



Item
7(i)

Cabinet

8 March 2023

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Title **Colchester Strategic Plan 2023-26 – Delivery Plan**

Wards affected All

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report proposes a delivery plan for 2023/2024 to deliver the goals of the new Strategic Plan 2023-26 (attached) which was adopted by the Council on 22 February 2023.
- 1.2 The Local Government Peer Challenge emphasised the need for a strong link between priorities and capacity to deliver. This plan is a key element of ensuring this.
- 1.3 The proposed delivery plan recognises the significant opportunities for Colchester as well as the significant transformation of Council services that will be required to deliver required budget savings and to provide services for a modern city.
- 1.4 Considering the unprecedented revenue savings required by the Council's Medium Term Financial Forecast, one off funding has been allocated for 2023/2024 to support transformation of services and the delivery of key strategic goals. The plan proposes allocations of this funding.
- 1.5 This delivery plan also recognises that to deliver the key objectives for Colchester it is even more important that the Council works with and enables other organisations to support delivery of key priorities for the city.

2 Recommended Decisions

- 2.1 To agree the Strategic Plan Delivery Plan 2023-2024 including the allocation of Strategic Plan Delivery Reserve and the transformation funding to deliver against the Strategic Plan Goals.

3 Reason for the Decision

- 3.1 To ensure delivery against the Strategic Plan 2023-26 including the allocation of appropriate resources.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 It is essential that an adequately resourced delivery plan is in place to ensure delivery of the Council's Strategic Plan. There are a range of actions that could deliver against the Strategic Plan but the proposed actions represent those that deliver most effectively with the available resources. The action plan can also be reviewed throughout the year if alternative actions emerge.

5 Background

- 5.1 The Council's Strategic Plan describes the organisation's view of the main priorities for the city. It covers a three-year time span, although many of the issues it addresses are long-term in nature.
- 5.2 The Strategic Plan 2023-26 (appendix A) sets out six strategic goals:
- Respond to the climate emergency
 - Deliver Modern Services for a Modern City
 - Improve health, well-being, and happiness
 - Deliver homes for those most in need
 - Grow our economy so everyone benefits
 - Celebrate our city, heritage and culture
- 5.3 Each strategic goal includes key aims, which address the key issues facing the City area and each priority includes key goals against which success will be measured.
- 5.4 The delivery plan (appendix B) provides a springboard to maximise the opportunities and benefits of Colchester being granted city status. In the future this will also be supplemented by a long-term vision for Colchester created with others across Colchester to ensure the benefits are fully harnessed.
- 5.5 This new delivery plan is being considered at a time of significant uncertainty and challenge and recognises the need for services to be transformed for the future through a new strategic theme to develop modern services for a modern city. This will include responding to the recent Local Government Association peer challenge including reviews of the of the Colchester Council family of companies. The plan also recognises that the City Council needs to increasingly work with others and enable them to help deliver key priorities.

6 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 6.1 The Strategic Plan 2023-26 will continue to support the importance of equality and diversity in all aspects of life in Colchester.
- 6.2 The Equality Act requires councils to have an equality objective, and the new Plan does that throughout its themes and priorities. An Equality Impact Assessment is attached as appendix C.

7 Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 The themes and priorities of the Strategic Plan 2023-26 will be reflected in officer reports to councillors following its adoption by full Council.

8 Consultation

- 8.1 The key priorities identified in the plan arise from a range of information sources including various assessments available such as [Census data](#), [ONS data sources](#), [Essex Open Data](#), [Public Health Profiles](#), [indices of deprivation](#), [Colchester Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\) profile 2019](#) as well as on results of public consultation. Consultation to inform the proposed strategic plan has included a public survey run during Autumn 2022. This resulted in 1113 responses. This was supplemented by several resident focus groups. A report of the responses is shown at appendix D.
- 8.2 The proposed delivery plan responds to the broad themes identified in the consultation. The results of the consultation will also be used to inform the delivery plan that will be considered by Cabinet in March 2023.
- 8.4 Key themes from the consultation were:
- The majority of respondents agreed that they enjoy living/working in Colchester but fewer respondents agreed that they felt a sense of community in the area of Colchester. 'Creating Safe, Healthy and Active Communities' was also the 1st or 2nd priority for 60% of respondents suggesting this is a valid area the plan should focus on.
 - Improving and regenerating the town centre was mentioned by respondents throughout the consultation also suggesting this is an area of focus for the strategic plan. When asked about Colchester becoming a city, the regeneration of the city centre received the highest number of comments at 22%. Next, was culture/heritage and tourism at 21%.
 - The desire to have pride in the place which they lived was mentioned throughout the survey, however currently this appears to be lacking for a number of residents emphasising the need for a strong future vision for the city.
 - Climate and environment was also important to many respondents although this needs to be balanced with some of the difficulties for some in utilising sustainable methods of transport

9 Publicity Considerations

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

10 Financial implications

- 10.1 The Strategic Plan sets the framework for the Council's three-year Medium Term Financial Forecast. This is a period of significant financial challenge and uncertainty, and the plan strikes a balance between ambition for the city with the reality of these financial circumstances.

- 10.2 In the budget approved by Council in February 2023, one off funding was used to create a Strategic Plan Delivery Reserve of £550K and £1.4M was allocated for transformation of services. The delivery plan proposes allocating this funding to support delivery against the Council's strategic aims and ensure future budget savings required by the Medium Term Financial Forecast can be delivered.

11 Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 Health, wellbeing and community safety remains a key component in this Strategic Plan. This is clearly identified in the "Tackle Health, Wellbeing and Happiness" strategic aim, and the priority to "improve community safety".

12 Health and Safety Implications

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

13 Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 The most significant projects within the delivery plan will be managed using a full agile project management system which includes a risk management system. Where delivery plan work items are being delivered as part of normal service delivery, service risk management processes will be used to manage associated risks.
- 13.2 The absence of a Strategic Plan, or the retention of a Strategic Plan that is no longer fit for purpose, would create risks for the Council failing to deliver on its core priorities and use of resources.

14 Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 14.1 The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and has committed to being carbon neutral by 2030. This plan will continue to deliver against this commitment as a golden thread throughout the plan as well as through the specific theme to respond to the climate emergency.

Appendices

Appendix A: The Strategic Plan 2023-26.

Appendix B: Strategic Plan Delivery Plan

Appendix C: Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix D: Summary of consultation responses

Background Papers