

Scrutiny Panel Meeting

**Online Meeting,
Tuesday, 18 August 2020 at 18:00**

The Scrutiny Panel examines the policies and strategies from a borough-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 observe all meetings of the Council, its Committees and Cabinet including those which may be conducted online such as by live audio or video broadcast / webcast. 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>.

Occasionally certain issues, for instance, commercially sensitive information or details concerning an individual have to be considered in private. When this is the case an announcement will be made, the live broadcast will end and the meeting will be moved to consider the matter in private.

Have Your Say!

The Council welcomes contributions in the form of written representations from members of the public at most public meetings. Each representation may be no longer than three minutes (or 500 words, if a written submission). Written submissions must be submitted via the form accessed by this link, before noon on the working day before the meeting date: [Scrutiny Panel Have Your Say!](#) If you wish to speak in person to the Panel, you must register your wish by noon on the previous working day, by emailing democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk, and include a written copy of what you wish to say, in case technical difficulties prevent you joining the meeting. The Chairman will invite members of the public to make their representations at the start of the meeting.

If you would like to submit representations to a meeting and need to find out more, please refer to the Have Your Say! arrangements here:

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

E-mail: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk
www.colchester.gov.uk

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 those functions by 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 BOROUGH COUNCIL
Scrutiny Panel
Tuesday, 18 August 2020 at 18:00

The Scrutiny Panel Members are:

Councillor Kevin Bentley
Councillor Lewis Barber
Councillor Tina Bourne
Councillor Paul Dundas
Councillor Chris Hayter
Councillor Mike Hogg
Councillor Sam McCarthy
Councillor Lorcan Whitehead

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.

Live Broadcast

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

<https://www.youtube.com/user/ColchesterCBC>

1 Welcome and Announcements (Virtual Meetings)

The Chairman will welcome members of the public and Councillors to the meeting and remind those participating to mute their microphones when not talking. The Chairman will invite all Councillors and Officers participating in the meeting to introduce themselves. The Chairman will, at regular intervals, ask Councillors to indicate if they wish to speak or ask a question and Councillors will be invited to speak in turn by the Chairman. A vote on each item of business will be taken by roll call of each Councillor and the outcome of each vote will be confirmed by the Democratic Services Officer.

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 pecuniary interest or non-pecuniary interest.

5 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Panel will be invited to confirm that the minutes of the meetings held on 7 July 2020 and 21 July 2020 are a correct record.

Minutes of Scrutiny Panel meeting 7 July 2020 9 - 18

Minutes of Scrutiny Panel meeting 21 July 2020 19 - 26

6 Have Your Say! (Virtual Meetings)

Members of the public may make representations to the meeting. Each representation may be no longer than three minutes (500 words). Members of the public may register their wish to address the meeting by registering online by 12.00 noon on the working day before the meeting date. In addition a written copy of the representation will need to be supplied for use in the event of unforeseen technical difficulties preventing participation at the meeting itself.

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.

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|----|--|----------|
| 10 | Pre-Scrutiny of the Council Recovery Programme (Covid 19) | 27 - 68 |
| | The Panel will pre-scrutinise the progress made to date on the Council's Recovery programme and plan a prior to it being submitted to Cabinet for approval on 2 September 2020. | |
| 11 | Review of the Colchester Borough Homes Recovery from Covid 19 | 69 - 84 |
| | The Panel will consider a report setting out the approach taken to Covid 19 recovery by Colchester Borough Homes and reports on progress to date. | |
| 12 | Amphora Recovery Programme (Covid 19) | 85 - 98 |
| | The Panel will consider a report providing an update on progress made to date on the Council's wholly owned companies' Covid-19 Recovery Plan in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. | |
| 13 | Colchester Business Improvement District | |
| | The Panel will receive a presentation from Simon Blaxill, Chair of Colchester Business Improvement District, and Sam Good, Business Improvement District Manager. | |
| 14 | Work Programme | 99 - 114 |
| | The Panel will consider a report setting the work programme for the Panel for the 2020/21 municipal year. | |
| 15 | 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

7 July 2020

Present: -

Councillor Barber, Councillor Bentley, Councillor Bourne, Councillor Dundas, Councillor Hayter, Councillor Hogg, Councillor McCarthy, Councillor Whitehead

Substitutions: -

None.

Also present: -

Councillor Cory, Councillor Goss, Councillor King, Councillor Lissimore, Councillor Beverley Oxford.

264. Appointment of Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Kevin Bentley be appointed Chairman for the ensuing Municipal Year.

265. Appointment of Deputy Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Lewis Barber be appointed Deputy Chairman for the ensuing Municipal Year.

266. Minutes of Previous meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2020 be confirmed as a correct record, subject to the addition of Councillor McCarthy on the list of attendance.

267. Pre-Scrutiny of Proposed changes to Garden Waste Collection

The Chairman thanked Cabinet for bringing this matter to the Panel for pre-decision scrutiny, prior to it going to the Cabinet meeting on 8 July 2020.

Owen Howell, Democratic Services Officer, read out written submissions for the item from Mr Andy Hamilton, Ms Pippa Salmon and Ms Maxine Strugnell as members of the public. Mr Andy Hamilton wrote to support the use of home composting. Ms Pippa Salmon wrote to express concern that the proposed charges were not based on individuals' ability to pay. Ms Maxine Strugnell's submission raised concerns regarding the potential for an increase in fly tipping and garden refuse being put into black bags, and about the fairness in charging for the roll-out of new wheelie bins.

Mr Jeremy Hagon addressed the Panel pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(1), raising his concerns over the proposals and his uncertainty as to how the waste portfolio was being managed. Mr Hagon expressed concern as to how residents on low incomes and/or who could not transport waste to the local tip would cope if charges for garden waste collection were introduced. It was queried as to whether there would be an option for residents to continue to use

white garden waste sacks, should they wish to. Mr Hagon queried whether the cost of adapting vehicles to collect from wheelie bins had been fully considered, and whether the running of the collection scheme should be subject to a tendering process. Mr Hagon queried whether alternatives, such as suspending collection during winter months, had been considered, and the effect that the new scheme would have on levels of fly tipping. It was questioned whether the introduction of charges would lead to a decrease in Council Tax, whether this would be an opt in/opt out service, what contractual terms would be in place (e.g. for dealing with missed collections) and what penalties might be in place for improper use. Mr Hagon posited that this matter should be decided by Full Council, following debate.

Councillor Scott-Boutell attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Panel to highlight promises made by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government to cover income lost by local authorities, contrasted with this assistance still not having been laid out. Councillor Scott-Boutell asked what work had been done to press Government for funds promised. The loss in income experienced by the Council was accompanied by an increase in demands on the Council's services.

Councillor Scott-Boutell put forward a range of views, including that shortfalls in Council income should be met by central government, rather than by increased charges on residents. It was queried how many other local authorities were moving to replace free collection of garden waste with a paid-for service. Questions were asked, such as whether the legality of the proposal had been considered, where the evidence for projected uptake and collection amounts had been given, especially given a lack of consultation, whether a cost benefit analysis had been carried out and whether other options for raising income had been looked at.

Councillor Scott-Boutell further asked whether the cost of reimbursements and grants for use of the service would come from the Council, whether community composting would lead to increased vehicle use and unsightly compost collection, whether the scheme would lead to other environmental impacts such as more bonfires.

Councillor Scott-Boutell asked the Panel to recommend that the proposals be put on hold, pending investigation of other potential funding streams.

Councillor Beverley Oxford attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Panel to ask how residents on low incomes could be expected to afford the cost of the proposed Garden Club and covered statistics relating to the current waste collection routes in operation.

Councillor Oxford noted fears that this move would lead to a full roll-out of wheelie bins throughout the Borough 'by stealth' and concerns regarding the need for additional information on the proposed scheme for community composting. Councillor Oxford stated that residents needed help, rather than additional charges, and asked whether a Council Tax rebate would be considered in order to make the changes cost-neutral for residents.

Councillor Lissimore attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Panel to acknowledge that the Council needed to react to address the challenges caused by Covid-19, but also to state that residents did not support the extra charge being proposed here for garden waste collection. This was in the context of many losing their jobs or facing reduced incomes. Councillor Lissimore criticised the proposals and expressed concern that the costings and projections were based on pre-Covid-19 data and unproven estimates and forecasts.

Councillor Lissimore noted that residents and councillors had been given a choice as to whether they wanted wheelie bins in their areas, back in 2016. Many areas had shown an overall preference not to have wheelie bins. A caution was given that the Council should not shift risk from its own finances by transferring risk on to residents. Councillor Lissimore also stated that the database of assisted collections was out of date and argued that this should be updated and corrected, before any structural changes to the collection service were contemplated. Councillor Lissimore also raised concern as to whether use of wheelie bins would slow the service and questioned why residents would sign up to the garden waste collection service if missed collections continued, albeit at a lower level than had previously been recorded.

Councillor Lissimore requested an explanation for the statement given that the proposals would have a beneficial effect on residents' health and asked why residents would take pride in their Council, given that recycling had been suspended at one point during the lockdown, and given that additional charges were now being countenanced.

An explanation was asked as to how residents would engage with the service if they were not able to access online services.

Councillor Lissimore gave the view that wheelie bins were an eyesore and noted that instances of fly tipping had already increased during the Covid-19 lockdown, arguing that the proposed changes would cause a further escalation in this as well as garden waste being put in household waste instead. Further objections were made regarding additional strain on Neighbourhood Teams and recycling centres, blocked drains and uncleared communal areas if garden waste isn't collected for free, difficulties finding space for compost bins, and no budget being identified for the scheme's costs or for community composting.

Councillor Lissimore raised the potential for the changes to increase the use of bonfires by householders and the concern that this would exacerbate respiratory conditions and breach the Council's air quality and climate change commitments, as well as the dangers of any increase in fly tipping which damaged flora and fauna.

Councillor Lissimore suggested that the proposals to introduce a charge be paused and a public review be conducted of all non-statutory services, including work to check if a change to collection services is possible and within the capacity of the Shrub End centre.

Councillor Goacher attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Panel to raise concern that the charge would constitute a regressive tax, not based

on ability to pay. He too raised concern that the proposals would increase car journeys to the tip, harm the environment, and see more garden waste put in black bag collections. The projected income would not balance the budget and Councillor Goacher argued that it was more important to lobby central government for necessary funds. It was argued that the plans did not take into account human behaviour patterns, were a tax on recycling and not in the spirit of the declaration of a climate emergency.

Councillor Goacher queried whether an environmental impact assessment had been carried out, emphasising the importance of such an assessment, and noted the brevity of the report's section covering environmental impacts. It was highlighted that data should be sought from local authorities which had already brought in charges for garden waste collection.

Councillor Scordis attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Panel to highlight the significant pressures on Council finances and note that additional Government support was not seemingly forthcoming. The proposals for garden waste charges represented one of many difficult decisions being contemplated. It was noted that some community composting schemes were already in operation, and that sharing between neighbours could be possible, albeit that there would be some places where this wouldn't be an option.

Councillor Scordis asked whether exemptions would be possible for those on low incomes, state pension or Council Tax support, how the Council would ensure collections would only be made from households on the collection scheme, and how fly tipping and inappropriate bonfire usage would be tackled. Details of wheelie bin roll out were requested, including what would be done where wheelie bins could not be used and whether the purchase of new bins should wait until it is ascertained how many existing wheelie bins are available for reconditioning and reuse.

Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, presented the background to the proposed decision, updating the financial position from the one given to the Panel at its meeting on 1 June 2020, and addressed the financial issues raised by visiting members.

The impact on low-income households was addressed. The Council aimed to protect the most vulnerable but regretted that there was no way to lower Council Tax rates, due to the severity of the current financial situation. The Portfolio Holder paid tribute to the Government measures which addressed economic stresses but argued that local authorities had not been supported fully, even in the face of concerted and coordinated lobbying from the local government sector and representative bodies. Slides were shown to provide an overview of the current budget strategy, addressing an estimated £12m gap in financing for the year, due to the effects of Covid-19 and lock down.

The financial projections and estimates had been based on evidence from other local authorities, albeit some of which had been recorded prior to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Regarding questions about having pride in the Council, the Portfolio Holder praised the hard work and dedication of the Council's staff and noted the awards and

financial grants that the authority continued to win, on the back of the Council's successes.

Mitigating factors and actions were recapped to show how damages to Council finances were being minimised and, whilst Government support had been received to replace lost income, it was likely that only around a third of the loss had been covered by this for the current financial year. Local authorities would bear some of the additional costs, but an increase in Government support was being sought. The Council's main income streams, and the challenges to them, were covered. An example given was that income from parking charges would need to increase by a third if they were to cover the unexpected shortfall.

A number of examples were given as to other ways in which a £1m saving could be made, including an end to grants to voluntary bodies for five years, or an end to discretionary housing payments. The Council's reserves were described as being better than those of many authorities, even whilst the Council had minimised rises in its portion of Council Tax over the past decade. The Portfolio Holder argued that the only alternative to increasing Council income would be to propose a significant increase in Council Tax rates.

In response to Panel questions as to what had developed since the previous meeting of the Panel, The Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources confirmed that the same problems remained, but that less Government support had been received than had been expected. Some successes had been achieved but severe problems were still facing the Council. It was now clearer what the limitations would be on Government action and support.

Councillor Goss, Portfolio Holder for Waste, Environment and Transportation, acknowledged that the proposed changes to garden waste collection were a hard choice to face, with a broad spectrum of views on the matter, but the current system was unsustainable. The waste and recycling service was resilient and outperformed many other local authorities, even though it was currently in the minority which did not charge for garden waste collection. Cabinet would like to maintain a free collection but were of the view that this was impossible. Efforts were being made to minimise the charges, and efforts would continue to work with residents to encourage waste reduction.

The Portfolio Holder for Waste, Environment and Transportation confirmed that the business case showed the revenue and capital implications, projected from data gathered from other local authorities which had been through similar processes. It was noted that the Council wanted to add value to their service, including offers and advice to residents. Wheelie bins were seen as being efficient and effective, for those areas which could accommodate them. The Panel were informed that 83% of local authorities utilised wheelie bins, and that these led to lower sickness levels in waste operatives, as they caused lower levels of musculoskeletal conditions than dealing with alternatives such as hessian sacks. Sacks were also found to need replacing more often as they are stolen or lost more often than wheelie bins.

The charging system proposed would be as flexible as possible, offering direct debit payment options, quarterly payment instalments and discounted rates for claimants

of universal credit. The payment structure was described, with no sign up fee for people joining in the first six months, and the Panel were informed that subscribers would receive advice, offers and suggestions for dealing with waste. Much had been learned from previous consultations and an exercise was planned for the Summer to gain data on levels of interest and estimate likely adoption rates for the redesigned collection service. Use of the service would be closely monitored, as would any changes in rates of reported fly tipping and use of black bag collections. Those residents with white sacks would not need to return them, however the Council would look to collect garden waste wheelie bins from those households not subscribing to the new scheme.

Assurance was given that the onboard cab ICT terminals would note which households are signed up to the collection scheme, and that assisted collections would continue for free, with the database used by the collection vehicles being updated.

The Portfolio Holder for Waste, Environment and Transportation stated that the Council was in the majority of local authorities which had needed to suspend collection of recycling at one point during the Covid-19 crisis, stating that around 70% of local authorities had suspended collection at least once.

A Panel member asked how additional demand for use of the Shrub End waste centre would be mitigated, including any increase in gridlock caused by waiting vehicles. The Portfolio Holder for Waste, Environment and Transportation explained that the centre was owned by the County Council and partially used by the Borough Council for its waste collection service. The Borough Council had been looking to work with the County Council to address the problems at the Shrub End centre but the County Council had no budget to move to a new site. A suggestion had been made to install cameras for web broadcast to show when the Shrub End site is quieter, allowing users to better plan their visits and avoid hours of peak use. The County Council are investigating options for this.

Panel members asked for information as to when the Council had first started collecting garden waste, and one member noted that many residents were on low incomes and did not have space for home composting, raising issues of fairness. The Portfolio Holder was asked what he would want to change about the proposals, if it were possible. The Portfolio Holder for Waste, Environment and Transportation explained that garden waste collections had been in operation for decades, and that if it were possible, he would wish to remove the proposed charges from the proposals. The roll out of wheelie bins, where possible, would save money and reduce sickness rates for Council staff and had already garnered positive feedback from areas which had used them already. White bag collections would continue where wheelie bins could not be used.

The Portfolio Holder was asked when a transformation of the service might have been examined had the Covid-19 pandemic not happened. The Portfolio Holder informed the Panel that a petition had already been received, calling for a new consultation on wheelie bin roll out, as well as interest from certain councillors. It was likely that a consultation would have been considered in the near future and it was clarified that mixed use of wheelie bins and white sacks for garden waste collection

in the same area would not be countenanced and that wheelie bins would not be forced on areas for which they would not be suitable, with residents' views being of paramount importance.

A member of the Panel agreed that the financial situation was stark and ventured that more needed to be done to help residents see the severity of the choices that had to be faced by the Council.

The potential benefits of expanding use of wheelie bins were underscored, particularly the beneficial effect of making collections easier and reducing rates of long-term sickness for staff, caused by stress and musculoskeletal injury.

Questions were asked as to when more information would be available on proposed concessions to the charging scheme, what discount might be given to those on low incomes and whether one-off collections would be offered on a 'pay-as-you-go' basis. The Portfolio Holder for Waste, Environment and Transportation confirmed that options for a chargeable freighter collection system were being looked at for one-off collections and explained that Rory Doyle, Assistant Director (Environment) would be able to give details regarding consideration of possible concessionary rates. It was emphasised that this charge would not be a tax, but a charge for receiving a service for which the Council did not have a statutory duty to provide.

The Portfolio Holder for Waste, Environment and Transportation asked members of the Panel to give their suggestions as to alternative ways to raise income or cut costs, should they feel that the proposals were unpalatable.

Clarification of the financial figures given was requested, including a breakdown of expected fixed and variable costs, and the cost and depreciation in value of the new vehicle mentioned. The Panel further requested detail as to which local authorities had provided data to inform the decision, the rate of take up of a similar scheme in Tendring, any funding to deal with potential increased fly tipping, what work had been done to predict any increase in vehicle use (and emissions) from greater use of local tips. The Portfolio Holder explained that no new vehicle would be bought, but that existing trucks would be adapted to add bin lifts. Other authorities had noted an initial small increase in fly tipping, but no large change. The Council had not experienced a large increase when collections had been suspended earlier in the year. Local authorities were permitted to charge and choose receptacles for garden waste, as this wasn't a statutory service.

Rory Doyle, Assistant Director (Environment), explained the costs and finance, including MRP [Material Requirements Planning] calculations over seven years for vehicles and four years for bins, and reasonable take-up projections. An 'expression of interests' exercise would be undertaken with residents, and the introduction of any charges would be the subject of a large communication effort. Local authorities consulted included Maldon, Tendring, West Suffolk, Castle Point and others outside of our area, such as Bexley. All started from different points, such as Tendring having no kerbside collection before introducing a chargeable service, and now having over 13,000 on the scheme. Route optimization would be carried out and it was expected that a service currently costing over £1m per year would become self-funding.

The report mistakenly noted the purchase of an extra vehicle, however no cost relating to this had been included in the business case.

In response to questions regarding the cost of waste collection, the Assistant Director explained that business case showed revenue implications on the baseline original figures as shown in the 2020-21 budget. The take-up in Tendring was around 25% of households and the Panel were informed that a reduction in people using the service would not lead to a commensurate drop in volume collected, as heavy users were more likely to continue to use the collection service. The Assistant Director noted that an initial 25% take-up was expected, increasing over time to peak at around Season four of operation as more joined, in line with what other authorities were experiencing with regard to paid collections. Tendring had achieved 25% take-up without advertising the introduction of a service from a standing start. A Panel member cautioned that there was a risk that the service would not be self-funding if the predicted 25-27% take-up was not achieved.

The Panel cautioned that clarity was needed regarding the projected take-up percentage before this decision was taken, and that if these projections were wrong it could prevent any positive effect on the Council's balance sheet. A Panel member warned that comparisons with dissimilar local authorities would not be useful and asked if the Council had compared itself to the financial situations of the comparable councils, requesting more detail on the modelling.

It was suggested that it would be helpful if this matter was to be brought to discussion by full Council, including a wider debate on alternative options for easing financial pressures. The Portfolio Holder for Waste, Environment and Transportation gave assurance that input by councillors would be welcome, including as to where wheelie bins would be suitable and explained that he would find a pause for consideration acceptable.

The Portfolio Holder answered questions to confirm that the Garden Club was not designed to be a costly scheme, that officers were liaising with the County Council to estimate and manage any changes in use of the Shrub End refuse tip, and that garden waste would not be collected if put in household waste bags. Rosa Tanfield, Neighbourhood Services Group Manager, confirmed that the County Council had no significant concern that tonnage deposited at Shrub End would increase.

Councillor David King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, emphasised that this proposal would not be enough to balance the Council's budget and, with no significant increase in Government assistance, many councils will struggle. There were no easy alternatives and further cuts and efficiencies would be needed. The Portfolio Holder requested that the Scrutiny Panel work with the administration to identify ways to increase savings. The current shortfall of Government funding compared to the cost of Covid-19 to the Council was approximately £6m.

The Chairman welcomed the offer of a pause on adopting the proposed scheme to allow for greater scrutiny, and the Panel summarised their recommendations.

RECOMMENDED to CABINET that: -

- (a) A pause be taken on the proposal to introduce changes to the garden waste collection service;
- (b) Further exploration be made of the five-point response to Budget Recovery agreed at the June Scrutiny Panel meeting, including the forensic understanding of statutory and non-statutory service provision by the Council;
- (c) A cross-party Task & Finish Group be set up to review waste service costs and implications and to include representatives of all party groups;
- (d) Cabinet continues to lobby central government for a long-term financial settlement for the benefit of this council's finances and its residents;
- (e) Ward councillors be consulted on any proposed changes to the use of wheelie bins and as to the identification of geographical areas where wheelie bin usage would or would not be appropriate.

268. Work Programme 2020-21

The Panel expressed a vote of thanks for its former Chairman, retired Councillor Beverly Davies, for her work chairing the Panel.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme for 2020/21 be noted and approved.

SCRUTINY PANEL

21 July 2020

Present: -

Councillor Barber, Councillor Bentley, Councillor Bourne, Councillor Dundas, Councillor Hayter, Councillor Hogg, Councillor McCarthy, Councillor Whitehead

Substitutions: -

None.

Also present: -

Councillor Cory, Councillor Goss, Councillor King, Councillor Lissimore, Councillor Beverley Oxford.

269. Presentation by the North East Essex Health & Wellbeing Alliance

Mark Jarman-Howe, Chairman of the North East Essex Health & Wellbeing Alliance, and Pam Donnelly, Strategic Director of Customer and Relationships, presented the work of the Alliance.

Benefits had been gained from working with partners across North Essex, including local authorities, NHS organisations, the Mental Health Trust, Community360 and other charities. The main challenges being faced by the Alliance included suicide, alcohol-related conditions and violent crime.

The main causes of ill health were covered, divided into categories of socio-economic, physical environment, health behaviours and healthcare. The great majority of these causes were not within the control of the NHS. A report was to be released to show barriers to improving health levels, and ways to overcome such barriers. Scrutiny was being given to the role of community assets in increasing health in communities. Greater funding is being sought for this work, and to improve connections and reach into BAME and LGBTIQ+ communities. The work of the integrated neighbourhood teams was described, in the community model of care, working with GPs and primary and acute care providers to use community care options whenever possible.

The Alliance's response to the Covid-19 crisis was detailed, with the explanation that some work streams had to be paused, but that much existing work was hastened (such as efforts to strengthen joint working and mutual aid) to help the Alliance's partners meet the demands from Covid-19. Teams were shown to be robust and effective and had moved to put surge capacity in place. Mental health work had been done to address the effects of Covid-19 and the ensuing lockdown. NHS organisations were working with councils and charitable bodies to counteract these negative influences on mental health.

The One Colchester Partnership was held up as a very effective vehicle for stakeholder partnership and co-operation, ensuring effective communications and targeting of resources.

Care home difficulties and challenges had been targeted and mitigations worked on. A number of outbreaks had been identified and managed by a multi-disciplined cell developed to manage such outbreaks. The pandemic response relied upon staff sharing across the Alliance's members and had stress-tested the Alliance's principles and ways of working. The organisation was applying to be the first Marmot-accredited Alliance in the UK.

The Alliance was refreshing its development approaches based on community assets, dealing with effects of lockdown and working on its key aim of population health management, with outcomes-based accountability.

The Alliance's governance arrangements and structure were described, with the CCG [Clinical Commissioning Group] being the legal authority for healthcare provision. An Alliance Committee had been formed to report to the CCG and with authority to set out plans and approve spending. There had been a change in the management office, shared between the partner organisations, and emergency pressures on the system were managed by the Alliance.

The Alliance's plans for the future were outlined. These would build upon the benefits of joint working as also seen with Alliances in Suffolk as well as in Essex, as part of the Integrated Care System (ICS). Much potential was seen in a new design and procurement approach between partners. Efforts were being made to ensure that the three Alliances in the ICS were working well, with a likelihood that the three CCGs would form clearer links.

Councillor Mark Cory, Leader of the Council, praised the work of the Alliance and the One Colchester Partnership, with work having helped to address the pressures and challenges such as outbreaks in care homes. This was vital work to keep people safe, in addition to the investments being made to reduce inequalities and increase opportunities in the Borough.

Councillor David King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, echoed the Leader's praise and highlighted the crucial cultural challenge being faced regarding changing attitudes towards dying and end-of-life care as well as emphasising the need to ensure sufficient resources were committed to allow aims to be achieved. The importance of changing attitudes to death was echoed by members of the Panel, to stop it being a taboo subject and help improve experiences. The Chairman of the Alliance stressed the work to provide an integrated service, with statutory and voluntary services, and a new approach having been signed off to bring resources together for end-of-life care, pump primed by investment. The funding strands and planned efforts were outlined. The service user and family would have representation and input in this 'compassionate communities' approach.

Councillor Julie Young, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Performance and Deputy Leader of the Council, affirmed that a strong local government voice was needed in healthcare and wellbeing. The region had weathered the Covid-19 crisis well thus far but, regarding the Marmot review, cautioned that wealth inequalities had caused a widening of life expectancies over the past decade, querying how this could be addressed.

The Panel asked for an explanation of the resourcing and area splits of the integrated neighbourhood teams. The Strategic Director of Customer and Relationships explained that much work had been done to set out the areas, trying to match these to primary care network areas where possible. Work with these teams included community nursing, occupational therapy, nutritional support and social health services. This was part of the effort to create a community model of care as a central way to provide health services. More detail was given of the partnership working with community health providers and decrease demand on acute care. Covid-19 has underlined the importance of this, along with the impact of isolation and loneliness.

It was asked how the Council could help to support work to improve wellbeing and whether this could include improving access to open green spaces and making efforts to improve the wellbeing of low-income households.

The Chairman and members welcomed the Strategic Director of Customer and Relationships' offer to brief each Council Group on the Alliance's work and related matters. The Panel praised the improvements in communications over the years and the updates provided to councillors.

The Panel raised historic issues regarding competition for resources publicity and clients in healthcare and asked about the work in the Alliance to improve co-operation between partners. This led to questions as to whether a drop in spending by local authorities would harm work to improve public health. Mark Jarman-Howe confirmed that reverse incentives to cooperation had been created under the old system, but that moves to share risks, guarantee incomes and gain benefits from partnership working had reduced the incentives for competition between organisations. The ICS was committed to the Alliance's way of working, especially where it worked across borders. The Alliance was working with the neighbouring alliance in Suffolk, with mutual learning; an example was that the Suffolk Alliance had drawn guidance from the North-East Essex Alliance's governance structure and integration. Regarding funding, there was much uncertainty. NHS funding remained a priority, but there was no certainty it would stay at the current levels. The ICS broke even in 2019-20 and efforts were being made to move the ICS to operate on a budget that ran for at least five years, to give certainty over future spending plans.

Mark Jarman-Howe was asked what inequalities are being measured that are of most concern to the Alliance. The Strategic Director of Customer and Relationships offered to brief each Council Group on the subject and assured the Panel that a strategy targeting inequality would be brought to Cabinet in Autumn. Reducing the effects of inequalities was a key Alliance and ICS priority. The partners were due to discuss this in October, with resources needing to be targeted at crucial areas of need and the factors behind the causes of ill health.

A Panel member asked for assurance that mental health services and support would receive the necessary funding, without this being reallocated. The Chairman of the Alliance gave assurance that there was a greater focus on mental health than ever before, including support work to reduce suicide rates, support for families, with less of a divide now being seen between mental and physical health. More work was still needed to offset the effects of austerity, with the ICS looking to increase funding of

mental health services and charities. The Strategic Director of Customer and Relationships elaborated on this to explain befriending was used to address isolation and that mental health support services were integrated fully into service delivery as a whole.

The Panel discussed the response to safeguard care homes, with care homes in the Borough coping well. The Alliance had commenced work with care homes at an early stage and shifted resources to where they were needed.

More information was requested on how partnership working had helped with responses to the Covid-19 situation and whether learning points from the first wave would be useful in subsequent waves. The Chairman of the Alliance confirmed that a second wave was a real possibility, however there was no indication as to specifics as there was insufficient knowledge to allow accurate forecasts to be made. A second lockdown would be much harder to manage than the first, especially if this coincided with poor weather and the influenza season.

Questions were also asked as to the biggest barriers to integration of services and what was needed for further integration. The Chairman of the Alliance noted that an example of integration was that St. Helena Hospice had taken the lead on providing non-hospital end-of-life care, leading other providers and working to provide such care at home, where possible. This also incorporated additional bereavement support and signposting to service options. Regarding barriers to integration, a change was needed in organisational behaviours, sharing of risk and in the trusting of organisations to follow others where appropriate.

On questions of structure and staffing, the Panel were informed that there were 12 organisations on the partnership board, with one or two members per organisation. 10-20 staff members worked in the Change Management Office. There was pressure across all organisations to reduce headcounts, and a positive of the Alliance is that it increases efficiency and allows for staff to be shared by organisations where possible. There were also shared roles between the CCG and Alliance.

The Panel asked whether the Alliance could work with employers and SMEs [Small and Medium-sized Enterprises] to help their staff. Mr Jarman-Howe explained that the Alliance members' workforces totalled around 15,000 and that there had been a significant improvement in resources to help staff across the organisations. This included work with mental health charities, such as MIND, to provide support and help, also rolled out to other employers.

Recent advances included a roll-out and use of remote video options for communications and consultations. Hardware and software options were being used by GP practices to adapt to the current Covid-19 restrictions. The digital engagement team continued in its work to ensure that online options could be rolled out and used by those who were not currently online.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Panel noted the presentation and the work of the North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance.

270. Year End April 2019 – March 2020 Performance Report including progress on 2018-2021 Strategic Plan Action Plan

Councillor Julie Young, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Performance and Deputy Leader of the Council, introduced the Report and the performance against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) during the last financial year. Highlights included performance in processing housing benefit and Local Council Tax Scheme claims, providing swift and effective support to the vulnerable. Success had also been recorded with the completion of 237 affordable homes in the year.

In the previous year, an increase in sickness rates had caused a dip in waste collection performance. Human Resources and the Wellbeing Strategy had worked to improve sickness rates, with mental health support, counselling and provision of physiotherapy. The target for minimising missed collections had not been met but marked improvements in performance against this measure had been shown over 2019-20.

The Deputy Leader was asked to explain why it was seen as a success to exceed the target for additional homes by over 200 new homes. Councillor Adam Fox, Portfolio Holder for Housing, elucidated that the number built depended on developers, with around 800-900 built per year, on average. The Chairman noted that it would be helpful for the Panel to also be given data as to the number of new properties for which the local authority had received applications during the year. Panel members welcomed the delivery of affordable housing but questioned the desirability of exceeding the overall KPI for new homes by around 20%, given the pressure put upon infrastructure. The reason for the exceeding of this target was questioned. The Portfolio Holder explained that, should the local target for new housing not be met, central government could step in to act and press for delivery of new housing.

The Panel discussed the Council's performance as to full homelessness duty owed. This was a new target and there was currently no data available to use for benchmarking. The form of the KPI was brand new, stemming from the Homelessness Reduction Act, and there was no national guidance as to the setting of targets. Rough sleeping was only a small part of the problem of homelessness and the Council wanted to show what it is doing to reduce the numbers in homelessness. It was cautioned that the economic impact of Covid-19 was likely to increase levels of homelessness and the Council was working with partners to plan for this. It was explained that the percentages recorded showed the percentage of the total number of individuals who had been given a housing plan, who had also then been found to have a full homelessness duty owed to them by the Council. The Panel were informed that much preliminary work is done to support households to prevent homelessness, and that this is not covered in the statistics that could be reported. A Panel member recommended that a better explanation of the KPI be provided, as the measure was causing confusion.

A Panel member noted that some targets were being significantly exceeded and queried whether they needed to be adjusted. The Deputy Leader cautioned that officers worked to give their utmost, rather than aiming to perform to targets. It was noted that the claim processing time KPI had been reset in the previous year.

Councillor David King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, further cautioned that new targets would need to be considered, given the fall in available funds due to Covid-19.

The Panel noted that, although the KPI for missed collections was in the red, a waste collection task and finish group was due to meet and discuss the collection service. The Deputy Leader noted that the hot weather had increased sickness levels, which had a knock-on negative effect on performance related to collections. An investment was made in staff wellbeing and additional agency workers. The Panel expressed concern that job stress may be increasing the mental health issues experienced by staff. The Deputy Leader clarified that mental health issues were not particularly apparent in waste collection staff, with the most serious issue being musculoskeletal problems. Increased access has been given to physiotherapy and psychological support. It was acknowledged that the HR Team needed to keep an awareness of different causes of sickness, working with line managers to identify and solve problems, avoiding long-term sickness where possible.

A member of the Panel expressed hope that there would be more publicity of some of the Council's successes, to give a better view of its service provision. The Panel considered whether there were other areas of performance in which the Council is interested in monitoring performance. It was suggested that a measure be found to show the impact of the Council's work on improving levels of public health. It was also suggested that a measure could be considered to measure enforcement of planning application condition enforcement, however it was noted that the Council did not have overall control on house building and planning matters.

RESOLVED that Scrutiny Panel:

- (a) Noted the performance levels described in the attached reports for the organisation's ability to operate effectively and achieve its strategic goals; and
- (b) Thanked the Council's staff and partners for all work done to assist residents during the Covid-19 crisis.

271. Annual Scrutiny Report

The Chairman suggested that future annual reports could be given to the Council's Communications Team to add professional design expertise and graphics. Caution was given that officers should not be overloaded but Richard Block, Assistant Director of Corporate and Improvement Services gave assurance that he had already asked the Communications and Marketing Team to take this on next year.

272. Work Programme 2020-21

The Panel noted that there would be an additional meeting on 27 July to scrutinise the call-in received relating to the recent Council response to the Sizewell B Stage 1 consultation. There would be a further additional meeting, on 17 August, for members to discuss issues relating to NEGC Ltd. The Chairman informed the Panel that he would seek advice as to whether it would be appropriate for him to chair that

meeting, or whether he would need to declare an interest and recuse himself (as Cabinet Member for Infrastructure at Essex County Council).

A general training course was being sought for Scrutiny Panel training. Owen Howell, Democratic Services Officer, explained that he would approach training providers in the near future.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme for 2020/21 be noted and approved.

18 August 2020

Report of	Assistant Director Place and Client Services	Author	Mandy Jones 282501
Title	Pre-Scrutiny of the Council Recovery Programme (Covid-19)		
Wards affected	All		

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report details the progress made to date on the development of the Council's Covid-19 Recovery programme, developed in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

In particular, it outlines:

- Progress made to date in the development of the Recovery programme since the Cabinet report of 3 June 2020 entitled 'Council Recovery Programme (Covid-19)' which set out the emerging framework and the approach taken by the Council, and with partners, to facilitate recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic.
- A summary review of the 'short-term' actions taken between the end of April and July 2020, building on those actions outlined in the two Cabinet reports of 3 June 2020: 'The Council response to Coronavirus (COVID-19)' which outlines work undertaken in response to the crisis and the 'Council Recovery programme (Covid-19)' report as referred to in the point above.
- The draft Recovery Action Plan (Appendix A) which is divided into the four 'cell' areas of Economy, Community, Customer and Council and contains the objectives and areas of activity associated with recovery for each cell area, focussing on the 'medium term' (between July 2020 and April 2021) and beyond.

1.2 Cross cutting themes of Housing, Finance, Climate Change and Sustainability and commerciality (represented through work with the Council's companies) are facilitated by the programme structure; activity relating to the priorities in these areas are woven through the fabric of the Recovery plan.

1.3 Two separate reports are being brought to this Scrutiny panel meeting for review: (Amphora Recovery Programme (Covid-19) and Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) Recovery Programme (Covid-19). The approach to recovery from Covid-19 detailed by Colchester Commercial Holdings Ltd (and the 'Amphora' companies) and CBH is aligned with the strategic direction and principles of the Council's recovery programme, the objectives contained within the Recovery plan and the budget strategy developed to respond to the considerable financial pressures caused by the Coronavirus pandemic.

1.4. Cabinet approved the recommendations in the report on the Council's Recovery Programme of 3 June 2020, specifically: that the approach to the Recovery programme outlined in 1.1 above and summarised further in 4.1 to 4.3 below are adopted and that further work to prioritise areas of activity and emerging projects would be undertaken with portfolio holders, balancing these with the significant financial pressures outlined in a separate report to the same Cabinet meeting (see Cabinet report of Assistant Director

– Corporate and Improvement Services: Covid-19 budget changes 2020/21 and budget strategy 2021/22). The work outlined in this report and detailed in Appendix A is the initial outcome of that process.

2. Action Required

- 2.1 To pre-scrutinise the progress made to date on the Council's Recovery programme and plan as outlined in this report (and at Appendix A) prior to the report being brought to Cabinet for approval on 2 September 2020.

3. Reason for Scrutiny

- 3.1 To ensure the Council's approach to recovery from Coronavirus as represented by the development of the Recovery programme summarised in this report (and detailed further in the report to Cabinet of 3 June 2020) is sound.
- 3.2 To ensure the objectives and activity outlined in the Recovery plan itself are also sound, acknowledging that the plan needs to be flexible and evolve in response to future uncertainties in the economy and society as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

4. Background Information

Building on the Recovery Programme principles and framework

- 4.1 The principles being used to guide the development of the Council's Recovery Plan are outlined as good practice by the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU). They include the need to 'build back better' by increasing resilience in the economy, the consideration of innovative and transformational delivery models, developing key role players and shared ownership and partnerships and aligning these across funding streams and to prioritise activity according to these principles.
- 4.2 The Cabinet report outlined the framework for the recovery programme as a four 'cell' model. To briefly recap the cells are Economy, Community, Council and Customer. Each cell area is owned by an Assistant Director with sponsorship by Executive Management Team. Governance, development and oversight is directed by portfolio holders and major decisions are brought to Cabinet. Two diagrams which illustrate the programme framework are included at Appendix B.
- 4.3 A cross party 'Leadership Assembly' made up of all-party Group Leaders meets regularly to provide policy input, raise awareness and communicate the development and progress of the Recovery programme within political groups and to all Members. It also provides direction for the programme, supporting officers where appropriate and using learning from the current crisis to contribute to the future direction of key community and delivery partnerships.
- 4.4 As outlined in the report to Cabinet, the effects of Covid-19 have been far reaching and will continue to have a profound impact on our economy and communities into the future. The rate of change has been unprecedented and is continuing. Set against this uncertainty, predictions for how the Coronavirus pandemic will continue to impact on all aspects of people's lives and detailed predictions for the future of our economy and communities are wide and varied.
- 4.5 In order to respond to this uncertainty, we have two strategies. Firstly, to ensure we are continually scanning for, and receptive to analysis of the future effects of Covid-19 on the

national and local economy and our communities. Secondly, we need to ensure that the plan is agile and able to respond to negative effects as they arise and, conversely, to harness opportunities as a result of the pandemic or created through national policy.

- 4.6 The Recovery plan is intelligence and insight driven. The business intelligence workstream, includes the development of a dashboard of national and economic indicators and utilises intelligence from a variety of sources (including South East area Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and the Office for National Statistics) to influence activity in the Economy cell. Local insight is also gathered and analysed: a recent survey was sent to over 2,500 businesses (with a 15% response rate) and monitoring statistics and engagement with business networks and partners such as Colchester Business Enterprise Agency (Colbea) and Our Colchester Business Improvement District (BID) has helped target our activity. In addition, research commissioned by the Council with North East Essex Health and Well Being Alliance (NEE HWB Alliance) examined the role community assets play in enabling wellbeing and is being used to inform the Community Cell activity, with partners such as One Colchester Strategic Partnership and the NEE HWB Alliance. The report is published here: <https://aru.ac.uk/research/ageing>
- 4.7 The flexibility of the plan is facilitated by an agile project management methodology and the plan is updated monthly. The 'cell' framework approach works across council services and embeds a set of 'cross cutting' themes into the plan, to ensure priorities such as sustainability and climate change are woven through to produce a plan that delivers on our priorities, rather than focussing on service delivery alone.

The Recovery plan and 'cells'

- 4.8 The Cabinet report of 3 June outlined our objectives for each cell area and a set of emerging areas of activity and potential actions. Considerable work has been undertaken since the June 2020 Cabinet report to respond to the current crisis in the short term to aid future recovery and to develop and prioritise actions and associated timescales to support recovery in the medium term (July 2020 to April 2021). Examples of the work undertaken in the short term are outlined at 4.12 and examples of future actions from the Recovery Plan (Appendix A) are outlined at 4.14.
- 4.9 Each cell area by its nature needs a varying approach to their plan. Partnerships work plays a key part in both the Economy and Community cells, with ownership for delivery often led jointly across systems and with other public and private sector organisations. In addition, some objectives are linked to longer term outcomes, rather than measurable short-term wins. This is especially true for the Communities cell where we are often jointly enabling work that is being delivered by our partners. One Colchester and the North East Essex Health Alliance are key partnerships driving the ambition and agreed actions, each organisation has its own recovery plan and priorities and our aim is to ensure these are joined up, understood and supported by partners to build and collaborate, improving outcomes where relevant.
- 4.10 For the Council and Customer cells the work is more focussed on how the Council recovers as an organisation and delivers services that help our residents recover from Coronavirus. For this reason, actions are likely to be more defined and measurable.
- 4.11 The approach to communication and engagement is for each cell owner (Assistant Director) to work proactively to identify opportunities to engage and communicate, ensuring these are built into areas of activity or project outlined in the plan. Most areas of activity will need their own engagement plan, for instance, work with the 'We are

Colchester' partnership to develop our Town Deal (bid for up to £25m from Government – see items 4.12 and 4.14 Economy below) is developing an extensive programme of engagement work to include partners, stakeholders and communities in the development of the Town Investment Plan.

- 4.12 Engagement will consider the needs and inequalities experienced by particular groups in society such as Black Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities and young people, with activity targeted to facilitate greater inclusion. An example of using insight and engagement is our involvement in the Essex Police Independent Advisory Group (IAG) which uses local insight to build the needs, wants and assets of groups who are under-represented in decision making processes. This insight and engagement with under-represented groups is used to shape services and to inform the Recovery Plan.

Progress on short term actions in each cell area (May to July 2020)

- 4.13 Below are some examples of progress in the short term for each cell area:

Economy

- **Extensive work with partners to re-open high streets (including work with the Business Improvement District's Town Centre Task Force)** have enabled social distancing and confidence for visitors when visiting town centres.
- **The £25M Town Deal process has re-started** – 'We Are Colchester' Board ratified a decision for our Town Investment Plan to be submitted to government in October 2020 and Recovery planning to be built into the process (with £1M available to us for earlier opportunities).
- **A Business Impact Survey** has been distributed and analysed and contributes to activity outlined.
- Continued sharing and promotion of **climate/sustainability good practice** - for example, working with ECC to facilitate implementation of Safer, Greener, Healthier routes in the Town Centre.
- Promoting emphasis on **travel planning and 'working differently' opportunities** **LFFN Gigabit Broadband** network High Street works - completed July 2020.
- Working with the Our Colchester Business Improvement District (BID) to encourage people to buy locally.
- Council procurement process reviewed to **increase local opportunities** and attract local suppliers and contractors.
- Colchester's four Arts / Museum based National Portfolio Organisations supported in **stimulating and relaunching key local arts and cultural sector businesses** and assets within the new guidelines - ongoing.
- **Pavement repairs/improvements** work in Colchester High Street has started.
- Development of specific schemes that **improve public realm in town centre: Mercury and St Nicholas Square**. Builds on previously completed (HAT projects) work.

Community

- **Digital Access** Teams project extension funding paper has been submitted to the Alliance for a decision
- **Track and Trace** scenario exercise has taken place with County partners. Process & procedures are in place
- All useful and relevant information for potential **volunteers** has been collated and now held in one central place at Volunteer Essex.

Council

- A first full cycle of **public Council Decision Making meetings** have been successfully delivered with 1877 views of our meetings on the Council YouTube channel
- All services are on track to have **resumed by the end of July 2020** following Covid risk assessments being carried out on a service by service basis
- Rowan House and the Town Hall are being utilised with appropriate Covid-19 controls in place
- **Lobbying of central government** to hold them to their word that all Covid-19 cost/budget impacts would be met has continued
- The **MTFF has been revised** to take account of the emerging position but there is still a considerable budget gap
- The **New Strategic Priorities** previously adopted by Council **have been reviewed** and found to be still be appropriate.
- The thematic approach to the budget strategy is encouraging a reimagination of services

Customer

- **Welfare Benefits and Discretionary Funds services have improved** due to new way of interacting and meeting with residents. Improved attendance rates compared during and post covid19 months. Communications include bi-weekly infographic updates, which signposts to the website
- the **Business Rates team** continue to distribute grants and the Discretionary Business Grant was extended with relaxed eligibility criteria. All applicants have been contacted
- the **coronavirus website** is continuing to be reviewed and updated where appropriate
- we're **communicating how services are operation** (normal, disrupted or closed) via weekly social media updates, which signposts to the website
- A review of **local land charges** marketing is taking place to make the service more commercial through recovery
- Elections and Communications Team are discussing ways to contact residents for the **Annual Canvass** without the need for personal contact
- **Taxi driver and vehicle licensing processes are now in place and new driver applications will restart soon** after a complete overhaul of the processes and new ways of working in a virtual digital way are being designed and developed. This new way of working will reduce the amount of travel taxi drivers need to undertake, alongside reduced printing of documents, both of which contribute to reducing carbon emissions.

Developed actions for the Medium term (and further into the future)

- 4.14 Appendix A is the Draft Recovery Plan with actions and activity for the 'medium term' and beyond. This document is a detailed account of the work that has been planned for between the present and April 2021 and beyond. Although much work has taken place since May 2020, the plan will continue to develop and be reprioritised and amended according to insight and intelligence, changes in government policy and the economy and society and Council and partner priorities.
- 4.15 Some examples from the Recovery Plan are listed below under the objectives for each cell area:

Economy

The Economy is rebuilt to be stronger in future

- **Town Deal** – finalising and submitting We Are Colchester's £25M bid and Town Investment Plan to Government in October 2020 – with a £1M early funding opportunity for key priority projects. An engagement plan is being developed with

an emphasis on participation by Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities and young people.

- **Partnership working** – continuing to work with key sectors and partners including One Colchester, The Ambassadors Group, North Essex Economic Strategy Group and We Are Colchester (Town Deal) to understand their own recovery planning and finding opportunities to address impacts jointly. This will include the sharing of best practice in ways to operate in an environmentally sustainable way post-Covid-19, for instance, supporting home working and promotion of sustainable travel options such as cycling and walking.
- **Funding of £20K for business support and advice to Colchester Business Enterprise Agency (Colbea)** in addition to the £9.5K funding provided this year to provide support through, email, telephone and fully funded 1:1 business advice sessions to local businesses to April 2021 to assist resilience and recovery.
- **Continuing focus on using intelligence** to target support, including the development of a dashboard of economic indicators.

Opportunities are developed to ensure the economy is greener and more inclusive

- **Modern Methods of Construction (MMC)** – exploring opportunities to access MMC funding to unlock sites including housing sites.
- Working with ECC **to inform the development and implementation** of the next phase of their ‘**Safer Greener Healthier**’ transport initiative and feeding insight from local partners to promote a greater emphasis on **travel planning and working differently to minimise travel to and from work**. Helping organisations make these changes aims to lead to reduced congestion around the borough, reduced carbon emissions and improvements in air quality.
- **Rollout of the E-cargo bikes project** following the successful bid for cargo bikes with the Energy Savings Trust for £136k which has purchased 25 electric Cargo bikes and 5 trailers for use by 10 local businesses and community and public sector partners, promoting green modes of transport, helping small business recovery and contribute to the Council’s climate change and sustainability priorities. This will help to ensure the ongoing shift and increasing appetite for online deliveries amongst both consumers and businesses is made more environmentally friendly.

The programme stimulates the local economy and markets

- Completing **construction and re-opening of Mercury Theatre**. In the construction of Mercury Theatre, work has gone in to ensuring the building is as sustainable as possible, with the installation of triple glazing, further solar panels and LED lighting amongst other improvements.
- **Delivery of the Colchester Northern Gateway Sports Park**, and infrastructure improvements, in order to open this regionally significant sports and leisure facility, promoting cycling and health.
- Continuing **delivery of Colchester Northern Gateway District Heat Network** to create an innovative renewable ground source energy supply.
- **Constructing ‘The Walk’ at Colchester Northern Gateway** for key pedestrian and cycle routes
- **Commencing 350 new homes** (30% affordable) at Colchester Northern Gateway
- Opening the
- Reviewing the whole ‘**social value**’ system of procurement to encourage local suppliers.

- Ongoing support for **arts and cultural sectors** through 'Creative Colchester' Board.
- **Develop a case for funding of new centre for digital and creative businesses in Queen St 'Queen St Grow on' facility.** If successful, this will enable these businesses to expand and up-scale. This will be built on the site of the former bus garage in Queen Street.

The Town Centre becomes a more vibrant, resilient and adaptable place for people to visit

- Working to ensure research into future **digital working hubs** is undertaken
- **Pop up cycleways, secure Town Centre cycle parking and wider walking access** launched to ensure visitors can travel by sustainable modes of transport and feel safe and supported to do this.
- Opportunities to **improve the public realm** identified
- Opportunities to **promote areas where the natural environment is more prominent** in the urban streetscape identified to contribute to reducing air pollution and supporting biodiversity.
- See also work to **restart Town Deal** (above)

Community

Levels of inter-organisational collaboration and new working practices bought about by Covid 19 crisis are sustained

- **'Lock it with Love'** campaign to be launched by One Colchester. Aimed at the public to show their appreciation for the NHS, loved ones. It is of a remembrance & commemorative nature as well attractive and something for people to look at.
- **Vulnerability & Shielding Alliance work** has been added into the Be Well domain work lead by CBC & TDC
- St Helena have increased their Rapid Response service capacity of Clinical Nurse Specialists aligned with other multi-disciplinary team members

Communities are strengthened to mitigate economic disruption, reduce isolation and improve Health & Wellbeing

- **Firstsite** are working with the Alliance on a photography project to celebrate NHS workers
- Joint working by CBC & C360 to **map local green prescribing opportunities** for well-being. This also links to the conservation objectives within the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency, including enhancing environments to create more space for nature to grow and thrive through natural seeding, greening and by ending use of glyphosate herbicide to increase biodiversity and visual amenity.
- **Anglian Ruskin University research** into Community Assets & Health and Well Has been launched and being built into Alliance planning.

Pre-existing inequalities within and between communities is reduced

- Friday prayers are now being hosted outside St Botolph's Priory grounds, with social distancing in place
- The Community Response Team have been **contacting BAME communities** to understand the impact of Covid 19 on them and hear about any barriers they faced in lockdown

Strengthen Volunteering, civic engagement & building on the strengths within Communities

- C360 volunteer centre is developing action and managements plans. Training is in place for volunteer managers and a task & finish group is being set up
- Drafting of the CBC updated Community Enabling Strategy has begun. Planned to be presented at Cabinet in the autumn
- Planning for Officer & Member ABCD is underway. We are awaiting proposed timescales and costs

Council

Restarting Council decision making and public participation in a digital environment

- Following a full cycle of virtual Council Decision Making meetings, a review is being undertaken. Improvements include enabling members of the public to ask live questions at all public decision-making meetings in addition to the option to make written submissions.
- A report will be prepared for consideration by the September meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee on future meeting arrangements including the option of hybrid in person/virtual meetings
- The opportunity to trial virtual meetings has been useful and could be used in the future to reduce the environmental impact of these meetings, through reduced travel by officers and members, as well as reduced printing of papers.

Restore and adapt Council services harnessing the positive changes made

- Services will be continually adapted as government guidance evolves
- Preparations are being made so services are prepared for any further controls in the event of a second wave of Covid-19.
- Officer based services continue to be delivered predominantly through home working but as government guidance changes more staff will be provided with the option of working at Rowan House. A review of office accommodation requirements is being undertaken following the demonstrable success of greater levels of homeworking. The mass shift to homeworking achieved in a short space of time has demonstrated its potential to become a greater part of Council working, bringing sustainability benefits including decreases in emissions and congestion throughout the borough because of reductions in staff travel to work. However, thought will have to be given to this approach to take account of the difficulties of homeworking for some staff, to ensure staff wellbeing is not impacted by any changes.

Review and revise our finances to deliver a balanced budget and sustainable MTFF

- A thematic approach to developing a proposed budget strategy is being taken with each theme being led by an Assistant Director
- The Budget Strategy will be further developed and adapted over coming months to take account of any changes to the financial position

Reset the Councils Strategic Priorities

- The programme of projects to deliver the Strategic Priorities are being reviewed to ensure they contribute to recovery and they can be delivered with the finance available.
- A revised Strategic Plan will be considered by Cabinet in September.

Reimagine and reinvent our services to meet our new priorities and budget

- The thematic approach to the budget strategy includes identifying new commercial opportunities, service efficiencies through continuous improvement and digitisation and new delivery models in addition to fundamentally reviewing the Council's priorities for service delivery, for example in re-assessing the relationship between the Council, our partners and the Community. Many of these service changes, such as increased digitalisation of processes will bring environmental improvements in the way Council services are operated

Customer

Undertake a review of all customer access channels considering Covid-19

- Staff are working from home, providing the same services and support via web and phone
- Library staff will signpost any customers to our telephony and online channels
- Current provision is working well and all customers who need support are still able to access services

Keep customers updated with the resumption of council services

- Comms are continuing to work with services and communicate how services are operating (normal, disrupted or closed) via weekly social media updates, which signposts to the website

Support customers to ease financial pressures caused by Covid-19

- Having initially suspended recovery, normal recovery process has now resumed for Council Tax (excluding Court where we're waiting for news on when the courts will open up for C-Tax and Corporate Debt Recovery)
- Business Rates team continue to distribute Discretionary Grants which was extended with relaxed eligibility criteria
- Welfare Benefits Team currently meeting increased demand and offering valuable support to vulnerable residents

Adopt new ways of working with customers

- The Contact Centre has been highly successful running from homes - performance has been excellent and we will encourage working from home going forward with digital processes to support this
- We continue to proactively work with customers to reduce payments by cheque

Real time customer data

- Real-time data suites for LCTS, Land Charges, Planning, Building Control & Licensing delivered
-

5. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 5.1 In alignment with the work on response to date, the emerging work on recovery has been informed by the requirements of the Coronavirus pandemic, the Coronavirus Act, Government guidance (statutory and non-statutory) and the invoking of General Emergency Powers in accordance with the Constitution.
- 5.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and has been submitted electronically. A link to the EIA is below:-

[Equality Impact Assessment](#)

- 5.3 As the Recovery plan emerges, further equality and diversity issues will be considered where policies or procedures emerge or change as a result of the Recovery Programme. This will include producing further Equality Impact Assessments where appropriate for individual areas of activity.
- 5.4 A Commons Select Committee inquiry was launched on 30 April to 'hear about the different and disproportionate impact that the Coronavirus – and measures to tackle it - is having on people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act'. Three further select committee enquiries were launched in June to consider the impact the Coronavirus and the measures to tackle it is having on BAME people, the gendered impact, disability and access to service inquiries.
- 5.5 The results of these inquiries will be considered when they are published and an assessment of how they are addressed in the plan, alongside all considerations relating to Equality, Diversity and Human Rights as outlined in Council policy.

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 The Recovery work aligns with the Council's existing strategic priorities; however, it is likely the future strategic priorities of the Council will need to be reviewed considering the significant economic and social impacts of the Pandemic. The future Recovery Plan will be aligned with those priorities.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 Consultation and engagement with all sectors of the community, business and other partners and stakeholders will be considered and included in the development of the Recovery plan in relation to individual areas of activity and cell objectives where appropriate.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 The Recovery plan and each area of work will be promoted utilising the Council's communication channels, with communication plans attached to major project areas. The plan will be published on the website and promoted through social and other media.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1 As referenced in the report the financial considerations in the development of the plan will be considered at every point of the plan development process and are identified as a cross-cutting workstream.

10. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

- 10.1 The Health and well-being of residents is a primary consideration in the development of the entire Recovery Plan with specific objectives in the Community cell outlined in 4.14 above and Appendix A, referring to working with partners to drive the neighbourhood model of care and embed opportunities for improved health and well-being with higher levels of activity, engagement with arts and culture and improving mental health.

11. Health and Safety Implications

- 11.1 The development of the plan will comply with existing health and safety legislation and the Council's policy.

12. Risk Management Implications

- 12.1 Risk management will be a key part of the development of the plan and risk assessed for projects according to the council's current risk management framework.

13. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 13.1 Environmental and sustainability considerations are considered of paramount importance in the Recovery Programme with a specific 'Climate Change and Sustainability' cross cutting work stream running through all the cells. Each opportunity will be considered in relation to the Climate Emergency Action Plan to ensure that the Council's climate change, environmental and sustainability ambitions and policies are actively addressed and promoted throughout the development of the Recovery Plan in all areas.

Appendices

Appendix A: Colchester Borough Council's Recovery Plan

Appendix B: Programme structure and framework

Medium Term Activity – Appendix A Council Recovery Plan (Covid-19)

Economy Cell				
Objective One: The Economy is rebuilt to be stronger in future				
Activity	Service Area / Partnership	Medium Term Development (1 August 2020 – 31 March 2021)	From	To
Support businesses through the crisis and beyond.	Place and Client Services	<p>Work with partners to understand their own Recovery Planning and find opportunities to address impacts jointly (utilising existing networks including: One Colchester, The Ambassadors Group, North Essex Economic Strategy Group, and We Are Colchester (Town Deal).</p> <p>Continued policy alignment work, as part of Town Deal and development of Town Investment Plan.</p>	01/05/2020	Ongoing
	Place and Client Services / Colbea / Business support networks and partners	<p>Work with the key sectors within the borough to find specific support for businesses, building on engagement from networks and feedback from surveys / other intelligence.</p> <p>Provide funding for Colbea of £20K for support and advice services to businesses (and potential start-ups) in the borough, including 1-2-1 sessions - in addition to the £9.5K provided from April-July 2020.</p> <p>Monitor business insight through Colbea's business support and advice service and engagement with other partners including Our Colchester Business Improvement District (BID).</p>	01/05/2020	30/03/2021
Build business resilience – sector specific with independents / SMEs at risk.	Place and Client Services / Colbea / Innovation Centre / BID and other business support networks	<p>Work with business networks to support independent businesses access online and digital trading and marketing.</p> <p>This includes working with the BID and other support organisations to support local traders to access online shopping platforms for independents businesses.</p>	01/05/2020	Ongoing

Medium Term Activity – Appendix A Council Recovery Plan (Covid-19)

	Place and Client Services / Colbea and other partners	Networking - Continue to work with agencies who help to support Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) including Colbea and learn from them what businesses sector by sector need to help build resilience.	01/08/2020	31/03/2021
Set up Business intelligence workstream to understand the continuing effects of Covid-19 on the economy and build intelligence from national and local research, and insight and engagement with support networks and other partners to inform future strategy and action planning.	Place and Client Services	Co-ordinating information and intelligence to ensure plan informed by the most up-to-date and correct information. Create a 'dashboard' of national and local economic indicators for monitoring the effects of Covid-19 and reporting on a regular basis. Include on web site with link to newsletter / update communication sent to businesses.	01/05/2020	Ongoing
	Place and Client Services / other Councils and partnerships	Work across authorities to join research initiatives (surveys, for example) through current partnerships and networks (North Essex Economic Strategy Group, Essex Economic Development Officers group, 'We are Colchester' (Town Deal) and local business network partnerships) to gain value for money, access current research and trends and enable comparison.	01/05/2020	Ongoing
Harness the positive opportunities for changes in ways of working as a result of the Coronavirus crisis (digital).	Place and Client Services / BID / Colbea and other business support networks	Investigate a joint research project with partners into the effects of Coronavirus on transforming working patterns and how this could benefit the local economy (e.g. possibility of improving footfall to town centre through development of digital working 'hubs')	01/05/20	31/03/21
Objective Two: Opportunities are developed to ensure the new economy is greener and more inclusive				
Activity	Service Area / Partnership	Medium Term Development (1 August 2020 – 31 March 2021)	From	To
Enhance ability of businesses to developing new sustainable models and encourage new sustainable businesses.	Place and Client Services / NEAs (North Essex Authorities) / Amphora	Ensure projects relating to economic recovery are aligned to the Council's climate change ambitions and projects are assessed for their impact on climate change.	01/05/2020	31/10/2020

Medium Term Activity – Appendix A Council Recovery Plan (Covid-19)

	Housing and Trading	Work across Council services to identify funding opportunities for businesses and the Council that relate to Sustainability and Climate Change including regular sharing and promoting of good practice through 'grant finder' and other insight and developing mechanisms to collect levels of inward investment from these sources and identify gaps.		
	Place and Client Services / Travel Plan	Promote a greater emphasis on travel planning incorporating opportunities for working differently minimising travel to and from work.	01/06/2020	Ongoing
	Place and Client Services / Amphora Housing and Trading	Explore opportunities to access Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) funding to unlock sites, including housing sites and CAHL opportunities by 2021. Ongoing with Amphora Housing.	01/05/2020	Ongoing
	Place and Client Services / local business networks	Develop new models of deliveries made to consumers' homes using e-cargo bikes and other electric vehicles. E-cargo bikes bid successful and bikes will be delivered and distributed to relevant partners between July and September. 6 pool bikes will be available for short term loans. Full project launch September/October. Implement opportunities to embed use of e-cargo bikes to replace alternative trips as much as possible. CBC and partners to deliver and promote on this through the Transport & Sustainability team	01/05/2020	Ongoing
Promote and enhance an adaptable and innovative economy to work differently post Covid-19 and encourage digital investment (see also above re development of working 'hubs' to improve footfall)	Place and Client Services / Amphora Trading	Extend the Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) Gigabit Broadband network from the town centre, out to the Northern Gateway and east of Colchester, as well as other urban areas. High Street works completed July 2020 Town centre works to be completed by January 2021 Metronet completed by May 2021 Overall works June 2021	01/06/2020	30/04/2024

Medium Term Activity – Appendix A Council Recovery Plan (Covid-19)

		£3.3m DCMS investment plus combined £500k budget for CCTV-related elements of the infrastructure build.		
	Place and Client Services / Amphora Trading	Secure inward investment and use the Council's housing assets to extend the Gigabit Broadband network across the wider urban areas, including some of our least affluent wards. Suburban Connection Nodes June 2020. Other works from August 2020, in up to 5 phases at 6-9 months each. £10m external investor (VX Fiber Ltd) funding for the build of the local distribution networks. Completion by April 2024.	01/06/2020	01/04/2024
Ensure inward investment in the local economy. Work underway to show strategic aims of all funders so that we are ready to attract investment and bid for funds.	Place and Client Services / all other partners listed	Integrate and align Recovery Plan with Town Deal, North Essex Economic Strategy, Local Industrial Strategy, Colchester Economic Growth Strategy Refresh, University strategy, Colchester/Tendring GC, HIF funding (etc.). See below: Town Deal Programme re-started for submission October 2020.	01/06/2020	30/09/2020
	Place and Client Services	Find (through programmes such as GRANTfinder) opportunities for funding to either develop into bids or signpost to partners and businesses.	01/06/2020	Ongoing
		SELEP (South East area Local Enterprise Partnership) loan funding opportunities - explore quick spend projects. This may include Sector Support Fund (SSF), GPF, LGF.	01/06/2020	Ongoing
Re-start the Town Deal process and align with Recovery Plan.	Place and Client Services / Town Deal partnership	'We are Colchester' Town Deal Programme re-started for submission of the Town Investment Plan end of October 2020, followed by implementation planning if successful.	01/06/2020	01/03/2021
	Place and Client Services / Town Deal partnerships	Plan for extensive engagement with stakeholders and communities to form our Town Investment Plan, including continued engagement with the 'We Are Colchester' Advisory Group and Town Assembly to enable input to	01/05/2020	31/10/2020

Medium Term Activity – Appendix A Council Recovery Plan (Covid-19)

		<p>develop the Recovery Plan and inform the Town Investment Plan (TIP).</p> <p>Scope of the intelligence we need to inform work of Town Deal is underway – using data from business intelligence workstream and insight from partnerships such as the BID's Town Centre Taskforce, the re-opening High Streets programme and other informal networks.</p>		
	Place and Client Services / Town Deal partnership es / Town Deal partnership	Adapt existing Town Deal/TIP aims and project ideas to reflect the Coronavirus crisis.	01/05/2020	01/03/2021
Objective Three: The programme stimulates the local economy and markets				
Activity	Service Area / Partnership	Medium Term Development (1 August 2020 – 31 March 2021)	From	To
Help stimulate the economy through construction and housing developments.	Place and Client Services / Colchester Borough Homes / Amphora Trading	<p>Mercury Theatre – complete construction and occupy / re-open building.</p> <p>Look to attract funding for £350k complementary Public Realm works at this site.</p>	Started	31/12/2020
	Place and Client Services / Amphora Trading	Continue to deliver the Colchester Northern Gateway Sports Park, and associated infrastructure improvements, in order to open this regionally-significant sports and leisure facility in January 2021, promoting healthy lifestyles and cycling.	Started	31/01/2020
	Place and Client Services / Amphora Energy	<p>Continue to deliver the Colchester Northern Gateway District Heat Network to create an innovative renewable ground source energy supply to the wider CNG South sites that contain a mixture of residential, commercial, health and leisure uses.</p> <p>Infrastructure to be commenced August 2020.</p> <p>The Energy Centre contract to be procured October 2020.</p>	01/08/2020	01/01/2024

Medium Term Activity – Appendix A Council Recovery Plan (Covid-19)

		Construction in Q2 2021 Energy Centre by March 2022 Connections up until 2024		
	Place and Client Services / Amphora Trading	Construct "The Walk" at the Colchester Northern Gateway to supply the key pedestrian and cycle route through the south sites, in advance of the 350 homes to be delivered by Colchester Amphora Homes Ltd. including 30% affordable housing. Construction of "The Walk" at Northern Gateway - started June 2020. To be completed by March 2021.	01/07/2021	01/03/2022
Continue the deliver the original 350 new affordable homes agreed in the HRA's New Council Housebuilding Programme in 2019, as well as the expanded Programme agreed by Cabinet in July 2020.	Place & Client Services, Amphora Homes, CBH	Continue with an increased acquisitions programme annually, building on the 35 additional affordable homes secured in 2019/20. Procure contractors for 3 garage sites in July/August 2020 and commence construction in October 2020. Procure a contractor for Military Road in September 2020 and commence construction in November 2020. Obtain planning permission for the redevelopment of Elfreda House in Autumn 2020, procure a contractor and commence redevelopment in March 2021. Explore the opportunities for additional housing, including further garage sites (Phase 3) and a continued longer-term Sheltered Housing Programme.	1/4/2020	31/3/2024
Promote use of local suppliers and campaigns (Shop local) and other means.	Place and Client Services / BID	Support the BID and local traders to encourage people to shop and buy locally. Procurement social value may include 'local' criteria where appropriate.	Ongoing	31/12/2020
		Apply for funding to deliver a bespoke marketing and communications campaign to support the Colchester market. This will include developing trader communications as well as promoting the benefits of the market to an	Started	31/10/2020

Medium Term Activity – Appendix A Council Recovery Plan (Covid-19)

		external audience. This is to be commissioned by an officer we are also hoping to secure through the funding. Develop a bid for funding for 5 new 'Council' gazebos for the market to be provided as new start-ups for traders to use until they purchase their own.		
Stimulate local markets (through for instance reviewing procurement practices).	Place and Client Services	Develop training workshop/webinars (for internal services and external contractors).	01/06/2020	30/09/2020
	Place and Client Services	Review website.	Started	30/09/2020
Develop a programme of sector specific support.	Place and Client Services	Sectors worst affected but with good recovery potential: identified. Programme to assist and 'bring back' the sector devised including business support offer commissioned to and provided by Colbea. Renew the SLA between CBC and Colbea, maintain focus on sector recovery in Creative Colchester Board, BID & Task Force work ongoing to support and revive the Retail, Tourism Leisure and Hospitality Sectors with focus on Town Centre.	Started	31/03/2021
	Place and Client Services / Amphora Trading	Develop a business case for funding of new business centre allowing digital and creative businesses to expand: 'Queen St Grow on' facility. This will be built on the site of the former bus garage in Queen Street. Feasibility work including archaeology and other site surveys underway. Finalise business case, prepare October cabinet report, prepare governance & funding agreements. SE LEP accountability board 20th November 2020.	Started	01/07/2022
Objective Four: Town Centre becomes a more vibrant, resilient, and adaptable place for people to visit				
Activity	Service Area / Partnership	Medium Term Development (1 August 2020 – 31 March 2021)	From	To

Medium Term Activity – Appendix A Council Recovery Plan (Covid-19)

Increase footfall in the Town Centre and improve public confidence.	Place and Client Services / BID	Plan for possibility of empty buildings and develop innovative use for future spaces which enable social distancing, including attractive and novel 'meanwhile' uses which can be applied at scale. See also 'digital hubs' development in objective 1 and LFFN Gigabit extension in objective 2.	01/06/2020	1/11/2020
Develop active & sustainable transport; promote walking and cycling to and in the Town Centre.	Place and Client Services / BID / ECC (Essex County Council)	Work with ECC to establish and develop 'Safer Green Healthier' transport initiative. First phase to enable social distancing adaptations were made 15-06-20. ECC is now planning phase 2 adaptations. Sustainable Travel team have sent a bid to ECC for further Department for Transport (DfT) monies to implement key cycling infrastructure.	Started	Ongoing
	Place and Client Services / BID	Introduce secure Town-Centre cycle parking facilities deploying former retail unit(s). Trial to then become permanent subject to viability. Early work done - included in latest funding bid to ECC for DfT monies.	01/06/2020	Ongoing
Improve the public realm in the Town Centre.	Place and Client Services / Colchester Borough Homes / Amphora Trading / ECC	Improve/repair pavements. (50% CBC Funded High Street works).	01/07/2020	30/11/2020
	Place and Client Services / Amphora Trading / BID	Inclusion of public realm schemes could be a major part of the Town Investment Plan (subject to approval). Development of projects for £1m 'accelerated Town Deal' bid to be submitted August could include public realm schemes.	Started	Ongoing
	Place and Client Services / Amphora Trading / Amphora Housing	Commence feasibility work to identify potential development sites in the town centre for mixed-use redevelopment (including housing). Investment propositions to be developed and tested throughout August 2020.	01/06/2020	31/03/2021

Medium Term Activity – Appendix A Council Recovery Plan (Covid-19)

	Place and Client Services / We Are Colchester	<p>Identify opportunities to promote areas within the town centre where the natural environment is made more prominent within the urban streetscape, potentially linked to longer term measures to manage a safer pedestrian friendly public realm.</p> <p>Potentially permanent to reflect Town deal long term investment plan opportunities.</p> <p>This is happening via active engagement between CBC Sustainable Travel team, ECC localities team and others. Links to Town Deal Investment Propositions. Ongoing.</p>	01/06/2020	Ongoing
Support independent, hospitality and retail sector through a range of measures, including encouraging an outdoor 'cafe culture' to enable safe social distancing.	Place and Client Services / Communities / BID / ECC / Town Centre businesses	<p>Covered in several existing actions listed above.</p> <p>Implement new planning and licensing regulations that allow for relaxation of current rules to enable outdoor spaces to be used by businesses. Ensure processes for applications are joined up between the Council and ECC.</p>	01/06/2020	Ongoing
	Place / Client Services / Colchester Borough Homes / Amphora	<p>Convert suitable empty units or sites outside of core retail and leisure areas for housing.</p> <p>Investment propositions to be developed and tested throughout August 2020. Will include this and similar.</p>	01/08/2020	Ongoing
Work with partners to promote the Town Centre to visitors through a tourism and visitor campaign and other events.	Place / Client Services / Amphora Trading / BID / Colchester Events Company	<p>Launch a significant promotions and events programme. Hold 'safe' events in the town centre that boost the economy through secondary spend during 2021 including the return of the large Castle Park concerts programme and the addition of a national-scale event in both 2021 and 2022.</p> <p>Hold 'national' event and Castle Park concerts in Summer 2021.</p>	Started	01/08/2022

Medium Term Activity – Appendix A Council Recovery Plan (Covid-19)

		<p>Hold 'national' event and Castle Park concerts in Summer 2022. Progress - discussed at regular task force meetings.</p> <p>Work with BID to deliver Christmas 2020 and Spring 2021 events to encourage safe footfall.</p>		
Council Cell				
Objective One: Restart Council decision making and public participation in a digital environment				
Activity	Service Area / Partnership	Medium Term Development (1 August 2020 – 31 March 2021)	From	To
At least one practice meeting of each panel/committee prior to the first public virtual meeting.	Corporate and Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of first cycle of remote public meetings • Public able to contribute virtually to all remote meetings • Review remote meetings and report to Governance and Audit Committee in September on future meeting arrangements 	01/05/2020	31/12/2021
Review Governance arrangements when Legislative timescales for virtual meetings ends.	Corporate and Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure sufficient support including appropriate ICT (Information and Communication Technology) equipment is available to continue remote meetings • Governance and Audit Committee to make recommendations to Cabinet on future arrangements for meetings • Following consideration by Cabinet, implement resolutions on future meeting arrangements • Ensure members continue to have confidence in meeting arrangements and appropriate governance is in place 	06/05/2020	06/05/2021
Objective Two: Restore and adapt Council services harnessing the positive changes made review				
Activity	Service Area / Partnership	Medium Term Development (1 August 2020 – 31 March 2021)	From	To

Medium Term Activity – Appendix A Council Recovery Plan (Covid-19)

Group Managers to identify plans for restoring, adapting and continuing services including capturing positive changes made.	Cross Services	Group Managers monitor the positive changes made in the way we deliver/support services. Prepare mitigation of a potential second spike of Covid-19.	01/04/2020	31/03/2021
Review Business Continuity Plans.	Cross Services	All services to review their individual Business Contingency Plans to take account of the risk/impacts of a second wave of Covid-19.	01/07/2020	31/03/2021
Consideration of a revised medium-term operating model involving the continuation of significant levels of home working.	Cross Services	Individual proposals for front line services that cannot be delivered through home working developed and considered on a case by case basis.	07/05/2020	31/03/2021
Safe return to Rowan House with revised operating model involving greater levels of homeworking.	Cross Services	Health and Safety implications for a safe return to Rowan House have been considered and Coronavirus risk assessments for all services/buildings have been conducted.	11/05/2020	31/03/2021
Review long term office accommodation requirements.	Cross Services	Greater levels of homeworking in the long term necessitates a review of office accommodation including other options to generate revenue from office space which is vacated across our buildings.	01/07/2020	31/03/2021
Restore Corporate KPIs performance to agreed targets set for 2020-2021.	Cross Services	Monitored monthly by SMT (Senior Management Team). Corporate KPIs will be reported by actual monthly performance rather than cumulative or average performance. April 2020 report can be found here. Performance targets will be reviewed at the half year point in October 2020.	01/04/2020	31/03/2021
Objective Three: Revise our finances to deliver a balanced budget and sustainable MTFF (Medium Term Financial Forecast)				
Activity	Service Area / Partnership	Medium Term Development (1 August 2020 – 31 March 2021)	From	To
Consideration and development of revised priorities and a strategy to respond to the budget gap in the MTFF.	Cross Services	Further activity ongoing to mitigate the budget gap in the MTFF.	03/06/2020	31/03/2021
Development of revised Strategic Priorities/Strategic Plan.	Cross Services	Once revised priorities agreed including recovery priorities a revised strategic plan will be developed for consideration by Cabinet in September 2020.	11/05/2020	30/09/2021
Development of a strategy to address the financial challenges we face due to the	Cross Services	Ensure a balanced budget, this strategy will need to review all areas of the council undertakes to ensure we can	11/05/2020	31/03/2021

Medium Term Activity – Appendix A Council Recovery Plan (Covid-19)

Coronavirus pandemic and close the £3.5 million gap in our budget for 2021/2022.		maintain and continue delivering the key services for the people of Colchester. Assistant Directors will also review areas to identify any in-year changes required, given the impacts on our service requirements and demand due to Covid-19.		
Agree principles to underpin the emerging Budget Strategy.	Cross Services	Ensuring the following principles are adhered to and monitored at Budget Group: 1. We will ensure community self-sufficiency, collaboration across the system and will value/trust our staff. 2. We will be digital by default and reduce duplication. 3. We will reduce hierarchies and continually learn and develop. 4. We will be environmentally and financially sustainable. 5. We will focus on achieving our key purpose and priorities. 6. We will use the best evidence available whilst recognising we are in unprecedented times.	11/05/2020	31/03/2021
Agree a cross-cutting, thematic approach to the 2021/22 budget process, with each of the Assistant Directors leading a theme, sponsored by the respective EMT member. This means the ADs will work across the organisation and partners to develop options within each theme that could contribute to meeting the budget gap for next year. They will each identify people they need to work with on this.	Cross Services	The themes being delivered by theme leads are as follows: PRIORITIES (Rory Doyle) – clarifying our purpose, what's important or less important in the 'next normal', implications for the strategic plan and the outcomes we're seeking to achieve. COMMERCIAL (Mandy Jones) – understanding and maximising income, optimising fees and charges, finding and predicting new income opportunities, asset review and working with the Council's Amphora trading companies. EFFICIENCY (Leonie Rathbone) - getting our own house in order, digital by default, reduced duplication in service delivery or processes, innovation, service redesign. SERVICE PROVISION (Richard Block) – finding the optimum operating model for Council services, understanding requirements, delivery models, specifications, shared service opportunities, procurement, and partnerships. COMMUNITY (Lucie Breadman) – allowing others to lead, letting go, reducing demand and managing expectations, devolution.	01/06/2020	31/03/2021

Medium Term Activity – Appendix A Council Recovery Plan (Covid-19)

Objective Four: Reset the Council's strategic priorities				
Activity	Service Area / Partnership	Medium Term Development (1 August 2020 – 31 March 2021)	From	To
Phased approach to resetting priorities.	Cross Services	Prioritise projects, identify and overcome obstacles to progress, agree or secure finance where not yet in place. Internal resource only.	01/06/2020	31/03/2021
Development of revised Strategic Priorities/Strategic Plan.	Cross Services	An updated Strategic Plan and action plan will be prepared for consideration by Cabinet in September.	11/05/2020	31/03/2021
Review existing projects.	Cross Services	Review the Project Prioritisation Tool and prioritise all projects to identify savings, generate savings, support Environment and Sustainability.	01/06/2020	31/03/2021
Review NSP Projects.	Cross Services	Decisions required continue or stop current list of NSP Projects.	11/05/2020	31/03/2021
Objective Five: Reimagine and reinvent our services to meet our priorities and budget				
Activity	Service Area / Partnership	Medium Term Development (1 August 2020 – 31 March 2021)	From	To
Complete reimagination of the services we deliver and how we deliver them.	Cross Services	The potential level of budget gap will require significant changes to the services we deliver and how we deliver them and SMT have started to consider this.	11/05/2020	31/03/2021
Identify longer term transformation.	Cross Services	As the Budget Strategy Themes are developed it is likely that a broader long-term transformation of services will be necessary for a post Covid-19 world.	11/05/2020	31/03/2021
Review key organisational strategies.	Cross Services	A review of key organisational strategies to align to a post Covid-19 world and new operating models.	11/05/2020	31/03/2021
Community Cell				
Objective One: Levels of inter-organisational collaboration and new working practices brought about by C-19 crisis are sustained				
Activity	Service Area / Partnership	Medium Term Development (1 August 2020 – 31 March 2021)	From	To
Partners to consider flexible working within their organisations going forward	Alliance	Project underway. Many changes already in place that will continued in the future e.g. use of Teams meetings, saving travel & costs. Alliance are working with Integrated care	Started	31/03/2021

Medium Term Activity – Appendix A Council Recovery Plan (Covid-19)

and keep or build upon Covid19 experiences.		systems (ICS) for recruitment, looking at skills available rather than just what they need now. Looking to train and grow their own. This is linked to the work being carried out by Colchester Institute. New ways of working allow appointments to work from anywhere, so location is not a barrier.		
Collaboration opportunities including joint recruitment of resources between organisations and sharing data and insight to enable working on actions and initiatives across the system and allocation of funding (to avoid duplication).	Alliance	Project underway. Alliance piloting in Colchester a virtual Careers Academy for 16-18 age group that replaces the old-style face to face. Next to be rolled out to Tendring District Council for all ages. Another initiative is an online health & wellbeing support & training offer, linked to Mind. Training could be rolled out to all System partners.	Started	31/03/2021
Make use of digital technology across the system to enhance delivery options and supply efficiencies.	One Colchester Delivery Group	Working Group formed following One Colchester Delivery Board meeting in July (includes Digital Access Team, Colchester Foodbank, Essex Integration, the Council and Citizens Alliance); First meeting took place and outline priorities found – feedback sought, and presentation given to wider Board.	Started	31/03/2021
Build upon and embedded where service enhanced or more streamline, customer centric delivery achievable.	One Colchester Delivery Group	Many changes already in place that need to be continued in the future. Further work on collaboration opportunities to take place. e.g. GP (General Practitioner) appts online/phone. Inspections done via photos rather than visits.	Started	31/03/2021
Housing Solutions including Rough Sleeping	Colchester Borough Homes	Colchester Borough Homes has aligned its recovery plan to meet the objectives of the Councils Housing strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing advice and support to Landlords and tenants to prevent homelessness • Identifying accommodation and support for those who are rough sleeping • Working with local charities and voluntary organisations to target support for those who are homeless This meets the objectives within the Housing strategy and we will be able to provide updates as required	Started	31/03/2021
Objective Two: Communities are strengthened to mitigate economic disruption, reduce isolation, and improve Health and Well Being				

Medium Term Activity – Appendix A Council Recovery Plan (Covid-19)

Activity	Service Area / Partnership	Medium Term Development (1 August 2020 – 31 March 2021)	From	To
A project to support the process of grieving and remembrance at community level involving the arts community as well as religious leaders and non-religious community leaders.	St Helena	Work to strengthen and embed the project into support programmes to continue (One Colchester and our Cultural Partners.	Started	31/03/2021
End of life Hub.	St Helena	St Helena continue to deliver their amended model in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, this includes, but is not limited to, coordinating all End of Life care in the community across North East Essex, working alongside the Primary Care Networks.	Started	31/03/2021
Continued shielding / support of most vulnerable.	One Colchester Delivery Board	Important Shielding efforts from the voluntary sector and Council continue. While the guidance has changed the desire and importance of ensuring some of the most clinically vulnerable individuals across Colchester are kept safe, have access to food, medicines and are not left socially isolated still is a key priority. Ensuring that the Hub provision is still available for a potential second wave in the Winter – Community 360. Resilience (Winter) steering group forming and meeting in July. The Council & One Colchester are part of the wider shielded and vulnerable taskforce.	Started	Ongoing
Community-led events / celebration of activities and community heroes.	Communities & Cultural partners	Will also look at long-term permanent memorial. Project/events team to be formed to consider options, link with key contacts, source funding and plan events (links to Economy Cell through Town Centre Task Force). Could include Amphora.	TBC	TBC
Use of volunteer networks to identify socially isolated individuals and signpost to existing community assets.	Community 360	Links to social prescribing. One Colchester, Community 360, Parish Councils, Cultural Partners, Council Leadership team.	Started	31/03/2021
Projects to support people “getting back on track” with positive physical and mental health and harness the daily exercise that has built up during the crisis.	Alliance	These are part of the Be Well Domain developed with the Local Development Partnership and the North Essex Health and Well Being Alliance. Build on Active Essex relationship and Local Delivery Pilot work. Evidence gathering has begun to show trends, risk areas and intelligence to shape	Started	31/03/2021

Medium Term Activity – Appendix A Council Recovery Plan (Covid-19)

		support & work required. We need to link to Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data.		
Community Spirit built during the crisis and volunteers to help ensure elderly and vulnerable have access to continued befriending schemes.	Community 360	Links to social prescribing. Partnership working to continue with organisations enabling the community to support each other and developing a retention scheme for volunteers. Building on community schemes and activities. (One Colchester & Community 360). Community 360 held Befriending Network meeting in June.	Started	31/03/2021
Better awareness of schemes and activities for those who need help.	Community 360	Links to social prescribing. Communications support required. Asset mapping review to be held.	Started	31/03/2021
Use of data and insight gained through the crisis to support those with highest health vulnerabilities going forward.	One Colchester Delivery Board	An evidence base to understand and inform decision making is key and new qualitative research commissioned by the Council and Health Alliance from Anglian Ruskin University has supplied insight into the importance of community assets and impact of the pandemic.	Started	Ongoing
Objective Three: Pre-existing inequalities within and between communities are reduced				
Activity	Service Area / Partnership	Medium Term Development (1 August 2020 – 31 March 2021)	From	To
Using existing established groups and their networks to help inform and shape future workstreams to reduce inequalities.	One Colchester Delivery Board	Communities forum / faith groups / minority work to be led by One Colchester / Alliance / the Council. Should link to climate emergency project at the Council.	TBC	TBC
Support work of faith groups and leaders of ethnic minority communities disproportionately affected by Covid-19.	Communities	Faith Groups are working hard to support both their own and wider communities as well as re-opening for worship, looking creatively at options and collaborating with each other and the Council.	Started	Ongoing
Project to look at Alliance and One Colchester apprenticeships and intern opportunities. To include community Initiatives and activities / funding to support Youth Employment / skills.	Colchester Institute	Current Colchester Institute Projects cover these requirements, Tracey will be working with Vicky at the Alliance on furthering this.	Started	31/03/2021
Objective Four: Increase in volunteering, civic engagement and building on the strengths within Communities				

Medium Term Activity – Appendix A Council Recovery Plan (Covid-19)

Activity	Service Area / Partnership	Medium Term Development (1 August 2020 – 31 March 2021)	From	To
Work with C360 to enhance current volunteering strategy for Borough.	Community 360	Information gathered through Community 360 Volunteer Service Survey.	Started	TBC
Work with Community Leaders and Ward Cllrs to capture and help enable continued volunteering efforts in local communities.	Community 360	Initial meetings held with local area groups and community centres.	Started	TBC
Review Community Enabling Strategy and repurpose into ABCD.	Communities	The Community Enabling Strategy is currently being reviewed & updated. This work will continue and will be shaped by the current situation. A small working group has started to review the strategy and pull together a new draft.	Started	31/12/2020
Member and officer awareness of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)	Communities, Community 360 and One Colchester Partners	Further training is being planned for Asset Based Community Development and work will need to be undertaken to embed in organisational ways of working. Nurture Development will roll-out online training for the Council, Community 360, One Colchester and Alliance – both introduction training and training for leadership. An Organisational Approach and System Leadership approach necessary.	Started	31/12/2020
Asset-mapping to be updated.	Community 360	Review and update of existing asset-mapping may include further organisations as part of wider definition of assets. To be informed by Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) assets report.	TBC	TBC

Customer Cell

Objective One: Undertake a review of all customer access channels considering C-19

Activity	Service Area / Partnership	Medium Term Development (1 August 2020 – 31 March 2021)	From	To
Review our in-person services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library & Community Hub Greenstead Local Housing Office Appointments 	Cross Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The library has reopened but the Community Hub still is closed. Essex County Council have verbally indicated lease agreement with Colchester Borough Council will end December 2020 - we await formal confirmation 	01/04/2020	31/12/2020

Medium Term Activity – Appendix A Council Recovery Plan (Covid-19)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are working from home, supplying the same services and support via web and phone • Library staff will signpost any customers to our telephony and online channels • Greenstead Local Housing Office is now open although demand is low as residents are preferring telephone appointments • We continue to supply telephone and web services without face to face meetings • We are working with ICT looking at MS Bookings for virtual face to face appointments • We are liaising with DWP (Department for Work and Pensions) regarding their resumption of services at JCP • Our Benefit specialists are accessing Tribunals via Teams 		
Further develop our telephony service to supply automated and accessible services 24/7.	Customer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New seconded Contact & Support Manager is taking on the development of a new automated service and working with ICT to optimize MITEL further for work from home / customer experience • Current provision is working well and all customers who need support are still able to access services 	01/04/2020	31/12/2020
Objective Two: Keep customers updated with the resumption of council services				
Activity	Service Area / Partnership	Medium Term Development (1 August 2020 – 31 March 2021)	From	To
To develop a recovery section of the coronavirus website area.	Customer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The coronavirus website is continuing to be reviewed and updated where appropriate • This action is now built into the way we work 	01/04/2020	01/07/2020
Proactively contact residents via email, text, social media and phone calls.	Customer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comms are continuing to work with services and communicate how services are running (normal, disrupted or closed) via weekly social media updates, which signposts to the website • We are using what we have learned to reform the annual election canvass process using data matching, 	01/04/2020	01/07/2020

Medium Term Activity – Appendix A Council Recovery Plan (Covid-19)

		<p>more efficient ways of contacting customers and ending the need to visit people's homes in person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This action is now built into the way we work 		
Objective Three: Support customers to ease financial pressures caused by C-19				
Activity	Service Area / Partnership	Medium Term Development (1 August 2020 – 31 March 2021)	From	To
Adapt our services to meet the needs of residents and businesses who are struggling to pay their Council Tax and Business Rates (BR).	Customer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having initially suspended recovery, normal recovery process has now resumed for Council Tax (excluding Court where we're waiting for news on when the courts will open up for C-Tax and Corporate Debt Recovery) • We are not yet recovering for those on Local Council Tax Support or Business Rates • Enforcement agents have C-19 appropriate processes with more resources around welfare 	01/04/2020	31/12/2020
Ensure we can process new claims for Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) quickly and accurately.	Customer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Council Tax Support case load expected to increase by 12.5% • Assessment is still prompt • Working age Local Council Tax Support claimants to receive up to £150 added discount - to be applied w/c 28.07.20 	01/04/2020	31/12/2020
Develop, implement and process the new discretionary business grant policy as per guidelines.	Customer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Rates team continue to distribute Discretionary Grants which was extended with relaxed eligibility criteria • Total paid year to date (@ 20/07/20) £33.14 M of which £1.671M distributed through the Discretionary Grant Scheme 	01/04/2020	31/12/2020
Work with DWP and other key partners to help residents when claiming UC, other welfare benefits and seeking back to work/training opportunities.	Customer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service has evolved rapidly and is embracing new technology to remove the need for face to face meetings • This is driving efficiency and helping to meet increase in demand • We're promoting Welfare Benefits throughout the council and further through our partners 	01/04/2020	31/12/2020

Medium Term Activity – Appendix A Council Recovery Plan (Covid-19)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welfare Benefits Team currently meeting increased demand and offering valuable support to vulnerable residents 		
Objective Four: Adopt new ways of working with customers				
Activity	Service Area / Partnership	Medium Term Development (1 August 2020 – 31 March 2021)	From	To
To work with services with an aim to continue to process work in a digital way.	Cross Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website redesign well underway making information more accessible We are working closely with Communities for Taxi Licensing applications to resume without reliance on face to face interaction 	01/04/2020	31/12/2020
To overcome barriers which could result in going back to paper-based processes.	Cross Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are working closely with services and negotiating around new ways of working We are considering how we sustain our working practices going forward and how we deal with this in transformation A review of local land charges marketing is taking place to make the service more commercial Revised Annual Canvass process has embraced data matching to reduce paper and cost and to remove need for personal contact - Comms have created artwork to drive traffic to the website The Contact Centre has been highly successful running from homes - performance has been excellent and we will encourage working from home going forward with digital processes to support this We have proactively worked with customers to reduce payments by cheque 	01/04/2020	31/12/2020
To prioritise digital development which results in customers being able to apply, pay and book online	Customer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several new digital processes are now live (Land Charges, Fishing Permits, Pest Control, Recycling Containers) and we will continue to progress with improved online services as part of business as usual Northgate going live August for Environmental Protection 	01/04/2020	31/12/2020

Medium Term Activity – Appendix A Council Recovery Plan (Covid-19)

Objective Five: Real time customer data				
Activity	Service Area / Partnership	Medium Term Development (1 August 2020 – 31 March 2021)	From	To
Track key customer data on a weekly basis to help forecast costs / income during recovery phase. E.g. Council Tax, NNDR, LCTS claims and Land charges.	Customer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Real-time data suites for Local Council Tax Support, Land Charges, Planning, Building Control & Licensing delivered Use of incoming data to track better, to help us forecast and predict budget impact in the short term 	01/04/2020	31/12/2020

Council Recovery Programme P&C Floor meeting 29 July

LGIU Principles for Recovery

- Build back better': increase resilience and address pre crisis structural weaknesses, particularly in relation to the economy
- Consider innovative and transformation development models
- Develop key role players and shared ownership
- Priorities should be aligned across agencies and funding streams
- The plan should allow for flexibility and evolution; be achievable and executed effectively
- Prioritisation: develop prioritisation criteria according to these principles.

These principles will be built into Recovery programme and subsequent Recovery plan.

Programme framework and governance

Sponsor - Ian Vipond

Owner - Mandy Jones

Programme Coordinator - Simon Thorp

Council

Sponsor – Dan Gascoyne

Owner – Richard Block

Advisors - Relevant
Managers

Project Manager

Economy

Sponsor - Ian Vipond

Owner - Mandy Jones

Advisors - Relevant
Managers

Project Manager

Community

Sponsor – Pam Donnelly

Owner - Lucie Breadman

Advisors - Relevant
managers

Project Manager

Customer

Sponsor – Pam Donnelly

Owner – Leonie Rathbone

Advisors -
Relevant managers

Project Manager

Finance - Owner – Paul Cook, Advisors – Relevant managers

Climate Change and Sustainability – Owner: Rory Doyle / Mandy Jones, Advisors - Group Managers

CBH and Housing – Owners Matthew Armstrong / Tina Hinson

CCHL / Amphora Owner Paul Smith

Governance arrangements

Political Function

Cabinet

Leadership Assembly - Recovery

SMT Function

SMT

Direction

Recovery Steering Group

Cells

Council

Community

Customer

Economy

Cell objectives

- **Economy:**
 - Colchester Borough becomes stronger post-Covid-19;
 - Opportunities are developed to ensure the new economy is greener and more inclusive;
 - The programme stimulates the local economy and markets;
 - The Town Centre becomes a more vibrant, resilient and adaptable place for people to visit.
 -
- **Community:**
 - Levels of inter-organisational collaboration and new working practices brought about by Covid-19 crisis are sustained;
 - Communities are strengthened to mitigate economic disruption, reduce isolation, and improve Health and Well Being;
 - Pre-existing inequalities within and between communities are reduced;
 - Increase in volunteering, civic engagement and building on the strengths within Communities.

Cell objectives (continued)

- **Customer:**

- Undertake a review of all customer access channels considering Covid-19;
- Keep customers updated with the resumption of council services;
- Support customers to ease financial pressures caused by Covid-19;
- Adopt new ways of working with customers.

- **Council:**

- Restart Council decision making and public participation in a digital environment;
- Restore and adapt Council services harnessing the positive changes made;
- Revise our finances to deliver a balanced budget and sustainable Medium Term Financial Forecast;
- Reset the Council's strategic priorities;
- Reimagine and reinvent our services to meet our priorities and budget.

Some examples – Economy Cell

- Reopening High Streets (Town Centre and other areas – BID and Town Centre Task Force). Including Safer Greener Healthier Transport measures by ECC.
- Restarting the Town Deal process and undertaking work to support a Town Investment Plan to account for recovery and enable long-term planning of skills, infrastructure and connectivity (October)
- Developing a business intelligence workstream to understand effects on Economy and Business
- Promoting the use of local suppliers and campaigns (Shop Local) through Our Colchester Business Improvement District and partners
- Helping kick start the economy through housebuilding / construction - reviewing procurement practices (supporting local suppliers), ensuring housebuilding projects are ready to tender and brought forward where appropriate and proactively identifying future developments and sources of finance.

Progress and next steps

- Approach, objectives and initial ideas to Cabinet 3 June (item 8iii p63)
- Alongside a report on response to Covid-19 and Budget report highlighting challenges
- Work in cells to prioritise and identify projects and activity associated with objectives (Recovery Plan)
- Scrutiny panel 18 August for pre-scrutiny (alongside Amphora and CBH Recovery) prior to Cabinet on 2 September alongside
- Internal comms to go out prior to Cabinet report (externally pre Cabinet)



Scrutiny Panel

18 August 2020

Report of Chief Executive, Colchester Borough Homes **Author** Gareth Mitchell
Matt Armstrong

Title **Review of the Colchester Borough Homes Recovery Plan (COVID-19)**

Wards affected All

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report details the approach taken to COVID-19 Recovery by Colchester Borough Homes and reports on progress made to date.
- 1.2 It provides the framework and methodology used to develop the recovery of services, highlighting in particular the close alignment to the Council's recovery programme.
- 1.3 At the time of writing this report the majority of services have resumed under COVID-19 Secure arrangements. The recovery stage will complete on the 31st August and will move into a transformation stage, building on the recovery of services into a new way of working, ensuring the services CBH provide are delivered in a safe and efficient way.

2. Action Required

- 2.1 To review the Colchester Borough Homes approach to recovery from COVID-19 and ensure it is aligned with the strategic direction and principles of the Council's recovery programme.

3. Reason for Scrutiny

- 3.1 To ensure the approach taken in recovering services (23rd March 2020 to date) since the COVID-19 restrictions were put in place by Government are sound and aligned to the Council's strategic direction, principles and objectives.
- 3.2 To ensure the transformation phase (1st September 2020 to 31st March 2021) as detailed in this report is sound and in line with the Council's recovery plan, contributing towards its strategic objectives.

4. Background Information

4.1 Colchester Borough Homes triggered its Business Continuity Plan on the 18th March 2020 reverting to providing a critical service provision only, which included:

1. Daily contact (via telephone) with all tenants in Sheltered Accommodation
2. An Emergency Repairs Service
3. Maintaining a customer services phonenumber
4. Maintaining a housing options and homelessness service remotely

All offices were closed and every office-based worker was able to work from home, partly assisted by a decision made previously in our working smarter project which allocated laptops, mobile phones and data to every employee. The move to working from home went very smoothly.

The government guidance for Landlords restricted service of notices on tenants in order to reduce the threat of homelessness and limited how homes could be let. General tenancy enforcement has been restricted to protect tenants affected by COVID-19.

4.2 The overall response was led by the CBH Chief Executive, who has participated in Council response management meetings throughout the pandemic and has led the Housing Cell under the Council's emergency arrangements. The CBH Director of Operations led the operational response and the Director of Business Improvement took the organisational planning lead. The corporate management team met three times per week to ensure quick responses to government advice. Board members were updated weekly via MS Teams with Board and Committee meetings remaining in place, being held virtually.

5. Recovery

5.1 Recovery planning started immediately, and the Director of Business Improvement attended the Council's recovery planning steering group to ensure the plan fed into the overall objectives of the Council.

5.2 The recovery project aimed to not just recover services but use this opportunity to transform the services CBH deliver and "build back better". The structure identifies 3 key streams to recover which aligned to the Council's recovery plan:

- Our Organisation
- Business
- Customer and Community

The 3 key streams were underpinned by the organisation's 6 strategic delivery plans:

- Our Organisation – People Plan and the Leadership Plan
- Business – Business Development Plan and the Value for Money & Technology Plan

- Customer and Community – Customer Plan and Community Plan

The structure at appendix A follows the Agile project management methodology and details the project owners, project managers and how our recovery feeds into the Council's recovery plan.

5.3 **Project Objectives**

The project objectives were:

1. To reinstate service delivery taking account of new risks to ensure health and safety of customers, staff and contractors.
2. To use the recovery plan as a business transformation opportunity and retain the beneficial new ways of working.
3. To make best use of technology in the workplace and in delivery of services.
4. To strengthen our Business Continuity Plan to ensure minimum disruption for future outbreaks.
5. To use our Community Plan to continue and develop local partnerships.

5.4 **Project Principles**

The Corporate Management Team created a set of principles which were applied in the planning of recovering services. This ensured that we captured and kept the good working practices established during the pandemic, used the opportunity to transform the way we manage and deliver our services; and ensured our recovery aligned itself with the Council's recovery plan. There is rationale detailed behind each principle to clarify the meaning of each one at appendix B.

- i. Use technology to its full potential
- ii. Build back better
- iii. Develop our agile approach to work
- iv. Use customer insight to inform service recovery
- v. One company approach
- vi. Set achievable plans and targets
- vii. Ensure plans are flexible and sustainable

5.5 **Communications and Engagement Plan**

A Communications Plan was established to ensure consistent messages were communicated to all stakeholders - channels were established so regular messaging and updates were achievable and remained aligned with the Council's recovery plan. A summary of the communications channels and methods are as follows:

- Residents updated frequently via post, social media, News and views magazine and our website

- Tenants COVID-19 leaflet (for home visits) and videos via website, email and in person
- Board update to members fortnightly (previously weekly) via MS Teams
- Portfolio Holder (and Ward Councilors) update weekly via briefing and email
- Staff Bulletin weekly via email
- Live CEO/Directors' broadcast to staff (including recording to watch back) fortnightly via MS Teams

Internally the corporate management team met three times a week during the response phase (now reduced to weekly) and agenda items are reserved at the majority of meetings for COVID-19 and recovery updates.

6. Our Approach

6.1 Whilst reacting daily to government advice during March and April, the management team identified the pressures within the business and concentrated time and resource in support of the service heads. From an establishment of 213 staff, only 9 were unable to work due to shielding, or childcare issues, where their primary role was field based. These staff were re-deployed into activities that could be done from home such as calling vulnerable tenants. The remainder of the business worked from home with the exception of those staff delivering the critical service provision as detailed in item 4.1. Daily updates were provided to the management team on the workforce status, allowing swift redeployment to react to pressures on the ground. Only three members of staff were off work with COVID-19 symptoms over the period, two returning after 14 days and one remained off for 3 months due to an underlying health condition. A large part of the organisation was able to remain delivering their primary role due to the ability of the organisation to work in an agile way.

6.2 Project List

A project list was established listing all sub-projects, initiatives and actions required to get services resumed. The recovery plan was outcome based, the outcomes being listed on the project plan to allow the programme team to measure progress and success. Start and end dates were listed for coordination with other recovery streams. Risks were identified and mitigated against and equality issues arising out of disrupted, or partially resumed services, were identified and mitigated. Resource and budget requirements were identified as part of the planning, allowing the programme team to redeploy staff where required and manage the budgets in resuming services.

6.3 Lessons Learnt

An exercise was conducted towards the end of May with the Corporate Management Team to capture the lessons learnt during the pandemic and has been kept updated as services resumed. This allows sharing of good working practices across departments and a consistent approach to new ways of working.

6.4 Tenant Consultation

It was identified early on that the success of any service resuming was that tenants were listened to and were a part of the transformation. Some statutory services didn't require consultation and were resumed quickly, but where the next phase of recovery has identified better ways of delivering, managing, communicating and monitoring services, we will consult with tenants to ensure it works for them. Consultation methods will include pilots, telephone conversations, feedback and online surveys.

6.5 Change Management

Resuming and in many cases transforming services requires staff to be brought into the new ways of working and delivering services. The project team are using the John Kotter change management methodology which has 8 steps to ensure the change is successful and stays in place once a service is resumed. The 8 steps run in sequence and project managers were required to satisfy themselves each step has been completed before moving onto the next. As a management team we recognised staff had change forced onto them during this pandemic and that it is vital they are fully behind the new ways of working before we implement them.



6.6 Recovery Dashboard

A recovery dashboard was created which detailed the status of each service that was being resumed. A Red, Amber, Green indicator was used to quickly identify the service status. This dashboard was shared internally and a website version, with less detail, is available for our residents.

7. Recovery Progress

CBH has now resumed all its services, some in full, others under social distancing measures where required. All backlogs and waiting lists have been addressed and the resumption of services has been designed to deliver the annual programme and budgets within the remainder of the financial year. Some of the key achievements are listed below.

7.1 **Our Organisation**

a. Preparing our office accommodation for staff to return

The CBH pods in Rowan House have been prepared to allow staff to adhere to social distancing, there is space for 33 staff at any one time. Additional cleaning is in place and a booking-in system allows numbers to be managed and the ability to report under track and trace. A space at the Greenstead Local Housing Office (GLHO) has also been prepared to conduct customer interviews when required. The remainder of GLHO and the Gosbecks Road office remain closed.

b. To implement new working practices

Guidance has been written (based on government guidelines) for staff working at home, in the office, on the estates and within a tenant's home (with and without PPE in case of known COVID-19 cases). New working practices to ensure services can continue to be delivered have been developed using technology and communication has improved.

c. To ensure governance arrangements are fit for purpose

All Board and Committee meetings occur virtually via MS Teams and the scheme of delegation was updated to accommodate quick decision making. Public input (voice your view) is enabled via the CBH website and social media.

d. Ensuring the health & safety of our staff and customers

Individual risk assessments have been developed in particular for staff in the clinically extremely vulnerable and clinically vulnerable groups and all BAME staff, to support their ongoing working arrangements, or their return to work. Risk Assessments and Method Statements (RAMS) have been developed for all activities within a tenant's home and contractor RAMS have been checked and approved prior to their return to site. Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessments are being completed for staff working from home and appropriate equipment provided to staff to enable safe home working.

7.2 **Business**

a. Housing Revenue Account and General Fund projects (inc. new projects)

The Design and Construction Management team has worked throughout the lockdown due to much of its project work being in the planning and design phase. The Mercury Theatre project remained open (the only Arts Council-funded project to do so) and work continued under the government guidelines. Recent procurements for the garage site housing development projects have gathered local contractor interest with an appointment imminent.

b. Resuming the Capital Programme

The Capital Programme restarting was an opportunity to assist our local contractors to become operational again and to stimulate the local economy, which was one of the Council's economic recovery plan objectives. The work has been carefully re-programmed to ensure the work is completed within year. Tenant Liaison Officers have communicated with tenants to explain the procedures put in place for their

safety, this has been well received with an approximated 80% take-up of capital works.

Many of our local contractors, who had furloughed their staff, were apprehensive about restarting their business. We listened to their concerns and provided the reassurance of consistent work, support in being COVID-19 compliant and assistance in planning work programmes. Staff resolved issues quickly and efficiently so contractors could be confident no barriers would be encountered when restarting work. This collaborative working aims to ensure the capital programme is completed on time.

c. Recovering the repairs backlog

There were 774 repairs in the system at the time of lockdown, all have now either been completed, no longer required or booked-in to be completed by the 14th August. All trades (including sub-contracted trades) are operational and a full repairs service will be in place by the 5th August.

d. Compliance

CBH has proactively managed and monitored compliance against the Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) consumer standards, has reported compliance status monthly to the RSH via CBC and remains in a good position versus the national picture for housing providers. At the time of writing there are 53 outstanding gas services due to tenants shielding or access issues, and electrical testing and full fire risk assessments have resumed. All other compliance has remained in date throughout the pandemic.

e. Making the most of Technology

Technology solutions identified throughout the business in order to adhere to social distancing have included electronic signatures, MS Teams video conference training and the use of electronic forms. New IT equipment has been procured and distributed, mobile handsets are being trialed and ways to improve customer contact are being investigated further.

7.3 Customer & Community

a. Our response to the Homeless 'Everybody in' government instruction

On 26 March 2020 Luke Hall MP, Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing, wrote to all Local Authorities asking them to safeguard as many homeless people as possible to protect their health and prevent COVID-19 transmission. The letter requested that everyone who was sleeping rough, or at risk of being homeless, be accommodated by the end of that week.

At the same time hostels, night shelters with shared accommodation and other accommodation providers closed alongside all other non-essential businesses.

Over one week the Rough Sleeper Outreach team accommodated 38 people who had been referred to CBH as rough sleeping. Since 26 March, 57 rough sleepers have been provided with emergency accommodation.

Supporting a number of rough sleepers has not been without its challenges, however the partnerships and local support has collectively helped us to sustain people in the emergency accommodation. Our local partnership with Essex County Council and the Public Health team has been invaluable to support this process, and our local multi-agency group has provided a range of support services. Our Rough Sleeper Outreach team and support network includes a Mental Health Social Worker, NHS-funded nurses who are able to provide regular health checks using Beacon House as a base, and a drug and alcohol specialist seconded from Open Road.

For many people in the rough sleeper community this has been a welcome reprieve and has provided an opportunity to have a steady income and access to support with drug and alcohol issues. Others have improved their health and wellbeing and some have returned to live with family and friends.

Recovery work has focused on moving these individuals out of the emergency accommodation and into permanent housing with appropriate housing-related support. This work is ongoing and as at the 30th July, 21 rough sleepers remain in emergency accommodation out of the original 57 accommodated.

b. Supporting our Customers

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been significant to many, particularly to those who are on a low income, or dependent on benefits.

CBH have maintained contact with tenants, particularly those who are vulnerable and those who have rent arrears. Regular rent statements and letters to advise on arrears balances have continued to be sent and those in arrears have been encouraged to make contact for support, particularly those who have needed to claim welfare benefits.

Wherever possible agreements for repayment of missed rent payments, or an agreed reduced payment schedule have been made, reprofiling rent collection through to the end of March 2021. Where a discretionary housing benefit payment has been available, our team have supported tenants to access it. We have continued to work in partnership with Christians Against Poverty debt advisors (CAP) and Citizens Advice, who provide a “fast track” service for CBH tenants.

Where families require intensive support to assist them with tenancy matters and debt, we work with Catch 22’s Family Support Service, who can access additional support.

c. Viewing and letting properties

We made changes to our process as a result of COVID-19 and have made the decision to retain these changes to improve the customer journey.

We now arrange viewings and sign the applicant up to the tenancy at the same time where possible. We are currently trialing an online signature app that will enable the lettings process to be fully automated.

Gateway to Homechoice is online which enables us to send the conditions of tenancy to applicants before viewing and complete the sign up at the property without any further appointment, which has reduced the number of touch points during the process for the applicant.

d. Restoring community safety and community confidence

We have been proactive and carried out 4000 welfare calls to potentially vulnerable tenants to ensure that they are coping well and we also increased our communication to our tenants, through our social media channels, our website, our tenants newsletter and letters to ensure that they are not missing new government information which may benefit them.

Anti-Social Behaviour reports have increased during the Pandemic and we have been keeping in regular contact with our customers throughout. We have served Community Protection Warnings and Notices to help encourage positive behaviours, we have also used partial closure orders and full closure orders on high level drug activity and related ASB to support our communities.

e. To maintain rent collection

During March and April there was a considerable reduction in rent collected, although the income levels are beginning to recover. At the end of June 95.03% rent had been collected compared to 95.40% at the same time last year. A 0.36% reduction in income – around £27,000.

Most of the rent accounts with increased arrears are those tenants who already had a high arrears balance and continued to struggle to make payments. The number of cases with an arrear of more than £1,000 has increased from 63 at year end to 102; with 18 tenants now owing more than £2,000. The highest arrears case now owes £3,426, and currently has a suspended Court Order.

8. Next steps

- 8.1 The next stage for the organisation is the Transformation Phase which will cover the period between the 1st September 2020 and the 31st March 2021. It is expected new challenges will arise during this period as restrictions are lifted such as the impact of the furlough scheme ending, the eviction ban ending, the pausing of Operation Shield and the possibility of a national recession. There is also winter planning to consider, and any potential impacts from Brexit and local outbreaks/lockdowns related to COVID-19.
- 8.2 A PESTEL and SWOT analysis was conducted by the management team and we are currently in the process of agreeing a project structure for the transformation stage. The

projects will be incorporated into the organisation's strategic delivery plans, led by a senior manager and progress reported monthly.

9. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed on the impact of CBH's response to COVID-19 upon customers and staff. The outcome of this identified that older and disabled customers were more vulnerable to the negative impact of moving to critical service provision only. This was mitigated by being proactive in contacting all of our vulnerable customers to conduct welfare checks, ensuring access to food and medication and signposting customers to support and befriending services. This related to 1500 tenants over the age of 70 and 1300 tenants (under the age of 70) with a physical or mobility disability.
- 9.2 Tenants with a learning disability were also contacted for a welfare check as the anti-social behaviour team noted an increase in the exploitation of vulnerable tenants and have been working closely with Essex Police to counter potential impacts of drug-related activity.

10. Strategic Plan References

- 10.1 The recovery plan's 3 key streams link directly to the Colchester Borough Homes Strategic Plan as set out in 5.2. There has also been close coordination and alignment with the Colchester Borough Council Recovery programme, including through CBH senior management membership of the CBC Recovery Steering Group

11. Consultation

- 11.1 During the recovery of services customer insight was used to plan and deliver services under COVID-19 restrictions. This was predominately gathered through analysis of the calls received by the call centre and communication with partnering organisations. A Residents Panel was held on the 15th June to consult residents on the CBH response to COVID-19.
- 11.2 Further consultation with residents will be conducted during the transformation stage to ensure the resumption of services is inclusive and meets expectations.

12. Publicity Considerations

- 12.1 Regular updates to our customers via letter, email, social media and our website has kept them up to date on the progress made on the recovery plan. A dashboard showing the status of the services we deliver is on the CBH website and can be found [here](#).

13. Financial implications

- 13.1 The majority of the services CBH deliver are funded through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) where the impact of COVID-19 is directly linked to the rent collection (see item 7.3(e)) which is managed through the 30 year HRA Business Plan. This means the impact is different to that on the General Fund (GF) where the effect is much more pronounced. Services funded through the GF, such as Housing Solutions and homelessness have received some additional government funding during the pandemic. Whilst rent collection has been affected, arrears within the stock remain a debt that will be recovered over time.

14. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

- 14.1 CBH made over 4000 welfare calls to potentially vulnerable tenants to ensure that they were coping once restrictions were put in place on the 23rd March and we have continued regular contact with our sheltered tenants. Our housing management system was adapted to enable tenants to report if they were isolating or had COVID-19 symptoms so we could tailor our service delivery to individual circumstances.
- 14.2 Guidance has been written, recorded and communicated to our staff and contractors to provide COVID-19 safe procedures for our customers. We will respect our tenants' individual requirements and can take additional precautions when entering their homes.
- 14.3 Our anti-social behaviour team has remained operational throughout the pandemic, providing reassurance to our customers that poor behaviour is challenged in order to provide a safe environment for everyone to live in. The lockdown period has seen an increase in reports of serious nuisance and crime and we have worked closely with the Police to deal with matters using civil enforcement.

15. Health and Safety Implications

- 15.1 Health and safety of both our customers and staff have been at the forefront of our decision making and throughout the pandemic. CBH have followed government advice, resuming services as restrictions were lifted.
- 15.2 As services resumed risk assessments were carried out for all aspects of work and where contractors were delivering works, risk assessments and method statements were required to be updated on how the work was to be delivered.
- 15.3 Where compliance could not be met due to COVID-19 restrictions a risk-based approach was taken in accordance with government and the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) guidance, in particular around gas servicing.
- 15.4 CBH have been proactive in promoting staff health and welfare by providing guidance on working from home and 'protecting your mental health'. A wellbeing survey was conducted on the 4th May which showed a positive result on the measures put in place for staff such as regular communication updates, regular contact with managers, wellbeing challenges and support in enabling a home working environment.

16. Risk Management Implications

- 16.1 Risks were identified within the recovery plan and mitigated in the planning of resuming services. The corporate risk register was kept updated and previous mitigations already in place were stress tested for effectiveness.

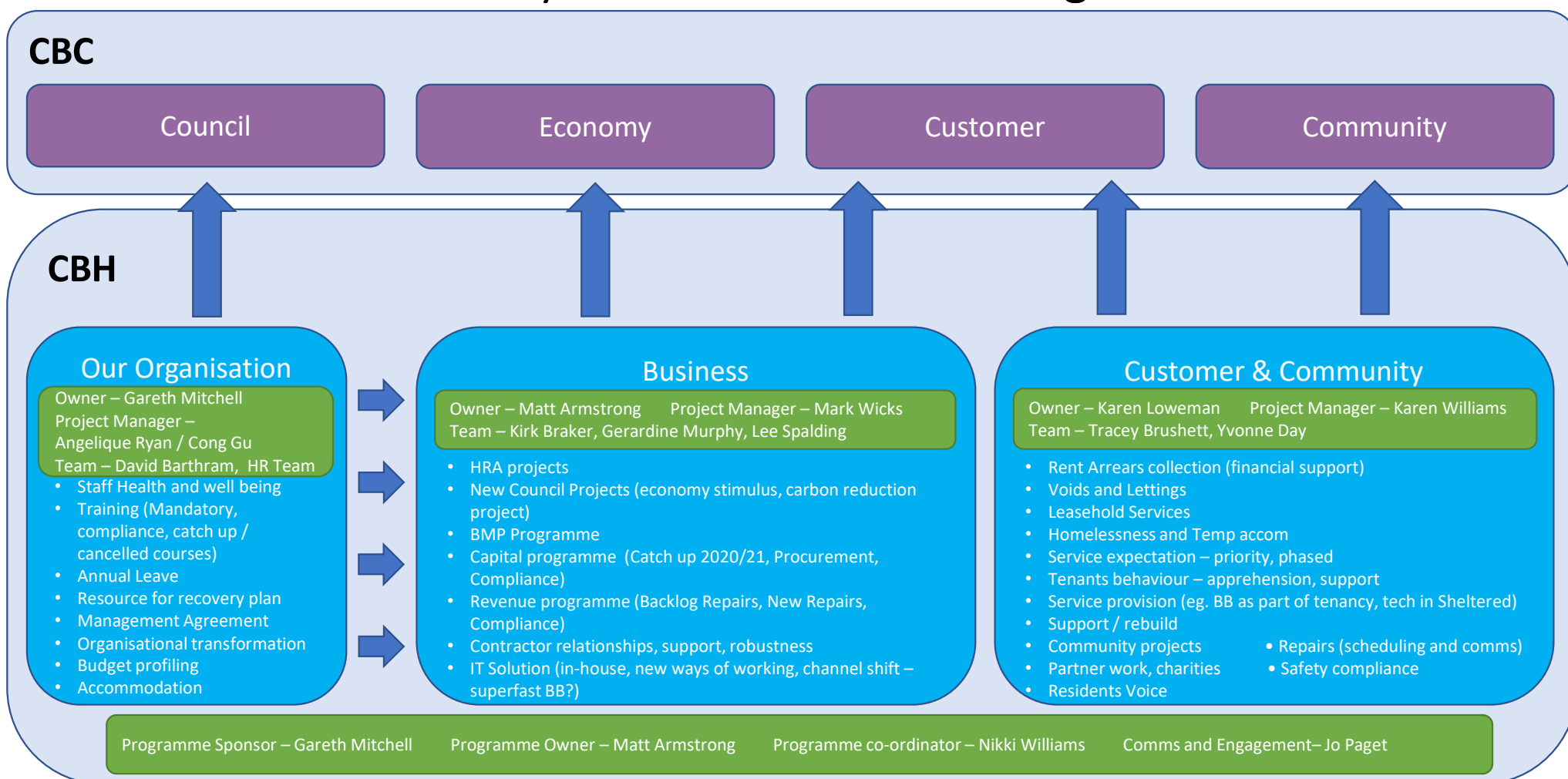
17. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 17.1 The recovery of services has created an opportunity to transform the way we work which is the focus on the next phase. Environmental impacts have and will continue to be considered as part of the resumption and transformation of service delivery. Most prominent is the reduction in car travel and the efficiencies realised through agile working.
- 17.2 A key element of the Council's economic recovery is the stimulus of the local economy. Following the Cabinet decision on the 8th July 2020, proposals for accelerating the capital investment programme have been submitted to the Council which include energy saving projects.

18. Appendices

- Appendix A - Recovery Plan Project Structure
- Appendix B - Project Principles

Recovery Plan Structure and integration



CBH 2.0 Project Principles

	Principle	Rationale
1	Use technology to its full potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look to use technology to replace service delivery where this where possible. • Consider smart technology which can be controlled and monitored remotely. • Use technology to improve communications. • Become a paperless organisation. • Be more efficient in the way we work.
2	Build back better	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the positive changes made during C-19 and do not lose good practice already implemented. • Use this opportunity to transform services rather than as a recovery exercise. • Maximise opportunities. • Develop strong communities. • Consider the environmental impact and include Green initiatives.
3	Develop our Agile approach to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles become remote and home based where possible in order to reduce the accommodation requirement. • Travel by car and/or public transport is minimised to reduce the chance of staff being infected in the short to medium term and for efficiency in the longer term (post vaccine). • Continue to prevent the spread of C-19 by putting staff and customer safety first. • Government guidance is followed and risk assessments completed prior to each service returning. • Statutory and legislative requirements are met and any deviations are made through a risk assessment with decisions logged with review dates.
4	Use customer insight to inform service recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All customer-based services only return once customers views and opinions have been collected and evaluated (with the exception of statutory services that remain the same). • Staff are part of the planning and decision-making process. • Services transform to meet the changing needs of our customers post C-19.
5	One company approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A collaborative approach to recovery is essential in order to be successful and consistent. • Consider any effect on other areas of the business.
6	Set achievable plans and targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor, learn and react to the C-19 KPI's. • Plans are implemented using Kotter's change management principles in order to be successful. • Governance and previous audit requirements are considered with any changes to a service, especially in relation to fraud or GDPR breaches. • Any changes to service delivery are costed and any financial implications are clearly identified and approved in advance of any changes.
7	Ensure plans are flexible and sustainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services are built back to sustain further waves of coronavirus. • Plans are flexible to deal with further easing / restricting of social distancing measures. • Plans consider the impact this crisis will have on customers, the economy and hard-hit sectors in the short, medium and long term. • Contractors and partnering agencies are ready to support and deliver plans.

18 August 2020

Report of	Assistant Director Place and Client Services	Authors:	Paul Smith (CSHL) Andrew Burrell (CBC) Amphora Managers
Title	Amphora Recovery Programme (Covid-19)		
Wards affected	All		

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on progress made to date on the Council's wholly owned companies' Covid-19 Recovery Plan; in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. The activities of the Amphora companies have been affected by the unexpected pandemic, whether that be the construction phase of projects, or activities such as the events; which will continue to be affected as we move forward and are released from the lockdown.
- 1.2 This report supports the Council's own Recovery Plan, but for each company it sets out:
 - A narrative on the impacts of the pandemic on the individual activities
 - A recovery programme for returning to pre-Covid-19 activities
 - Progress to date, against the recovery plan in the short-term period (March-July 2020)
 - Current plans for the ever-evolving medium-term period (July 2020-April 2021)
 - A summary of longer-term issues (beyond April 2021).
- 1.3 The Amphora Group's Business Recovery Plan (BRP) is commercially sensitive and cannot be shared due to the prejudicial impact this could have on their activities; however, a public version has been provided with this report (Appendix A) to illustrate some of the considerations transparently. These activities feed into the Council's own recovery plan (See other report), in the four recovery cells, and also within cross cutting themes of housing, finance, climate change and sustainability; all commerciality aligned with the strategic direction and principles of the Council's recovery programme.

2.0 Action Required

- 2.1 To consider the progress made to date in the Group's response to the Coronavirus pandemic as outlined in this report and detailed in Appendix A, and recovery plans and ensure that it is aligned with the Council's Recovery Plan prior to them being brought to Cabinet for approval.

3.0 Reason for Scrutiny

- 3.1 To ensure the Group's approach to recovery from Coronavirus is consistent with the Council's own approach and aligns with the Council's strategic direction.

- 3.2 To ensure the objectives and activity outlined in the Group's business recovery plan itself are also sound, acknowledging the plan needs to be flexible and evolve in response to future uncertainties in the economy and society as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

4.0 Background and Action Plan Information

- 4.1 In order to respond to the uncertainty of these times, and in line with the Council's own direct recovery planning, the Amphora group approach is built on:
- Horizon scanning – to ensure we are aware of potential business threats and opportunities and can duly respond to changing predictions for Covid-19 which affect the national and local economy in all areas of our services.
 - Agile planning – to ensure the roadmap to a full recovery can respond effectively with good business planning, resilient corporate structure and correct resources fit for the marketplace.
- 4.2 Gaining an insight into the impact of new legislation, government guidance or public opinion affecting each sector will better guide our activities and strategies. Our Recovery Plan is founded on business intelligence and insight from a variety of sources gained through continual dialogue with:
- Funders including Homes England, DCMS and BEIS
 - Contractors and other industry experts such as RICS
 - Government departments
- 4.3 The Group's structure provides a degree of independence and autonomy within the Council's governance framework which allows a small degree of agile working practices. This enables the companies to make some decisions at the required pace, whilst maintaining alignment with the strategic overview of the Council.
- 4.4 Whilst the Amphora companies contribute across all four of the Council's recovery cells, the majority of its activity is focused on economic recovery. Success will depend on delivery of number of major projects currently underway, including:
- developing and showcasing a vibrant events programme to secure Colchester's place on the national events circuit;
 - boosting local and regional participation in sport and healthy living with a diverse and inclusive sport and leisure provision at Colchester Northern Gateway's Sports Park;
 - supporting local construction industry with an extensive building programme of high quality private and mixed-tenure homes on sites across the borough – with the commencement of construction at Creffield Road and Military Road and three garage sites will start in the next three months;
 - supporting a greener economy and responding to the Council's climate emergency agenda, led with construction of the district heat network and the feasibility for a micro grid to supply electricity to CNG flagship project;
 - delivery of the expansive Local Full Fibre Network (LLFN) digital infrastructure network to drive commercial opportunities in the Borough and encourage economic recovery, particularly the ability of people to work from home, and the fostering of a positive investment climate for higher-quality employers and the potential for improved connectivity system for new Helpline services.

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS WITHIN EACH COMPANY (MAY - JULY 2020)

- 4.5 This section explains the impact of Covid-19 on key projects and how this was managed in the short-term.
- 4.6 **Colchester Amphora Energy Ltd (CAEL)** experienced some delay to the delivery of its District Heat Network. This minor delay and flexible working has however permitted additional work to be undertaken to fine tune the design and prepare the tender specification so that the delay was made to be as productive as possible. A Government extension to the date for non-domestic RHI also now allows a more favourable timeline for installation of the Energy Centre to better match the requirement of heat delivery, aligned to the other developments.
- 4.7 **Colchester Amphora Homes Ltd (CAHL)** experienced a slight delay in the continuance of the archaeology works at Creffield Road due to the changing guidance on safer operating and social distancing on sites; and following government guidance such work was permitted which minimised delays. The contractors are now appointed, and the construction programme is back on track. All contractors are adhering to the required social distancing measures to ensure delivery can continue in line with the construction programs.
- 4.8 **Colchester Amphora Trading Ltd (CATL)** experienced immediate impact at both ends of the spectrum. Helpline, the emergency response service for vulnerable residents, saw increased demand as more residents found themselves distanced from traditional support networks of friends and family. At the other end of the spectrum the Events and Leisure World came to an immediate closure as soon as lockdown measures were announced.
- 4.9 CATL's construction projects, principally at Colchester Northern Gateway, temporarily stopped due to the initial lockdown. The Sports Park construction was halted for approximately four weeks whilst the Government developed the construction sectors safe working guidance for minimising the spread of Covid-19. During this period, we worked with the contractor to facilitate safe working operating procedures including a Covid compliant logging system and bespoke site safety rules (i.e. changes to access, body heat monitoring, work location tracking and travel plans). The contract remains affected by Covid-19 as a result of some of the Covid-safer working practices, sub-contractors on furlough and supply chain delays.
- 4.10 As the Government considered its early guidance for construction projects, CATL took the executive decision to prolong its instruction to commence works on The Walk – the dedicated walking and cycling route at CNG-South. This decision ultimately saved potential costs to the project which could have resulted in prolongation fees and additions to professional fees. The works to “The Walk” (formerly known as “The Boulevard”) began approximately a month later than planned, work timetables were retained thanks to the continuation of design work and confirmation of finishes.

- 4.11 The economic uncertainty faced by the business community also resulted in a decrease in rent collection and Estate Management activities. Rent collection dropped from 97% of rents received to 44% as tenants struggled to pay due to lockdown trading restrictions. Estate management strategies have been developed with CBC to mitigate income loss caused by the economic downturn, with existing property transactions progressed as quickly as possible.
- 4.12 The DCMS-sponsored LFFN was not affected due to the specific timing of that project (as the deployment programme was not initiated) and it was then quickly commenced as soon as the Covid-19 lockdown for construction services was permitted, with the high street cable upgrades now complete; minimising disruption to this part of the town centre as it now re-populates.
- 4.13 The Infrastructure to the A12 Inter route is ongoing, which will create a new fast digital cable connection from the Town Hall (the hub for Colchester digital networking) to Telehouse in London. These upgraded data links are due for completion in September and create a long-term revenue for CBC being managed by Amphora, as well as benefitting the residents and business who will be able to use them in due course, assisting with the town's economic recovery.
- 4.14 Multiple leases on a commercial basis, are being negotiated for the letting of land plots to the investor, VX Fiber. In addition, there are a number of other service providers showing an interest in the digital infrastructure being delivered in Colchester, which will increase commercial income during 2020-21. Upgraded connections to some of the CBH sheltered housing developments are nearing completion and will further improve service and revenue.

DEVELOPED ACTIONS FOR THE MEDIUM TERM (JULY 2020-APRIL 2021)

- 4.15 **Appendix A** is a public version of the Group's Business Recovery Plan. It presents the Group's key deliverables for the current year 2020/21 and an overview of the work that has been planned from April 2021 until 2024. Due to the commercial nature of many of the company activities it is not possible to disclose all impacts, actions or plans which may then prejudice the Council's position in future or give competitors an advantage.
- 4.16 Although much work has taken place since May 2020, the plan will continue to develop and be reprioritised and amended according to horizon scanning on changes in government policy, the economy, society, CBC and partner priorities. It also follows agreed Business Plans, which the Scrutiny Committee reviewed in late 2019, and subsequently agreed by Cabinet after recommendations from both Scrutiny and the shareholder committee (Governance & Audit).
- 4.17 **CAEL's** medium-term actions and objectives are the construction and commissioning of the Energy Centre together with the initial installations of sections of the pipe distribution network, commencing in 2020/21, and concluding the heat network in line with the CNG housing delivery programme ending December 2024. The initial pipeline has started delivery on site as part of "The Walk" contract works, which commenced in July 2020.
- 4.18 **CAHL's** medium-term actions include the continuation of the building activity at Creffield Road, progressing the construction at Military Road, Harding's Close, Buffett Way and Scarfe Way and, together with CBC, to consider future housing sites and the outline planning permission, followed by the detailed planning

consent, on Mill Road at CNG in March 2021. At Creffield Road, CAHL have recently announced the appointment of TJ Evers as the winning contractor, bringing forwards a local employment opportunity for a construction company that is based in Tiptree.

- 4.19 **CATL's** diverse activities break down into Commercial Development Services, Estates and Asset Management and Trading activities such as Helpline, Events, Fibre and CCTV as well as providing commercial and strategic management of the Council's Sport and Leisure service and Economic and Social Development delivery.
- 4.20 For Commercial Development Services the focus between now and April is on the CNG Sports Park and CNG "South" site with:
- Completion and fit-out of the Sports Park as a fully operational venue of cycling excellence, home of Colchester Rugby Club, and sport and leisure for all.
 - Preparation to ensure the Sports Park is operationally ready for the public launch in January 2021, with the team recruited and trained, and marketing in place to attract multiple and diverse users.
 - Completion of additional post contract works, including signage for promotion and accessibility.
 - Management of the offsite highway improvements which are under a separate contract and will be complete in mid to late 2021.
- 4.21 At CNG-South, to accommodate a delayed move of the Rugby Club to the Sports Park in January 2021, the start of "Phase 2" works for "The Walk" are projected for early 2021 with a completion by mid-2021. Planning consent for the hybrid planning application in October 2020 shall continue with the reserved matters by March 2021 and an expectation to commence works mid to late 2021.
- 4.22 Our Economic and Social Delivery team will continue to work in partnership with CBC Communities Team, to support the growth of Colchester's creative and cultural economy. Projects include development of the new Stanway Community Facility on the Western Bypass; and feasibility and development of projects at Queen Street Bus Depot and public spaces at St Nicholas Square and Balcerne Gardens. Additional financial support until the end of 2020 was achieved from the ERDF funded South East Creative Cultural and Digital Support Programme.
- 4.23 Safeguarding of income is the medium-term focus for Estates and Asset Management Team to be achieved through tenant management and the implementation of estate strategies to minimise voids and empty property costs and progress transactions. The Asset Management Strategy will be revised to incorporate the changing economic context and support for the Council's emerging Economic Recovery Strategic Plan.
- 4.24 For other trading activities the focus will be on re-opening and recovery:
- Socially distanced and restricted weddings recommenced from 4th July
 - Selected outdoor and indoor, Covid-19 compliant, events recommencing as and when permitted (and from July/August)
 - Sport & leisure facilities, with restricted capacities, online pre-bookings and new cleaning and operating procedures, re-opened from 25th July (however, some services are still not permitted to open e.g. Aqua Springs).
 - Delivery of the digital upgrade of CCTV, aligned to the LFFN roll out, recommenced in May 2020

- The Digital team is in early discussion with mobile operators and an external adviser about the entry of the mobile operators into the network to facilitate 5G deployment in Colchester. The latter is likely to emerge in the coming 1-2-year period as an important source of revenue and is one of the key success metrics required of the project by DCMS. It is important that all service lines consider potential uses for the new LFFN digital infrastructure, which will grow into one of the largest of its type in the UK over the next year.

LONGER TERM ACTIONS (POST APRIL 2021)

- 4.25 The Group will continue to develop the work it has agreed under its current Business Plans (2018-21) with consideration to future business planning currently in development for the period 2021-2024. With the impacts of coronavirus expected to continue into this period, the subsequent Business Plans and budget setting processes will address these ongoing ramifications.
- 4.26 **CAEL's** longer term objectives focus on boosting a greener economy and supporting the de-carbonisation of the town. Principally, this currently lies with developing the Northern Gateway Heat Network to maximise the Energy Centre's capacity and explore the potential to extend the Network; as well as developing other sustainable, energy related projects such as a micro grid at the Northern Gateway and heat networks in Colchester.
- 4.27 **CAHL's** longer-term actions will do much to stimulate the local economy including progress of the Mill Road development proposals for up to 350 new homes with commencement on site; exploring St Runwald Street to accommodate up to 55 new homes; ensuring sales of new homes are achieved at Creffield Road; processing Phase 2 development sites along with managing the Phase 2 garage sites; and promoting Phase 3 garage sites and reviewing proposals for Phase 3 development sites.
- 4.28 **CATL's** longer term focus will be to continue to ensure its Estates Management income is safeguarded and new income generating opportunities are identified which adapt to the changing economic climate. Implementation of the updated Asset Management Strategy will be a key driver.
- 4.29 For CATL's other trading activities, beyond April 2021 work will continue to:
- Re-establish and develop further the events programme across all venues, taking a leading role in the cultural recovery of Colchester, encouraging both residents and visitors into the town.
 - Develop an exciting and inclusive sports and leisure provision and programme at the Sports Park to maximise users and participation for all abilities and to manage commercial performance.
 - Extend Helpline's services both in terms of offer and geographical reach utilising the possibilities the digital upgrade will deliver.
 - Continue roll out for ultra-fast fibre across the Borough working with strategic partners to maximise customer sign ups and market the benefits for residents and businesses.
 - Develop business opportunities with third parties by offering our:
 - F & M Services
 - Project Management
 - Sports and Leisure Management
 - Property development
 - Sustainable communities

- Grant applications

5.0 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 5.1 In alignment with the work on response to date, the emerging work on recovery has been informed by the requirements of the Coronavirus pandemic, the Coronavirus Act, Government guidance (statutory and non-statutory) and market intelligence. Several of the projects are designed to improve³ access or services for our more vulnerable user groups, including (but not limited to) the “access for all” elements of the Sports Park, increased affordable housing, provision of better broadband to less affluent areas, and helpline.
- 5.2 As the Recovery plan emerges, further equality and diversity issues will be considered where policies or procedures emerge or change as a result of the Recovery Programme. This will include producing further Equality Impact Assessments where appropriate for individual areas of activity.

6.0 Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 The Amphora Group’s activities span most of the strategic plan priorities. The Group’s Business Recovery Plan therefore aligns with the Council’s recovery planning and the existing strategic priorities. This will need to be reviewed considering the significant economic and social impacts of the Pandemic. The future Recovery Plan will be aligned with those priorities.
- 6.2 The group activities advance or positively contribute to most of the Councils strategic priorities, whether this be place-making, sustainability, health and wellbeing, community safety, housing delivery, or economic growth.

7.0 Consultation

- 7.1 Appropriate consultation and engagement with partners, all sectors of the community, business, contractors, and stakeholders will be considered in relation to the individual projects and activities undertaken.

8.0 Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 The Group’s Business Recovery Plan is not publicised in the same way that the Council may publicise its Recovery Plan. As the companies work through the recovery period each area of work will be promoted or publicised wherever appropriate and utilising the company and Council communication channels, with communication plans attached to major project areas.

9.0 Financial Implications

- 9.1 Overall, following the business Recovery Plan, a revised forecast for CCHL for the year ending 31 March 2021 was presented and approved by the Governance and Audit and the Cabinet for a dividend of £226k, previously £528k, as a direct result of Covid-19.
- 9.2 The successful recovery of CCHL will deliver the dividends assumed in the Council’s Medium-Term Financial Forecast.

- 9.3 Continuing successful delivery of the Council's capital programme will achieve better value for money and the delivery of income targets associated with the programme.

10.0 Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

- 10.1 Health and wellbeing is at the heart of the company activities, whether it be through the management of Leisureworld, the project management for the new Sports Park and the wider Northern Gateway, or the events programme. The wellbeing of residents, businesses and visitors is a primary consideration in the development of the Business Recovery Plan.

11.0 Health and Safety Implications

- 11.1 The development of the recovery plan complies with applicable Health and Safety legislation and the Company's and Council's policies. On construction sites, the contractors on site are complying with the latest national safe operating procedures, whilst the events business operations have restarted in line with government guidance (and in the same way we are managing for the leisure facilities).

12.0 Risk Management Implications

- 12.1 Risk management will be a key part of the development of the plan and risks have been assessed for projects according to the current risk management framework.

13.0 Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 13.1 Environmental and sustainability considerations are considered of paramount importance in the Recovery Plan. The activities of CAEL are a prime example of how the companies are directly influencing sustainability, with the Northern Gateway Heat Network being a flagship, innovative, carbon-cutting scheme. Each opportunity will be considered in relation to the Climate Emergency Action Plan to ensure the Council's climate change, environmental and sustainability ambitions and policies are actively addressed and promoted throughout the development of the Recovery Plan in all areas. We are committed to sustainable development and our aim is to improve our impact on lives, communities and the economy in which we operate, we strive to account for our economic, social and environmental impact whilst aiming to reduce our carbon footprint and other pollutants.

Appendices

Appendix A: Colchester Commercial Holdings Ltd Outline Business Recovery Plan

Scrutiny Committee

Amphora Covid-19 Recovery Plan Summary

2020-2024

Key deliverables for the current year 2020/21:

- Completion and opening of £28.7m Sports Park at Colchester Northern Gateway (CNG).
- Planning consent and commencement of the new homes, commercial and leisure provision at CNG.
- First housing sales at Creffield Road.
- Re-commencement of Covid compliant social distancing Events.
- Improve on the commercial and retail rental income on behalf of CBC.
- Complete the initial deployment of the Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN).
- Finalise the pre commencement works for the construction of the Energy Centre.
- Develop funding streams for the delivery of local community centres.

Key financial assumptions for the current year 2020/21 due to the pandemic:

- Service Level Agreement (SLA) charges have been reviewed and re-distributed across all companies.
- The minimal indoor or outdoor event projections (including weddings) until January 2021 has decreased the income by 80%, the costs associated with Events has therefore decreased resulting in an overall reduction in net income of £443k.
- Staff costs have been reviewed and updated and include the recovery for furloughed staff within CATL.
- CATL expenditure includes £100k venue hire costs, as agreed with CBC.

Revised forecast dividend of £226,000 for 2020/21 is shown below:

Financial Statement

	Original Budget 20/21	Covid-19 Revised Budget 20/21	Variance		Original Budget 20/21	Covid-19 Revised Budget 20/21	Variance
CCHL	Full Year Budget	Full Year Budget	Full Year Budget	CATL	Full Year Budget	Full Year Budget	Full Year Budget
	£000's	£000's	£000's		£000's	£000's	£000's
Income	2,122	2,036	86	Income	3,760	2,997	763
Expenditure	-2,122	-2,036	-86	Expenditure	-3,149	-2,722	-427
	0	0	0		611	275	336
CAHL	Full Year Budget	Full Year Budget	Full Year Budget	Group	Full Year Budget	Full Year Budget	Full Year Budget
	£000's	£000's	£000's		£000's	£000's	£000's
Income	169	121	48	Income	6,190	5,293	897
Expenditure	-131	-120	-11	Expenditure	-5,537	-5,014	-523
	38	1	37		653	279	374
CAEL	Full Year Budget	Full Year Budget	Full Year Budget	Profit b/f tax	653	279	374
	£000's	£000's	£000's	Tax	124	53	71
Income	139	139	0				
Expenditure	-135	-137	2	Forecast Dividend	529	226	303
	4	2	2				

Key deliverables for next three years 2021 - 2024:

- Detailed planning consent for the new homes, commercial and leisure provision at CNG
- Completion of the Energy Centre and connection of District Heat Network to supply local homes and businesses of CNG.
- Completion and start of occupancy of the 350 new homes for private sale and affordable rent
- Connection of private residents and commercial businesses to the LFFN with private sector investment.
- Delivery of Colchester Events programme with national appeal for UK promotion of a vibrant and inclusive Colchester
- Completion of various housing sites and assistance to CBC in future sites for sustainable development.
- Support for a greener economy with action plan against delivery of CBC's carbon neutral footprint by 2030
- Development of new business and partnering opportunities to continue the annual dividend growth to CBC.

Medium Term by Company for the period 2021 - 2024

CAEL:

- Begin installation of the Energy Centre and initial sections of pipe distribution network with first 'heat on' in early 2022 and complete the full heat network connections as per the construction program.
- Identify funding streams for additional projects such as microgrids, photovoltaic (PV) for Leisure World (c£3m project).
- Explore CAEL as an energy consultancy using additional resources.
- Seek synergies with CBC's sustainability & climate change team to provide efficiencies on its energy strategy and expenditure.
- Prepare a restructuring of fibre arm into CAEL with potential greater emphasis on utilities.
- Produce CAEL's renewable energy projects to support CBC's carbon neutral vision.
- Present options for energy efficiencies at Leisure World could use the borehole at Rowan House to offset high energy costs.

CAHL:

- Explore and apply where eligible to Homes England for social housing grants.
- Develop and market multiple housing sites across the Borough.
- Masterplan agreed development sites in line with CBC's strategic priority on regeneration of the Town Centre.
- Achieve planning for Mill Road with heat network/microgrid, utilising contracted architectural expertise.
- Handover completed garage site properties at Scarfe Way, Buffett Way and Hardings Close to Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) to begin occupancy.
- Commence on the Phase 3 garage sites

CATL:

Helpline

- Helpline as an established and well used local service must continue to promote itself to private pay customers on the quality of the service it provides.
- Update to the analogue phone lines as they are being phased out from 2022 to 2025 and all customers will require a digital solution.
- Seek alternative solutions to add more functionality i.e. Alexa, Google Home to provide more support for customers and which could be funded by health partners.
- Seek overlap wherever possible with the new digital infrastructure to create revenue-generating opportunities by being a direct provider of site connectivity.
- Targeted marketing campaign to grow customer base organically with phased additional responders based on demand.

Expanding Services for Helpline

Helpline's model is primarily monitoring and response but could also:

- provide 'Out Of Home' (OOH) services to CBC and CBH detailing with domestic failings i.e.. boilers, floods, etc.
- create a wider Helpline brief where any resident can contact us 24 hours a day to access approved, trusted trade professionals extending a service already in place for CBH Helpline
- Manage OOH calls for other agencies / councils
- Promote automated calls service for external health partners

CCTV Digitalisation

The current CCTV system is outdated and an upgrade to a digital system is underway which is due for completion Summer 2021

- The new operating system brings greater capability to extend services into commercial market for both CCTV and alarm monitoring.
- Proposal to upgrade to full digital system with links to Northern Gateway, Castle Park and Leisure World.
- Opportunity to monitor internal and external alarms ie. schools, care homes, etc from central control centre.
- Discussions with local councils on central monitoring of CCTV from Colchester.

Events

Website Development

- The current website is one platform aiming to meet a number of different customer needs
- Customer journeys are complex and do not currently enable a simple purchase of tickets
- Proposal to develop website(s) based on simpler customer journey
 - Weddings
 - Community
 - Town Hall
 - Castle
 - Corporate room hire
 - Hire venue
 - What's on

- Buy a ticket / Box Office

Charter Hall Refurbishment

- With a growing events reputation and programme, the Borough should have a dedicated and suitably equipped venue able to attract the global artists that it is attracting to Castle Park.
- Charter Hall is a joint use Sports Hall / Events venue with outdated décor, sports hall line markings that deter bookings.

Events Facilitation Third Parties

- The current operation is focussed on promoting and utilising CBC venues to bring people to Colchester.
- CEC has a growing reputation of delivering a diverse and well managed programme of events
- Proposal to develop relationship to promote Colchester Events Company as facilitator of events on behalf of third-party venue organisations
- Take cultural lead for Colchester, collaborate with key partners to create one vision and delivery for Colchester
- Provide a full event / wedding planning service for both CBC and external venues
- Hire equipment for both Colchester Events Company and third-party events

Estate Management

- Manage the rental income to return to pre Covid-19 levels
- Strategic assessment of the Council's property assets
- Develop Facilities and Maintenance services for other parties

Capital Project Management

- Deliver
 - Colchester Northern Gateway
 - Sports Park
 - Highway Improvements
 - CNG South
 - Community Centres
 - Other Council assets brought forward
 - Develop Project Management services for third parties

Business and Economic Development

- Support the growth of Colchester's creative and cultural economy and obtain funding for new community facilities.

Digital Communications

- Deploy ultra-fast fibre across the Borough working with strategic partners to maximise customer growth for residents and businesses.

Ends
August 2020

18 August 2020

Report of	Assistant Director – Corporate and Improvement Services	Author	Owen Howell ☎ 282518
Title	Work Programme 2020-21		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the current Work Programme 2020-2021 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 2020-2021.

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 current work programme for 2020-21 is appended to this report.
- 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**.
- 3.3 It is envisaged that meetings of the Scrutiny Panel will be conducted remotely online until further notice is given. Councillors, officers and members will be informed of any developments regarding meeting arrangements/future venues, and these will be publicised for members of the public who may wish to participate or attend.
- 3.4 It should be noted that the Work Programme has been redrawn to reflect the use of online meetings and the need to focus greater scrutiny work on consideration of a smaller number of agenda items per meeting.

4. Standard References

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

5. Strategic Plan References

- 5.1 Good governance is integral to the delivery of the Strategic Plan's priorities and direction for the Borough as set out under the four themes of growth, responsibility, opportunity and wellbeing. Unfortunately
- 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 – Forward Plan of Key Decisions – 1 September 2020 to 31 December 2020.

Work Programme for 2020/21

Scrutiny Panel meeting - 1 June 2020
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 23 May 2020
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finance and Council Response Reports relating to Covid-19 2. Work Programme 2020-21
Scrutiny Panel meeting – 7 June 2020
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing - TBC
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre-Scrutiny of Proposed changes to Garden Waste Collection 2. Work Programme 2020-21
Scrutiny Panel meeting - 21 July 2020
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 16 July 2020
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Year End 2019/20 Performance Report and Strategic Plan Action Plan 2018-21 2. N.E. Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance 3. Annual Scrutiny Report 4. Work Programme 2020-21
Scrutiny Panel meeting – 17 August 2020
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 13 August 2020
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. North Essex Garden Communities
Scrutiny Panel meeting - 18 August 2020
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 13 August 2020
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recovery work by CBC, CBH and CCHL relating to the Covid-19 situation 2. Colchester Business Improvement District 3. Work Programme 2020-21
Scrutiny Panel (Crime and Disorder Committee) - 15 September 2020
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 10 September 2020
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safer Colchester Partnership (Crime and Disorder Committee) 2. Work Programme 2020-21
Scrutiny Panel – 13 October 2020
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's Briefing – 8 October 2020
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local Council Tax Support – Year 2021/22 (Provisional) 2. Budget Strategy for 2021-22 3. Work Programme 2020-21
Scrutiny Panel meeting - 10 November 2020
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 5 November 2020
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reports from Arts Organisations (Mercury, The Arts Centre, FirstSite) 2. Work Programme 2020-21
Scrutiny Panel meeting - 15 December 2020

Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 10 December 2020
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Half Year 2020-21 Performance Report & Strategic Plan Action Plan progress 2. Budget Strategy for 2021-22 3. Colchester Commercial Holdings Ltd [TBC] 4. Work Programme 2020-21
Scrutiny Panel meeting - 26 January 2021
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 21 January 2021
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2021-22 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme, Medium Term Financial Forecast and Treasury Management Investment Strategy 2. Housing Revenue Accounts Estimate and Housing Investment Programme 3. Corporate Key Performance Indicator Targets for 2021-22 4. Colchester Borough Homes: Key Performance Indicator Targets for 2021-22 5. Work Programme 2020-21
Scrutiny Panel (Crime and Disorder Committee) - 16 February 2021
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 11 February 2021
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safer Colchester Partnership (Crime and Disorder Committee) 2. Work Programme 2020-21
Scrutiny Panel meeting– 16 March 2021
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 11 March 2021
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work Programme 2020-21

COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL

FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS 1 September 2020 – 31 December 2020

During the period from 1 September 2020 – 31 December 2020* 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.

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)	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 award a contract over the value of £500,000 for the delivery and procurement of parking bay sensors for installation in various locations in both Colchester and Clacton-on-Sea.	Yes	August 2020	Portfolio Holder for Communities, Wellbeing and Public Safety, Councillor Michel Lilley (under delegated powers from Cabinet) Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services	Portfolio Holder report will detailing the proposed contract to be awarded, including the supplier and works to be carried out by Ringway Jacobs/Essex Highways.	Jason Butcher Parking Project Manager 01206 282901 Jason.butcher@colchester.gov.uk
The award of a contract for the Council's new affordable homes to be constructed at Buffett Way and Scarfe Way, Greenstead	Yes	August 2020	Portfolio Holder for Housing, Councillor Adam Fox Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Andrew Tyrrell Client Services Manager 01206 282390 Andrew.tyrrell@colchester.gov.uk

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The award of a contract for the Council's new affordable homes to be constructed at Military Road	Yes	August 2020	Portfolio Holder for Housing, Councillor Adam Fox Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Andrew Tyrrell Client Services Manager 01206 282390 Andrew.tyrrell@colchester.gov.uk
Consideration of the recommendations from the Waste and Recycling Task and Finish Group	No	19 August 2020	Cabinet (Cllrs Cory, J Young, Fox, Goss, Higgins, King, and Lilley) Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report	Dan Gascoyne Chief Operating Officer 01206 282294 Dan.gascoyne@colchester.gov.uk

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Matters Relating to Third Party Rights at Queen St	Yes	2 September 2020	Cabinet (Cllrs Cory, J Young, Fox, Goss, Higgins, King and Lilley) Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report and plans	Ian Vipond Strategic Director, Policy and Place 01206 282717 ian.vipond@colchester.gov.uk
Revised Strategic Plan	No	2 September 2020	Cabinet (Cllrs Cory, J Young, Fox, Goss, Higgins, King and Lilley) Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report	Rory Doyle Assistant Director, Environment 01206 507885 Rory.doyle@colchester.gov.uk

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COVID 19 Recovery	No	2 September 2020	Cabinet (Cllrs Cory, J Young, Fox, Goss, Higgins, King and Lilley) Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report	Mandy Jones Assistant Director, Place and Client Services 01206 282501 Mandy.jones@colchester.gov.uk
Stanway Community Facility – Asset Transfer	No	2 September 2020	Cabinet (Cllrs Cory, J Young, Fox, Goss, Higgins, King and Lilley) Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report Results of public consultation Document from Stanway Parish Council – application for tender	Lucie Breadman Assistant Director Communities 01206 282726 Lucie.breadman@colchester.gov.uk

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100 Housing Revenue Account Homes	No	2 September 2020	Cabinet (Cllrs Cory, J Young, Fox, Goss, Higgins, King and Lilley) Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report	Tina Hinson Housing Strategy Manager 01206 506903 Tina.hinson@colchester.gov.uk
Approval of Award of Contract for Replacement Windows and Doors	Yes	October/November 2020	Portfolio Holder for Housing, Councillor Adam Fox Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Clare Lawrance Client Asset Manager 01206 282506 Clare.lawrance@colchester.gov.uk

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Award of Contract for Caged Vehicles Fleet	Yes	October 2020	<p>Dan Gascoyne, Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with Councillor Martin Goss, Portfolio Holder for Waste, Environment and Transportation</p> <p>Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832</p>	Officer report	<p>Tracy Allen Specialist and Contracts Manager 01206 282256 Tracy.allen@colchester.gov.uk</p>
Procurement of Liquid Fuel	Yes	14 October 2020	<p>Cabinet (Cllrs Cory, J Young, Fox, Goss, Higgins, King and Lilley)</p> <p>Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk</p>	Cabinet report	<p>Tracy Allen Specialist and Contracts Manager 01206 282256 Tracy.allen@colchester.gov.uk</p>

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Submission of Colchester's "Town Deal" to Government	No	14 October 2020	Cabinet (Cllrs Cory, J Young, Fox, Goss, Higgins, King and Lilley) Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report	Matthew Brown Economic Development Manager 01206 507348 matthew.brown@colchester.gov.uk
Update on Proposed New Grow-on Business Centre in Queen Street	Yes	14 October 2020	Cabinet (Cllrs Cory, J Young, Fox, Goss, Higgins, King and Lilley) Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report	Matthew Brown Economic Development Manager 01206 507348 matthew.brown@colchester.gov.uk

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Award of Contract for the Colchester Northern Gateway Heat Network	Yes	18 November 2020	<p>Cabinet (Cllrs Cory, J Young, Fox, Goss, Higgins, King and Lilley)</p> <p>Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk</p>	Cabinet report and tender analysis	<p>Andrew Tyrrell Client Services Manager 01206 282390 Andrew.tyrrell@colchester.gov.uk</p>

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