

# Strategic Plan Action Plan – Actions

## Vibrant

- Enhance the diverse retail and leisure mix supporting independent business opportunities valued by residents and visitors
- Develop a strong sense of community across the Borough by enabling people and groups to take more ownership and responsibility for their quality of life
- Make more of the great culture and heritage in Colchester so that more visitors can enjoy the history and passion of Colchester
- Create the right environment for people to develop and flourish in all aspects of life both business and pleasure

Action	Half Year update
Work with development partners to bring exciting new retail and leisure to the eastern part of Colchester town centre	<p><b>Greyfriars Hotel</b> opened in July following a £10m refurbishment. This boutique hotel brings a new level of luxury to Colchester's tourism offer.</p> <p><b>The Cells</b> at the old Magistrate's Court and <b>'Bills' in the former Angel Court</b> add to the leisure offer and make an important contribution to diversifying the evening and night time economy.</p> <p><b>Town Centre Improvements Exhibition</b> – showcase event for recent and forthcoming developments in the town centre. This was well attended and received by the public with approximately 700 visitors in total.</p>
Launch the new High Street Charter Market and develop the offer with themed or extra market events	<p>The official launch took place on April 18<sup>th</sup> with a series of celebratory events supported by the National Market Traders Association and the National Association of British Market Authorities</p> <p>The market is being developed through advertising opportunities within the specialist trade press and a Social Media campaign on dedicated platforms.</p> <p>The Charter Market was involved in a <b>themed family fun day</b> on 12 September. Stallholders gave very positive feedback after the event including how it created a pleasant atmosphere enhanced by the music, customers seemed happier and less hurried leading to more time to browse/buy. The general consensus was that there should be more events like this.</p>
Support communities to develop their own Neighbourhood Plans	<p>There are currently 9 Neighbourhood Plans being developed and a number of other parish councils are considering their options. Officers are supporting all the parishes involved. In the first 6 months of this year Neighbourhood Plan Area Designations have been approved for Eight Ash Green, Copford and Marks Tey. The Parish Councils are undertaking training and seeking grant funding as they progress their plans. Myland CC Neighbourhood Plan is well advanced and will be submitted in November for final consultation ahead of examination.</p>

<p>Work with our residents, the third sector and other service providers to implement the Community Enabling Strategy to enable communities to influence, own or co-design services</p>	<p>A number of Services have been reviewing policies and processes to consider how we can better enable residents and customers. These activities include more online support as described below, and sharing more advice and information.</p> <p>In addition to this use of Section 106 funding continues to focus on community development and projects highlighted in local areas such as the Old Heath Community Café facility.</p> <p>Specific Community Enabling projects have been agreed and funded by New Homes Bonus money and these are progressing well and include a focus on enabling residents to 'get active' in their communities.</p> <p><b>Go Online Promotion</b> – This project is delivering digital skills courses for customers in partnership with community groups (e.g. Parish Councils, libraries etc), thus enabling communities to self-serve. Since April we have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• created a Basic Digital Skills course with CBH and Signpost for staff and customers (being rolled out internally and at Signpost/CBH)</li> <li>• trained 30 Online Champions who are able to help people access our online services</li> <li>• Held online drop in sessions and Digital Bazaars with champions and partners across the borough</li> <li>• Given 150 customers online support over 3 months</li> <li>• Made changes to the website and system processes based on customer feedback via the Go Online activities</li> <li>• Developed a Go On UK partnership with including the private, voluntary and public sectors (e.g. Barclays, Housing Associations, ECC, CCVS, Ee) with networks created in communities.</li> </ul> <p><b>NAR3/Town Centre Planting Proposals</b> – Colchester in Bloom have agreed to take ownership of some planting displays along with their maintenance.</p>
<p>Work with the Colchester Community Voluntary Service (CCVS) and other local voluntary sector organisations to promote volunteering</p>	<p>CBC have provided funding to CCVS to promote the value volunteers can bring across organisations, identify interesting volunteering opportunities and promote and fill them, ensuring that we support individual and capture the benefits.</p> <p>This has been achieved through a Town Centre collection for refugees.</p> <p><b>Walking With The Wounded</b> – CCVS being invited to evening reception to promote work opportunities, including volunteering.</p> <p>CBC has worked with the Constable Country Visitor Management Group to secure funding for a 'Constable Country Rangers Scheme' with 17 volunteers helping visitors to get more from this sensitive area.</p>

<p>Make more of our culture and heritage with initiatives such as the Friends of the Colchester Roman Wall and by attracting Heritage grants</p>	<p><b>Town Walls</b> - further interpretation panels have been installed in partnership with the Friends of Colchester Roman Wall. The most recent panel is on Priory Street.</p> <p><b>Castle</b> - new content has been added to the App. The updated App can be downloaded from the App Store or Google Play. Further content is planned.</p> <p><b>Banners</b> – on some key routes into town will be used to promote the heritage of Colchester and what the town has to offer visitors.</p> <p><b>Lighting the Walls &amp; Heritage Sites</b> – the BIFA project is to light Balcerne Gate and it is anticipated that this will be completed by April 2016.</p> <p><b>High Street Alleyways</b> – plans to enhance the heritage of town centre alleys in partnership with ECC using NHB and LGF funding streams. Specifically our contribution will focus on ironwork installations at each end of the alleyways. It is anticipated that this will be completed by April 2016.</p>
<p>Ensure sufficient land is allocated in the right places to attract and retain businesses, supply homes and identify the infrastructure that is needed by developing a Local Plan for the borough</p>	<p>The evidence base for new allocations is currently being prepared to inform the draft Local Plan for approval and public consultation early 2016. The existing plan contains sufficient allocations for new homes and business in the short/medium term and identifies infrastructure needs.</p>
<p>Co-ordinate partners and funding streams in the Northern Gateway and the Hythe to generate a wide range of jobs and facilities</p>	<p>Leisure land at Northern Gateway South marketed and recommended developer approved at RIF Committee in September.</p> <p>David Lloyd lease exchanged in September and awaiting completion.</p> <p>Ongoing conversations with key stakeholders and sports funding organisations in respect of leisure land to the North of A12 at Northern Gateway. Brief for public realm and transport consultancy sent out.</p> <p>Heat mapping masterplan work for the Hythe and Northern Gateway, funded by ECC and Department of Energy and Climate Change and Su Ports EU project has been completed.</p>
<p>Create more independent business opportunities by providing trading units in new large developments across the borough.</p>	<p>Work continues on a Building Partnerships leasehold deal in respect of St Botolphs Quarter following sign off of heads of terms.</p> <p>Units at Molar works, the Hythe now received back from developers and being marketed.</p> <p>Creative Business Centre contractor approved at RIF Committee in September with work to start on site in October. The centre will provide 43 new business start up units in St Botolphs.</p>

## Prosperous

- Promote Colchester to attract further inward investment and business relocation, providing greater and more diverse employment opportunities
- Support people to develop the skills needed by employers in the future to take advantage of higher paid jobs being created
- Provide opportunities to increase the number of homes available including those that are affordable for local people and to build (& renovate) our own Council houses for people in significant need
- Ensure transport infrastructure keeps pace with housing growth the keep the Borough moving

Action	Half Year update
Deliver an inward investment campaign in key employment sectors	Working with Invest Essex and 'Breeze' (an inward investment consultancy) to plan the data mining and marketing requirements needed to attract new inward investment into the Borough.
Work with the Town Team and other partners to promote Colchester to attract inward investment	New Christmas Lights contract procured to 2017 in partnership with retailers.  <b>High Street Animation</b> – publicised under “Colchester Presents” branding with active involvement from Williams & Griffin, Red Lion Walk and Culver Square in the provision of entertainment at both events.
Review the Better Colchester Town Centre website to promote Colchester	Website under review by new Project officer.  <b>Town Centre Improvements Exhibition</b> – Feedback is being incorporated into the <a href="#">Better Town Centre website</a> , which will be regularly updated to keep people informed of progress made.
Secure increased funding and support for skills initiatives particularly in growth or emerging sectors	Working with Essex County Council to deliver a digital/ IT STEM programme in 4 local schools by the end of 2015/16 (600 students per term).  Working with Essex and Tendring Councils to raise awareness of and attract recruits into the Health & Care sector. Schools signed up to industry led activities include The Gilberd, Thurstable and Philip Morant.  Working with Essex County Council and businesses to plan how best to recruit, train and provide accreditation in construction skills. Workshop at Colchester Institute on October 29 <sup>th</sup> .
Provide local economic data to education providers to help ensure that the skills that Colchester businesses need are provided	Using the Colchester Economic Growth Strategy Evidence Base and the Essex Economic Plan data to share local data to education providers. Working with Essex Employment & Skills Board to ensure the link is made between the key sector representatives and local education providers.
Ensure there is an ongoing five-year supply of housing sites and the provision of sufficient numbers, types and tenure of housing to meet local need	The Council is updating its evidence base to ensure the most up to date information is used to inform housing targets. The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) is used to monitor existing allocations and new sites to ensure there is a 5 year housing land supply.

Deliver 205 new affordable homes in the borough by 2018	For the first 6 months of the year 74 affordable homes have been delivered.								
Seek 20% of new homes on qualifying sites to be affordable homes	<p>At the end of September 2015 a total of 3 qualifying sites had legal agreements agreed and signed which specified the affordable housing contribution due on that site. Two of the sites were rural exception sites which were being built by a private developer. On these sites we secured 67% and 53% affordable housing. The total affordable housing contributions are set out below:</p> <table><tr><th>Total number of homes on the 3 qualifying sites<sup>1</sup></th><th>Number of affordable homes due if 20% affordable policy applied</th><th>Number of affordable homes actually secured</th><th>Commuted sum to provide affordable homes offsite in lieu of on-site for these 3 sites</th></tr><tr><td>190</td><td>38</td><td>11</td><td>£153,000</td></tr></table>	Total number of homes on the 3 qualifying sites <sup>1</sup>	Number of affordable homes due if 20% affordable policy applied	Number of affordable homes actually secured	Commuted sum to provide affordable homes offsite in lieu of on-site for these 3 sites	190	38	11	£153,000
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190	38	11	£153,000						
Work with Colchester Borough Homes to increase the quality of council housing by refurbishing these properties and using new technologies to ensure they are energy efficient	<p>Delivery of the Housing Investment Programme is progressing well across the housing stock; this includes upgrading electrical wiring and the installation of replacement kitchens, bathrooms, heating systems, windows and doors. External improvements such as soffit, fascia and guttering replacements to uPVC and estate improvements such as replacement of failing boundary brick walls with fencing and garage site upgrades. Our refurbishment of sheltered housing schemes to the Colchester Standard saw phase 1 completed at Worsnop House in March; while phase 2 commenced at Enoch House in August with a completion scheduled for March 2017.</p> <p>New technologies have been installed across the housing stock including photovoltaic (PV) panels, PV storage systems, voltage optimisers, loft, cavity and solid wall insulation, ‘A’-rated gas boilers and double glazing. The refurbishments of Worsnop House and Enoch House included gas absorption heat pumps, PV panels, solar thermal panels, triple glazing, sun tubes and LED lighting</p>								
Work with statutory and voluntary sector partners to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough	<p>The Homelessness Strategy Progress report 2015 published. The evidence base and Delivery Plan have been updated.</p> <p>To reduce begging in Colchester, an alternative giving campaign has been set up to encourage residents to give donations to Charities for homeless clients instead of street beggars.</p>								

<sup>1</sup> Qualifying sites means sites of more than 10 units in Colchester, Stanway, Tiptree, Mersea and Wivenhoe or more than 5 units elsewhere.

Articulate Colchester's transport needs to influence the development of new infrastructure by the Highway Authority and developers	As part of the evidence base for the new local plan, transport modelling work is being undertaken to gain a better understanding of infrastructure needs associated with new development.
Support the delivery of improvements to the strategic road and rail network	<p>The third part of the Northern Approaches Road opened April 2015.</p> <p>Colchester's Park and Ride service opened in April 2015 and launched in June 2015. An extra stop at Middleborough was added to the route following lobbying.</p> <p>Colchester has been represented at an 'A12' workshop, providing information on current and future growth to Highways England.</p> <p>Officers have met with all 3 rail companies who have been invited to tender for the East Anglia Rail Franchise; and worked with Abellio Greater Anglia on the design for refurbishment of the north side station building for construction to start in 2015.</p>
Allocate developer funding to sustainable transport projects in the borough which improve the balance between different modes of transport	<p>Requests are made at Development Team and in response to applications to ensure new development is well served by sustainable transport modes. New path opened as part of Brook Street development linking to Wivenhoe Trail. Working with University and Maltings Student accommodation unit on Travel Planning "App".</p> <p>+ Funded final part of Tiptree Community Cycle project with CTC delivering events throughout the summer.</p>
Improve the walking and cycling links between Colchester North Station and the town centre through initiatives such as 'Fixing the Link'	<p>LEP Local Growth Fund to be invested on projects promoted by Colchester including improving the alleyways in the town centre and linking Park and Ride stops to the town centre core.</p> <p>Cycle parking on south side of Colchester station doubled and new secure parking unit launched in September – demand for cycling parking has doubled over the last 8 years on southside of station.</p> <p>Fixing the Link – design consultants appointed and consultation held. Detail design underway. Financial contributions secured from partners – AGA and ECC.</p>

## Thriving

- Provide Colchester's heritage and wide ranging tourism attractions to enhance our reputation as a destination
- Be recognised as a centre of learning with excellent schools and educational opportunities for young people to make the most of their potential
- Be clear about the major opportunities to work in partnership with public, private and voluntary sectors to achieve more for Colchester than we could on our own
- Cultivate Colchester's green space and opportunities for health, wellbeing and the enjoyment of all

Action	Half Year update
Provide positive experiences for visitors and residents by promoting Colchester's key leisure, visitor attractions and events venues	This has been achieved by launching a Tourism video, producing a 2016 Visit Colchester Guide – showcasing the best of Colchester, Colchester Presents joint marketing campaigns, a Town Hall marketing campaign, a Colchester Castle marketing campaign including social media, and a Colchester Leisure World marketing campaign.
Support and help market a range of cultural festivals for local people and visitors	Marketing support has been given to a series of events organised as part of the 'Borough Investment For All' fund including the summer Big Screen, Bark in the Park, High Street and Winter Wonderland and Colchester Presents marketing campaigns.  Support has also been given for the Comedy Festival and Roman River Festival. Ongoing support and partnership working continues with The Mercury Theatre, firstsite and the Arts Centre. Visit Colchester has been working with local providers to publicise and promote festivals and events for residents and visitors to the Borough.
Enhance Colchester's heritage attractions with initiatives such as integrating attractions, identifying trails around the town, and lighting the Roman walls	Heritage Trail App - (developed and funded through the Castle redevelopment project) has had more content added.  The new Heritage App developed and funded through the Castle redevelopment project provides a heritage trail around the town along with interactive information.  Feasibility and costing work underway to define opportunities to light part of the Roman Walls and Key Heritage Sites more effectively. The town centre animation event on the 31 <sup>st</sup> October will also include a unique laser lighting display on the Town Hall, showing this heritage building in a completely new light.
Promote what Colchester has to offer to residents, visitors, and new businesses	A Purple Flag event was held over National Purple Flag Weekend (2-4 October 2015) which engaged a range of licensed premises and taxis to celebrate Colchester's Purple Flag accreditation raise awareness and improve public perception of night time economy and launch a fundraising campaign for the SOS Bus. The Purple Flag assessment will be carried out on 12 December 2015.

	<p>Tourism video 2016 Visit Colchester Guide –showcase the best of Colchester. Colchester Presents joint marketing campaigns. Town Hall marketing campaign. Colchester Castle marketing campaign, including social media.</p>
<p>Establish an effective apprenticeship programme to provide career and learning opportunities for young people</p>	<p>Officers are currently working with Essex County Council in order to increase the number of Digital Apprenticeships to 60 in 2015/16, 90 in 2016/17.</p> <p>It is intended to pilot a rotational apprenticeship scheme developed by the Essex Employment &amp; Skills Board to Level 2 in Health and Care having gained experience in various care organisations.</p>
<p>Work with the third sector to deliver Colchester's Environmental Sustainability Strategy</p>	<p>Work is progressing with local third sector organisations, Abberton Rural Training, Enform and Essex Wildlife Trust to support the delivery of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy.</p> <p>In recognition of some of the projects delivered with these partners Colchester Borough Council's Strategic Housing Team won the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) East Award for their work in the fields of promoting energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty.</p> <p>Partnership projects have included delivery of energy switching support for vulnerable people in Colchester for two years and the Colchester Green Open Homes event in 2014. This was so successful that the project was extended to the whole of Essex in September 2015 and included homes, community buildings and businesses with energy efficiency measures in place.</p> <p>Colchester Borough Council (CBC) signed up to the Local Government Authority's (LGA) Climate Local Commitment. As well as demonstrating an on-going commitment in reducing the Council's own carbon emissions from its buildings, services and operations, it also supports the roll-out of sustainability projects in partnership with the third sector.</p>
<p>Make the most of our parks and open spaces by managing them well and offering a range of activities and events</p>	<p>Our parks and open spaces are being used throughout the year for a variety of regular and one off events including High Woods Country Park "Bubble Rush" event raising funds for St Helena Hospice.</p> <p>Our good management of our parks has been recognised by the retention of Green Flag awards for Castle Park and High Woods Country Park.</p>



## Welcoming

- Ensure Colchester is a welcoming and safe place for residents, visitors and businesses with a friendly feel that embraces tolerance and diversity
- Improve the cleanliness and health of the place by supporting events that promote fun and wellbeing
- Create a business friendly environment, encouraging business start-ups, support to small and medium sized enterprise and offer development in the right locations
- Make Colchester confident about its own abilities, to compete with the best of the towns in the region to generate a sense of pride

Action	Half Year update
Work with partners to fund and deliver streetscape improvements to support economic vitality	We are working with ECC to secure £15m Single Local Growth Fund monies for Colchester Projects of which some would be used to improve the alleyways in the town centre
Work with partners in the Safer Colchester Partnership to deliver support, promotion and regulation in order to make Colchester even safer and for it to feel safer	<p>Partners on the Safer Colchester Partnership have produced an Annual Partnership Plan with the following four priorities: Protecting Vulnerable People, Reducing Reoffending, Addressing drug and alcohol misuse and Reducing Crime and Fear of Crime.</p> <p>Successful joint agency enforcement activities are being co-ordinated via the Licensing Enforcement Group.</p> <p>A new style Licensing Policy is out for consultation which aims to create a safe and vibrant early evening and night time economy.</p> <p>CBC is working with partners, the Safer Colchester Partnership, the voluntary sector and licenced premises to coordinate Colchester's 2015 application for Purple Flag status. Purple Flag is a national accreditation for town centres which have a well-managed night time and evening economy.</p>
Improve the information available to new residents	<p>The 'colchester.gov.uk' website has been significantly improved over the past 6 months allowing our residents to access online content more readily. Areas improved include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NNDR (Business Rates)</li> <li>• Council tax and Benefits</li> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Elections</li> <li>• Waste and Recycling</li> </ul> <p>Work on these areas has seen a large impact on user engagement with Planning alone showing over 100% increase in online engagement and Revs and Bens has seen their online engagement rise by over 71%.</p>

	<p>Our new suite of GovDelivery e-newsletters have seen a 42.5% increase in subscriptions and a 30% increase in clicks through to content on websites across the council.</p> <p>An increased use of social media and paid for advertising have resulted in an increase in transactions on council run websites, notably a Castle FlashSale and Bark in the Park tickets.</p>
Improve street cleansing and enforcement in Colchester town centre, and in Stanway, Tiptree, West Mersea, and Wivenhoe	<p>The new Enforcement Rota brings wardens in from other zones to work solely on town centre enforcement. This increases the amount of enforcement that can take place and keeps wardens skills high. In this half year 14 litter fines have been given already in town.</p> <p>We have secured funding to purchase a new Hot Washer to keep town centre streets cleaner.</p> <p>In Stanway we work closely with the Parish Council to ensure there is a joined up approach to cleansing; and currently hold a contract to maintain their open spaces.</p> <p>Tiptree has a dedicated Zone Operative to ensure issues are seen and dealt with early. This has led to a significant visual impact, especially in the Estate areas.</p> <p>Wivenhoe has a dedicated Zone Warden to help with education and enforcement. This is working well and residents are starting to share information about problem hotspots.</p>
Work with health partners to contribute towards delivering effective outcomes for individuals and their families, with particular focus on prevention and intervention to improve health outcomes and to tackle health inequalities	<p>New links established within the North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (NEE CCG) and Colchester Hospital University Foundation Trust (CHUFT). Environmental Health Practitioners now attending meetings with Clinical Leads at the Primary Care Centre with an emphasis on identifying opportunities and interventions relating to the wider determinants of health for particular vulnerable patient cohorts such as those frequently admitted to acute services following a fall or those with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).</p>
Lead and develop the Active Colchester Network to co-ordinate programmes and activities to increase participation	<p>An officer from Leisure World is chairing the Active Colchester Community Sport Network, which brings together the University, Colchester United Football in the Community, Colchester Garrison, Active Essex (ECC), Colchester Institute, C CVS, Essex FA, Essex Cricket, ACE and Disability4Sport.</p> <p>An action plan has been developed and agreed which secured £8500 funding from Active Essex for physical activity projects and activities. Those delivered to date include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training for CBC Zone Teams and sheltered housing staff to lead Boccia sessions in sheltered housing schemes</li> <li>• Free Summer Sports Festival at Leisure World Highwoods</li> <li>• Free Older people's activities afternoon in Charter Hall</li> <li>• Free family fun day in Tiptree</li> <li>• Regular Parkour sessions at Leisure World Highwoods</li> </ul>

Work with Colchester Borough Homes, housing providers, private landlords, residents and partners to create cleaner, greener and safer communities	<p>The Low Emission Strategy has been drafted and will now go for consultation. The strategy will provide a framework for integrating the Council's activities to reduce air quality related emissions across the Borough. The strategy's key aim is to identify the sources of air pollution and the effect upon public health to enable suitable actions to be developed to target the improvement of air quality.</p> <p>Through the Colchester Low Emission Bus Project electronic cooling fans have been fitted to 10 busses operating in the Town Centre resulting in better fuel efficiency, reduced emissions and quieter engines. 1 bus has now been fully retro fitted with selective catalytic reduction technology reducing nitrogen emissions by 80% with 9 more vehicles due to be upgraded shortly.</p> <p>Work to improve housing conditions in the private rented sector has seen 124 significant hazards mitigated from dwellings across the district with the majority of hazards identified relating to falls risks, cold, damp homes, and fire safety deficiencies. As a result of property improvements 19 families have been lifted from fuel poverty.</p> <p>The Bark in the Park 2015 event was successfully delivered; and attended by 3000+ visitors with their dogs. The key aim of the event was to promote responsible dog ownership.</p>
Enhance the offer from Colchester Business Enterprise Agency to deliver a 'one-stop-shop' for business start-ups and survival	The Colchester Business Enterprise Agency (COLBEA) offer provides a comprehensive advice, support and mentoring service to local businesses and aspiring new businesses. COLBEA premises in its 2 Colchester sites are now running at 100% occupancy.
Deliver the Creative Business Centre in the town centre to support fledgling businesses	A contractor was approved at a recent RIF Committee and will start on site in late October. The brief to operators is out to tender with returns due late October. Monthly progress reports are being made to a joint CBC/ECC Board
Launch a new destination marketing campaign to raise Colchester's profile and to encourage pride in the borough	This has included a Journey and Tourism video, Visit Colchester tourism marketing campaign and Colchester Presents.