

Cabinet

**Grand Jury Room, Town Hall
7 September 2011 at 6.00pm**

The Cabinet deals with the implementation of all council services, putting into effect the policies agreed by the council and making recommendations to the council on policy issues and the budget.

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COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL CABINET

7 September 2011 at 6:00pm

Leader (& Chairman): Councillor Anne Turrell (Liberal Democrats)
Deputy Chairman: Councillor Martin Hunt (Liberal Democrats)
Councillor Nick Barlow (Liberal Democrats)
Councillor Lyn Barton (Liberal Democrats)
Councillor Tina Dopson (Labour)
Councillor Beverley Oxford (The Highwoods Group)
Councillor Paul Smith (Liberal Democrats)
Councillor Tim Young (Labour)

AGENDA - Part A

(open to the public including the media)

Pages

1. Welcome and Announcements

(a) The Chairman to welcome members of the public and Councillors and to remind all speakers of the requirement for microphones to be used at all times.

(b) At the Chairman's discretion, to announce information on:

- action in the event of an emergency;
- mobile phones switched off or to silent;
- location of toilets;
- introduction of members of the meeting.

2. Urgent Items

To announce any items not on the agenda which the Chairman has agreed to consider because they are urgent and to give reasons for the urgency.

3. Declarations of Interest

The Chairman to invite Councillors to declare individually any personal interests they may have in the items on the agenda.

If the personal interest arises because of a Councillor's membership of or position of control or management on:

- any body to which the Councillor has been appointed or nominated by the Council; or
- another public body

then the interest need only be declared if the Councillor intends to speak on that item.

If a Councillor declares a personal interest they must also consider whether they have a prejudicial interest. If they have a prejudicial interest they must leave the room for that item.

If a Councillor wishes to make representations on an item on which they have a prejudicial interest they may do so if members of the public are allowed to make representations. In such circumstances a Councillor must leave the room immediately once they have finished speaking.

An interest is considered to be prejudicial if a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard it as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest.

Councillors should consult paragraph 7 of the Meetings General Procedure Rules for further guidance.

4. Have Your Say!

(a) The Chairman to invite members of the public to indicate if they wish to speak or present a petition at this meeting – either on an item on the agenda or on a general matter not on this agenda. You should indicate your wish to speak at this point if your name has not been noted by Council staff.

(b) The Chairman to invite contributions from members of the public who wish to Have Your Say! on a general matter not on this agenda.

5. Minutes

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2011.

6. Call-in Procedure

To consider any items referred by the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel under the Call-In Procedure. At the time of the publication of this Agenda there were none.

7. Communities and Diversity

i. Highwoods Country Park - Car Park Charging Proposals

1 - 29

See report by the Head of Life Opportunities

8. Strategy and Performance/Resources and ICT	
i. Review of the Council's Funding and Partnership Delivery Arrangements with Colchester Arts Centre, firstsite and the Mercury Theatre	30 - 36
See extract from the minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 19 July 2011	
9. Customers	
i. Local Government Ombudsman - Annual Review 2010/2011	37 - 41
See report by the Monitoring Officer	
10. General	
i. Progress of Responses to the Public	42 - 43
To note the contents of the Progress Sheet	
11. Resources and ICT	
i. Disposal of Plot 700, The Crescent, Colchester Business Park	44 - 48
See report by the Head of Resource Management	
ii. Disposal of Land North of A12 Adjoining New BP Petrol Filling Station	49 - 53
See report by the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration	
iii. Review of Local Code of Corporate Governance	54 - 82
See report by the Monitoring Officer	
12. Exclusion of the Public	
<p>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</p>	

information is defined in Section 100I and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL CABINET

7 September 2011 at 6:00pm

AGENDA - Part B

(not open to the public or the media)

Pages

13. Resources and Diversity

i. Disposal of Plot 700, The Crescent, Colchester Business Park

The following report contains exempt information (financial/business affairs of a particular person, including the authority holding information) as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

See Appendix B to the Head of Resource Management's report

ii. Disposal of Land North of A12 Adjoining BP Filling Station

The following report contains exempt information (financial/business affairs of a particular person, including the authority holding information) as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

See report by the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration



Cabinet

Item
7(i)

7 September 2011

Report of	Head of Life Opportunities	Author	Bob Penny
Title	High Woods Country Park – car park charging proposals		
Wards affected	Mile End and High Woods		

This report concerns the introduction of car park charging at the Turner Road car park, High Woods Country Park.

1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To agree the introduction of car park charging at Turner Road car park at High Woods Country Park
- 1.2 To agree to change the Colchester Borough Council (Off Street Parking Places) Order 2008 – A in order to add the Turner Road car park to the Schedule.
- 1.3 To agree the parking charges and concession arrangements set out in the report
- 1.4 To agree the annual review of parking charges

2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 High Woods Country Park - the Council's largest open space and multiple Green Flag Award winner – is a site of Borough-wide importance. Its facilities include a car park at the Turner Road entrance adjacent to the Country Park Visitor Centre. There is a smaller less visited car park at Chanterelle on the east side of the Country Park. At present the car parks are provided for users of the Country Park only. However, there has been a trend for staff and visitors from local workplaces and health facilities to use the Turner Road car park, especially Monday to Friday. Staff at the Country Park do not have sufficient time to monitor and restrict use to Country Park visitors only.

The Country Park has a large surrounding catchment area and is accessible by public transport – a regular bus service runs along Turner Road – on foot and by bike.

The High Woods Country Park Management Plan 2010 – 2015 approved by the Portfolio Holder earlier this year required Officers to investigate and consult on the possible introduction of car parking charges, and its impact on income and visitor numbers.

This investigation has been completed and it is considered - that in line with other country parks operated by Essex - it is not unreasonable to charge drivers for use of the Turner Road car park. The Council is seeking to generate additional income and income received will assist the overall budget position of the Council.

- 2.2 Recently there has been significant investment in High Woods Country Park to improve access and the range of facilities provided. There has been a major improvement to cycle access achieved by the surfacing of existing routes and creation of new cycle routes offering enhanced east-west connectivity. The car park has been extended and

resurfaced and is line marked to make more efficient use of the space. The introduction of a new adventurous play trail within the woodland in 2011 has been very well received and has seen a significant increase in the number of visits to the country park and many more repeat visits.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 There is an option to continue to offer free parking at High Woods Country Park. This will not contribute to the budget pressures being faced by the Council. In addition, there is restricted parking for staff and visitors at the Primary Care Trust, and charging for parking at Colchester Hospital. Staff and visitors from the PCT and hospital have used the car park on occasions and when staff resources permit, they have been approached by Country Park staff to explain that the car park is provided for park visitors and not for PCT workers or visitors. In the majority of cases such opportunist car parkers have heeded the advice and have not returned to use the car park for their personal benefit. Potentially the demand for this facility will exceed its capacity if free parking continues and income generating opportunity will not be achieved.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 A report on car park charging at High Woods Country Park was considered by the Portfolio Holders for Communities and Street and Waste Services and Deputy Leader of the Council in August 2010. Under the call in procedures, the decision was considered by Finance and Audit Scrutiny Panel (FASP) in September 2010.
- 4.2 Arising from the discussion at FASP on 7 September 2010 it was agreed that there would be resident and park user consultation. The consultation document was prepared in conjunction with the Community Research Officer and is attached at Appendix A. The consultation was prepared in order to gather information about usage that some FASP members and other speakers considered was inadequate in the original PFH report and to obtain the opinion of residents and park users on the proposal to introduce charges.
- 4.3 A total of 235 letters to local residents were distributed by local Councillors in those targeted areas identified by the Ward Councillors as being the most affected by the impact of the charging proposal. Each letter contained a copy of the consultation form and provided the link to the on line website where respondents could register their comments as well as a Freepost address to encourage responses
- 4.4 In addition to the letters distributed to targeted residents there was also a leaflet drop to cars using the High Woods Country Park car park during the consultation period and a notice in the external noticeboard at the Visitor Centre. Each letter contained a copy of the consultation form and provided the link to the Council's website where respondents could register their comments as well as a Freepost address to encourage responses. All efforts were made to make completion of the response forms easy.
- 4.5 The consultation period extended from 24 January to 27 February 2011.
- 4.6 During the 5 week consultation period 131 people responded. A summary of the consultation is provided in Appendix B and has been made available to the High Woods and Mile End Ward Councillors.

4.7 Respondents' frequency of car park use.

T1. I currently use the High Woods Country Park car park:	Total	%
I do not use the car park	39	30
Once or twice a week	26	20
Infrequently	21	16
Once a month	16	13
Once every 2 weeks	11	9
Most days	10	8
Everyday	5	4
Grand Total	128	100

Of the 128 respondents answering Q1, 30% stated that they did not use the car park. 32% of respondents were regular users, using the car park at least once per week

4.8 Duration of stay

T4. I normally stay in the Country Park for:	Total	%
1 to 2 hours	60	67
2 to 4 hours	16	18
Less than 1 hour	7	8
More than 4 hours	7	8
Grand Total	90	100

The awareness that a very large majority of visitors to the Country Park visit for less than 2 hours for the purposes of informal recreation was confirmed by the survey.

4.9 The main reasons for visiting the park were identified

T2. My main reason for parking in the car park is:	Total	%
To walk in the park	35	39

To walk my dog in the park	23	26
To visit the Centre or volunteer	12	13
Other	8	9
To bring my family for the day out	8	9
To fish in the High Woods lake	2	2
To go to work	1	1
Grand Total	89	100

4.10 Residents opinion on parking charges

T5. Do you agree or disagree that we should charge visitors?	Total	%
Strongly disagree	86	67
Disagree	14	11
Neither agree nor disagree	8	6
Agree	14	11
Strongly Agree	4	3
Don't know	3	2
Grand Total	129	100

As car parking has been available at no cost to the user since the High Woods Country Park has been open to the public it is a reasonable expectation that respondents would not wish to pay for a facility that has been previously provided for free. The response to the survey identifies 20% of respondents were either not concerned or agreed to charges being introduced and a further 2% don't know.

4.11 Disagreement on the parking proposals focus on 6 areas of concern

1. Cost
2. Deterring people from the park
3. Restricting a community facility
4. Discouraging healthy lifestyles
5. Cost of installing and maintaining a charging system
6. Impact on surrounding roads

4.12 Whilst recognising the points that have been raised, these are consultation responses from targeted users and local residents but nevertheless valid and need to be addressed. Items 1 – 5 inclusive are all dependent on the reasonableness of charges and determining a balance between a cost that is not prohibitive but a charge that generates income after the cost of ticket equipment provision and maintenance and does not become an underpriced alternative to parking facilities used by Primary Care Trust and hospital staff, hospital visitors and commuters.

- 4.13 The current tariff at the hospital is £3.00 for upto 2 hours, £4.00 for upto 4 hours and £5.00 for over 4 hours. The prime purpose for car parking facilities in the country park is for country park visitors. It is believed that introducing car park charging would make it more difficult to continue the current approach that the car park is only for visitors to the Country Park and would “legitimise” parking by those who identify the car park as simply another Pay and Display car park and an alternative to the parking opportunities that currently exist.
- 4.14 Charging at country park car parks is not a new approach. Essex County Council introduced charging at its country parks several years ago and nowadays the system includes a flat charge of £2.00 that makes no distinction between long and short stays, and there is a season permit of £60.00 for regulars.
- 4.15 The table below is provided to illustrate by way of comparison other car park charges within Colchester

Location	Up to 2 hours	Up to 4 hours
Nunns Road NCP	£3.00	£6.20
Colchester North Station	£3.80	£6.60
Osborne Street NCP	£3.20	£3.80
CBC Parking Services Peak	£2.90/£3.00 ²	£3.90/£4.00
CBC Parking Services Off Peak	£2.50	£2.50

- 4.16 The Council’s Parking Services would establish the Turner Road car park as a pay-and-display facility, and carry out the day-to-day operational and enforcement role in the car park. They would levy a management fee from the total income generated.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 Mindful of the comments received during the consultation, it is proposed to introduce car parking charging at the Turner Road car park to generate income from long stay parking that is used as an alternative to other long stay parking that is provided in the vicinity.

- 5.2 Charges are proposed as follows;

Weekdays	
Upto 2 hours	0.50
2 hours – 4 hours	2.00
Over 4 hrs	4.00
Weekends and Bank Holidays	
Upto 2 hours	0.50
Over 2 hours	2.00

- 5.3 Changes to the charging structure

Changes have been made to the charging structure that was set out in the PFH report in August 2011 as a result of the comments received during the consultation. Stays beyond 2 hours at weekends and Bank Holidays will be a maximum of £2.00 and will not attract the higher charge for stays in excess of 4 hours. This arrangement reflects the general increased leisure time available at weekends and Bank Holidays to encourage longer stays to enjoy the facilities at High Woods Country Park.

Recognising the number of users who are regular but short stay users, a short stay season ticket is being proposed which equates to 2 short stay charges per week. Any additional short stay use of the car park during the week will be at no additional cost.

5.4 Rationale behind proposed charges

The survey has confirmed that the majority of park users are short stay users (less than 2 hour with the reason for visits being to walk or to exercise a dog. By offering a short stay charge of 50p users still have the opportunity to use the Chanterelle car park free of charge to walk their dog or walk through the park. 32% of respondents use the park frequently and it is proposed to introduce a short stay season ticket which would be financially beneficial for those who use the car park on more than 3 occasions per week.

For those who use the High Woods Turner Road car park for family days out, a £2.00 charge for stays up to 4hours is comparable with town centre charges. Visitors to Town Centre attractions such as the retail stores, Castle Museum or Castle Park could expect to pay similar parking charges. Chanterelle car park would remain as a free alternative.

Only 8% of users stay in the Country Park for more than 4 hours. The charge of £4.00 is less than the current tariff at the hospital. Hospital and PCT workers have heeded the intervention from Countryside Rangers when they have been using the Country Park car park for long stay business parking and a charge for a stay in excess of 4hrs would meet their needs and would impact on only 8% of current car park users. It is being proposed that the rate is reduced to £2.00 at weekends for stays over 2 hours to recognise the park's family attraction, particularly since the introduction of the new play trail and to encourage longer stay use by family groups. Potential parking demand by commuters and office workers car would be less during weekends.

5.5 Whilst the consultation survey has expressed the opinion of local residents and current users of which 30% do not use the car park, the impact of car park charges cannot be fully determined until the arrangement is in place and users are required to make decisions about whether to pay or make alternative arrangements. It is therefore proposed that there is an annual review of the charging policy and charges to ensure the proposals meet site management and income objectives and consideration is taken in to account of any negative impacts.

5.6 It is recognised that the use of the Turner Road car park has an impact on the number of people attending the Country Park Visitor Centre. A reduction in the number of visitors using the car park is expected to lead to less secondary spend at the Visitor Centre and an associated pressure on the £15,000 Country Park income target from sales.

5.7 Season tickets and concessions.

5.7.1 There are a number of regular users of the country park car park and it is recognised that the impact of short stay parking charges at 50p would be a major additional outlay if the car park was used on a daily basis. It is for this reason that a short stay season ticket of £50.00 per annum is proposed which is equivalent to 2 uses per week over a 50 week year. Regular users who use the car park more than 2 times per week would therefore benefit from acquiring the season ticket which would be specific to the vehicle and displayed on the registered vehicle.

5.7.2 The current arrangement for season ticket holders in other CBC car parks is to purchase a "tax disc style" permit which is displayed on the vehicle. If there was no parking ticket purchased, there would be no management information regarding when the ticket was purchased and it would be impossible to monitor the use of the season tickets regarding

vehicle arrival and departure times. Future developments may enable smarter technology to be used so that visitors holding a season ticket for short term parking can still obtain a parking ticket for display on their parked vehicle at no charge. This would enable a ticket to be displayed in the car, provide management information about the use of the car park and provide evidence of time of commencing car park use for enforcement purposes. Until more information is gathered regarding the impact of introducing parking charges and the availability of ticket machine development, the impact of season permits on income is hard to assess.

- 5.7.3 As the principle purpose of the car park is for the users of High Woods Country Park, long stay parking is to be discouraged as it is felt that this would monopolise the car park leaving inadequate space for the majority of park users who park their vehicles for periods of less than 2 hours. It is therefore considered that season tickets for long stay users would not be appropriate.
- 5.7.4 The delivery of much countryside management activity within the Borough is through the Colchester Countryside Volunteer Service (CCVS) which operates out of High Woods Country Park. This has been a successful way of engaging with the public and gaining volunteer help to support a range of activities in the park such as patrolling, litter collection, maintenance and providing information and support to park visitors. The support given by CCVR is vital to the management of the Country Park. It is recommended that CCVR volunteers be given an exemption to the parking charges in recognition of the free help and therefore savings that they provide to the Council.
- 5.7.5 It is also recommended that students attending the Country Park for educational sessions led by Country Park staff and anglers holding season permits and day tickets to use the site's fishing lake be given an exemption to any parking charges.
- 5.7.6 It is proposed that there would be no charge for motorcycles. Minibuses would be charged as other cars on the basis that a mini bus utilises a single car parking space. Coaches would be charged a specific rate but those associated with pre arranged educational would not be charged although most school related coach visits result in the coach dropping off students rather than staying for the duration of their booking.

5.8 Implementation

To implement charging, the Council will need to change the Colchester Borough Council (Off Street Parking Places) Order 2008 – A in order to add the Turner Road car park to the Schedule and implement pricing. This involves a Report and Notice advertised in the Press and on site and a further Report should there be any objections. The advertising period required for the Notice is 21 days (plus time to report and deal with any objections).

- 5.9 There is a one off cost to supply and install ticket machines of approximately £4,000. There is an 8 – 10 week delivery on ticket machines
- 5.10 The cost of providing the ticket equipment and site management including cash handling would be covered by the Parking Services management fee. Ticket machines would be emptied regularly to remove the potential of theft from the ticket machines and associated cost of repair.
- 5.11 It is proposed that income raised from car park charges is re-invested in the Country Park to deliver the new income target and maintain and develop its services, facilities and attractions. Income raised as a result of enforcement action following non-payment of a charge will provide an additional income stream within Street Services.

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 Implementation of car park charges is an example of the need to shift resources to deliver priorities which is set out as a Strategic Plan priority.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 Consultation has been carried out amongst selected residents and car park users from 24 January to 27 February 2011 during which time 131 responses were received. The consultation response is provided in Appendix A. It would be anticipated that consultees who were indifferent about the proposal or were not affected by the proposal would not respond and those who felt strongly about the introduction of charges would make their opinions known.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 It can be reasonably expected that a proposal to charge for facilities that have been previously offered for free will not receive a high level of public support. The targeted approach to the consultation has identified respondents' reasons for objecting to the introduction of parking fees but has also identified that there is some support for introducing charges. The success of implementation is dependent on the reasonableness of charges, determining a balance between a cost that is not prohibitive but a charge that generates income after operating costs and does not become an underpriced alternative to parking facilities used by Primary Care Trust and hospital staff, hospital visitors and commuters.
- 8.2 Respondents' views have been considered and reflected in the proposal for a scale of charges based on duration and the intention to offer short stay season tickets to retain use of the park by our regular walkers and dog walkers.
- 8.3 Alternative parking at Chanterelle will be offered at no charge although the cost of travelling to Chanterelle car park and its less convenient location may make short stay users reflect that the parking charge is not unreasonable.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1 The income from car park is estimated to generate in the region of £15,000 per full year. It is considered that the seasonal variation of car park usage equates to 70% usage April – Sept and 30% Oct – March.
- 9.2 As described in 5.5 it is anticipated that any reduction in the number of car park users and visitors to the park will have an impact on the income taken through the Visitor Centre. Car park usage is currently showing a significant increase which has been attributed to the new pay trail and the number of new and repeat visits with children to experience the new equipment.
- 9.3 The cost of supplying the ticket machines would be approximately £8,000 (costing up to £4,000 each, sited and connected, and there would need to be two provided), and would be found from the Parking Services trading account. The annual management fee which would cover the cost of machine maintenance, parking enforcement and cash collection would be around £2,500 for a full year. It is expected that an additional amount would be charged for processing the coin to bank, and this is estimated to be £500 p.a. There will

be a once-only set-up cost of £1,000 for advertising the fees and charges by revising the Parking Order, unless it was possible to link this with other changes.

A financial plan showing proposed expenditure and income for a full year is shown in the table below:

	Variable charge Forecast
One off Expenditure	
Supply of ticket machines	£8,000
Parking Order fees and advertisement	£1,000
	£9,000
Annual Income (average estimate)	(£15,000)
Less Parking Services Management fee	£2,500
Less coin processing fee	£500
Less reduced Visitor Centre income	£500
Total net annual income	£11,500

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 10.1 An Equalities Impact assessment has been prepared. As the issue of access licences is associated with residents' location and car ownership it is not considered disadvantageous to particular equality target groups and there are no actions required to mitigate any negative impacts. The completed Equalities Impact assessment can be found on http://www.colchester.gov.uk/servedoc.asp?filename=equality_Impact_Assessment_Parking_Services.pdf

11. Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 There are no particular community safety implications.

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 There are no health and safety implications

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 There are no risk management implications

Background Papers

Summary of public consultation exercise response



High Woods Car Park Consultation

High Woods Country Park is a beautiful place enjoyed by all and is very important to Colchester Borough Council. The Park has held the nationally recognised Green Flag award for the quality of park management for many years and with your support the Council intends to continue to maintain the high standards of this facility. Please complete this short survey and tell us your preferences on the proposal to charge for car parking at Turner Road car park, to help maintain and improve High Woods Country Park .

1. I currently use the High Woods Country Park (Turner Road) car park: (please tick one)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Everyday | <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Most days | <input type="checkbox"/> Infrequently |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once or twice a week | <input type="checkbox"/> I do not use the car park Go to 4. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once every 2 weeks | |

2. My main reason for parking in the Turner Road car park is: (please tick one)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> To walk in the park | <input type="checkbox"/> To visit the Centre or volunteer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To walk my dog in the park | <input type="checkbox"/> To fish in the High Woods lake |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To go to work | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To bring my family for the day out | |

Please specify

3. I normally stay in the Country Park for:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 hour | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 4 hours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 to 2 hours | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 4 hours |

The Council is progressing a number of schemes to aid the Park's future development and to generate additional income in these challenging economic times. The Council believes that charging a reasonable fee for car parking facilities would be a preferable and acceptable option to users rather than reducing services. An income from car park charges will help sustain the budget for the Country Park so we can continue to maintain the high standards of this facility.

4. Do you agree or disagree that we should charge visitors for parking at the Turner Road car park?

- | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Agree | <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
|---|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|

5. If you disagree or strongly disagree, please can you explain your reasons?

6. I would still use the Turner Road car park if the fee was:

	Yes	No
50p for 2 hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
£1.00 for 2 hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
£2.00 for 2 hours	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
£4.00 all day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Would you prefer to pay a fixed fee for the car park or a fee based on the amount of time you spend at the park?

I would prefer to pay a fixed fee I would prefer to pay a fee based on the duration of my visit

8. If car park fees were introduced I would: (please tick one)

Still visit by car Visit less often
 Walk Not visit
 Use public transport Other
 Park somewhere else Go to 9.

Please specify

9. If you would park somewhere other than the Turner Road car park, please tell us where.

About Yourself

The following questions are optional but will help us to make sure that the right services are reaching the right people at the right time. To help us to make sure we are doing this correctly it would be helpful if you would answer these questions about yourself. Some of the questions may feel a little personal, but the information we collect will remain confidential and will comply with the Data Protection Act 1998.

10. What is your postcode?

11. Please tell us the first line of your address

12. What is your age?

Under 19 20-39 40-59 60-79 80+

13. What is your ethnicity?

Asian or Asian British Black or Black British Chinese Mixed White

14. Do you have a long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits your daily activities?

Yes No

Thank you for completing this survey. Please return it to the High Woods Country Park visitor centre or send it to Colchester Borough Council. FREEPOST (no stamp required) CL3862. PO Box 5215 Colchester CO1 1GG by 27 February 2011.

High Woods Car Park Charges Survey January - March 2011

Executive Summary

- This consultation was open to the public from 24 January 2011 to 27 February 2011 and aimed to gain feedback on the proposals to introduce car parking fees to Turner Road car park by the High Woods Country Park Visitor Centre.
- A total of 131 people responded to the survey during this four week period.
- The majority of respondents stated that they use the car park at some level of frequency (89 people, 69%). Whilst 39 respondents stated that they do not use the car park (30%).
- The main reason for most people parking in the car park is to walk in the Country Park and/or to walk their dog(s) in the park. The majority of those that do visit the park state that they tend to stay for 1 to 2 hours.
- The results show that the majority of respondents either strongly disagree or disagree with the new proposals to introduce fees at the Turner Road car park (100 people, 78%). Disagreement with the proposals seems to focus on six areas of concern: cost, deterring people from the park, impact on surrounding residential roads, restricting a community facility, discouraging healthy lifestyles and the cost of installing and maintaining a charging system.
- The most favourable option for car park charging was 50p for two hours with 34 respondents. However, this only accounts for approximately a quarter of all 131 respondents to the survey (26%). A further 17 respondents said they would still use the car park if the fee was £1.00 for two hours.
- When asked specifically if they would prefer to pay a fixed fee for using the car park or pay a fee that was based on the length of their stay, the majority opted for the latter (32 respondents). The remaining 14 respondents preferred to pay a fixed fee.
- If car parking fees were introduced into the car park 40 respondents stated they would not visit the Country Park. A further 20 people said they would visit less often. Encouragingly, 12 respondents said they would still visit by car and 10 said they would walk.

Introduction

The Council has been progressing a number of schemes to aid High Woods Country Park’s future development and to generate additional income in these challenging economic times. The Council believes that charging a reasonable fee for car parking facilities would be a preferable and acceptable option to users rather than reducing services. It is proposed that an income from car park charges will help sustain the budget for the Country Park so we can continue to maintain the high standards of this facility.

Our customer’s views on these proposals were sought in a consultation that ran from 24 January 2011 to 27 February 2011. A total of 131 responses were received to the consultation during this period and the results are analysed below. When reviewing the results it is important to note that not all 131 respondents answered every question so figures will not always sum to 131 and percentages should be read with caution.

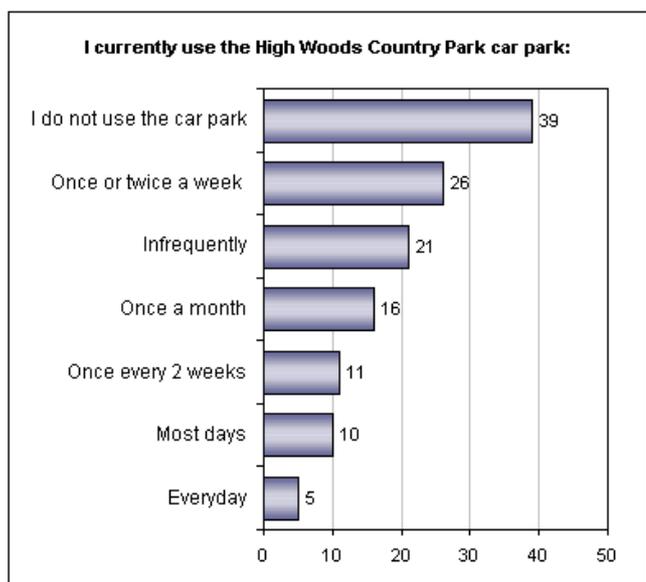
Current use of High Woods Country Park

As table one below outlines, of the 128 people responding to this question, the majority of respondents stated that they use the car park at some level of frequency (89 people, 69%).

Of these 89 respondents, 26 people said that they use it once or twice a week (20%). 21 people said that they use it infrequently (16%) and 16 people said they use it approximately once a month (13%). 15 people stated that they use the car park either most days or everyday (12%).

In comparison, 39 respondents stated that they do not use the car park (30%).

T1. I currently use the High Woods Country Park car park:	Total	%
I do not use the car park	39	30
Once or twice a week	26	20
Infrequently	21	16
Once a month	16	13
Once every 2 weeks	11	9
Most days	10	8
Everyday	5	4
Grand Total	128	100



As table two below outlines, respondent’s main reason for parking in the car park is to walk in the park (35 people, 39%) or to walk their dog(s) in the park (23 people, 26%). A further 12 people stated that they use the car park as they either visit the Centre or are a volunteer (13%). Only two respondents stated that they use the car park to fish in the High Woods lake and just one respondent said they park there to go to work.

T2. My main reason for parking in the car park is:	Total	%
To walk in the park	35	39
To walk my dog in the park	23	26
To visit the Centre or volunteer	12	13
Other	8	9
To bring my family for the day out	8	9
To fish in the High Woods lake	2	2
To go to work	1	1
Grand Total	89	100

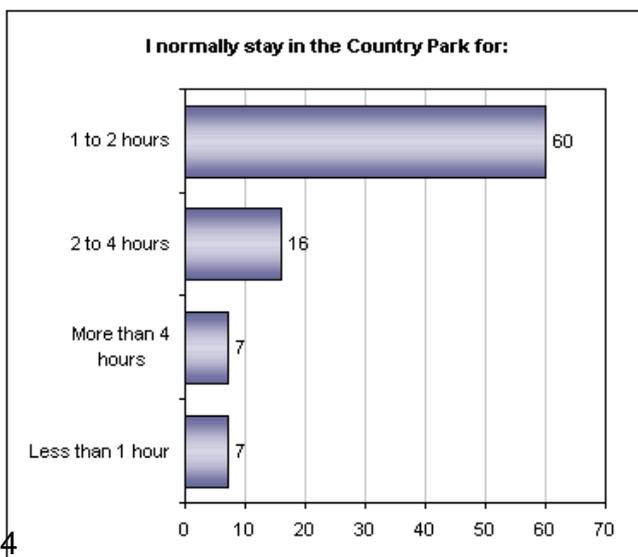


Eight respondents stated 'other' in their response and a seven people explained their answer as can be seen in table three below:

T3. Other, please specify:
To have my lunch break away from the town where I can have peace and quiet.
Primarily to visit the hospital, as well as walking around the country park.
Usually when have out of town visitors.
Walk in woods - use dipping pond.
Health Walk - bench to bench on short circuit near Visitors Centre.
Volunteer Ranger duty.
It is a good safe place to bring my clients - I work as a dementia care support worker.

Of the 90 respondents answering question three, the majority said that when they visit they normally stay in the Country Park for 1 to 2 hours (60 people, 67%). A further 16 people said that they normally stay for 2 to 4 hours (18%). An equal number of respondents stated that they stay either less that 1 hour or more than 4 hours (7 respondents, 8%). These results are outlined in table four below.

T4. I normally stay in the Country Park for:	Total	%
1 to 2 hours	60	67
2 to 4 hours	16	18
Less than 1 hour	7	8
More than 4 hours	7	8
Grand Total	90	100

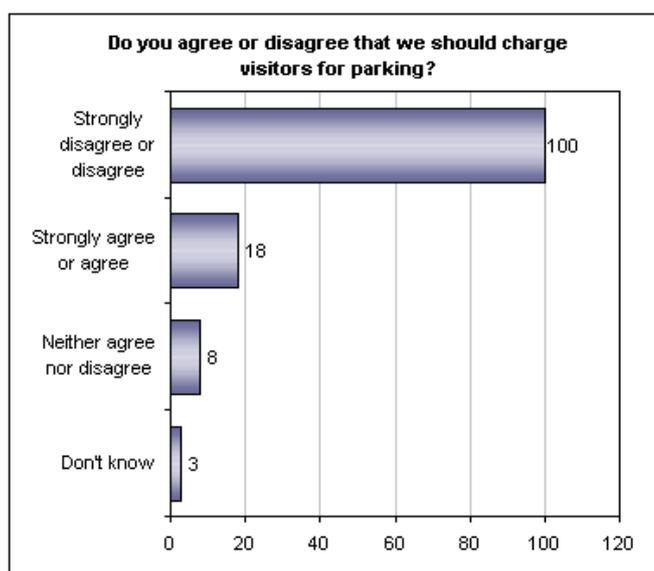


Charging for the car park

Although it is likely that some type of car park charges will be introduced to the High Woods Country Park Turner Road car park, it was important to consult the public and ask them what type of charging structure would be most suitable and/or acceptable to the area. The results below and accompanying comments indicate that the majority of respondents were unhappy about the proposal for car park charges and may re-consider visiting the Country Park in future if they were.

Table five and the corresponding chart below highlight that the majority of the 129 respondents to this question either strongly disagree or disagree that car park charges should be introduced at the Turner Road car park, despite the potential benefits to the Country Park from this source of income (100 people, 78%). Only 18 respondents said that they would either strongly agree or agree with the new charges (14%).

T5. Do you agree or disagree that we should charge visitors?	Total	%
Strongly disagree	86	67
Disagree	14	11
Neither agree nor disagree	8	6
Agree	14	11
Strongly Agree	4	3
Don't know	3	2
Grand Total	129	100



It should be noted that those respondents who felt negatively about the introduction of car park charges were not necessarily car park users who would therefore incur these potential costs. In fact, table six below illustrates that 14 car park users either strongly agree or agree that car park charges should be introduced. By comparison, just three respondents, who do not use the car park, strongly agree or agree. However, it is also true that a higher number of car park users than non car park users were in disagreement with the charging proposals too.

T6. Opinion of car park charges by use of car park	Using car park	Not using car park
Strongly Agree	2	2
Agree	12	1
Neither agree nor disagree	5	3
Disagree	10	4
Strongly Disagree	58	27
Don't know	1	2
Grand Total	88	39

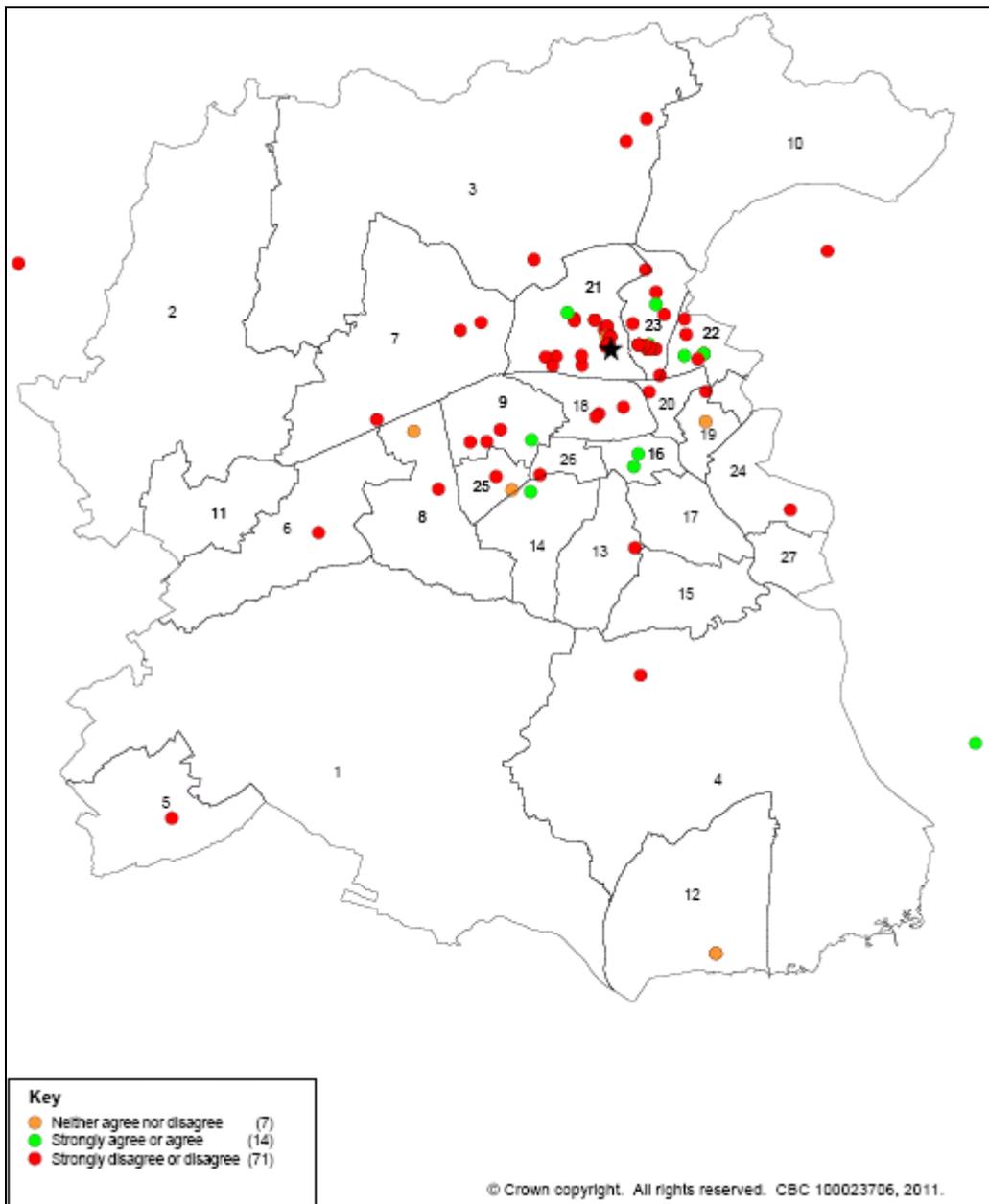
In order to gain a deeper understanding into the respondent's thoughts on the proposed fees, respondent's answers to question four have been mapped by their home address. From the address information provided it has been possible to map 92, of the 129 respondents to this question, by their postcodes.

The map on the following page illustrates their general opinion on the new car park fees i.e. whether they 'strongly agree or agree,' 'strongly disagree or disagree' or 'neither agree nor disagree.' The black star on the map in Mile End represents the location of the High Woods, Turner Road car park.

The map shows that a large proportion of the people disagreeing with the new proposals are living within the Highwoods or Mile End wards and as well as further afield.

It should be noted that response rates may be higher in the areas surrounding the Visitors Centre as a number of homes there were contacted by letter and invited to complete the survey.

Responses to the proposed introduction of fees at Turner Road car park, by postcode.



Ward name	Map number
Berechurch	13
Birch and Winstree	1
Castle	18
Christ Church	26
Copford and West Stanway	6
Dedham and Langham	10
East Donyland	15
Fordham and Stour	3
Great Tey	2
Harbour	17
Highwoods	23
Lexden	9
Marks Tey	11
Mile End	21

Ward name	Map number
New Town	16
Prettygate	25
Pyefleet	4
Shrub End	14
St. Andrew's	19
St. Anne's	20
St. John's	22
Stanway	8
Tiptree	5
West Bergholt and Eight Ash Green	7
West Mersea	12
Wivenhoe Cross	24
Wivenhoe Quay	27

Many comments were received regarding the introduction of car parking fees and they indicate that there are six main reasons why customers disagree with the introduction of charges at the High Woods Turner Road car park. 98 comments were received in total and the various reasons given are summarised below. It is recommended however, that readers view the full list of unedited comments in appendix one.

Car park charges would:

(a) Be unaffordable - 21 respondents were concerned about the cost of the proposed charges and the possibility that those families on lower incomes may end up excluded from an important community facility.

“As a parent with a young family, this is a cheap morning/afternoon out for us where we can all get some fresh air. The children can run around, meet other families and be out in the open. If you start charging for parking we won’t bother going! Another afternoon stuck in front of the TV.”

“Even at 50p a time, this adds up to £15 a month for people who walk their dogs in the park (woods daily). No one wants to pay £15 a month so lots of dogs are not going to enjoy a daily walk in the woods”.

“As a pensioner I have to budget carefully.”

(b) Deter visitors to the Country Park - 25 respondents stated that the new charges would deter people from visiting the High Woods Country Park altogether either due to cost or inconvenience. Many people were concerned that alternatives such as bus or cycle access would be unhelpful as they use the park to walk their dogs or do not live on a direct bus route. There was also concern that families would be deterred from using the park.

“Dog walkers cannot get there by public transport or cycle & for most it is too far to walk. A car is therefore the only means of access.”

“High Woods Country Park is a fantastic resource for everyone in Colchester and beyond. Charging for visiting would deter some people and reduce the parks usage.”

(c) Cause congestion in nearby residential roads - Significant concern was expressed regarding the knock on effect of the proposed fees on nearby residential roads. 38 respondents stated that residents living in the surrounding roads to the park would incur further nuisance and congestion, some of which they are already experiencing since the introduction of the Hospital’s car parking fees or due to early morning fishermen.

“We live at the entrance to the country park close to St Helena Hospice. The public would use our road to park rather than pay a parking fee. We already have problems in the fishing season with fishermen parking in our road (as it is closer to the lake). They arrive at unsociable hours (5.30am and leave anytime after 6.30pm - leaving our road congested. Our road will be the most affected as it is closest to the lake without paying a parking fee. There are elderly people who regularly have their access blocked!”

“I live in a road very close to the country park that is already being used by non-residents to park their cars to avoid parking charges at the Hospital or train station. Frequently I return home to find cars parked in front of my house and neighbour’s houses

and the congestion on such a small road is both extremely unfair and at times dangerous. I feel very strongly that introducing parking charges at the country park will only add to this problem as visitors will seek alternative "FREE" parking in residential streets close by."

"I feel bona fide visitors to the park should not be charged to park but would have no objections to others i.e. those trying to avoid parking charges at the hospital, having to pay."

(d) Be wrong as High Woods is a community facility - 28 respondents were against the introduction of car park fees on the principle that the High Woods Country Park is an area of open space that should be free and available to the whole community. Some respondents felt strongly that they already contribute to the maintenance of community facilities such as this through their council tax.

"I do not see why people should be charged to use the only natural beauty spot for miles around!"

"The country park is already paid for by rates and taxes and we would be paying twice and it would stop us visiting this area and the park and refreshments when open."

"We pay council tax and it is a public amenity!"

(e) Discourage healthy lifestyles - 10 respondents were concerned that the fees would discourage visitors to the country park and consequently have a negative effect on the community's health. One respondent in particular said the Council need to consider their position on encouraging healthy lifestyles.

"The Council should consider whether it wishes to promote exercise as a healthy thing to do, or not. If you do, then you should not create any reason for people not to visit - and in my view that means parking should be free."

"We are always being told to get fit and healthy, and walking in the fresh air around the High Woods park is not only good for bodily health, but also very good for the mind, with the pleasing sights and sounds of the birds and the squirrels and of all the different colours of the trees."

"Yet again a council charging a fee to exercise, walk and enjoy a free facility, with obesity rising and health rates in decline this is a dreadful decision. Introduce the charge and I will vote for the party who does NOT want this charge."

(f) Cost money to install and maintain - 7 respondents thought that the introduction of car park fees would not be cost effective and that the resources used to install and maintain the system would not gain sufficient revenue.

"I wonder how much money would actually be raised having regard to the costs of installing the equipment and enforcement."

"The park was meant to be for the people of Colchester what little money it would make is not worth doing and would not be cost effective to collect."

“It should be free parking; the cost of paying parking attendants will probably outweigh the revenue obtained in parking fees and thereby increase the drain on the council”.”

Suggestions and Questions

Within the comments left under question four, 12 suggestions were made and two questions were asked. These read as follows:

Suggestions:
If funds are required to support and develop the park it would be much more attractive to start a community based "Friends of Highwoods" group, looking to obtain funding from individuals and businesses that value the park.
It may be worth considering having one or two hours free then paying for longer than that, or having some 'value added' facilities at the visitors centre (audio tours, guided walks, a better shop and cafe) you could also consider sponsoring (trees, benches etc).
We should be more directly dealing with congestion and overcrowding than charging.
If car parking charges are introduced, perhaps an admission charge for pedestrians and cyclists should also be introduced.
Take a leaf out of the Spanish who never seem to need parking charges and gain all the income from people spending money in their towns.
Maybe cost savings could be made by closing the centre, just providing info board.
Prefer any highly paid council workers to take a cut and stop wasting money on VAC which few want, employing consultants to do what employees should be able to do and no more money on "Twinning" etc.
You should be thinking of ways to draw more people into the beautiful area instead of making people think they have to pay for access to nature.
In order to discourage non park-user vehicles I would propose a time-limit which could be monitored by the rangers.
To save money you should start by stopping the ridiculous practice of collecting garden waste in the winter.
If you want to make more money get wardens to fine people who let their dogs defecate the park.
Why not build a new play area and charge people to visit it?

Questions:
Why is Colchester so negative in its view of people with cars, do the councillors think charges will do anything but make matters worse? Who is going to pay for the salaries of the people who will impose fines and what income can show a profit?
How can you argue that Chanterelle remains free and the one near us doesn't - that's discriminating?

Proposed charging structures

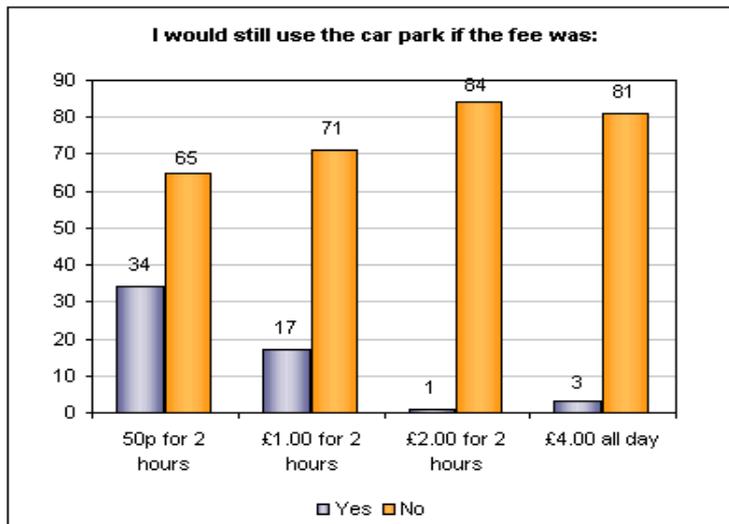
In order to understand what type of car park charging structure would be most acceptable, respondents were asked whether they would still use the car park if the fee was 50p for two hours, £1.00 for two hours, £2.00 for two hours or £4.00 all day. Table seven and its accompanying chart below illustrate the responses received.

They indicate that in the main, most respondents disagreed with all four proposals suggested in comparison to those who agreed.

The most favourable option for car park charging was 50p for two hours with 34 respondents. However, this only accounts for approximately a quarter of all 131 respondents to the survey (26%). A further 17 respondents said they would still use the

car park if the fee was £1.00 for two hours. Only one person stated that they would still use it if the fee was £2.00 for two hours. By comparison, three people said they would still park there if the fee stood at £4.00 for the whole day.

T7. I would still use the car park if the fee was:	Yes	No
50p for 2 hours	34	65
£1.00 for 2 hours	17	71
£2.00 for 2 hours	1	84
£4.00 all day	3	81
Grand Total	55	301

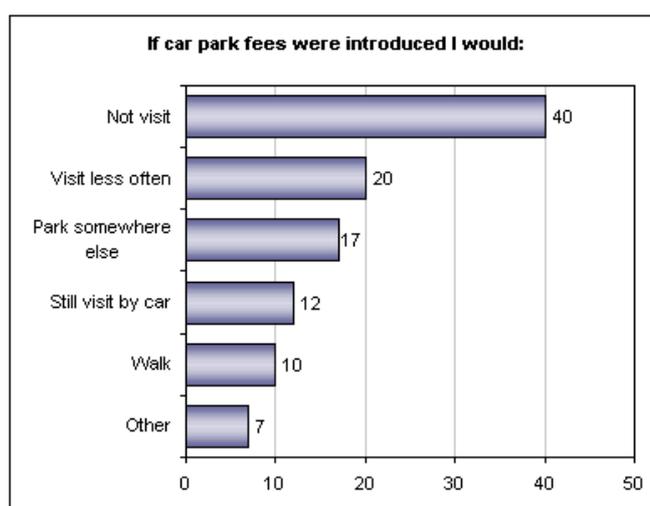


When asked specifically if they would prefer to pay a fixed fee for using the car park or pay a fee that was based on the length of their stay, the majority opted for the latter (32 respondents). The remaining 14 respondents preferred to pay a fixed fee. Response numbers are low for this particular question as only people who had stated ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’ or ‘neither agree for disagree’ to question four were asked (question four - ‘Do you agree or disagree that we should charge visitors for parking at the Turner Road car park?’).

T8. Would you prefer to pay a fixed fee for the car park or a fee based on the amount of time you spend at the park?	Total	%
I would prefer to pay a fee based on the duration of my visit	32	70
I would prefer to pay a fixed fee	14	30
Grand Total	46	100

Respondents were asked to indicate the impact of the introduction of car park charges at the Turner Road car park on them. Table nine and corresponding chart below highlights that 40 respondents stated they would not visit the Country Park if the charging proposals were implemented (38%). A further 20 people said they would visit less often (19%). Encouragingly, 12 respondents said they would still visit by car (11%) and 10 said they would walk.

T9. If car park fees were introduced I would:	Total	%
Not visit	40	38
Visit less often	20	19
Park somewhere else	17	16
Still visit by car	12	11
Walk	10	9
Other	7	7
Grand Total	106	100



A total of 17 respondents said that they would park somewhere else other than the Turner Road car park. When asked where this may be, the following 14 responses were given:

T10. If you would park somewhere else, please tell us where.
I will park in one of the nearby roads outside someone's house.
Surrounding streets.
I would reduce my visits to the summertime only and park in the Chanterelle car park (that area of the park is often water logged in the winter months).
Nearby residential roads.
Tesco's car park.
Chanterelle entrance.
Chanterelle entrance.
Any other entrance in housing estate e.g. Highwoods.
In a side street.
Leave car at home near Chanterelle Car Park.
Possibly Eastwood Drive.
A nearby road.
Chanterelle car park.
One of the streets in the Highwoods housing estate.

In summary, eight people said they would park in nearby residential roads/side streets. A further four stated they would park in the Chanterelle car park.

Of the seven respondents stating 'other,' the following five comments were left:

T11. Other, please specify:
I would cycle or walk.
I don't use the car park as I am a local resident.
Wonder when I start getting charged for sitting on the park benches.
Look for alternative fee free parking at popular walking places.
Probably park off Ipswich Road and walk through the park if visiting the hospital. If in a hurry, I would pay to park at the visitor centre.

EQUALITY MONITORING DATA

At the end of all public surveys a set of equality monitoring questions are asked. These questions are optional for the respondent but help us to ensure we have engaged with all sectors of the population.

The table below outlines the age structure of respondents and shows that the majority were either aged between 40 and 59 years or 60 and 79 years (47 people, 40% each). A smaller proportion was aged 20 to 39 years (21 people, 18%) and only three people were aged over 80 years. None of the respondents were younger than 19 years.

Age	Total	%
Under 19	0	0
20-39	21	18
40-59	47	40
60-79	47	40
80+	3	3
Total	118	100

Under the ethnicity question, 106 respondents replied and all stated their ethnicity as 'White.'

Respondents were asked whether they have a limiting long-term illness and 23 people stated that they did (20%) The majority however, stated that they did not (92 people, 80%).

Limiting Long-term illness	Total	%
Yes	23	20
No	92	80
Total	115	100

APPENDIX 1 - Unedited comments left under question four - 'Do you agree or disagree that we should charge visitors for parking at the Turner Road car park?'

<p>This would put people off using the visitor centre for health walks etc and using the lake for fishing etc and for people that use it every day very expensive even 50p will add up every month if used every day i bet the person who thought up this idea does not use the car park every day!!!!</p>
<p>I live in a road very close to the country park that is already being used by non-residents to park their cars to avoid parking charges at the Hospital or train station. Frequently I return home to find cars parked in front of my house and neighbour's houses and the congestion on such a small road is both extremely unfair and at times dangerous. I feel very strongly that introducing parking charges at the country park will only add to this problem as visitors will seek alternative "FREE" parking in residential streets close by.</p>
<p>The charges you are imposing are killing the town. This park was given to the people, for the people, and not as a money making tool. In these challenging times the very few things that are free are being withdrawn. I suggest you look at other solutions, such as the management of your own expenses rather than exploiting something which isn't yours to exploit.</p>
<p>I use the main visitor car park nearly every day to walk my dogs, I simply can't afford to pay to park there, nor do I see why I should be expected to. I pay £150 a month council tax, Highwoods Country Park is one of the few facilities I ever use, I refuse to pay to park my car to use a facility that should be free for everyone. To comment that the park is adequately served by buses is simply facile, I have 3 dogs and I don't live on a bus route, how am I supposed to get there by bus?. Maybe I could cycle and attach a trailer that my dogs could sit in?. If parking charges are introduced I will never park in the main car park again, I will however find a convenient spot in one of the nearby roads and park there instead.</p>
<p>Car park charging will mean an increase in on street parking and additional use at Chanterelle car park and street. It is a public service for free use. Charging will reduce use and discourage people for family days out. It will not really benefit the council financially when all items are taken into consideration. It is noted the consultation shows no financial figures for any judgement to be made.</p>
<p>Although i do not use this park often , i know a large number of dog walkers who visit it everyday,if the charges are introduced these people would not be able to use the park,</p>
<p>I would certainly think twice about visiting the park if parking fees were introduced. Currently we visit the park approx every week and then drive on to Tescos to do our shopping. If charged for parking at Highwoods we would probably go to a park elsewhere where parking was free and also do our shopping elsewhere.</p>
<p>Parking charges should not be used as a revenue stream. Parking charges should only be applied when parking supply is lower than demand when charges ensure that the turnover of spaces allows everyone a fair chance to park. At Highwoods Visitor Centre there is plenty of parking space. Applying charges will simply drive people to park in the surrounding streets or will penalise those less able to find alternative parking. This is a blunt tool with too many undesirable side effects. If funds are required to support and develop the park it would be much more attractive to start a community based "Friends of Highwoods" group, looking to obtain funding from individuals and businesses that value the park. I would be much happier to join this group paying £10 or £20 a year, than pay £2 for each visit.</p>
<p>I walk in the park during my lunch break, if I had to pay this would be cost prohibitive!!</p>
<p>you should never have to pay to park at a country park. some people visit the park to walk their dogs every day and it would be impossible for them to be able to afford parking fees.thus denying colchester rate payers free access to the country park</p>

<p>I cannot believe that you are even thinking about charging us for the pleasure of walking our dogs or family. If you start charging I know for a fact that I and many other people will then use the other entrance from Highwoods and if you are thinking of charging there as well people will then start to park on the roads just outside the car park which I am sure the residents will be very happy about. I am a a very responsible dog owner and do pick up my dogs mess but if people are not able to park free of charge will then walk their dogs along the streets and allow their dogs to foul the pavements without clearing up! I cannot believe that with the current job situation for a lot of families they do not have this disposable income to spend on car parking and therefore the children are the one's who will suffer. I think its bad enough we have to pay at hospitals but this is taking it one step too far. I appreciate that you have done the car park recently but its always at a price and the only people who will suffer are young families who will miss out on the opportunity to learn and respect nature.</p>
<p>I Would not use the park if I had to pay to walk my dog.It is lovely to have a large green area which can be used by all & encourages people to walk in nice surroundings. I do not feel that anything further needs to be added to the park to make it a good place to spend time. Regarding the Chanterelle Car Park I would not use it as I have a friend who's car was broken into & I understand there have been quite a few problems with this happening.Why do the people who take regular daily exercise have to pay to do it - surely not the right message to give out!</p>
<p>I would not visit Highwoods if there was a charge to use the car park. It may be worth considering having one or two hours free then paying for longer than that, or having some 'value added' facilities at the visitors centre (audio tours, guided walks, a better shop and cafe) you could also consider sponsoring (trees, benches etc)</p>
<p>Charging will encourage parking in inappropriate nearby locations</p>
<p>It is one of few things you can do with family, that doesn't cost money. By charging you will reduce the use by families, or just make them park in other areas, possibly inconveniencing local residents.</p>
<p>I pay enough council tax for little to show and have a very low income. The money going to be spent on this consultation makes my blood boil. The tossers that run this council I would like to see them all drown in the lake for what good they are and then i would pay 50p to watch it happen.</p>
<p>There are other places that I can go to walk in the country or the coast without having to pay.</p>
<p>Highwoods Country park is a fantastic resource for everyone in Colchester and beyond. Charging for visiting would deter some people and reduce the parks usage.</p>
<p>It will act as a deterrent to some people to visit the park.</p>
<p>Highwoods country park is a great place to visit either walking the park or walking your dog, it has great access to highwoods estate and tescos for a further long distance walkerto be FREE of charge to parkpark open and for it , it helps familys and friends get together in the fresh air and to stretch your legs to keep fit, i strongly believe that colchester council should keep the car</p>
<p>I do not see why people should be charged to use the only natural beauty spot for miles around!!!!!!!!!!!!!!</p>
<p>THERE ARE NO FACILITIES TO ENCOURAGE FAMILIES TO COME ALONG. IF THERE WERE A CHARGE I WOULD NOT COME TO THE PARK I WOULD FIND SOMEWHERE ELSE TO GO, LIKE THE DISCOVERY CENTRE AT BRAINTREE THEY CHARGE A NOMINAL FEE BUT THERE ARE THINGS TO DO FOR CHILDREN</p>
<p>We are always being told to get fit and healthy, and walking in the fresh air around the highwoods park is not only good for bodily health, but also very good for the mind,with the pleaseing sights and sounds of the birds and the squirrels and of all the differant colours of the trees.</p>
<p>We should be more directly dealing with congestion and overcrowding than charging. Plus anyform of charging will involve more clutter. Also Litter. People should be able to move about without always having to take money with them!</p>
<p>Visitors would be put off by having to pay or would park on roads nearby causing problems for residents.</p>
<p>As a local regular dog walker in this haven which is very much under used I feel that introducing a charge will deter some people from coming here. It is a wonderful place for young families to come to for the day with their picnics and an hourly parking fee will not help families to relax and enjoy the freedom here. Hospital parking is the real issue in this area and if Colchester Borough Council could get that right then the people parking and cluttering up our roads would be paying into the system instead of getting freebies. This surely would put more revenue into the pot to help support places like Highwoods Country Park.</p>

<p>It will stop people using the country park. Not many people are aware of the other car park, for people that use this park everyday it will be huge amount to pay. People drive here to walk their dogs as they have no where else to walk them except on pavements.</p>
<p>Council facilities, including the country park, are funded by council tax. As such I feel that I have already paid for these facilities. Motorists are once again being seen, by the Council, as a soft option for raising income. If car parking charges are introduced, perhaps an admission charge for pedestrians and cyclists should also be introduced.</p>
<p>Colchester has already lost many of it's green spaces in the last 20 years, so the Highwoods is a vital community space. Many activities in Colchester are too expensive to be enjoyed regularly, so it is wonderful to have a place like this to enjoy without worrying about the cost.</p>
<p>The Council should consider whether it wishes to promote exercise as a healthy thing to do, or not. If you do, then you should not create any reason for people not to visit - and in my view that means parking should be free. If I lived further from the park and had to drive to it, I would not be prepared to pay for parking. However, from a personal, and selfish, perspective the fewer people use the Country Park the more pleasant experience it is likely to be for me when I choose to visit. So from this angle charges would be a good thing, and the higher the better.</p>
<p>As a local resident who already struggles with "Hospital Parkering" I can see nothing but problems if parking charges are imposed---why oh why is Colchester so negative in its view of people with cars, do the councillors think charges will do anything but make matters worse. Who is going to pay for the salaries of the people who will impose fines and what income can show a profit. Come on Colchester----take a leaf out of the Spanish who never seem to need parking charges and gain all the income from people spending money in their towns.</p>
<p>there are so few things left that are free. why penalise those of us who enjoy and appreciate our park every day come rain or shine. Please dont discourage people from walking. To charge would deter people or encourage them to park outside the park hindering residents</p>
<p>More people may park in the surrounding roads. I come from the Sudbury area so would not walk or cycle to get there. Buses are infrequent and for me, not convenient. Also, if there are to be no charges for the Chanterelle entrance then I suppose people will just park there instead.</p>
<p>Some people may resort to parking in nearby roads rather than paying. There is already a problem with people avoiding hospital car parks for this reason. Seema tough on the local residents.</p>
<p>As a parent with a young family, this is a cheap morn/afternoon out for us where we can all get some fresh air. The children can run around, meet other familys and be out in the open. If you start charging for parking we wont bother going! another afternoon stuck in front of the tv :-)</p>
<p>It would be a deterrent, would cost money to maintain so would probably be expensive, as are all car parks in Colchester. Also machines would be prone to vandalism. Very unfair to daily users such as dog walkers who would probably not come. This park is a wonderful facility which should be available to anyone. Maybe cost savings could be made by closing the centre, just providing info board.</p>
<p>visitors wiil park at other entrances in housing estates and cause many many traffic problems</p>
<p>It will deter people individually and with families from using park. I won` t use it. Prefer any highly paid coucil workers to take a cut and stop wasting money on VAC which few want, employing consultants to do what employees should be able to do and no more money on "Twinning" etc etc</p>
<p>A car park fee might discourage people from enjoying High Woods and using its facilities.</p>
<p>The financial gains can only be minimal and any charges that may put off a visitor is short sighted. You should be thinking of ways to draw more people into the beautiful area instead of making people think they have to pay for access to nature.</p>
<p>Any charges may prove prohibitive to people who currently use the park particularly mothers and toddlers, the elderly and unemployed</p>
<p>I think that car-park should be free to encourage use of the park not dis-courage it. Introducing parking charges would only add to the congestion in neighbouring residentail roads. In order to discourage non park-user vehicles I would propose a time-limit which could be monitored by the rangers.</p>
<p>Dog walkers cannot get there by public transport or cycle & for most it is too far to walk. A car is therefore the only means of access.</p>

parking charges would completely ruin the experience - walking in the park is preferable to walking on the roads, but not if you have to pay for the privilege.
with limited income and spiralling fuel costs this would be the last straw - I would have to find something cheaper to do.
There is no alternative method of transport possible for the many dog walkers using the park who don't live in the immediate area, therefore if charges are introduced many of these visitors will simply go elsewhere.
As a pensioner I have to budget carefully
It will hamper access for poorer people and very frequent users and it should be access for all. We all are having tough financial times and this would be another stress. It would also add to the parking problems in nearby roads caused by the hospital charging. How can you argue that Chanterelle remains free and the one near us doesn't - that's discriminating.
I strongly disagree, reasons are: 1) Hollymead Close already has a load of trouble from the hospital where people try to avoid paying for parking by parking in our private spaces and across our drives. 2) Facilities like High Woods should be free and as a council you should stop trying to take money from people all the time. I think the Visitors Centre is a waste of money. 3) To save money you should start by stopping the ridiculous practice of collecting garden waste in the winter.
I live in Chanterelle and if charges are introduced at Turner Road, people will simply drive to Chanterelle, if charges are then introduced there cars will simply park in the road.
Even at 50p a time, this adds up to £15 a month for people who walk their dogs in the park (woods daily). no one wants to pay £15 a month so lots of dogs are not going to enjoy a daily walk in the woods. High Woods has been there for years - there is no need to keep spending money on creating footpaths etc. We did without all this for years before the wood was turned into a fancy 'Country Park'.
Charging will encourage people to park on nearby roads. If you felt that this was successful you would charge for Chanterelle car park. People would park along Chanterelle and Coppice End causing congestion; preventing large vehicles ie delivery vehicles, fire engines getting through. Parking restrictions would soon follow ie yellow lines preventing my visitors from parking outside my house.
The dog owners will simply drive to Chanterelle car park instead, more dog shit will be deposited at that end of Highwoods increasing the risk of toxocara to children (causes blindness). A lot of dog owners do not pick up the dog shit if they can get away with it - we have observed them just walk away. High Woods was a nice park in 1993 when I moved here. it is now simply a dogs toilet. If you introduce parking charges at Chanterelle they will park in our side roads preventing us having parking for our visitors. If you want to make more money get wardens to fine people who let their dogs defecate the park. Thank you.
Facilities such as this should be freely available to all. Better to cut expenditure in the park or finance from other budgets and sources where appropriate and possible.
It should be free parking, the cost of paying parking attendants will probably outweigh the revenue obtained in parking fees and thereby increase the drain on the council.
A public space should have free access to all no matter how far they have to travel
This is an area for the enjoyment of ALL out of work, pensioners, low paid and for some. Once installed it will not be removed but increased. It is also used for important exercise - KEEP IT FREE
This country park is one of the few places I can enjoy with my family free of charge. I now do not use the Castle Park because of the charges at Leisure World, I live in Coppice End next to Chanterelle car park and am extremely concerned that eventually you will also charge for parking there which will result in considerable problems with cars parking on already narrow roads. This already happens when gates are locked causing residents a problem.
The park was meant to be for the people of Colchester what little money it would make is not worth doing and would not be cost effective to collect. Why High Woods? Being sarcastic why not Castle Park. Although not a dog owner its better they go to the park than roam the streets. To charge people to go to the park is totally unworkable and petty.
Because tax payers / rate payers pay enough already towards local facilities;. If maintenance standards reduced so be it.

<p>Already pay to fish at the lake so shouldn't have to pay car park</p>
<p>The reason:- people who don't want to pay will simply come along and park in Hillridge, so that they can access the park through the Hillridge Gate. This causes clogging up of the Hillridge Road and often blocks access to the houses on Hillridge. What measures can you put in place to avoid that remembering that Hillridge residents need parking space for their guests and visitors too? There are also elderly residents in Hillridge who have ambulance visits periodically. It is a headache when people coming to the park clog up the access road.</p>
<p>High Woods is a Country Park and should be accessed by all</p>
<p>Many people use the Country Park for health reasons. exercise and family outings. Many people are on low incomes and charging for this facility would be a shame. This charge could be a real disadvantage to disadvantaged groups</p>
<p>Charges will make people park in local roads - this is unacceptable</p>
<p>If you start charging - people will use the surrounding residential streets to park for free. As a resident of Hollymead Close we already have to suffer congestion down our road daily due to people parking to visit the hospital and avoid charges. This will just make the situation worse. Why should we have to suffer the consequence of your actions? Please consider the people who live in the surrounding streets as we are fed up.</p>
<p>Penalises daily visitors - dog and non dog walkers. Income would not cover the cost of installing / monitoring machines I suspect. Would only drive people on to adjoining roads or to Chanterelle car park which apparently needs resurfacing.</p>
<p>Cars will park in the residential roads nearby - already blighted by hospital staff and visitors</p>
<p>We live at the entrance to the country park close to St Helena Hospice. The public would use our road to park rather than pay a parking fee. We already have problems in the fishing season with fishermen parking in our road (as it is closer to the lake). They arrive at unsociable hours (5.30am and leave anytime after 6.30pm - leaving our road congested. Our road will be the most affected as it is closest to the lake without paying a parking fee. There are elderly people who regularly have their access blocked!!</p>
<p>The country park is already paid for by rates and taxes and we would be paying twice and it would stop us visiting this area and the park and refreshments when open. Also dangerous cyclists will put families and elderly off using park already. Who do we sue if we get hit?</p>
<p>We pay council tax and it is a public amenity!</p>
<p>I feel it is not justified as it was there for years and years</p>
<p>Because I will take my dogs elsewhere</p>
<p>It is presently a free facility available to all and would unfairly penalise those that could not afford the expense of paying to park</p>
<p>The country park is a free facility for the people of Colchester and should remain totally free. It will not stop non park users utilising the car park.</p>
<p>We should encourage healthy lifestyles - people with children / dogs need to be encouraged not discouraged. It's disgusting that the council wants to charge for parking. Stop people parking to go to work - NOT to have a healthy lifestyle!</p>
<p>I feel this is the only free facility available for the family to gain some fresh air and exercise and I feel it would be a shame to take this facility away!!</p>
<p>Country Park should be available to all without fees to encourage an interest in the woodland environment especially for children.</p>
<p>It is a wonderful facility and access freely is treasured. Why not build a new play area and charge people to visit it? Trying to stop parkers who do not use the park would be good bus fares are high and families may find it cheaper to drive. We need to encourage walking for health reasons.</p>
<p>I live in Chanterelle and charging would result in people parking outside my house making it awkward for visitors and myself to reverse out of my drive.</p>
<p>When moving to Highwoods was told there would never be charging</p>
<p>I am a local resident and think by charging for the car park it will encourage even more people to use Wryneck Close as a car park as currently it is used by as a daily staff car park for people working in the Primary Care Centre</p>

Parking in the estate is already difficult with hospital parking - charging will mean people park elsewhere and cause more parking issues.
Country park should have free access
The people who regularly park in the Turner Road car park would try to park in my road, Wryneck Close and that is already full up with cars parked by Primary Care Trust staff (Mon - Fri 8am - 6pm usually)
You should not charge visitors - non park users should be charged!!!!
We pay our council tax and its a council run park. We will go elsewhere if this is put in place.
Yet again a council charging a fee to exercise, walk and enjoy a free facility, with obesity rising and health rates in decline this is a dreadful decision. Introduce the charge and I will vote for the party who does NOT want this charge.
Because it's nice to go somewhere which doesn't involve money
I feel bona fide visitors to the park should not be charged to park but would have no objections to others ie those trying to avoid parking charges at the hospital having to pay.
I regard the car park as a facility
As an out of town centre facility surely some respite from car parking fees is not an unreasonable expectation
I live in Wryneck Close and feel if you charge then parking in the Close will increase and this causes congestion and people being blocked in their drives due to poor parking
I will drive somewhere else where no charges are made
I don not see nay reason why I should be charged to park my car so that I can access an area simply to practice healthy exercise
We live in Wryneck Close which suffers from hospital / commuter parking already. If you charge for high Woods we will also get park visitors and then you will definitely need to give parking restrictions

Agenda item 8(i)

Extract from the minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 19 July 2011

Councillor Nick Cope (in respect of being a Director of the Mercury Theatre Limited) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)

Review of the Council's funding and partnership delivery arrangements with Colchester Arts Centre, Firstsite and the Mercury Theatre

The following invitees attended the meeting for this item;

Mr. Anthony Roberts, Colchester Arts Centre
Ms. Kath Wood, firstsite
Mr. Wayne Warner, firstsite
Mr. Chris Paveley, Chair firstsite
Ms. Dee Evans, Mercury Theatre
Mr. Adrian Grady, Mercury Theatre
Mr. Tony Casement, Mercury Theatre

Also in attendance for this item;

Councillor Nick Barlow, Portfolio Holder for Commerce and Sustainability
Councillor Paul Smith, Portfolio Holder for Resources and ICT
Ms. Lindsay Barker, Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration
Ms. Josie Worner, Cultural Services Manager

Have Your Say

Mr. Marc De'ath addressed the Panel, speaking about 'fifteen Queen Street' (fQS), "the home of creativity in Colchester". fQS is a firstsite facility that provides super-fast WIFI, meeting rooms, collaborative workshop space, a library full of inspirational books and journals, chill-out gardens, repro equipment and giant 'shared working' whiteboards, as well as Membership, that guarantees unrivalled access to a long list of forthcoming events, workshops, talks, exhibitions and community projects and enables 15 Queen Street to be used as a trading address.

Mr. De'ath said fQS provided a lifeline to both himself and others who shared this facility and he was indebted to firstsite for this opportunity. fQS provided the opportunity of a new sense of focus and hope and was a catalyst to his own civic pride, invigorating Colchester and with it a greater identity. In times of austerity it was an opportunity to make the most of a unique facility that provided a positive feedback, which enabled firstsite to build on what had already been achieved.

Ms. Tracy Allen addressed the Panel concerning the Mercury Theatre (MT). Ms. Allen said her first involvement with MT was a family experience for herself and her daughter, the Grapes of Wrath production. Ms. Allen said everyone involved in the production was extremely welcoming, putting all people new to the theatre group at ease, people of all age groups and people with disabilities, a true reflection of the local community. Ms. Allen said her involvement had helped her with public speaking, useful for her school daytime job. The experience had also been positive for her daughter, providing an interest outside of television, making friends, and who wished to pass on a message “the Mercury Theatre Rocks”. Ms. Allen concluded by saying both her and her daughter is involved in a new production of ‘A Winter’s Tale’.

Ms. Amy Hicks addressed the Panel to speak about her involvement with the Colchester Arts Centre (CAC). Ms. Hicks said before working at CAC, she did not enjoy her job at that time and had no clear aim. She was placed at CAC as part of the future jobs fund scheme. Whilst having no experience of the work at CAC, she had succeeded with a passion, the first step on the arts ladder. Ms. Hicks said she has gained experience in all aspects of work, with invaluable mentoring from staff at CAC, and her success with the Fashion Show had been a real confidence booster. Ms Hicks said she now felt far more organised and motivated and loved the work she was doing, enjoying the adage ‘live to work’.

Councillor Lesley Scott Boutell addressed the Panel, saying that whilst she was not an ‘arty’ type of person herself, she understood the vital role played by the three arts partners to culture and arts in Colchester, and their role in achieving the Council’s strategic priorities.

Councillor Scott-Boutell said her daughter is a Member of the Youth Theatre and the Mercury Theatre (MT) had played an important role in her life, with links between the MT and her daughter’s Stanway school.

Councillor Scott-Boutell thanked the Colchester Arts Centre for their help and assistance in holding the Colchester Frock Swop event that had helped to promote recycling in Colchester, with people making use of clothes that others no longer had a use for. Councillor Scott-Boutell concluded by asking how quickly would any new funding streams to the arts partners effect the level of funding contribution from the Council.

Introduction

Councillor Nick Barlow, Portfolio Holder for Commerce and Sustainability introduced the item on the Review of the Council’s funding and partnership arrangements with Colchester Arts Centre, firstsite and the Mercury Theatre.

Councillor Barlow said he was pleased to be working with the Arts partners, gratified by their work, and welcomed the opportunity for the Panel to consider the partnership delivery arrangements.

Councillor Paul Smith, Portfolio Holder for Resources and ICT addressed the Panel saying this review was an eventful experience, quite different to previous reviews where the discussions had focused on the Visual Arts Facility building.

Councillor Smith said the Council was now looking to the future, cause for celebration, and this was an opportunity for Members to see how it fits with the Council's strategic objectives. firstsite will become a creative centre of expertise, providing new local jobs, and for the local creative industries, an economic edge.

In response to Councillor Willetts, Councillor Barlow said he understood any concerns regarding cuts in grants and services, but the Council was experiencing budget pressures and there are shortfalls across all areas of the Council. In an ideal world any reduction in funding would not be necessary, but in this real world there is a need for many services and partners to have funding reduced. Councillor Barlow said the arts is valued and is a very important part of the Council's Strategic Priorities, but that said the budget pressures still remain.

Presentation

The partners representatives gave a presentation, the scope of which was as follows;

- Working with Colchester Borough Council
- Achievement on the Council's strategic priorities
- Return on investment

Mr. Wayne Warner, firstsite, gave an overview of the work of firstsite.

Mr. Tony Casement, Mercury Theatre (MT), gave an overview of the work of the Mercury Theatre.

Mr. Casement spoke about the Community Outreach and Development programme, giving examples of individual people and programmes that had benefitted from the initiative, reading out an inspirational letter from Mr. Albert Weir, a young disabled person, involved in the 'Grapes of Wrath' production.

Mr. Casement spoke about 'Addressing young people's needs', working directly with schools and the young people of Colchester. Two Summer Schools (drama groups) with no fees attached, and in conjunction with the University of Essex and two Community Productions in the MT Studio.

In respect of 'Enabling Job Creation and developing the skills economy', Mr. Casement said jobs are created such as that mentioned by one of the Have Your Say speakers. The first graduate, from RADA, will be starting work with the MT this year.

Ms. Dee Evans addressed the Panel saying it was important that the arts had a positive and meaningful effect on individuals, broadening horizons and enhancing self-esteem. She hoped the local work of the Town's art providers was positively received, saying the MT receives hundreds of complimentary emails and letters from people, though also receiving some providing critical comments.

Ms. Evans said the local arts partners provide an important facility, diverse and affordable, an invaluable experience for all.

Mr. Anthony Roberts, Colchester Arts Centre, gave an overview of the work at the Colchester Arts Centre (CAC).

Mr. Roberts provided a breakdown of the income, number of visitors and demographics of the CAC. Electronic interaction is an important part of the lives of younger people, reflected in the number of interactions in respect of the CAC, with Mr. Roberts explaining there had be interaction on Facebook (2017), Twitter (1163) and YouTube (750 separate hits).

Mr. Roberts spoke about the Fundamental Service Review undertaken by the Arts Partners and the positive effect this had had on the Community Outreach and Development Project, working together in respect of the 'fete' project. Pulling resources had proven to be an opportunity to make a bigger impact collectively, than on an individual basis. The Willowbrook School Fete project had collectively raised £30,000, providing for a larger scale project that included a Marquee, film, live performance and crafts.

Ms. Kath Wood, firstsite, spoke about the work of firstsite, saying they continue to work with a range of partners. firstsite have a programme of work including projects, exhibitions and publications from established and emerging artists and extensive learning opportunities and artist support initiatives. As a partner of Plus Tate, this was an opportunity to exchange ideas, knowledge, skills and resources, as well as programmes and collections.

In regards to 'Promoting Healthy Living and inclusive lifestyle', Ms. Wood spoke about their work with serviceman's wives and work concerning the national Schools Programme, in partnership with the Colchester Institute.

'fifteen Queen Street' was a new creative hub in Colchester, spoken about by Mr. De'ath, one of the Have Your Say speakers, and the new visual arts building will provide the impetus for new investment in the area.

Ms. Wood said firstsite remained committed to becoming nationally significant and locally relevant, and welcomed the continued support by Colchester Borough Council.

Questions and Answers

In response to Councillor Sykes, Ms. Josie Worner, Cultural Services Manager explained that the key targets for performance as noted in the three

partners individual funding agreements are populated by the partners, and is a reflection of their own business / organisation. The language is from the organisations themselves, a reflection of what the organisation is doing and tends to do.

Councillor Smith responded to Councillor Cope in regards to the 2011-12 Budget and the funding for the arts organisations, saying the Budget process was set out on page 35 of the agenda under the Budget Strategy item, and at this time he was not in a position to confirm or otherwise the funding for 2012-13. Councillor Smith said he valued the work of the Arts organisations, and regretted the recent reductions in funding but the Cabinet was committed to doing it's very best to fit the Budget to the Strategic Priorities. In response to Councillor Ellis, Councillor Barlow said whilst the Cabinet had not adopted the Panel's proposal from last year, for an indication to the arts providers of two future years funding to be given without prejudice at the same time as the current grant is agreed, the Cabinet are actively looking at ways to providing an estimation of future years funding to the arts providers.

In regards to the effects of current reduced funding, Mr. Grady (MT) responded to Councillor Willetts, saying cuts from the three major funding partners amounted to £180,000. The MT had begun a cost reduction exercise, losing posts as a consequence of this, but endeavouring to maintain the quality of production at the same time.

The Fundamental Service Review process with the CAC and firstsite had been useful, focusing on collaborative work that maximised projects but with less individual funding required. A re-organisation of the back-office business had also resulted in a reduction in overhead costs. A future box-office system is also being considered. Mr. Grady said the MT is managing at present though there remained grave concerns for the future. Ms. Evans said the funding reductions would take serious effect from next year onwards, an enormous challenge, with no certainty over the MT viability.

Mr. Warner (firstsite) said the reduction in funding has resulted in the loss of jobs and at a time when firstsite take up occupancy of the new arts building, and a lot of focus has been on the delivery of this project. The effect of reduced funding would impinge on the number of projects that could be completed.

Mr. Roberts (CAC) said reduced funding at the CAC means a reduction in events that provide a nil return, a very important platform for young and up and coming writers and performers. There will be less opportunity for these in future years.

Ms. Wood (firstsite) said the overall funding is more reliant on that of Colchester Borough Council, linked to the other two major funding partners and should the Council's funding fracture it could be the start of a downward spiral.

Ms. Evans responded to Councillor Naish's concern that the three businesses work seemed to lean heavily to addressing the needs of younger people, by saying the funding agreements tend to be written silo fashion, and there is no particular focus on young people. Ms. Wood said many of the projects are inter-generational. Ms. Wood also confirmed to Councillor Naish that it is understood about the potential congestion caused by events and firstsite do have the appropriate dialogue with the Highways Agency when pre-planning such events.

Councillor T. Higgins thanked and congratulated the speakers on their presentations, saying creative industries accounted for 18% of businesses in Colchester against a national average of 8%. Councillor Higgins said it would be helpful if the arts organisations could work in collaboration with local restaurants and bars to provide discounted meals prior to evening performances. Councillor G. Oxford agreed with Councillor Higgins, but said such businesses must be DDA compliant.

Councillor Higgins proposed that the Panel agree to the proposal from 2010-11 to provide an indication of two future years funding at the same time as the current grant is agreed, a proposal later seconded by Councillor Chapman. Councillor Ellis said continuity in funding is a good idea. Ms. Evans said the Arts Council request a three year Business Plan, a basis for linking to a similar period of grant support.

In response to Councillor Chapman, Mr. Grady said business sponsorship / corporate revenue was very important, £18,000 per annum for the MT. The MT, along with other major regional theatres are looking to collaborate on a joint approach, to be re-launched, and going out to a the wider region shortly, though the MT is not yet in a position to invest in this project. Ms. Wood said a new membership scheme for the new firstsite building is to be launched shortly. Mr. Warner confirmed that £1.2 million had already been raised towards the capital project. Mr. Roberts said it was getting ever more difficult to raise these funds during a period of economic downturn, but that said, the arts partners are working collaboratively to find new ways of generating corporate income.

Councillor Quince felt the £672,000 VAT windfall received in 2010/11, should, through consultation, enable organisations such as the arts partners to bid for the money.

Councillor Ellis thanked the arts partners for attending the meeting and for their excellent presentation(s), saying he had learnt a lot and had a greater appreciation of the work undertaken by the organisations.

Members concurred with Councillor Ellis, Councillor Oxford saying it had been a fair and balanced discussion. Members agreed to a recommendation to Cabinet to give an indication of two future years funding at the time that the current grant is agreed.

Councillor Smith noted the Panel's request for giving an indication for future funding, and this would be considered by the Cabinet.

RESOLVED that the Panel;

- i) Considered and noted the current performances against the current standards.
- ii) Considered and noted the fit between the contribution to the funded arts partners and the Council's Strategic Priorities.
- iii) Requested the Cabinet to consider providing an indication of two future years funding at the same time as the current grant(s) is agreed.



Cabinet

Item
9(i)

7 September 2011

Report of	Monitoring Officer	Author	Andrew Weavers
Title	Local Government Ombudsman – Annual Review 2010/2011		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

This report request the Cabinet to note the Local Government Ombudsman’s Annual Review for 2010/2011

1. Decision Required

- 1.1 To note the contents of the Local Government Ombudsman’s Annual Review for 2010/2011.

2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 To inform the Cabinet of the number and type of decisions made by the Local Government Ombudsman in relation to Colchester during 2010/2011.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 No alternative options are presented.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The Local Government Ombudsman issues an Annual Review to each local authority. The Annual Review for Colchester for the year ending 31 March 2011 is attached to this report at Appendix 1. The information provided is divided between the Advice Team, which deals with initial assessments of enquiries and/or complaints and the Investigative Team which actually investigates complaints.
- 4.2 It is worth noting that anyone can choose to make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman. Accordingly, the number of complaints is not an indicator of performance or level of customer service. In most instances there was no case to answer. The Local Government Ombudsman will normally insist that the Council has the opportunity to resolve the complaint locally through its own complaints procedure before commencing its own investigation.
- 4.3 The Standards Committee has an overview of Local Government Ombudsman investigations and the contents of the Annual Review will be reported to the Committee in due course.

5. Key Headlines

- 5.1 There were no findings of maladministration against the Council and no formal reports were issued.

- 5.2 Last year 54 enquires were received by the Advice Team a 63% increase from the 34 received in the previous year. Of these 23 were classed as premature complaints and referred back to the Council to be considered through its own complaints procedure. A further 7 enquiries were dealt with by the Ombudsman providing advice and the remaining 24 were referred to the Investigative Team for consideration.
- 5.3 The main subject area covered by the Advice Team which had an increase was Planning and Development which saw an increase to 19 a 53% increase from the 10 received in the previous year. This was due to a number of linked complaints being made regarding one planning application which subsequently led to procedures being changed. Of the total figure for Planning and Development 9 cases were referred for investigation. They also received 10 enquires in relation to benefits and tax an increase of 10 % on the previous year. Of these 3 were referred for investigation.
- 5.4 The Investigative Team decided 23 complaints against the Council which is a 10% increase from the 21 decided in the previous year. A total of 6 local settlements were agreed (where the Council agreed to take action which the Ombudsman considered was a satisfactory response to a complaint) which is an increase from the previous years total of 4. The Council paid a total of £965 in compensation which was met from service budgets. This is an increase of 68% from the previous year's total of £575. The service areas involved have learnt from the circumstances of the particular complaints and have improved their procedures accordingly.
- 5.5 The Council's average response time to the Ombudsman's written first enquiries was 29.6 days which is a slight reduction in improvement from the previous year's figure of 29.3 days. The Ombudsman's target is 28 days. Steps are being taken to continue to improve the response times in order to meet the Ombudsman's target.
- 5.6 During the past year we took the opportunity to provide a training session for services which was delivered by an assistant ombudsman. The session was well received and provided beneficial advice to service on dealing with complaints.

6. Financial Considerations

- 6.1 No direct implications other than mentioned in this report.

7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 The lessons learnt from complaints to the Ombudsman link in with our Customer Excellence element of the Strategic Plan by constantly learning and putting lessons learnt into practice. This will in turn lead to improved customer service as we continue to meet and exceed our customers' expectations

8. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications

- 8.1 No direct implications.

9. Publicity Considerations

- 9.1 Details of the Annual Review will be posted on the Council's website.

10. Consultation Implications

- 10.1 No direct implications.

11. Community Safety Implications

11.1 No direct implications.

12. Health and Safety Implications

12.1 No direct implications.

13. Risk Management Implications

13.1 No direct implications.

Appendix 1: Local Authority Report -Colchester BC

For the period ending -31/03/2011

(Figures in brackets for the period ending 31/03/2010)

LGO Advice Team

Enquiries and complaints received	Adult care services	Benefits & Tax	Corporate and other services	Education & Children's services	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Highways & Transport	Housing	Other	Planning & Development	Total
Formal/informal premature complaints	0 (0)	6 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)	4 (0)	0 (3)	12 (3)	23 (6)
Advice given	0 (0)	1 (1)	1 (0)	2 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)	1 (2)	1 (2)	0 (1)	7 (7)
Forwarded to investigative team (resubmitted)	0 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (0)	1 (0)	0 (3)	0 (1)	2 (2)	6 (7)
Forwarded to investigative team (new)	0 (0)	2 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (0)	5 (6)	1 (2)	5 (4)	18 (14)
Total	0 (0)	10 (1)	2 (0)	2 (0)	4 (0)	5 (0)	10 (11)	2 (8)	19 (10)	54 (34)

Investigative Team

Decisions	Reports: Maladministration and injustice	Local Settlements (no report)	Reports Maladministration No injustice	Reports: no Maladministration	No Maladministration (no report)	Ombudsman Discretion (no report)	Outside Jurisdiction	Total
2010 / 2011	0	6	0	0	13	4	0	23
2009 / 2010	0	4	0	0	10	6	1	21

Appendix 1: Local Authority Report -Colchester BC

For the period ending -31/03/2011

Average local authority response times 01/04/2010 to 31/03/2011

Response times	First enquires	
	Number of first enquires	Average number of days to respond
2010 / 2011	12	29.6
2009 / 2010	11	29.3
2008 / 2009	16	34.5

Types of authority	<= 28 days %	29 -35 days %	> = 36 days %
District Councils	65	23	12
Unitary Authorities	59	28	13
Metropolitan Authorities	64	19	17
County Councils	66	17	17
London Boroughs	64	30	6
National Parks Authorities	75	25	0

PETITIONS, PUBLIC STATEMENTS, QUESTIONS

(i) Have Your Say speakers

Date of Meeting	Details of Member of the Public	Subject Matter	Form of Response	Date Completed
Cabinet, 13 July 2011	Parish Councillor Gill-Ross	Colchester's Digital Strategy	Verbal response provided at the meeting by the Portfolio Holder for Commerce and Sustainability	13 July 2011
Council, 20 July 2011	Nick Chilvers	Publication of information about penalty notices on the Council's website; timescale for the relocation of the bus station and introduction of traffic restrictions on the High Street	Verbal response provided at the meeting by the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Performance, Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services Portfolio Holder for Renaissance	13 July 2011
Council, 20 July 2011	Andy Hamilton	firstsite and the Visual Arts Facility	Verbal response provided by the Portfolio Holder for Resources and ICT	13 July 2011

(ii) Petitions

Date petition received	Lead petitioner	Subject Matter	Form of Response	Date Completed
27 May 2011	Martin Preece	Petition to change policy on the provision of women only sessions at Aqua Springs and Leisure World	Letter agreeing to change of policy sent by the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Diversity on 7 July 2011	7 July 2011
20 July 2011	Councillor Quince	Reopening of the clock museum at Tymperleys	Petition to be debated by Council at its meeting on 19 October 2011. Letter sent to Councillor Quince confirming this on 22 July 2011	22 July 2011



Cabinet

Item

11(i)

7th September 2011

Report of	Interim Head of Resource Management	Author	Mike Shorten, Estates Manager
Title	Disposal of Plot 700, The Crescent, Colchester Business Park		
Wards affected	Highwoods		

This report concerns the transfer of land comprising Plot 700, The Crescent, Colchester Business Park, Colchester CO4 9YQ

1. Decision Required

- 1.1 To approve the grant of a 150 year ground lease in respect of Plot 700, The Crescent, Colchester Business Park for a premium of £800,000 and peppercorn rent throughout the term; and
- 1.2 To authorise the Head of Resource Management, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Resources, to settle final terms and consequential matters to complete the ground lease.

2. Reasons for Decision

- 2.1 To achieve a valuable capital receipt in the 2011/12 financial year in support of the Capital Programme, as programmed in the Strategic Asset Management Plan 2010-13
- 2.2 To bring the land forward for development and job creation on Colchester Business Park.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 To postpone the disposal until the property market recovers and a greater capital receipt may be achievable. In the current economic climate it is not possible to speculate as to when the market might recover to this extent.
- 3.2 To consider a sale on terms other than a long leasehold. Whilst freehold is the most attractive title to purchasers, in monetary terms the difference in value between a 150 year leasehold at a peppercorn and a freehold is minimal and not possible to quantify in the present market. A freehold offer might generate additional bids from developers but those with access to funds are cautious and selective in the current climate in which office development is not viable.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 Plot 700 comprises a green field 2.66 acre site within the established Colchester Business Park; it has a frontage to the Crescent and backs onto the A12. The Council has retained the freehold interest in the Business Park and granted long ground leases

to retain overall control over the use and development of the Park. Plot 700 is situated in the position shown by red border on the plan attached at Appendix A.

- 4.2 In 2008 the Council exchanged contracts with a developer to grant leases at ground rents totalling £85,000 pa increasing to 15% of the open market rental value of office buildings to be constructed on site. The developer subsequently terminated the agreement citing the economic downturn combined with difficulties it was experiencing in letting offices it had already developed on the neighbouring plot 750 that the company had previously acquired from the Council. The Council received ground rent for the period of the contract's existence.
- 4.3 The property / development market demonstrates a preference for freehold deals which are contrary to the Council's policy of retaining freehold interests for the advantages that stem from this in the longer term. Many developers will accept the 'virtual freehold' that is a long lease at a peppercorn, and it is only in stronger markets that they will consider the geared ground rent arrangement incorporated in the previous deal.
- 4.4 In September 2010 the Council successfully sold a smaller (1.30 acre) nearby plot on a 150 year lease at a peppercorn for a premium equating to £367,646 per acre.
- 4.5 Plot 700 is identified in the Strategic Asset Management Plan 2010/13 for disposal in 2010/11 but was delayed pending an improvement in market conditions.
- 4.6 Colchester based commercial property agent Newman Commercial was reinstructed to market the property having successfully introduced the previous purchaser of a geared lease albeit that the deal was later terminated. A marketing programme with a prominent 'For Sale' site board, advertising in the local and specialist national property press together with the agent's contacts resulted in four offers being received by the closing date. These offers were below expectations and consequently full and final bids were invited - two parties increased their offers whilst the other two offerees withdrew. These initial and final offers are set out in Appendix B.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Head of Resource Management is authorised to accept Offer 1 and to liaise with Legal Services to effect an early sale of a 150 year lease for the premium offered. This offer is made by a party well known in the local market and considered well funded and decisive. The offeree is seeking an early exchange of contracts.
- 5.2 It is to be noted that the offer is made on the basis that there will be no restriction upon use of the plot except by planning permission. In cases where the use is restricted, to say offices, an opportunity arises for the Council to charge a premium for any subsequent relaxation, to say a gymnasium, but that would not be available in this instance.
- 5.3 Offer 2 is higher but since making this final offer the party has refused all further attempts at communication by Newman Commercial and it is assumed that this party is not seriously pursuing its offer. Accordingly, it is being treated as no longer valid.

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 The Council's vision, as set out in the Strategic Plan, is "Colchester; a place where people want to live, work and visit", and this is supported by three objectives – to listen and respond, shift resources to deliver priorities, and be cleaner and greener.

6.2 The generation of a significant capital receipt arising from this sale will contribute towards funding the capital programme and thus enable the Council to shift resources to deliver priorities.

6.3 The release of Plot 700 will contribute to the Council's priority for action in enabling job creation. However, there is a prospect that the purchaser will 'bank' the land delaying development until the local commercial property market recovers making development more viable.

7. Consultation

7.1 Marketing of the property included a prominent 'For Sale' site board, advertising in both the local and specialist national property press together with the selling agent's contacts.

7.2 The planning permission secured by the previous 2008 purchaser which withdrew has lapsed and the successful purchaser's development scheme will be advertised in the usual way inviting representations on their proposed scheme once finalised.

8. Publicity Considerations

8.1 The proposed disposal received publicity through a marketing campaign which included advertisements in both local newspapers and the national specialist property press together with the 'For Sale' site board and selling agent's direct mailing programme.

9. Financial implications

9.1 Plot 700 is identified in the Strategic Asset Management Plan 2010/13 for disposal to assist delivery of the Capital Programme. The proposed capital receipt of £800,000 will meet this objective.

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

10.1 It is considered that this transaction will not give rise to any equality and diversity considerations, nor impact on the promotion of equality and diversity in relation to gender, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age and race/ethnicity.

10.2 The relevant Equality Impact Assessment can be found on the Council's website at: [Home>Council and Democracy>Policies, strategies and performance>Equality and Diversity>Equality Impact Assessments>Resource Management>Disposals and Marketing](#)

Or;

http://www.colchester.gov.uk/Info_page_two_pic_2_det.asp?art_id=8000&sec_id=1988

10.3 This financial transaction does not result in any new policy or in any major change to existing policies.

10.4 It is considered that this financial transaction does not give rise to a breach of human rights.

11. Community Safety Implications

11.1 It is considered that this disposal will not have any adverse affect upon community safety, crime and disorder.

12. Health and Safety Implications

12.1 There will be no impact upon the health and safety of the general public by this transaction. When the site is developed by the purchaser health and safety will be the responsibility of the developer and construction team in the usual way and the usual regulations will apply.

13. Risk Management Implications

13.1 There are not considered to be any significant risk management implications in relation to this transaction.

Appendices

Appendix A - Site plan

Appendix B - Schedule of Offers received..... (item 13i) in Part B of the Agenda

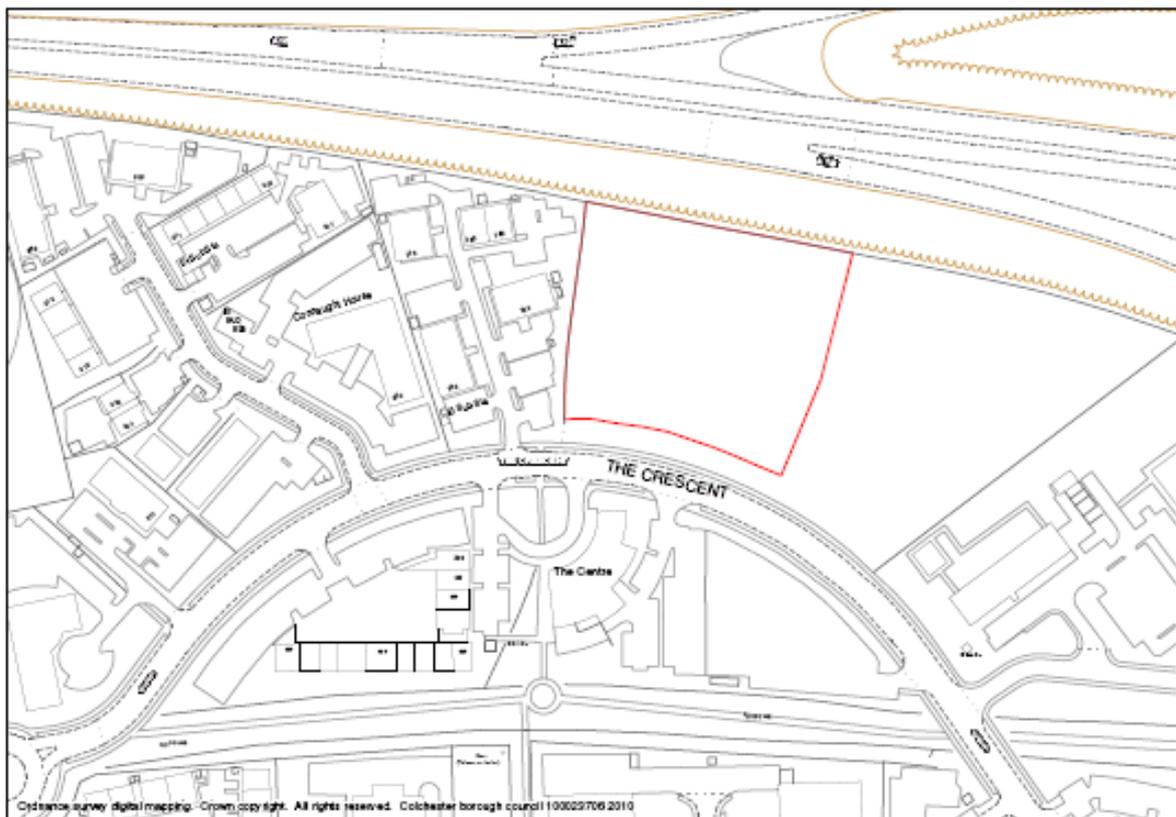
Background Papers

Property file - Plot 700, The Crescent, Colchester Business Park.

Appendix A

Disposal of Plot 700, The Crescent, Colchester Business Park

Site Plan



Not to scale

Cabinet

7 September 2011

Item
11(ii)

Report of	Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration	Author	Patrick O'Sullivan
Title	Disposal of land north of A12 adjoining new BP petrol filling station		
Wards affected	Mile End		

1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To agree the freehold sale of the land north of the A12 adjoining the new BP petrol filling station in accordance with the information contained within the confidential part of this Report.
- 1.2 To agree that, in the event that this bidder does not proceed, then the site may be offered to the second highest bidder on the terms contained within the confidential part of this Report.
- 1.3 To agree that a sum not to exceed £100,000.00 is to be expended out of the proceeds of sale to contribute to a foul sewer connection for both the restaurant site and that of BP on the adjacent plot in addition to the sum already reserved by the preferred bidder.
- 1.4 That the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources, be authorised to settle final terms and consequential matters to complete the sale, including the resolution of drainage requirements in accordance with paragraph 4.3 of this Report.
- 1.5 To agree that a sum of £200,000.00 is allocated to the Cuckoo Farm Scheme in the Capital Programme to allow pre-development activity and feasibility work to facilitate the development of Council land at Cuckoo Farm.

2. Reasons for Decision

- 2.1 To take advantage of the existing Outline Planning Permission (O/COL/01/1625) which will expire in March 2012.
- 2.2 To generate a significant capital receipt for the benefit of the Capital Programme.
- 2.3 To enable pre-development activity and feasibility work to be undertaken to facilitate the development of Council owned land south of the A12 at Cuckoo Farm.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 Leave the site undeveloped until closer to the expiry of the current outline permission in March 2012. If any significant delay occurs it will be necessary to seek a new outline permission under revised rules relating to the separation of planning Use Classes. This may result in the loss of permission for either take away or restaurant use.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The property comprises an area of 1.08 acres (0.44 hectares) and is shown outlined on the attached Ordnance Survey plan (Appendix A).
- 4.2 Local Commercial Agents were approached via a competitive bidding process, from which Whybrows were appointed to market the property on the basis of an existing Outline Planning Permission (O/COL/01/1625). Arising from the marketing programme, five offers were received by the closing date of Friday 10th June 2011. These are set out in a Schedule (Appendix B) to the confidential part of this Report. It is Whybrow's advice that the highest of these offers represents best consideration in accordance with Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 and may be recommended for approval.
- 4.3 The highest and second offers both include provision for installation of mains drainage to the site and it is proposed to combine this with the Council's requirement to provide a permanent solution to the drainage requirements of the BP filling station which is an obligation of the Council under the BP development agreement.
- 4.4 A variation to the Outline Planning Permission referenced above has been permitted to Condition 3 of the Permission to allow the period for application of reserved matters to be extended to 17th March 2012.
- 4.5 This report relates to a site on the north of the A12, but it is part of a wider land allocation across Cuckoo Farm which provides for a variety of land uses including employment land and 'enabling' development of restaurants, hotel and other commercial leisure uses adjoining the Community Stadium. With the proposed completion of the Northern Approaches Road with the link planned to the new A12 junction across the Severalls Hospital this land is now available for release for development. The sale of the restaurant site north of the A12 makes available the option of funding the pre-development work for the larger site.
- 4.6 As a result of the dissolution of the Landowners' Agreement in 2011, which previously bound the Council to the Homes and Communities Agency and the Mental Health Trust, 100% of the net proceeds of sale are now useable by the Council.

5. Proposals

It is recommended:

- 5.1 That the site be offered to the highest conditional bidder on the terms of their offer presented in Appendix B. to the confidential report.
- 5.2 That, in the event that this bidder does not proceed, then the site may be offered to the second highest bidder on the terms of their offer in Appendix B.
- 5.3 That the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources, be authorised to settle final terms and consequential matters to complete the sale, including a resolution to the drainage requirements.
- 5.4 Funds are allocated to the Cuckoo Farm Capital Scheme to allow the pre-development work to commence on the allocation of land south of the A12.

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 The Council's vision, set out in its Strategic Plan, is "Colchester: a place where people want to live, work and visit", and is supported by three objectives - to listen and respond, shift resources to deliver priorities, and be cleaner and greener.
- 6.2 The generation of a significant capital receipt arising from this sale will contribute towards the funding of the Capital Programme and thus enable the Council to shift resources to deliver priorities.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 Formal consultation will be undertaken as part of the planning process following the selection of a preferred bidder. The planning application for the reserved matters will be advertised in the usual way inviting representations.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 Publicity for the disposal has been conducted through a marketing campaign which included advertisement in the national property media and local newspapers, together with a direct mailing programme and the erection on-site of a For Sale board.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1 On the assumption that a sale is concluded with the highest bidder, the transaction would result in a significant net capital receipt to the Council.
- 9.2 The capital receipt would be available to support the Council's Capital Programme and specifically funds can be used to commence the pre-development and feasibility work to bring forward development on Council owned land at Cuckoo Farm.

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 10.1 It is not considered that this financial transaction gives rise to any equality and diversity considerations in relation to gender, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age and race/ethnicity. The relevant Equality Impact Assessment can be found on the Council's Website at: [Home>Council and Democracy>Policies, strategies and performance>Diversity and Equality>Equality Impact Assessments>Disposals and Marketing](#) in each case by clicking on the Website pages underlined.
- 10.2 This financial transaction does not result in any new policy nor in any major change to existing policies.
- 10.3 It is not considered that this financial transaction gives rise to a breach of human rights.

11. Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 It is not considered that the sale of this site gives rise to Community Safety implications.

12. Health and Safety Implications

12.1 It is not considered that the sale of this site gives rise to Health and Safety implications.

13. Risk Management Implications

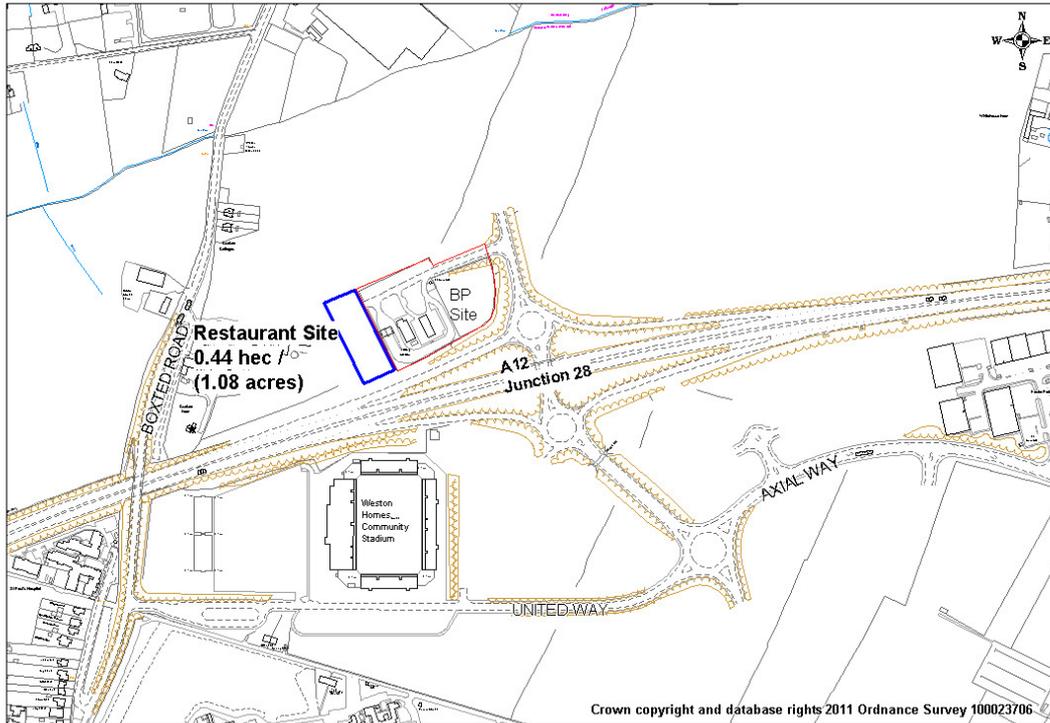
13.1 This disposal is proposed to remove the risk arising from deferment of the receipt expected from the sale of the new BP site.

14. Sustainability

14.1 The construction of a restaurant will comply with new building standards and the requirement to reduce carbon emissions.

Appendices:

Appendix A. - Site Plan showing premises





Cabinet

7 September 2011

Item
11(iii)

Report of	Monitoring Officer	Author	Andrew Weavers ☎ 282213
Title	Review of Local Code of Corporate Governance		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

This report recommends that Cabinet approves an updated Local Code of Corporate Governance and recommends to Council that it be included in the Council's Policy Framework

1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To approve the updated Local Code of Corporate Governance and to recommend to Council that it be included in the Council's Policy Framework.

2. Background

- 2.1 Governance is about how the Council ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. It comprises the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which such bodies are directed and controlled and through which they account to, engage with and, where appropriate, lead their communities.
- 2.2 The Council strives to meet the highest standards of corporate governance to help ensure it meets its objectives. Members and Officers are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of the Council's affairs and the stewardship of the resources at its disposal.
- 2.3 Cabinet at its meeting on 17 March 2010 approved the Code and subsequently the Full Council at its meeting on 24 March 2010 included it within the Council's Policy Framework. The revised Code is subject to an annual review which is dealt within this report.
- 2.4 The attached revised Local Code of Corporate Governance has been developed in accordance with guidance issued in 2007 jointly by CIPFA (The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) and SOLACE (The Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) entitled "Delivering Good Governance in Local Authorities".
- 2.5 This Guidance identified six Core Principles against which local authorities should review their existing corporate governance arrangements and develop and maintain a local code of governance. The principles are;
 - Focusing on the purpose of the Council and outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area;
 - Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles;
 - Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour;

- Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk;
- Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective; and
- Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

2.2 The six core principles each have a number of supporting principles, which in turn have a range of specific requirements that apply across the range of Council business.

2.3 Attached to this report at appendix 1 is an updated Local Code of Corporate Governance which has been prepared in light of the Guidance and the six principles. It has been the subject of consultation with officers and was considered by the Standards Committee at its meeting on 24 June 2011. A draft minute of the Standard's Committee's consideration of this item is at appendix 2. The Standards Committee recommendations have been incorporated into the updated Code.

2.4 The Code takes each of the principles in turn and elaborates on how the Council will meet its aims, what source documents or processes evidence the aims and in addition highlights any further or ongoing work. This in turn links into the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

2.5 The following changes to the Code are highlighted for the Cabinet's information:

The items highlighted were shown as "Further work ongoing" and have now been completed and are now "Source documents/ processes". Some items appear more than once as they relate to more than one of the Core Principles.

Core Principle 1

Source documents / Processes	Further work ongoing
Annual Monitoring report	Strategic Plan Action Plan
	Review of Communications and Marketing
	Customer insight work
"Council Achievements and Performance and Improvement at the Council " section on web site	Fundamental Service Reviews

Core Principle 2

Source documents / Processes	Further work ongoing
Performance Reporting and Performance Indicators	Strategic Plan Action Plan
	Fundamental Service Reviews

Core Principle 3

Source documents / Processes	Further work ongoing
	Strategic Plan Action Plan
Equality Scheme	Annual review of Whistleblowing Policy and Gifts and Hospitality
Performance Reporting and Performance Indicators	Annual review of Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy
Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy	

Core Principle 4

Source documents / Processes	Further work ongoing
Equality Impact Assessments	Annual review of Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy
Equality Scheme	Fundamental Service Reviews

Core Principle 5

Source documents / Processes	Further work ongoing
Colchester Learning Managers and Customer Excellence awards	Strategic Plan Action Plan
Performance Reporting and Performance Indicators	Fundamental Service Reviews
Equality Scheme	Review of Council Communications and Marketing

Core Principle 6

Source documents / Processes	Further work ongoing
“Council Achievements and Performance and Improvement at the Council ” section on web site	Strategic Plan Action Plan
Equality Scheme	Fundamental Service Reviews
	Customer insight work

Some new “Source documents/ Processes” have been included which are now recognised to contribute toward the Core Principles but were not included in the previous version of the Code.

- 2.6 Progress has been made during the year in strengthening the Council’s governance arrangements. This includes the work of Cabinet and Standards Committee which is reflected both in the changes to the “Further work ongoing” column and also inclusion in the “Source documents/ Processes” column.

3. Strategic Plan References

- 3.1 Governance forms parts of the Council’s commitment to customer excellence which underpins the Council’s Strategic Plan vision.

4. Financial Considerations

- 4.1 None.

5. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications

- 5.1 No particular implications.

6. Publicity Considerations

- 6.1 The Local Code of Corporate Governance will be included in the Constitution and will be placed on the Council’s website.

7. Consultation Implications

7.1 None.

8. Community Safety Implications

8.1 None.

9. Health and Safety Implications

9.1 None.

10. Risk Management Implications

10.1 None.



COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL

CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Contents

- Core Principle 1** *Focusing on the purpose of the Council and outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.*
- Core Principle 2** *Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.*
- Core Principle 3** *Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.*
- Core Principle 4** *Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.*
- Core Principle 5** *Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective.*
- Core Principle 6** *Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.*

**COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL
CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

INTRODUCTION

“Governance is about how local government bodies ensure that they are doing the right things, in the right way for everyone, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.

It comprises the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which local government bodies are directed and controlled and through which they account to, engage with and where appropriate, lead their communities”.

Delivering Good Governance in Local Authorities (CIPFA/SOLACE 2007)

The CIPFA/SOLACE guidance “Delivering Good Governance in Local Authorities” identified six Core Principles against which local authorities should review their existing corporate governance arrangements and develop and maintain a local code of governance. These principles are:

- *Focusing on the purpose of the Council and outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area*
- *Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles*
- *Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour*
- *Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk*
- *Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective*
- *Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.*

This Code of Governance has been prepared in accordance with the Guidance and will be reviewed by the Accounts and Regulatory Committee and the Standards Committee on an annual basis.

Additionally authorities are required to prepare and publish an Annual Governance Statement in accordance with this framework under Regulation 4(2) of the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006. The Annual Governance Statement is a key corporate document. The Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council have joint responsibility as signatories for its accuracy and completeness.

COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL: CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Core Principle 1 – Focusing on the purpose of the Council and outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area		
Our aims in relation to focusing on the purpose of the Council and outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area are to:		
<p>1.1 Exercise strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the authority’s purpose, vision and its intended outcome for citizens and service users</p> <p>1.2 Ensure users receive a high quality service whether directly, or in partnership, or by commissioning</p> <p>1.3 Ensure that the authority makes best use of resources and that tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money</p>	<p>Source documents/Processes</p> <p>Strategic Plan 2009-12 Service Plans Sustainable Community Strategy Communications Strategy Consultation – “Knowing Your Community” Policy Framework Council website – www.colchester.gov.uk Research and Engagement team project work</p> <p>Strategic Plan 2009-12 Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Programme Sustainable Community Strategy Local Code of Corporate Governance Annual Governance Statement and Assurance Framework</p>	<p>Further work ongoing</p> <p>Strategic Plan 2009-12 Strategic Plan Action Plan – progress is reported to Cabinet on a half yearly basis and published on the Council’s website Review of Council’s Communications and Marketing Customer Insight group</p> <p>Local Code of Corporate Governance updated as required by CIPFA Guidance</p>
<p>In order to achieve our aims we have/will:</p> <p>1.1.1 Develop and promote the Council’s purpose and vision</p> <p>1.1.2 Review on a regular basis the Council’s vision for the local area and its impact on the authority’s governance arrangements</p>		

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
<p>1.1.3 Ensure that partnerships are underpinned by a common vision of their work that is understood and agreed by all parties</p> <p>1.1.4 Publish an annual report on a timely basis to communicate the authority's activities and achievements, its financial position and performance</p>	<p>Strategic Plan 2009-12 Sustainable Community Strategy Public Service Partnership Partnership Strategy Partnership Register</p> <p>Statement of Accounts Council's website www.colchester.gov.uk "Council Achievements" and "Performance and Improvement at the Council" – sections on the Council's website</p>	<p>Research is currently being undertaken into establishing the Council's partners key values and vision</p> <p>Strategic Plan actions and monitoring of delivery</p>
<p>1.2.1 Decide how the quality of service for users is to be measured and make sure that the information needed to review service quality effectively and regularly is available</p>	<p>Performance Reporting to Senior Management and Scrutiny Panel. Customer Excellence programme Customer Excellence Standard Consultation – "Knowing Your Community" Mosaic and Touchstone customer research tools Annual Monitoring Report Audit Commission annual audit letter and recommendations Policy Review Panel</p>	<p>Govmetric</p> <p>Fundamental Service Reviews</p> <p>Projects carried out by the Council's Research and Engagement team</p>

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/processes	Further work ongoing
1.2.2 Put in place effective arrangements to identify and deal with failure in service delivery	<p>Performance Reporting and performance indicators</p> <p>Complaints Procedure</p> <p>Internal Audit Process</p> <p>Finance and Audit Scrutiny Panel</p> <p>Executive Director for People and Performance</p> <p>Performance Management Board</p> <p>Customer Service Centre responsible for web site management</p> <p>Audit Commission annual audit letter and recommendations</p>	<p>Group monitoring of summary service plan delivery.</p> <p>Fundamental Service Reviews</p>
1.3.1 Decide how value for money is to be measured and make sure that the authority or partnership has the information needed to review value for money and performance effectively. Measure the environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions.	<p>Performance Reporting</p> <p>Local Authority Carbon Management</p> <p>Nottingham Declaration Strategy and Action Plan</p> <p>Audit Commission annual audit letter and recommendations</p>	<p>Value for money methodology as described in Value for Money section of Use of Resources Carbon Management programme</p> <p>Sustainability assessments for Local Development Framework</p>

Core Principle 2 – Members and Officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles		
Our aims in relation to Members and Officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles are to:		
2.1	Ensure effective leadership throughout the authority and being clear about executive and non-executive functions and of the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function	
2.2	Ensure that a constructive working relationship exists between authority members and officers and the responsibilities of members and officers are carried out to a high standard	
2.3	Ensure relationships between the authority, its partners and the public are clear so that each knows what to expect of the other	
In order to achieve our aims we have/will:		Further work ongoing
2.1.1	Set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of the executive and of the executive's members individually and the authority's approach towards putting this into practice	The Constitution will continue to be reviewed on a rolling basis.
2.1.2	Set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of other authority members, members generally and of senior officers	Development of a protocol to cover the working arrangements between Portfolio Holders and senior Officers.
2.2.2	Make the chief executive or equivalent responsible and accountable to the authority for all aspects of operational management	The Constitution will continue to be reviewed on a rolling basis. Support for this from Executive Director People and Performance

	Job Accountability Statement / Person Specification Signature on Annual Governance Statement	
In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
2.2.3 Develop protocols to ensure that the leader and chief executive (or equivalent) negotiate their respective roles early in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained	Constitution Member/Officer Protocol Regular 1:2:1's	The Constitution will continue to be reviewed on a rolling basis.
2.2.4 Make a senior officer (usually the section 151 officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that appropriate advice is given on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records and accounts, and for maintaining an effective system of internal financial control	Head of Resource Management has been appointed as the Council's Chief Financial Officer (S151 Officer). Constitution Job Accountability Statement / Person Specification S151 Officer Protocol Report template includes financial implications before report considered by Members	
2.2.5 Make a senior officer (other than the responsible financial officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes, regulations are compiled with (usually the Monitoring Officer)	Legal Services Manager has been appointed as the Council's Monitoring Officer Monitoring Officer Protocol Report template requires that Legal Services are consulted before a report considered by Members	
2.3.1 Develop protocols to ensure effective communication between members and officers in their respective roles	Member / Officer Protocol Planning Procedures Code of Practice Outside Bodies advice given to Members Member and Officer Codes of Conduct	
2.3.2 Set out the terms and conditions for remuneration of members and officers and an effective structure for managing the	Pay and conditions policies and practices Independent Remuneration Panel Terms of Reference and Reports	

<p>process including an effective remuneration panel (if applicable)</p>	<p>Regular liaison meeting with Unison</p>	
<p>In order to achieve our aims we have/will:</p> <p>2.3.3 Ensure that effective mechanisms exist to monitor service delivery</p>	<p>Source documents/Processes</p> <p>Performance Reporting and performance indicators Executive Director for People and Performance Complaints Procedure Heads of Service monitoring Service Plans Performance Management Board Performance system Scrutiny Panels</p>	<p>Further work ongoing</p> <p>Customer insight work</p>
<p>2.3.4 Ensure that the organisation's vision, strategic plans, priorities and targets are developed through robust mechanisms, and in consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders, and that they are clearly articulated and disseminated</p>	<p>Strategic Plan 2009-2012 underpinned by a review of all existing consultation work. Specific consultation with hard to reach groups. Medium Term Financial Strategy Performance reporting and performance indicators Council Website Communications Strategy Courier Customer insight groups</p>	<p>Strategic Plan 2009-12 Strategic Plan Action Plan – progress is reported to Cabinet on a half yearly basis and published on the Council's web site. Fundamental Service Reviews</p>
<p>2.3.5 When working in partnership ensure that members are clear about their roles and responsibilities both individually and collectively in relation to the partnership and to the authority</p>	<p>Constitution Individual Partnership Agreements Service Level Agreements Advice given to members in relation to outside bodies Partnership Strategy Partnership Register</p>	<p>Research is currently being undertaken into establishing the Council's partners key values and vision</p>

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
<p>2.3.6 When working in partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that there is clarity about the legal status of the partnership • ensure that representatives or organisations both understand and make clear to all other partners the extent of their authority to bind their organisation to partner decisions. 	<p>Constitution Individual Partnership Agreements Service Level Agreements Advice given to Members in relation to outside bodies Partnership Strategy Partnership Register</p>	<p>Research is currently being undertaken into establishing the Council's partners key values and vision</p>

Core Principle 3 – Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour

Our aims in relation to promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour are to:

- 3.1 Ensuring authority members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance
- 3.2 Ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
3.1.1 Ensure that the authority's leadership sets a tone for the organisation by creating a climate of openness, support and respect	<p>Constitution Chief Executive's and Leader's blog on the Council's intranet Performance reporting Leadership days Standards Committee has an overall view of conduct issues established by their terms of reference Member and Officer Codes of Conduct Increased numbers of Independent Members appointed to Standards Committee Member/Officer Protocol Whistleblowing Policy Anti Fraud and Corruption Policy Freedom of Information Policy statement and publication scheme Monitoring Officer and S151 Officer Protocols Planning Procedures Code of Practice Officer Register of Gifts and Hospitality Officer voluntary register of interests Member's Register of Interests Website and intranet</p>	<p>Best Councils' survey work Quarterly briefing for staff Annual review of Whistleblowing Policy and Gifts and Hospitality Annual review of Anti- Fraud and Corruption Policy New "Corporate Governance" section set up on the Council's web site to bring all relevant information together under one heading Flexible working and Way We Work Programme</p>

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
	<p>Corporate Roadshows by Chief Executive for staff Executive Management Team shadowing Hub and Spokes Officers focus group Portfolio Holders monthly sessions with senior officers</p>	
<p>3.1.2 Ensure that standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of members and staff, of work between members and staff and between the authority, its partners and the community are defined and communicated through codes of conduct and protocols</p>	<p>Member and Officer Codes of Conduct Performance System Complaints procedures Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy Member/Officer Protocols Member Development Programme Officer training on Member/ officer relationship Whistleblowing Policy Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Security Policy Safeguarding Children's Policy Hub (intranet) Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy</p>	<p>Annual review of Whistleblowing Policy Annual review of Anti Fraud and Corruption Policy</p>
<p>3.1.3 Put in place arrangements to ensure that members and employees of the authority are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice</p>	<p>Member and Officer Codes of Conduct Equality and Diversity training for Members and Officers Financial Procedure Rules, Contract Procedure Rules Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy Whistleblowing Policy Registers of Interests (Officers and Members) Services and processes are underpinned by Equality Impact Assessments Single Equality Scheme Officer induction and training</p>	<p>Annual review of Whistleblowing Policy Annual review of Anti Fraud and Corruption Policy</p>

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
3.2.1 Develop and maintain shared values including leadership values both for the organisation and staff reflecting public expectations and communicate these with members, staff, the community and partners	Member and Officer Codes of Conduct Strategic Plan 2009-12 Administration's vision, 3 objectives and 9 priorities in place and being shared Way We Work Programme - organisational values for People, Customer Excellence, Leadership of Place Shaping and Transformation Performance reporting Customer Excellence	Strategic Plan Action Plan – progress is reported to scrutiny on a half yearly basis People Strategy actions Review of Communications and marketing
3.2.2 Put in place arrangements to ensure that procedures and operations are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards, and monitor their continuing effectiveness in practice	Contract Procedure Rules Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy Whistle Blowing Policy Member and Officer Codes of Conduct Monitoring of the above takes place by the Standards Committee, with the exception of the Contract Procedure Rules which are monitored by Cabinet. ICT Security Policy	Reporting through to Cabinet or Standards Committee, as appropriate, on a regular basis.
3.2.3 Develop and maintain an effective Standards Committee	Agenda and Minutes Terms of Reference Regular meetings The number of Independent Members and Parish Representatives exceeds statutory minimum Local Assessment of complaints Framework implemented Annual Report Work programme	Annual review of the Local Assessment Framework by the Standards Committee. Annual Report

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
3.2.4 Use the organisation's shared values to act as a guide for decision making and as a basis for developing positive and trusting relationships within the authority	<p>Member and Officer Codes of Conduct Strategic Plan 2009-12 Administration's vision, 3 objectives and 9 priorities in place and being shared Way We Work Programme Performance Appraisals Customer Excellence Leadership days Portfolio Holder sessions with Senior Managers Policy Framework</p>	
3.2.5 In pursuing the vision of a partnership, agree a set of values against which decision making and actions can be judged. Such values must be demonstrated by partners' behaviour both individually and collectively	<p>Values agreed with each partner Partnership Register Partnership Strategy</p>	

Core Principle 4 – Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk

Our aims in relation to taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk are to:

- 4.1 Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcomes of constructive scrutiny
- 4.2 Having good quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs
- 4.3 Ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place
- 4.4 Using their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their areas

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
<p>4.1.1. Develop and maintain an effective scrutiny function which encourages constructive challenge and enhances the organisation's performance overall and of any organisation for which it is responsible</p>	<p>Scrutiny is supported by robust evidence and data analysis Agenda and Minutes Work programme Successful outcome of reviews Training on developing meaningful work programme Training for scrutiny chairman Scrutiny of partners and joint projects</p>	<p>Individual skills for successful scrutiny training in for members in conjunction with Ipswich and Tendring District Councils</p>
<p>4.1.2. Develop and maintain open and effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria, rationale and considerations on which decisions are based</p>	<p>Constitution Decision making protocols Record of decisions and supporting materials Report template Decision list published Meetings Factory on Council's website</p>	
<p>4.1.3. Put in place arrangements to safeguard members and employees against conflicts of interest and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice</p>	<p>Member and Officer Codes of Conduct Member and Officer Registers of Interests Declaration of Interests at meetings Code of Conduct guidance and training provided to Members and Officers</p>	

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
	<p>Planning procedures Code of Practice Standards Committee have responsibility for these issues Monitoring Officer reports on these issues Politically restricted posts Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy</p>	<p>Annual review of Anti- Fraud and Corruption Policy</p>
<p>4.1.4 Develop and maintain an effective Audit Committee (or equivalent) which is independent or make other appropriate arrangements for the discharge of the functions of such a committee</p>	<p>Finance and Audit Scrutiny Panel Terms of Reference Accounts and Regulatory Committee Audit awareness training Agenda and Minutes</p>	
<p>4.1.5 Put in place effective transparent and accessible arrangements for dealing with complaints</p>	<p>Complaints procedure "Help us get it right" Local Assessment Framework</p>	<p>Customer insight work</p>
<p>4.2.1 Ensure that those making decisions whether for the authority or partnership are provided with information that is fit for the purpose – relevant, timely and gives clear explanations of technical issues and their implications</p>	<p>Council's Website Report templates dealing with key aspects Report by Head of Service with necessary technical expertise included Training and professional development Equality Impact Assessments</p>	<p>Projects carried out by the Council's Research and Engagement Team Customer insight work</p>
<p>4.2.2 Ensure that professional advice on matters that have legal or financial implications is available and recorded well in advance of decision making and used appropriately</p>	<p>Report template requires that consultation is undertaken with Monitoring Officer and S151 Officer before report considered by Members Record of decision making and supporting materials S151 and Monitoring Officer Protocols Equality Impact Assessments</p>	

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
<p>4.3.1 Ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the organisation, with members and managers at all levels recognising that risk management is part of their job</p>	<p>Risk Management Strategy part of the Policy Framework Corporate Risk Manager Corporate/service planning Cabinet Member with accountability for risk management Finance and Audit Scrutiny Panel monthly monitoring role of top 5 risks and regular review of whole risk register Performance Management Board quarterly risk review Risk Registers- Strategic, Operational and Project Risk and Control self assessment completed by all managers Training for Members and Officers</p>	<p>Currently developing Members training session. Officer training as and when required through Group Management Teams Fundamental Service reviews look at different ways of delivering services, with risk taken into account</p>
<p>4.3.2 Ensure that arrangements are in place for Whistleblowing to which staff and all those contracting with the authority have access</p>	<p>Whistleblowing Policy Information for contractors Monitoring Officer Constitution</p>	<p>Annual review of Whistleblowing Policy</p>
<p>4.4.1 Actively recognise the limits of lawful activity placed on them by, for example the ultra vires doctrine but also strive to utilise powers to the full benefit of their communities</p>	<p>Constitution Monitoring Officer Report templates Equality Impact Assessments Single Equality Scheme</p>	

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
<p>4.4.2 Recognise the limits of lawful action and observe both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on local authorities by public law</p>	<p>Availability of professional legal advice Monitoring Officer Protocol S151 Officer Protocol Report templates Constitution Equality Impact Assessments Single Equality Scheme</p>	
<p>4.4.3 Observe all specific legislative requirements placed upon them, as well as the requirements of general law, and in particular to integrate the key principles of good administrative law – rationality, legality and natural justice into their procedures and decision making processes</p>	<p>Monitoring Officer Protocol S151 Officer Protocol Procedure Rules Report template Constitution Format for quasi judicial committees “Have Your Say” leaflet Planning Procedure Code of Practice Equality Impact Assessments Single Equality Scheme</p>	

Core Principle 5 – Developing the capacity and capability of Members and Officers to be effective

Our aims in relation to developing the capacity and capability of Members and Officers to be effective are:

- 5.1 Making sure that Members and Officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles
- 5.2 Developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance as an individual and as a group
- 5.3 Encouraging new talent for membership of the authority so that best use can be made of individuals' skills and resources in balancing continuity and renewal

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
<p>5.1.1 Provide induction programmes tailored to individual needs and opportunities for Members and Officers to update their knowledge on a regular basis</p>	<p>Member training and development Charter Status for Member Development processes and award Member and Officer Induction programmes Refresher courses Briefings Officer Development Plan (individual and corporate) Appraisals for officers People Strategy Personal Development Plans Learning and Development Strategy/Annual Plan</p>	<p>Member skills development</p>
<p>5.1.2 Ensure that the statutory officers have the skills, resources and support necessary to perform effectively in their roles and that these roles are properly understood throughout the organisation</p>	<p>Appraisals Training Induction Monitoring Officer and S151 Officer Protocols Employee Policies Learning and Development Strategy/Annual Learning and Development Plan</p>	

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
5.2.1 Assess the skills required by Members and Officers and make a commitment to develop those skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively	<p>Appraisals for officers SMART objectives Personal Development Plans for officers Member training and development Charter Status for Member Development processes and award People Strategy Learning and Development Strategy/Annual Learning and Development Plan</p>	<p>Member skills development</p>
5.2.2 Develop skills on a continuing basis to improve performance including the ability to scrutinise and challenge and to recognise when outside expert advice is needed	<p>Appraisals for officers Personal Development Plans for officers Member training and development Member scrutiny training People Strategy Colchester Learning Managers and Customer Excellence awards</p>	<p>Member skills development Fundamental Service Reviews</p>
5.2.3 Ensure that effective arrangements are in place for reviewing the performance of the authority as a whole and of individual members and agreeing an action plan which might for example aim to address any training or development needs	<p>Performance reporting and performance indicators Performance and Improvement Framework Performance management and appraisals for officers SMART objectives People Strategy Investors in People Assessment Comprehensive Area Assessment Annual Audit Letter Organisational Assessment</p>	

<p>In order to achieve our aims we have/will:</p> <p>5.3.1 Ensure that effective arrangements designed to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in the work of the authority</p> <p>5.3.2 Ensure that career structures are in place for Members and Officers to encourage participation and development</p>	<p>Source documents/Processes</p> <p>Equality Impact Assessments on services and policies Knowing your community on web site Voluntary Sector Compact Mosaic and Touchstone Public meetings Single Equality Scheme Strategic Plan Consultation Local Development Framework consultation Life opportunities and Community development work Neighbourhood Action Panels Consultations (eg waste survey carried out using a range of communication methods to encourage participation) Customer insight work Research and Engagement Team projects People Strategy Internal Recruitment Process Internal Secondments Personal Development Plans for officers</p>	<p>Further work ongoing</p> <p>Review of Council communications and marketing</p> <p>Human Resource Plans Member skills development Fundamental Service Reviews</p>

Core Principle 6 – Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability

Our aims in relation to engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability are to:

- 6.1 Exercise leadership through a robust scrutiny function which engages effectively with local people and all local institutional stakeholders, including partnerships, and develops constructive accountability relationships
- 6.2 Take an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to the public to ensure effective and appropriate service delivery whether directly, in partnership or by commissioning
- 6.3 Make best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibility to staff

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
6.1.1 Make clear to themselves, all staff and the community, to whom they are accountable and for what	Constitution Community Strategy Stakeholder identification Targets and Performance Monitoring Website and intranet Consultation Strategy Communications Strategy Satisfaction surveys	
6.1.2 Consider those institutional stakeholders to whom they are accountable and assess the effectiveness of the relationships and any changes required	Stakeholder identification Statutory provisions Stakeholder surveys Consultation Strategy Communications Strategy Partnership Strategy Partnership Register	
6.1.3 Produce an annual report on scrutiny	Annual Report	

function activity	
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In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
6.2.1 Ensure that clear channels of communication are in place with all sections of the community and other stakeholders including monitoring arrangements to ensure that they operate effectively	Communications Strategy Web sites Equality Impact Assessments Courier Safeguarding Children Policy	Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy Review of Council communication and marketing
6.2.2 Hold meetings in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality	Constitution Access to Information Rules	
6.2.3 Ensure arrangements are in place to enable the authority to engage with all sections of the community effectively. These arrangements should recognise that different sections of the community have different priorities and establish explicit processes for dealing with these competing demands	Strategic Plan 2009-12 Web site - "Knowing Your Community " section Consultation strategy Communications strategy Community strategy Single Equality Scheme and Equality Impact Assessments Corporate business plan Service Plans Budget Consultation Meeting	Fundamental Service Reviews
6.2.4 Establish a clear policy on the types of issues they will meaningfully consult on or engage with the public and service users including a feedback mechanism for those consultees to demonstrate what has changed as a result	Statement of Community Involvement Customer Excellence Customer insight project team Partnership framework Communication strategy Consultation Strategy Budget Consultation meeting Strategic Plan consultation Mosaic and Touchstone	Govmetric Customer insight work

In order to achieve our aims we have/will:	Source documents/Processes	Further work ongoing
<p>6.2.5 On an annual basis, publish a performance plan giving information on the authority's vision, strategy, plans and financial statements as well as information about its outcomes, achievements and the satisfaction of service users in the previous period</p>	<p>Statement of Accounts Strategic Plan 2009-12 Website www.colchester.gov.uk</p> <p>Performance Reporting and Performance Indicators</p> <p>Council website has "Performance and Improvement at the Council" "Council Achievements" and "Council and Democracy" sections</p> <p>Archived agendas and minutes now published as well as the current ones on the website</p>	<p>Strategic Plan Action Plan – progress is reported to scrutiny on a half yearly basis</p>
<p>6.2.6 Ensure that the authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its staff and ensure that it has made a commitment to openness and transparency in all its dealings, including partnerships subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so</p>	<p>Constitution Customer service standards Voluntary Sector Compact "Have Your Say" at meetings Freedom of Information Act Publication Scheme Member and Officer Codes of Conduct Way We Work Programme Whistle Blowing Policy Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy Monitoring Officer Protocol Communications Policy Data Protections Policy ICT Security Policy</p>	<p>Annual review of Whistleblowing Policy</p> <p>Annual review of Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy</p>

<p>6.3.1 Develop and maintain a clear policy on how staff and their representatives are consulted and involved in decision making</p>	<p>Council website Investors in People Facilities and Recognition Agreement with UNISON</p>	
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Extract from the Minutes of the Standards Committee meeting of 24 June 2011

Review of Local Code of Corporate Governance

The Committee considered a report from the Monitoring Officer reviewing the updated Local Code of Corporate Governance.

The entry for paragraph 3.2.2 should be amended to make clear that the Contract Procedure Rules would not be monitored and reviewed by the Standards Committee. Responsibility for the Contract Procedure Rules lay with Cabinet. It was suggested that a reference to the award of Charter Status for Elected Member Development should be added to paragraphs 5.1.1 and 5.1.3 as this was external validation of the Council's approach to member development and was relevant to the criteria for paragraph 5.1 of the Local Code of Corporate Governance.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the Local Code of Corporate Governance be approved subject to the following amendments:

- (a) an amendment to paragraph 3.2.2 to clarify the arrangements for the monitoring and review of the Contract Procedure Rules;
- (b) the inclusion of a reference to the award of Charter Status for Elected Member Development in paragraphs 5.1.1 and 5.1.3.

