between Colchester Commercial Holdings Ltd and the Council itself. Another Panel member noted that smaller CCHL profits would mean less liability for Corporation Tax, expressing confidence that this would not therefore be an issue.

A Panel member asked for more information regarding item 10 [Turnstone income] within Table D4 [Technical reconciliation of 2023/24 savings]. The Portfolio Holder for Resources acknowledged the increased risk regarding the Council's work with Turnstone, due to the Cineworld situation, but gave assurances that the Council had guarantees in place to protect itself.

Paul Cook, Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer, explained that the assumptions made and used in formulating the Council's work with Turnstone on Northern Gateway could be provided in the briefing note to be circulated to Panel members following the meeting. The Leader of the Council expressed his view that the Council had sufficient assurances in place, and agreed that more information could be provided to better inform members of the Panel.

Regarding table D5, item 1 [General Inflation (pay, contractual etc)], A Panel member asked if it would be reasonable to assume there would be a fall in inflation, in line with expectations, and especially with regard to expected upward pay/salary pressures. It was also queried if there were implications for following years. The Portfolio Holder for Resources explained that some macroeconomic projections had to be taken from the Officer of Budget Responsibility [OBR] and that the Council had responded strongly to the OBR's projections, in comparison to some other local authorities. The Head of Finance elaborated on this to say that, with the difficulties of fluctuating inflation, the Council had to monitor pay in local government to pick up any variations from projections and would continue to work hard on modelling and monitoring in the future.

Officers and Cabinet members were asked if there were different contingencies in place for different potential rates of inflation. Related to this, questions were asked as to whether a prudent level of reserves were being maintained to, for example, cope with increased pay costs should industrial action lead to increased pay awards. The Leader gave assurance that the Council's band of assumptions did not need to be so wide as previously it was, due to more information now being known, such as details of the funding settlement from central government.

Regarding item 3 from Table D5 [Support for transformation & future budget savings], a request was made by the Panel for more information in the briefing notes to be circulated.

Item 5 from Table D5 was raised, with a large growth noted in pension costs [an extra £836k]. A Panel member stated that there had been a pensions deficit of around £107m in accounts from 2021, compared to Appendix G which showed a surplus of a few million, asking how this could be reconciled and for additional information on the cause of the additional £836k costs as shown in Table D5. The Head of Finance directed attention to the evaluation from March 2021, which advised that the Council pay its pension contributions into the local government pension scheme up-front, rather than via annual payments over the three years shown. Scheme contributions had increased, due to life expectancy changes and investment performances. The deficit shown in 2021 was the long-term deficit, towards which the Council made payments in instalments. A payment was due each year, but the advice had been to pay off three-years-worth of payments at the start of that three-year period, rather than in annual instalments. The £836k was the up-

front payment to Essex County Council [which oversaw the pension scheme], at a discounted rate. This had been paid out of a reserve which had been set aside for that purpose. The Head of Finance clarified that the pension deficit recorded in 2021 had been set out under different actuarial calculations. A fall in life expectancy and increase in investment performance had led to an improvement in the situation. A request was made by a Panel member for a balance sheet to show the current situation, with the member highlighting pension commitments as a large financial item which was likely to have been subject to changes since 2021. The Portfolio Holder for Resources underlined the Council's commitment to making its payments efficiently, but reiterated that management of the pension scheme lay with ECC. The Head of Finance explained that the relevant information was covered in an actuarial report which could be shared with the Panel following the meeting. The Panel requested that an abridged summary of the content of that report would be welcomed. The Leader of the Council gave assurances that the Council was following protocol and due process, including in regard to the pension scheme, which was well-run and applied its rules to all of the organisations within it.

The Panel considered the proposed draw-down of £4m from the Business Rates Reserve and asked why this had been judged to be a safe option. The Head of Finance explained that business rates accounting was via the collection fund system, which meant that timing of this could differ between different years. A more detailed table would be provided on this in the future, using values as of March 31st.

A Panel member noted that members had been promised a reserves route map, given the importance of gaining better understanding of the subject, and suggested that councillors would benefit from training on how reserves worked and on how to maintain prudent levels. The Portfolio Holder for Resources described the reserve levels of the Council as being kept at a prudent level, meeting the local government standard which was set at around £2m. Many specific types of reserves were held, which were listed, and the Portfolio Holder agreed that it was important to explain their purpose and any restrictions placed on how they could be used. The Head of Finance offered to look at how training could best be provided, either separately or as part of wider treasury management training, but cautioned that it could be difficult to carry out direct comparisons with other local authorities' approaches.

Scrutiny Panel discussed the Council's draft Treasury Management Strategy [TMS] and TMS Statement. A Panel member expressed concern that the Section 151 Officer of the Council had the power to borrow up to the authorised limits set by the Council. The Panel member noted that in 2021 the Council had £131m borrowing from the Public Loan Board, and £40m borrowing from the money markets. The Panel member contrasted this with the £79.5m in short-term investments detailed in a treasury management report produced in November 2021 and asked for information as to the reasons behind the use of these loans and investments, especially given the interest charged on borrowing being significantly higher than the average percentage rate of return on investments. The Panel member asked whether it would be possible for the Council to reduce its borrowing from the money markets. The Portfolio Holder for Resources explained that longer-term loans were taken at interest rates considered to be advantageous to the Council, whilst the yield rates shown were for shorter-term investments. Cabinet would welcome suggested ideas from elected members for reducing borrowing costs or increase investment yields.

The Section 151 Officer and Head of Finance explained that the Section 151 Officer's responsibilities and authority, including in regard of borrowing, were laid out in the Council's constitution, after first being considered by Governance and Audit Committee. Reporting to Governance and Audit Committee had been improved over time, increasing

the amount of information and detail provided. The importance of an update in 2023-24 was stressed, to follow the capital programme review and once the Council could produce a clearer expectation of capital expenditure, funding provided from borrowing and borrowing levels. Affordability calculations and loan maturity profile would be shown. More detail on treasury management calculations could be provided, but the reports had been designed to be user-friendly for members of the public to understand. The Panel were reminded that treasury management training had been scheduled for them in the near future. Interest earnings on three- and six-month deposits were currently at around four percent, with quarterly reports being made to Governance and Audit Committee.

The Leader of the Council gave assurance that the Council's finances had repeatedly been shown to be solid, including by internal and external auditors. The Leader suggested that it would be more appropriate for a wider conversation on this to be carried out at Governance and Audit Committee's meetings, and expressed concern at what he termed as an unusual degree of doubt being expressed by one member at this meeting. The Leader suggested that the Council could approach CIPFA [Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy] to request they examine the Council's approach to treasury management and provide an independent assessment, reporting this back to Governance and Audit Committee. The Panel welcomed this offer. The Panel member who had voiced concern expressed his view that draft accounts could and should be published, even though these had not been externally audited. The Leader gave his assurance that nothing was being withheld.

The Chairman asked whether concern about the TMS Statement would stop the production of a balanced budget, or whether it was something which should be addressed, but would not stop the budget process from continuing. The Chairman suggested that the Panel could accept the assurances provided regarding the soundness of the proposed budget, with the proviso that additional consideration and review of the TMS and TMS Statement would be carried out in the future, with training on treasury management to increase councillors' understanding.

The Panel queried the fluctuation in capital expenditure borrowing needs that was projected for the Housing Revenue Account [HRA] between 2025-26 and 2026-27 and sought assurance that this was not expected to cause problems with the management of capital expenditure. The Head of Finance gave assurance that no problems were expected and the change in expected capital expenditure between the two years was manageable within the Council's treasury management system. It was explained that more information could be given as part of the following agenda item, which related to the HRA.

RESOLVED that: -

- a) The Scrutiny Panel and other elected members would be provided with a copy of the revised Capital Programme, and details of any related changes to the Budget, following completion of the fundamental review of the Capital Programme
- b) The Scrutiny Panel would be provided with briefing notes to cover: -
 - i. An explanation to clarify the projected transformative and non-transformative savings, and details of where these savings are allocated, with greater detail on Appendix J of the Cabinet report;

- ii. Further information in support of the recommended Treasury Management prudential and treasury indicators
 - iii. Additional information and detail relating to Item 3 on Table D5 [£1,400k in 'Support for transformation & future budget savings'];
 - iv. A summary of the content of the Actuarial Report for the Council, and other additional information regarding the Council's pension liabilities and participation in the Local Government Pension Scheme as run by Essex County Council;
 - v. The Medium Term Financial Forecast position on pay inflation, and the assumptions relating to it;
 - vi. A statement of reserve movements to augment appendix H
- c) The Scrutiny Panel welcomes the offer by the Leader of the Council to commission an independent and external review, carried out by CIPFA, of the Council's treasury management and its Treasury Management Strategy and Statement.

RECOMMENDED to CABINET that: -

- a) The Scrutiny Panel has confidence in the Budget report, as provided to it for consideration;
- b) Additional information and assurances be added to the equality impact assessments relating to the levying of flat fees for garden waste collection and the potential differing impact on different ethnic communities, and to address the concern that allowing any container to be used for putting out garden waste may have impacts on the collection of waste, and assurance provided that these will be considered by Cabinet;
- c) Training be provided to elected members, to cover the management of local authority reserves, either as a stand-alone course or as part of a wider treasury management training course;
- d) Greater information be provided to the Scrutiny Panel on the assumptions being made regarding the proposals to charge for garden waste collection, including assumptions relating to uptake of the scheme once it commences and over time, the likely effect this will have on the Council's environmental agenda and policies, and assurance that the Council's waste and neighbourhood services teams can manage the effects from the new service structure;
- e) The matter of pay inflation over the coming two years be given more prominence within the Council's risk register.

379. 2023/24 Housing Revenue Account Estimates and Housing Investment Programme

Darren Brown, Finance Manager (Business Partners), set out the proposals for 2023-24 and summarised the report provided. Government had introduced a limit on rent increases

to seven percent in 2023-24. There were no indications of a similar restriction for 2024-25 yet. An overview was provided to the Panel of governmental policy changes, but the Finance Manager underlined that the main impacts had arisen from interest rates and high inflation.

The Asset Management Strategy [AMS] included the reviewing of outputs, and a report would be generated on this.

The Finance Manager explained the illustration of the debt curve in Appendix F, between years and to show the expected situations both with and without rent caps being in place. The Council aimed to maintain a healthy debt curve through the next 30 years.

The Panel considered the impact of rent caps, both positive for tenants, but also impacting on the Council and its income.

A Panel member queried the items in Appendix A which detailed over £24,000k per year being paid to Colchester Borough Homes [CBH] through the Management Fee, with a further item on 'Management Costs' of £6,565k in 2022-23, rising to £7,691k in 2023-24. The Finance Manager was asked if there was any duplication of spending between these two lines. The Portfolio Holder for Resources explained that there was a Management Fee for housing management, and additional management fees for management of the capital programme. The Finance Manager confirmed that the table entry for CBH showed the management fee for housing, but not for repairs/maintenance services or management of the capital programme. The Finance Manager offered to provide additional information on this to the Panel, if the Panel wished to receive this. The £7,691k [in 2023-24] was for landlord costs, including recharges, estate management etc. The benchmarking exercise carried out by Housemark showed that CBH offered good value compared to other housing management providers, with relatively high performance at relatively low cost. The Leader offered to circulate the Housemark benchmarking data and report to the Scrutiny Panel.

The [Housing Finance](#) Manager provided detail on the fluctuation in capital expenditure borrowing needs that was projected for the Housing Revenue Account [HRA] between 2025-26 and 2026-27. This was linked to scheduled work relating to the Heart of Greenstead Scheme. A Panel member asked why this report wasn't on the Cabinet agenda for 25 January 2023, and why it had been produced before the Capital Programme review had concluded. The same Panel member suggested that there were better and cheaper ways to manage the Council's housing stock and accused the Administration of pursuing a wasteful course of borrowing and investment via the HRA. The Finance Manager corrected the Panel member, explaining that the report presented at Appendix A was indeed due to go before Cabinet and was on the Cabinet agenda for 25 January 2023.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Panel had reviewed and noted the 2023/24 Housing Revenue Account Estimates and the Housing Investment Programme reports which were being submitted to Cabinet on 25 January 2023.

380. Work Programme 2022-2023

RESOLVED that the work programme for 2022-2023 be noted and approved.

14 February 2023

Report of	Chief Operating Officer	Author	Owen Howell ☎ 282518
Title	Work Programme 2022-23		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the current Work Programme 2022-2023 for the Scrutiny Panel. This provides details of the reports that are scheduled for each meeting during the municipal year.

2. Action Required

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to consider and approve the contents of the Work Programme for 2022-2023, or request amendments, additions and/or deletions.

3. Background Information

- 3.1 The Panel's work programme evolves as the Municipal Year progresses and items of business are commenced and concluded. At each meeting the opportunity is taken for the work programme to be reviewed and, if necessary, amended according to current circumstances. The draft work programme for 2022-23 is appended to this report. This contains the items which are reviewed each year by the Panel.
- 3.2 The Forward Plan of Key Decisions is included as part of the work programme for the Scrutiny Panel, and this is included an **Appendix A**.

4. Standard References

- 4.1 There are no particular references to publicity or consultation considerations, or financial, equality, diversity, human rights, community safety, health and safety, environmental and sustainability or risk management implications.

5. Strategic Plan References

- 5.1 Scrutiny and challenge is integral to the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2020-2023 priorities and direction for the Borough as set out under the strategic themes of:
- [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](#)

- 5.2 The Council recognises that effective local government relies on establishing and maintaining the public's confidence, and that setting high standards of self-governance provides a clear and demonstrable lead. Effective governance underpins the implementation and application of all aspects of the Council's work.

Appendices

Appendix A – Scrutiny Panel Work Programme, 2022-23

Appendix B – Forward Plan of Key Decisions: 1 March 2023 – 30 June 2023

Work Programme for 2022/23

Scrutiny Panel meeting – 7 June 2022
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 1 June 2022
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Town Deal Reporting 2. Work Programme 2022-23
Scrutiny Panel meeting – 5 July 2022
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 30 June 2022
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Council's disbursement of rebate payments on Council Tax 2. Year End 2021/22 Performance Report and Strategic Plan Action Plan 3. Housing Strategy 4. Annual Scrutiny Report 5. Briefing note on Hythe Flooding 6. Recap report on previous Scrutiny Panel reviews of local bus services 7. Work Programme 2022-23
Scrutiny Panel meeting - 16 August 2022 Meeting cancelled for lack of business
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 11 August 2022
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work Programme 2022-23
Scrutiny Panel (Crime and Disorder Committee) - 13 September 2022
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 8 September 2022
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safer Colchester Partnership (Crime and Disorder Committee)
Scrutiny Panel – 11 October 2022
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's Briefing – 6 October 2022
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Briefing from Cllr Julie Young, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities 2. Economic Growth Strategy Deferred 3. Review of Colchester Borough Homes: 2021-22 Performance, and discussion of Key Performance Indicator Targets for 2023-24 4. Work Programme 2022-23
Scrutiny Panel meeting - 8 November 2022
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 3 November 2022
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Budget Strategy for 2023-24 2. Update on Town Deal projects' progress 3. Family/local affiliation in letting and/or sale of local affordable housing and Gateway to Homechoice Allocations Policy 4. Work Programme 2022-23

Scrutiny Panel meeting - 13 December 2022
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 8 December 2022
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Briefing by Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Local Economy and Transformation 2. Draft Economic Strategy [Was due to come before Scrutiny Panel on 16 August 2022 and then 11 October 2022 but delayed to 13 December 2022] 3. Half Year 2022-23 Performance Report 4. Strategic Plan Action Plan progress 5. Local Council Tax Support – Year 2023/24 6. Work Programme 2022-23
Scrutiny Panel meeting - 16 January 2022
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 11 January 2022
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Peer Challenge Review report and action plan 2. Work Programme 2022-23
Scrutiny Panel meeting - 24 January 2023
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 19 January 2023
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Briefing by Portfolio Holder for Resources [focus on Budget 2023-24] 2. Budget Strategy for 2023-24 3. 2023-24 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme, Medium Term Financial Forecast and Treasury Management Investment Strategy 4. Housing Revenue Accounts Estimate and Housing Investment Programme 5. Work Programme 2022-23
Scrutiny Panel - 14 February 2023
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 9 February 2023
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Briefing by Portfolio Holder for Culture and Heritage 2. Briefing by the Leader of the Council 3. Corporate Key Performance Indicator Targets for 2022-23. Deferred: See 'Items still to schedule' 4. Work Programme 2022-23
Scrutiny Panel meeting– 14 March 2023
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 9 March 2023
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Briefing by Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure 2. Collection of Section 106 developer contributions 3. One Colchester Partnership 4. Scrutiny Panel Annual Report 5. Work Programme 2022-23
Scrutiny Panel meeting– 15 March 2023
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 9 March 2023
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Briefing by Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services and Waste 2. Briefing by Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability 3. Town Deal projects progress report 4. City Status Programme

Items still to schedule, when possible:

- Corporate Key Performance Indicator Targets for 2022-23. This was due to come for consideration at the meeting of 14 February 2023, however at the request of the Chief Operating Officer, this has been deferred to a future meeting, so that the new set of KPI targets can be considered once a new Strategic Plan has been approved by Council.
- Previous Council negotiations with Alumno [Monitoring Officer advice is that this will only be able to be scrutinised in open session once the current ongoing legal situation is resolved regarding the Queen Street site]
- Planning trial of local prioritisation for property purchasing [relating to a recent planning application] [Officer advice is that this is at an early stage and is likely to need to wait until 2023-24 to be ready for meaningful scrutiny of scheme and outcomes]

COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL

FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS 1 March 2023 – 30 June 2023

During the period from 1 March 2023 – 30 June 2023* Colchester Borough Council intends to take 'Key Decisions' on the issues set out in the following pages. Key Decisions relate to those executive decisions which are likely to either:

- result in the Council spending or saving money in excess of £500,000; or
- have a significant impact on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards within the Borough of Colchester.

This Forward Plan should be seen as an outline of the proposed decisions and it will be updated on a monthly basis. Any questions on specific issues included on the Plan should be addressed to the contact name specified in the Plan. General queries about the Plan itself should be made to Democratic Services (01206) 507832 or email democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk

The Council invites members of the public to attend any of the meetings at which these decisions will be discussed and the documents listed on the Plan and any other documents relevant to each decision which may be submitted to the decision taker can be viewed free of charge although there will be a postage and photocopying charge for any copies made. *All decisions will be available for inspection on the Council's website, www.colchester.gov.uk*

If you wish to request details of documents regarding the 'Key Decisions' outlined in this Plan please contact the individual officer identified.

If you wish to make comments or representations regarding the 'Key Decisions' outlined in this Plan please submit them, in writing, to the Contact Officer highlighted two working days before the date of the decision (as indicated in the brackets in the date of decision column). This will enable your views to be considered by the decision taker. Details of the decision makers are correct at the time of publication.

Contact details for the Council's various service departments are incorporated at the end of this plan.

If you need help with reading or understanding this document please telephone (01206) 282222 or textphone users dial 18001 followed by the full number that you wish to call and we will try to provide a reading service, translation or other formats you may need.

*The Forward Plan also shows decisions which fall before the period covered by the Plan but which have not been taken at the time of the publication of the Plan.

KEY DECISION REQUIRED	DOES DECISION INCLUDE EXEMPT INFORMATION (or information defined by the Government as Confidential)	DATE OF DECISION or PERIOD DECISION TO BE TAKEN	DECISION MAKER (title and name, including Cabinet, portfolio holders and officers) – details of decision makers correct at time of publication	DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED OR TO BE SUBMITTED TO DECISION TAKER TO CONSIDER (and from where they are available)	CONTACT DETAILS FROM WHICH DOCUMENTS CAN BE OBTAINED (name of the authors of the reports)
Approval to complete the purchase of land/property at ‘The Centre’ Greenstead from Notting Hill Genesis, using funding received via the Estates Regeneration Fund	No	February 2023	Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Mark Cory Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Daniel Barton Greenstead and Youth (Town Deal) Projects Manager 01206 282912: Daniel.Barton@colchester.gov.uk
Award of Contract for Voids works contract	Yes	February 2023	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, Councillor Julie Young. Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Geoff Beales Client Services Manager 01206 506514 geoff.beales@colchester.gov.uk

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Award of contract for the construction of affordable homes at Veronica Walk, Colchester	Yes	February 2023	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, Councillor Julie Young. Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Andrew Tyrrell Client and Business Manager andrew.tyrrell@colchester.gov.uk 01206 2822390
Award of a contract for the construction of affordable homes at Prospero Close, Colchester	Yes	February 2023	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, Councillor Julie Young. Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Andrew Tyrrell Client and Business Manager andrew.tyrrell@colchester.gov.uk 01206 2822390

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Review of Free Bulky Collections	No	February 2023	Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services and Waste, Councillor Martin Goss. Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Rosa Tanfield Group Manager for Neighbourhood Services rosa.tanfield@colchester.gov.uk 0330 0538 047
Review of Saturday Household Drop-off Service	No	February 2023	Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services and Waste, Councillor Martin Goss. Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Rosa Tanfield Group Manager for Neighbourhood Services rosa.tanfield@colchester.gov.uk 0330 0538 047

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Fixed penalty notice charges review	No	February/March 2023	Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services and Waste, Councillor Martin Goss Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Rosa Tanfield Group Manager – Neighbourhood Services Rosa.tanfield@colchester.gov.uk 0330 0538 047
Award of a contract for the construction of affordable homes at Hedge Drive, Colchester	Yes	March 2023	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, Councillor Julie Young. Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Andrew Tyrrell Client and Business Manager andrew.tyrrell@colchester.gov.uk 01206 2822390

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Authority to award Contract for Delivery of Energy Improvements for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Project	No	March 2023	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, Councillor Julie Young. Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Martin Norgett Strategic Client for Asset Management martin.norgett@colchester.gov.uk 07816 204488
Award of Contract for Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICR's)	No	March 2023	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, Councillor Julie Young. Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Martin Norgett Strategic Client for Asset Management martin.norgett@colchester.gov.uk 07816 204488

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Award of Contract for Asbestos Removal	No	March 2023	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, Councillor Julie Young. Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Martin Norgett Strategic Client for Asset Management martin.norgett@colchester.gov.uk 07816 204488
Review of Ferry Marsh, part of Colne Local Nature Reserve	No	March 2023	Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services and Waste, Councillor Martin Goss Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Nick Christo Parks, Countryside and Greening Operations Manager Nick.christo@colchester.gov.uk 07966 281114

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Request for delegated authority for the award of Housing Revenue Account contracts for the 2023/24 Housing Investment Programme financial year.	No	8 March 2023	Cabinet (Cllrs King, Cory, Cox, Fox, Goss, Luxford Vaughan, Nissen, J. Young) Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report	Martin Norgett Strategic Client for Asset Management martin.norgett@colchester.gov.uk 07816 204488
Strategic Plan Delivery Plan 2023/24 This report will provide a proposed delivery plan for 2023/2024 to deliver against the Council Strategic Plan. This will include the allocation of appropriate resources to deliver the Councils Strategic Objectives. It will request that Cabinet approve the delivery plan.	No	8 March 2023	Cabinet (Cllrs King, Cory, Cox, Fox, Goss, Luxford Vaughan, Nissen, J. Young) Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report and proposed Strategic Plan Delivery Plan	Richard Block Chief Operating Officer richard.block@colchester.gov.uk (01206) 506825

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Approval of commitment to the Local Authority Housing Fund	No	8 March 2023	Cabinet (Cllrs King, Cory, Cox, Fox, Goss, Luxford Vaughan, Nissen, J. Young) Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report	Karen Paton Housing Strategy Co-ordinator karen.paton@colchester.gov.uk 01206 282275
Award of recycling materials contract	No	May 2023	Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services and Waste, Councillor Martin Goss Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Robert Doran Fleet and Depot Contract Manager Robert.doran@colchester.gov.uk (01206) 282612

CONTACT DETAILS FOR COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL

Pam Donnelly, Chief Executive

Tel: (01206) 282211

email: pamela.donnelly@colchester.gov.uk

Richard Block, Chief Operating Officer

Tel: (01206) 506825

email: richard.block@colchester.gov.uk

Lindsay Barker, Executive Director Place

Tel: (01206) 507435

Email: Lindsay.barker@colchester.gov.uk

Lucie Breadman, Strategic Director

Tel: (01206) 282726

email: lucie.breadman@colchester.gov.uk

Rory Doyle, Strategic Director

Tel: (01206) 507885

e-mail: rory.doyle@colchester.gov.uk

Mandy Jones, Strategic Director

Tel: (01206) 282501

email: mandy.jones@colchester.gov.uk