

24 February 2021

Report of	Chief Operating Officer	Author	Paul Cook ☎ 505861 Darren Brown ☎ 282891
Title	Supplementary Budget Report 2021/22		
Wards affected	All		

1 **Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report includes additional information as requested by the Scrutiny Panel at their meeting on 26 January 2021.
- 1.2 The report provides further budget detail on the savings agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 27 January 2021.
- 1.3 The report also outlines the some of the key areas in which the proposed 2021/22 measures will contribute to reducing inequalities, as agreed by the Cabinet at its meeting on 27 January 2021.

2 **Recommended Decisions**

- 2.1 To note the further breakdown of savings as set out in the report.

3 **Savings**

- 3.1 The following table reflects the savings reported in the 27 January Cabinet report on the 2021/22 budget;

Table F4 – Technical reconciliation of 2021/22 savings		
1	Commercialisation	(820)
2	Efficiency	(550)
3	Service Provision	(1,074)
4	Community	(84)
5	Total Savings	(2,528)

3.2 The following table provides a breakdown of the savings agreed by type of budget:

Table A1 – Subjective Analysis		
1	Employee costs	(1,197)
2	Premises costs	(82)
3	Supplies & Services costs	(250)
4	Third Party Payments	(29)
5	Other Grants & Reimbursements Income	(230)
6	Customer & Client Receipts Income	(740)
7	Total Savings	(2,528)

3.3 The following table provides the detailed list of transformation and efficiency gains and cost reduction savings;

Table A2 – 2021/22 Savings		
1	1% of the 2020/21 Pay Award will not be consolidated	(200)
2	Commercial Companies growth assumptions	(130)
3	Section 106 use for New Strategic Priorities	(100)
4	Sheepen Road Income	(92)
5	Ground Maintenance Contract Inflation (20/21 budget setting)	(70)
6	Local Fast Fibre Network (LFFN) Broadband income growth (net income)	(60)
7	BPR, Digitalisation, and Paperchase (as per 20/21 budget setting)	(50)
8	Shared services savings (as per 20/21 budget setting)	(30)
9	Waste and Zones Review savings (as per 20/21 budget setting)	(30)
10	Executive Management Team staff changes	(25)
11	Primary authority role (as per 20/21 budget setting)	(20)
12	New Castle Activities (as per 20/21 budget setting)	(15)
13	Car parking charges increase and environmental levy	(208)
14	Savings against current budgeted cost for external contracts	(150)
16	Reduced number of officers in the Planning Service	(120)
17	Rather than standing Customer Improvement Team budget the staff resource required for each service improvement project will be scoped and wrapped into each project business case	(110)
18	Savings against salary budget costs by sharing the cost of staff in HR, Finance, Governance, and ICT with partner organisations	(100)
19	With changing workplace patterns we will need a reduced level of hall keeping resource to manage them.	(100)
20	Market expansion	(86)
21	Resource reduction of Payments and Debt Manager and Purchasing Officer	(70)
22	Contact and Support Team Resource reduction – Customer Advisors (CBH)	(56)
23	During our response to Covid -19 we have moved “in person” services previously provided in the Library/Community Hub to provide them digitally which requires less staff. This change could now be made permanent	(56)
24	Locality Budget reductions	(50)
25	Environment fees and charge increases	(47)

26	Reduction in posts to monitor Capital Budgets	(45)
27	Street Numbering and Other ICT Service Charges	(43)
28	Contact and Support Team Resource reduction – Customer Advisors (C&E)	(42)
29	Master Data Management Efficiencies	(40)
30	Communications savings	(40)
31	Benefits Processing Team resource reduction – Benefits Team leader	(35)
32	Building Control reduced demand	(35)
33	Human Resources team efficiency and cost reduction	(33)
34	Contact and Support Team officer Resource reduction – Contact and Support Officer (PBL)	(31)
35	Customer Information Officer reduction	(30)
36	Funding of community safety activity with partners	(29)
37	Research Team Efficiency	(20)
38	Weekend noise service	(20)
39	Minor cremation fee increase	(17)
40	Licensing reduced demand	(15)
41	Area Based Community Development approach	(14)
42	Challenge to museums business rates banding	(12)
43	Better establishment staff numbers control	(10)
44	Charging for recycling containers	(10)
45	Increased income from Trade waste	(10)
46	Tree planting budget	(10)
47	Reduced hours of Affordable Housing Strategy Officer	(7)
48	Pavement licence income increase	(5)
49	Total Savings	(2,528)

4 Inequality

4.1 In December 2020 the Council resolved to

- Report twice yearly on inequality across our borough using national, county and local profiles
- Instigate our own locality measures with outcomes that raise the life chances of vulnerable groups or neighbourhoods
- Consider the impact on inequality in our decision making
- Encourage formal and informal partnerships to contribute positively to reducing inequality across the borough
- Invite our MPs to take up the mantle of reducing inequality in the constituencies they represent.

4.2 Reflecting the above and the recommendation of the Scrutiny Committee, the Cabinet meeting on 27 January 2021 agreed all budget measures would be *assessed for their likely impact on inequality, reflecting the Council's commitment to addressing the inequality existing within our Borough, as highlighted by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.*

- 4.3 Addressing inequalities is fundamental to the Council's budget approach on both revenue and capital in order to deliver the Council's [Strategic Plan 2020-23](#) priorities.
- 4.4 Professor Sir Michael Marmot, has published a report: [Building Back Fairer: The COVID-19 Marmot Review](#). The report follows on from 2010 Fair Society, Healthy Lives and the 2020 Review, 10 years on and highlights growing inequalities that have manifested throughout the pandemic. The Council's Priorities reflect many of the areas flagged in the report where action is needed. Some key areas supported by the 2021/22 budget and capital programme are set out below.

Tackling the Climate Challenge and Leading Sustainability

- Additional works contracts are being prepared to increase HRA investments over the next year and beyond that will specifically tackle our least energy efficient properties in response to climate change.
- The Council's Warm Homes Project is working in partnership with local home energy improvement professionals to support residents who are looking to save energy and keep warm in their homes.
- Through the One Colchester partnership the Council will share best practices on tackling climate change and sustainability across organisations in the Borough (including biodiversity) and will increase community engagement around the Council's Climate Emergency declaration.
- Working with partners to promote sustainable travel behaviour change, healthier lifestyles and reduce car dependency including through the Colchester Travel Plan Club network supporting, encouraging and influencing employees and students to travel sustainably through the implementation of workplace travel plans.
- As improved broadband connectivity is rolled out for many of our most deprived communities (LFNN noted below) the planned development of digital solutions for the organisation and our customers which will reduce waste, reduce cost and reduce unnecessary travel. Staff will be able to work effectively from home and complete their site work without relying on a central office and customers will be able to access services online without the need to leave their homes.

Creating safe, healthy and active communities

- The Council has maintained its generous Local Council Tax Support Scheme despite the tough financial position.
- The Council is a living wage employer ensuring fair pay for all employees and requires the same of those with whom we contract.
- Use of the Local Development Pilot (LDP) and system partners to identify key areas for investment encouraging inactive residents in the most deprived areas to become more active.
- Active engagement carried out with community groups, voluntary groups and Town and Parish Councils to agree a section 106 project plan for each ward in preparation for receipt of S106 developer contributions towards community infrastructure.
- The Senior Occupational Therapist in Housing Project.
- Continuing to offer Disabled Facilities Grants to help tenants and property owners with limited resources to improve their properties. The Council is investing £1.208m per annum over the next 2 years.
- Introduction of the Fast-Track Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) to support Hospital Discharge and Admission Avoidance. Redesign of the grant delivery process in readiness for the new Northgate IT system.

- Taking a robust enforcement approach against owners of unlicensed Houses in Multiple Occupation and criminal landlords.
- Promoting awareness and collaborative working with partners across the wider system to ensure residents are supported and to ensure that housing is considered as a wider determinant of health.
- Collaborating with One Colchester partners such as Community360, Colchester Borough Homes, CCG, Age Concern, to co-design and co-produce projects to support our most vulnerable residents including the winter warmth project 2020/21
- Building trusted, open and transparent relationships with community leaders from diverse communities such as our BAME and Faith communities. Engaging with these community groups through listening events and regular dialogue. Co-production of initiatives to support those most in need.
- Rural Crime Toolkit and Rural Community Safety Fund to provide communities with ideas, information, support and funding to make their neighbourhood a better place to live.
- Keep Safe for Colchester is a free scheme helping vulnerable residents to feel safer and more confident out in the Town.
- Working together with partners through the Multi Agency Coordination Panel to target individual criminals and use our combined powers to disrupt the criminal in addition to the criminality.
- Facilitating Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) sessions and awareness within communities, system leaders and members to discover and connect the assets that exist and are mobilised within neighbourhoods.

Delivering homes for people who need them

- The Local Plan will allocate sites to provide land for housing and employment up to 2033 and beyond.
- The Council continues its major investment in the HRA and general fund housing to provide more housing for those in need at affordable or social rents. In 2021/22 the Council is investing an additional £40.292m in its housing investment programme.
- Delivering a minimum of 30% affordable housing across all our mixed tenure sites.
- The current collection of new homes will be the most energy efficient homes we have constructed as a Council and this will be furthered with the next forthcoming projects in the various programmes; accessibility is being prioritised too. All homes are to a high quality "Colchester Standard", some being built to meet 2025 "future standards".
- Working with partners to implement the 2020-2025 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy delivery plan.
- Several Phase 2 Amphora Housing sites are being explored with a view to progressing viable schemes.

Growing a fair economy so everyone benefits

- The LFFN project will develop improved connectivity for many of our most deprived communities, improving life chances through access to information, skills development, social and support networks and employment opportunities.
- Joint working with the Police and the Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID) to help businesses safely re-open within Covid-19 guidelines when possible.
- The Council continues to help residents financially (by paying some eligible debts) for those who are at risk of losing their homes or who need to move but can't afford the moving costs.
- The Council continues to support residents to maximise their income either by helping them find work or by applying for government welfare benefits. This

includes supporting residents through their appeal requests and tribunal court hearings.

- The Council has used incoming funding from Government and Essex County Council to help mitigate the effects on residents' finances as a result of the pandemic
- The Council is accredited for Customer Service Excellence and our staff are highly trained and experienced in identifying and helping those less fortunate than others to access services.
- The Council has seen an increase in residents attending their housing and welfare benefits appointments since the pandemic started. Appointments include being delivered virtually which has proven more convenient and easier with levels of increased satisfaction from residents.
- The Council supports residents to access council and other services by providing one to one support when needed via the Community Digital Access team.

Celebrating our heritage and culture

- The Council is working with partners to deliver a collaboration Cultural Vision and Ambitions for the Borough in 2021-2022.
- The Council continues to promote Colchester's heritage and visitor attractions to increase visitor numbers and to support jobs.
- Enhance and promote our heritage by better revealing our assets by supporting projects and initiatives to increase public awareness and allowing all to access their heritage in daily life.
- The Council has worked throughout the pandemic, alongside cultural partners to enhance accessibility from the panto online to new digital schools package to ensure whole generations of children don't miss out on learning about their local heritage.
- The Council is developing a new Cultural Strategy in collaboration with partners.

4.5 The Council's monitoring of action on Inequality includes:

- All committee reports include a section setting out the equality and diversity implications of decisions.
- Governance and Audit Committee considers an annual update report on Equality and Safeguarding. The 2019/20 report was approved at the 24 November 2020 meeting.
- The Council will be extending the reporting scope to ensure impact assessments cover the wider implications for those living in areas of deprivation or with reduced life opportunities. This will be based on objective tests which the Council will develop, taking independent advice.

4.5 The equalities implications of the four savings themes of commercial; communities; efficiency and service provision were set out in the papers to the 14 October 2020 Cabinet meeting. These reports are set out as background papers to this report.

5 Consultation

5.1 This report reflects discussions at 26 January 2021 Scrutiny Panel.

6 Financial implications

6.1 As set out in the report.

7 Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 7.1 All budget measures are assessed for their likely environmental impact, reflecting the Council's commitment to be 'carbon neutral' by 2030. Environment and Climate Change is an essential cross-cutting theme in the Council's recovery planning and a core theme of the new Strategic Plan.

8 Equality, Diversity and Inequality Implications

- 8.1 Consideration will be given to equality, diversity and inequality issues in taking forward budget proposals. This will be done in line with agreed policies and procedures including production of Equality Impact Assessments where appropriate. See also section 4 for details.

9 Risk Management Implications

- 9.1 As set out in the report

10 Other Standard References

- 10.1 There are no direct Publicity, Human Rights, Community Safety or Health and Safety implications as a result of this report.

Background Papers

None

[EIA Commercial](#)

[EIA Communities](#)

[EIA Efficiency](#)

[EIA Service Provision](#)