

Environment and Sustainability Panel Meeting

**Online Meeting, Virtual Meeting Platform
Thursday, 17 September 2020 at 18:00**

The Environment and Sustainability Panel explores methods of conservation of natural habitats and biodiversity through adapting existing practices or creating new ecologically diverse environments. The Panel encourages renewable energy generation and carbon footprint reduction in both the public and private sectors by examining air and water quality, plastic and waste reduction and renewable energy generation. The Panel monitors the progress and implementation of the Council's Emergency Climate Action Plan and regularly reports to Cabinet and Full Council.

Information for Members of the Public

Access to information and meetings

You have the right of access to all meetings of the Council, its Committees and Cabinet which may be conducted remotely such as by live audio or video broadcast / webcast. You also have the right to see the agenda (the list of items to be discussed at a meeting), which is published on the Council's website at least five working days before the meeting, and minutes once they are published. Dates of the meetings are available here:

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

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

Have Your Say!

The Council welcomes contributions in the form of written representations from members of the public at most public meetings. One single contribution to each meeting of no longer than 500 words may be made by each person which must be submitted via the form accessed by this link, before noon on the working day before the meeting date: Environment and Sustainability Have Your Say!

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Environment and Sustainability Panel - Terms of Reference (but not limited to)

To acknowledge our “Climate Emergency” and translate aspirations into actions.

To explore methods of conservation of natural habitats and biodiversity, whether through adapting existing practices and places or creating new ecologically diverse environments with sustainable practices built in.

To encourage renewable energy generation and carbon footprint reduction in both the public and private sectors across the borough.

To encourage environmental stewardship focusing on carbon footprint reduction by examining air quality, water quality, plastic and waste reduction and renewable energy generation in both public and private spheres across the Borough

To monitor and regularly report to Cabinet and Full Council upon progress and implementation of the Council’s Climate Emergency Action Plan and its goal to be net carbon neutral by 2030.

COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL
Environment and Sustainability Panel
Thursday, 17 September 2020 at 18:00

The Environment and Sustainability Panel Members are:

Councillor Nigel Chapman
Councillor Peter Chillingworth
Councillor Mark Cory
Councillor Robert Davidson
Councillor Mark Goacher
Councillor Sam McCarthy
Councillor Lee Scordis
Councillor Lorcan Whitehead

The Environment and Sustainability Panel Substitute Members are:

All members of the Council who are not Cabinet members or members of this Panel.

AGENDA
THE LIST OF ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING
(Part A - open to the public)

Please note that Agenda items 1 to 6 are normally dealt with briefly.

1 Appointment of Chairman

To appoint a Chairman for the forthcoming Municipal Year

2 Appointment of Deputy Chairman

To appoint a Deputy Chairman for the forthcoming Municipal Year

3 Welcome and Announcements (Virtual Meetings)

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

4 Substitutions

Councillors will be asked to say if they are attending on behalf of a Committee member who is absent.

5 Urgent Items

The Chairman will announce if there is any item not on the published agenda which will be considered because it is urgent and will explain the reason for the urgency.

6 Declarations of Interest

Councillors will be asked to say if there are any items on the agenda about which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest which would prevent them from participating in any discussion of the item or participating in any vote upon the item, or any other pecuniary interest or non-pecuniary interest.

7 Have Your Say! (Virtual Meetings)

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

8 Introduction to the work of the Panel and Terms of Reference

The Chair will make a brief verbal introduction to the work of the Panel, and discuss the Terms of Reference.

9 Climate Emergency – One Year On

7 - 22

This report sets out the progress that has been made with the environmental sustainability agenda at the Council since the Climate Emergency declaration on 17 July 2019. Next steps for each of the environmentally themed projects and workstreams occurring at the Council are also summarised.

10 Greening Colchester Policy

23 - 72

This report sets out how the Council proposes to reduce, monitor and control the use of glyphosate-based products and how it will use alternative methods for the control of unwanted vegetative growth on Council owned land.

11 Environment and Sustainability Work Programme 2020-2021

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This report sets out the current Work Programme 2020-2021 for the Environment and Sustainability Panel. This provides details of the reports that are scheduled for each meeting during the municipal year.

Part B

(not open to the public including the press)

17th September 2020

Report of	Place and Client Services	Author	Ben Plummer
Title	Climate Emergency – One Year On		☎ 508965
Wards affected	All Wards		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the progress that has been made with the environmental sustainability agenda at the Council since the Climate Emergency declaration on 17th July 2019. Next steps for each of the environmentally themed projects and workstreams occurring at the Council are also summarised.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to note the contents of this report.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 This report is for information only

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Not applicable

5. Background Information

- 5.1 On the 17th July 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency, committing the organisation to becoming carbon neutral in all its operations and services by 2030. Since this declaration, the Council published a Climate Emergency Action Plan in January 2020 which details key themes and initial actions that the Council intends to take to help reach the carbon neutral target.
- 5.2 There are several key Council projects and workstreams which are focussed on the environment and sustainability, and progress with these is discussed below. In this report, recent progress on each of the projects is highlighted. Background and additional information on each project can be found in appendix 1.

Northern Gateway Heat Network - Progress and next steps:

- 5.3 The installation of the infrastructure that will connect the heat pump and the boreholes started being installed in July 2020 as part of a contract to develop “The Walk” (previously known as “The Boulevard”). This includes underground infrastructure installed at the same time as this main pedestrian/cycleway through the Colchester Northern Gateway. The tender of the design and the build of the central Energy Centre and heat distribution pipes will then commence later in 2020, with construction of the energy centre due to start in Spring 2021.
- 5.4 The heat network will be the biggest of its kind, and will provide clean energy to 350 homes on the Colchester Amphora Homes Ltd (Mill Road) site (with 30% affordable homes owned by the Council), another 300 homes on the health campus, a small medical facility and nearly 500,000 square feet of commercial floorspace.
- 5.5 In addition, an initial feasibility study has been commissioned with funding from the Greater South East Energy Hub for a micro grid to cover other areas of the Northern Gateway development which will report on the viability in September 2020. A microgrid would offer additional clean energy using Council assets to provide a longer term income in addition to the environmental benefits.

Planning and Climate Change - Progress and Next steps:

- 5.6 The Place Strategy team have been exploring various ways to deliver further environmental and sustainability measures through the planning system.
- 5.7 These measures, which the Place Strategy Team are exploring, were included in CBC’s Climate Emergency Action Plan. The progress on each of the actions identified can be found in appendix 1. The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted on progress with these measures as Officers have had to focus on core areas of work and some Officers have had to deal directly with the impacts of the pandemic. All measures will continue to be progressed by the Place Strategy Team, in collaboration with the Transport and Sustainability Team where appropriate.
- 5.8 A number of planning applications have been determined with conditions to include electric vehicle charging points. This includes the Council’s own developments. The Colchester Northern Gateway Sports Park will be the first of these to provide the EVCPs when it opens in January 2021, followed by housing developments that will be completed and occupied from March 2021. These demonstrate how the Council is leading by example (the affordable housing also

including renewable energy through air source heat pumps and other environmental sustainability measures).

Clean Air for Colchester (DEFRA Behaviour Change Project) - Progress and next steps:

- 5.9 The results from the Clean Air for Colchester Project engagement phase and the Clean Air Survey are being used to design the Colchester wide 'switch off' campaign and to identify a resident group in Colchester to work with to increase the proportion of journeys made through walking and cycling.
- 5.10 The findings and insight from the survey and public engagement can be viewed in the report ['Findings from the Clean Air for Colchester Community Engagement'](#) with some key findings of this report highlighted in Appendix 1.
- 5.11 The 'switch off' signage messaging will be installed, subject to planning permission, within two of Colchester's Air Quality Management Areas at two traffic light junctions and the East Gates rail crossing where a large proportion of queuing stationary traffic is often present, especially at peak times. The launch of the 'switch' off campaign is due late September. The objectives of the study are to:
- Test the effectiveness of messaging over a period of months.
 - Identify if driver fatigue is a factor leading to a decrease in switch off rates and if so at what point messages stop being effective.
 - Explore whether rotating messages maintains positive driver behaviour around switching off their engines.
 - Test the effectiveness of messages simultaneously at traffic light junctions and rail crossings in Colchester.
 - Investigate the impact of switching off engines on air quality.

eCargo Bike Project - Progress and next steps:

- 5.12 Following a procurement exercise, the majority of bikes have now been ordered and the whole fleet is anticipated to have arrived by mid to late September. The legal agreement between the champions and CBC is complete. Storage for the CBC bikes and the pool bikes is being arranged as well as insurance and risk assessments. A communication plan will be formulated, and a [web page](#) has been put together prior to an official launch date being arranged.

Council culture - Progress and next steps:

- 5.13 Engagement and education is going to play a vital part of the progress over the next few years. Embedding sustainability into hearts and minds will be key to maximising delivery. A number of initiatives are being prepared, including the introduction of a need to consider climate change from the initial outset of new projects, and the inclusion of this in PIDs.
- 5.14 To help with implementation of the Climate Emergency Action Plan, a Climate Emergency Officer was employed at the beginning of February 2020. This officer will aim to embed environment and sustainability considerations within the Council's culture amongst other tasks. Some tasks the officer has carried out in his role since starting are outlined below.

- Carbon Trust analysis – collecting data for the recent analysis conducted by the Carbon Trust (see later in the report)
- Environmental Impact Checklist – A checklist of key questions for considering the environmental impacts of projects has been produced for project managers to use when completing the Project Initiation Document (PID).

5.15 Some next steps for this workstream include:

- Sustainable procurement: The Council will be introducing a new way to measure and embed social value within its procurement processes through an online platform managed by the company Social Value Portal. The officer is and will further be considering how to use this process to gain further information on the environmental performance of contractors the Council seeks to work with.
- Educational programme for staff: Resources to conduct a climate change awareness and training programme have been researched. Next steps will involve agreeing to how this training will be delivered, finding a budget for its delivery and prioritising officers to take part in this training.
- Further embedding of Environment in Council culture: This includes the assessment of the environmental implications of Council projects in progress and closure reports and increasing information available to new starters and officers more widely on the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan.

Woodland Project (and biodiversity) - Progress and next steps:

5.16 After a successful first year of planting, tree planting for the second year will resume in November 2020, with an emphasis on ensuring that tree planting not only enhances the natural beauty of areas and increases carbon storage, but to also benefit biodiversity.

5.17 Following the announcement by the Council to phase out the use of glyphosate in Council operations and services last year, a policy on the use of Glyphosate in Council operations is being produced.

5.18 Some next steps for this workstream include:

- Planning the 2nd tree planting season due to begin in November 2020. 11,200 trees are to be planted in this season.
- Investigating the possibility of creating a tree seed nursery at the Big Garden at Highwoods Country Park.
- Continued collaboration with local experts and interested stakeholders such as the National History Society to ensure the protection of biodiversity is central to the approach taken with tree planting.
- Identifying areas along the Colchester Orbital, the 14-15 mile walking and cycling route in and around Colchester, that can be 'greened'.
- Establishing open spaces to be left to rewild on a trial basis and investigating the effect this has on biodiversity within these areas.
- Identifying sites for urban tree planting in Colchester.

Carbon Trust analysis - Progress and next steps:

- 5.19 Further to their analysis of the Council's carbon footprint in financial year 2018-19, the Council commissioned the Carbon Trust to undertake some further analysis. This included conducting pathway analysis to map out CBC's emissions to 2030 based on national and Council level trends and policies, and calculating the Council's Scope 3 footprint (i.e. indirect emissions from the Council's operations and services such as procured goods and services, leased buildings, equity investments of the Council and staff commuting).
- 5.20 The full findings from these two pieces of analysis are included in the [Carbon Trust report](#). Some headline results from these two pieces of analysis are outlined below.
- 5.21 Scope 1 and 2 Pathway Analysis:
- Based on several key Council projects, the Carbon Trust project the Council's emissions to reduce by 3,401 tCO₂e (tonnes of CO₂ equivalent) to 2,780 tCO₂e by 2030
 - The Council aim to have a full electric fleet by 2030, seek to decarbonise heating systems (swapping to electric heating systems where possible) and consider further use of renewable electricity on, or to supply, Council operated buildings
- 5.22 Scope 3 footprint:
- The Scope 3 carbon footprint was estimated to be 31,842 tCO₂e, making up 84% of the Council's total carbon footprint
 - The majority of emissions came from equity investments; particularly Colchester Borough Homes (14,829 tCO₂e), and from procured goods and services (12,870 tCO₂e).
- 5.23 Key recommendations from the report:
- Undertake feasibility studies for large projects such as the retrofit programme for the Council's sheltered housing stock and electrification of the Council's fleet.
 - Continue to pursue easy win technologies to decarbonise the Council estate
 - Begin to set out the principles of an offsetting strategy for the Council
- 5.24 Following the Carbon Trust pathway analysis, it is important that the Council follows up on this by deciding on specific actions and projects to take forward in order to lower the Council's carbon footprint. The Council will have to consider this in light of the Covid-19 crisis, thinking about how Council buildings and services will operate in a post Covid-19 environment.
- 5.25 Work has already started on tackling climate change and sustainability in the housing stock. A programme of works is being planned, to be agreed and procured for commencement in 2021. This will be supplementary works to the Housing Investment Programme (HIP) led by the Client Team and CBH.
- 5.26 Climate change will also be embedded into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan and Asset Management Strategy which are due for review in 2021 and will come into force from 1 April 2022. In addition, as part of the Councils acquisition programme 100 homes acquired by the Council (as part of the HRA's

New Council Housing Programme) will undergo retrofitting to improve their environmental sustainability before being occupied.

Council Covid-19 Recovery Programme - Progress and next steps:

- 5.27 In this report it is worth acknowledging that the way many of the Council's services operate have changed due to the Covid-19 crisis. These services have adapted well, and it has provided an insight into new ways of working that would have perhaps been harder to imagine before this crisis.
- 5.28 Below is summarised some actions, both planned and those being undertaken, to ensure the Council's recovery has environmental sustainability at its heart.
- 5.29 Economy:
- Collaboration with Essex County Council (ECC) to facilitate the implementation of the 'Safer, Greener, Healthier' transport infrastructure changes to the High Street.
 - Examining the possibility of trialling new models of deliveries made by businesses to consumers' homes using eCargo bikes and electric vehicles.
 - Working with local partners to ensure a greater emphasis is placed on travel planning, to reduce travel to and from work.
- 5.30 Council:
- Ensured that Council Decision Making meetings could be carried out online. This process has reduced the travel that members would normally have to make to these meetings.
 - Helping to enable most Council officers to work from home during the lockdown period and beyond.
 - Thinking about ways to reimagine how Council services will run with new priorities and budget strategy, which will have environmental sustainability as a key focus.
- 5.31 Customer:
- Developing ways to carry out more services in a digital way rather than in-person such as those that were delivered through the Community Hub.
- 5.32 Communities:
- Working with Community 360 to map opportunities for local green prescribing for wellbeing.
 - Supporting partner organisations to develop flexible working practices, including homeworking as part of the way in which they operate going forward.
 - Looking to set up 'communities forums' to reduce inequalities across the borough, particularly among those in minority and/or faith groups. It is hoped that this work can be linked into the climate emergency workstream at the Council to ensure that any actions that are made to benefit the wider environment and tackle climate change within the borough do not isolate any of these groups.

Overall summary:

- 5.33 Significant progress has been made on several Council projects and workstreams within the last year since the Climate Emergency declaration, and it is important this is sustained. However, it is important that the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan is further refined, and specific tangible actions identified to ensure progress on delivering the plan does not slow. There is also a need to ensure steps are taken to reduce emissions across the Borough. The Council's emissions only contribute to a small proportion of those in the borough, meaning that if big reductions in carbon emissions are to be seen, action will also have to be taken on the wider borough scale.

6. Standard References

- 6.1 There are no particular references to the Strategic Plan; consultation, financial; or community safety, equality and diversity, human rights, publicity, health and safety, risk management or environmental and sustainability implications.
- 6.2 However, given the nature of the projects and workstreams described, they all reflect and consider the Council's declaration of a climate emergency. In this way, they have all considered the potential negative and positive implications on the environment and sustainability.

Appendix 1

This appendix provides more detail on the projects summarised as part of the main report.

Northern Gateway Heat Network

In 2017, the Council won grant funding to install a district heating system in the north of Colchester which will provide low carbon heat for 350 homes, 300 elderly care apartments, a small medical facility and nearly 500,000 square feet of commercial floorspace. The Council formed Colchester Amphora Energy Ltd to lead this project from 1 April 2018.

In 2018/2019, a series of 5 boreholes were drilled into an aquifer (a layer of saturated chalk and gravel holding water) to test the amount of water that could be abstracted. This was trial technology at this scale (in the UK), part of the reason why funding was granted, and was successful to allow the project to proceed. In future, Colchester innovation could lead to others following this work and the learning about the possibilities for mass-scale renewable ground-source heat networks.

Heat will be generated using a ground source heat pump which will extract heat from water abstracted from the chalk aquifer deep below the ground (and then return the water to the aquifer) providing hot water for heating and washing in the Northern Gateway “south” development.

Planning and Climate Change

In October 2019, the Lead Officer for Planning, Housing & Economic Growth outlined environmental and sustainability measures that Colchester Borough Council are achieving through planning to the Conservation and Environmental Sustainability Task and Finish Group. Progress with further measures within planning to benefit the environment are highlighted in the below table.

Climate Emergency Action Plan: Proposed measures for implementation within existing planning legislation

Measures identified	How can this be achieved	Timeframe & Progress
Investigate the introduction of a Climate Emergency Checklist so decision makers can understand the sustainability of proposals & demonstrate compliance with these measures.	1. Investigate the incorporation of all of these measures into a Climate Emergency Checklist. 2. Research examples of sustainability checklists from elsewhere.	1. Initial investigation complete 2. Research completed as part of initial investigation 3. Consider as part of the development of all of these planning measures before

	<p>3. Consider implementation & discuss with DM.</p> <p>4. Training for DM on how to interpret the checklist.</p>	discussing implementation with DM.
Sustainable transport		
Information on sustainable travel choices to be included in marketing of residential properties for developments where there are good sustainable transport options to encourage reduced car use and ownership.	<p>1. Add information to relevant applications as part of Transport & Sustainability response/requests to planning permission consultations</p> <p>2. Consider how this would be monitored.</p> <p>3. Explore the potential to link this to the provision of information on green spaces as part of habitats sites mitigation.</p>	
Installation of electric vehicle charging points	<p>1. Liaise with other departments.</p> <p>2. Research other LPAs requests for electric charging points as part of new development.</p>	1. Ongoing liaison with other CBC departments.
Consideration given to car free developments and other approaches to reducing car parking provision and encouraging car free lifestyles.	<p>1. Research car free developments & travel plans.</p> <p>2. Discuss with the Highways Authority to inform discussion on future options.</p> <p>3. Member training about car free/ reduced parking.</p>	
Introduce additional car clubs.	1. Consider further locations in Colchester to implement car clubs.	1. Ongoing work, looking to develop the network.

Investigate measures to support sustainable modes of transport: investigate a workplace parking levy in the town centre.	<p>1. Research examples of a workplace parking levy (Nottingham only known example, Leicester and Oxford considering this) and consider its application in Colchester.</p> <p>2. Work with other departments to consider incentives such as green number plates, access to bus lanes and cheaper parking.</p>	
Improve, enhance & expand the Colchester Orbital as a walking and cycling route, green space and area of nature conservation.		The Colchester Orbital maps have been published and the route is being promoted by various organisations, including CBC.
Greening		
Explore requiring developers to provide a Canopy Cover Assessment for each major application & maintain or increase canopy cover on site.	<p>1. Guidance to be prepared outlining exactly what is required to increase canopy cover onsite.</p> <p>2. Talk to local groups about their help in establishing baseline cover across Colchester.</p>	<p>1.</p> <p>2. Completed. There is 18.2% canopy cover across the borough.</p>
Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) on allocated sites to safeguard canopy cover.	<p>1. Investigate all allocated sites.</p> <p>2. Make TPOs where appropriate.</p>	1. Planning Policy has provided a list of all allocated sites.
Encourage green roofs and green walls.	<p>1. Research examples of good practice elsewhere.</p> <p>2. Consider the benefits of producing a guidance note for applicants.</p>	The Essex SuDS Design Guide is due for publication in Summer 2020.

Biodiversity		
Produce guidance on measurable biodiversity net gain measures.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research measurable biodiversity net gain projects. 2. Prepare a guidance document including principles of biodiversity net gain & case studies. 3. Discuss planning conditions with DM. 	1. Research undertaken.
Explore options for a long term, strategic measurable biodiversity net gain strategy similar to the Essex Coast RAMS.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Follow the progress of the Environment Bill & Defra Metric 2.0. 2. Consider the benefits and options for a strategic project & how this conforms to legislation & best practice. 3. Discuss with other Essex LPAs. 	Longer term project
Sustainable buildings		
Encourage sites or part of sites (e.g. Amphora & MOD sites & garden communities) to deliver exemplar buildings.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arrange a site visit to passivhaus developments, e.g. Norwich and Braintree. 2. Research other local examples of sustainable buildings. 3. Discussions with developers. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This is included in the Action Plan. 2. 3. Ongoing
Above ground SuDS to be designed as multifunctional features to form part of green infrastructure network.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss with ECC as the Lead Local Flood Authority & other LPAs (Essex Design Guide). 2. Internal discussions, including with new Urban Designer. 	<p>Ongoing discussions.</p> <p>The Essex SuDS Design Guide is due for publication in Summer 2020.</p>
Council to adopt or management scheme to be secured to maintain SuDS features where these are also adoptable open space.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider maintenance and management costs for each SuDS feature. 2. Discuss with Parks team. 	

Raise awareness of the Home Quality Mark (HQM).	1. Talk to ECC about how this is being promoted in Essex & how we can raise the profile of the HQM in Colchester.	
Seek a proportion of homes to be built to lifetime homes standard.	1. Discussions with developers.	Ongoing discussions
Water		
Require new dwellings to meet optional tighter water standard of 110 litres pppd.	1. Research how this is implemented elsewhere (Environment Agency & Anglian Water to advise). 2. Discuss implementation with DM	1. Research undertaken
Renewable energy		
Consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy.	This is being progressed through other parts of the Action Plan (see paragraph 2.1.15).	-
Identify opportunities for development to draw its supply from decentralised, low energy sources.	1. Discuss with Amphora. 2. Look at allocations.	1. Amphora Energy exploring opportunities to deliver district heating elsewhere in Colchester (in addition to the Northern Gateway).

Essex County Council has established a Climate Change Commission. The Commission will identify ways to mitigate climate change, improve air quality, reduce waste, and increase green infrastructure and biodiversity. The Commission recognises the role of planning as one of the main mechanisms to deliver outcomes. Therefore, in addition to the above work, Officers at CBC are liaising with the Commission and other Essex local planning authorities about the role of planning in improving outcomes for the environment and climate change.

Clean Air for Colchester (DEFRA Behaviour Change Project)

The project [Clean Air for Colchester](#) received £249,100 in funding from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to deliver a behaviour change project aimed at reducing air pollution within Colchester, specifically within the Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's). The project has a total duration of two years concluding in May 2021.

The project's primary objectives are to:

- (1) Encourage the widespread uptake of 'no idling', switching engines off when parked, particularly when waiting stationary at traffic lights and level crossings.
- (2) Reduce the number of vehicles on the road by increasing the number of people walking and cycling for short journeys.

The project had an engagement phase which ran from October 2019 to January 2020. This aimed to understand what people know about air pollution and its effects, explore community feeling about idling and identify individuals willing to get involved with the project. The team conducted and attended a range of events and public engagement sessions aimed at raising awareness of the air quality issue in Colchester, the health impacts of air pollution, changes which can be made to reduce our impact on air quality and identify barriers to changing behaviour. A Clean Air Survey investigating similar issues was also produced and received 1181 responses.

Key findings from the survey were that 56% of respondents said knowing how long they will wait at traffic lights would encourage them to switch off and that 45% said roadside reminders would encourage them to regularly switch their engines off. The full result from the survey can be viewed [here](#). Alternatively, on the [project webpage](#), there is an easy to read infographic that summarises outline findings from the Clean Air Survey.

eCargo Bike Project

In May 2020, CBC received grant funding of £136,912 from the Energy Saving Trust for the purchase of [25 electric cargo bikes](#) (eCargo bikes) and five electric trailers. These will be used by 4 Council teams including Parks, Ipswich Museums and the Zone teams as well as 10 'champions' who will use the bikes for their daily activities such as making deliveries and collections of goods.

The eCargo bikes will provide a low carbon mode of travel and will be used to replace more polluting diesel and petrol vehicles that are currently used by the Council teams and 'champions'. The bikes are well suited to carry out short deliveries quickly by being able to avoid, as well as not contribute to, congestion and also being able to use bus lanes and cycle paths.

Our internal and external champions will be the visible face of the project attracting attention and encouraging conversations and discussions about how eCargo bikes can be used to meet business needs, which will help break down barriers and misconceptions and encourage interest.

Local businesses and organisations will then have the opportunity to borrow an eCargo bike for a free short-term loan from a pool of 6 which we anticipate being stored at Culver Square. It is hoped that this feature of the project, alongside seeing other organisations using eCargo bikes, will encourage and increase the confidence of local businesses to consider and invest in eCargo bikes and other electric powered

vehicles as a 'greener' way to carry out their daily activities. The project also aims to overcome the uncertainty and barriers associated with cycling more widely.

In the longer term, it is intended that research will be carried out to understand how the pool of eCargo bikes can be used to tackle physical inactivity amongst delivery drivers and also provide a low carbon mode of transport for local communities to use on a pay as you go basis.

Council culture

One of the key tasks assigned to the Climate Emergency Project Officer at the Council, is to embed the consideration of environmental impacts within how the Council works. A couple of ways this is being done are mentioned below and in the main report.

- **Environmental Impact Checklist:** The purpose of this checklist is for officers to give greater consideration to the environmental impacts of Council projects. Officers will have to go through these questions and consider how their project might impact upon the environment in a variety of ways such as through consumption of resources and production of waste, use of energy and transport and work with biodiversity.
- **Sustainable Procurement:** Use of the Social Value Portal in Council procurement processes will enable the council to ask contractors to demonstrate how they can deliver various elements of social value through their operations and services. This will include assessing contractors on their environmental performance, using measures such as percentage of contractor fleet that is made up of low emission vehicles, plastics recycling rate or any carbon certification the contractor has. This process will help contribute to lowering the Council's indirect emissions. Additionally, the officer will try to understand the emissions associated with contractor services and operations more clearly, so that the Council can understand the impact of its indirect emissions from procurement, and how it can play a role in influencing and reducing these.

Woodland Project (and biodiversity)

In October 2019, the Council announced its plan to plant 200,000 trees between 2020-2024 as part of the Colchester Woodland Project. The first planting season started in November 2019 and continued until March 2020 with 4486 trees planted by Council staff and residents in this period. The Council also held its annual 'Trees for Years' giveaway in February 2020 where over 10,000 trees, shrubs and fruit bushes were given out to residents, community groups, schools and Town and Parish Councils.

In November 2019, CBC announced that it would be phasing out the use of Glyphosate herbicide in Council operations and will be seeking to employ more environmentally friendly method(s) to manage weeds, which will help to benefit biodiversity and the green spaces throughout the borough. The Policy that is being developed to outline how Glyphosate is, and will continue to be phased out in Council operations consider plans

to phase out its use on Council sites such as parks and countryside sites, as well as land owned by partner organisations, Colchester Amphora and Colchester Borough Homes. Furthermore, the Council is considering suitable places to trial the re-wilding of green spaces such as meadows and roadside verges, whereby weeds and wildflowers are left to grow in order to enhance biodiversity.

Council Covid-19 Recovery Programme:

The Council has put together a Covid-19 recovery programme consisting of 4 'cells' of work being undertaken to recover from the Covid-19 crisis. These cells are Economy, Council, Customer and Communities. A key part of this recovery programme is that the activity being undertaken within these cells has had climate change and sustainability embedded within the planning of activity.

Much of the work within the recovery programme has revolved around a major trend that has occurred, and been forced to happen during the lockdown that many people have engaged with, which has been working from home. This has brought benefits to many people's lives in terms of increased wellbeing (from reduced travel time to work, increased flexibility for ways to work and live) and also benefits for the environment (e.g. improvements in air quality and reductions in emissions from reduced travel of commuters and the congestion produced by this). On the other hand, flat out homeworking has also had its downsides for many officers such as reduced human interaction and a greater merging of boundaries between work-life balances. However, it has given a good insight into how homeworking could become a greater part of Council culture.

More work is also being carried out online. For example, during the lockdown, services previously carried out at the Community Hub had to transfer to be done online or on the phone. This has been successful to a degree and has enabled Council officers to consider other processes that could have a greater digital focus. For example, the process for renewing taxi licenses and for new applicants is being rethought to be done completely digitally through virtual meetings and calls. This way of working will reduce both the amount of travel taxi drivers need to undertake and the printing of documents, both of which contribute to reducing emissions. Despite these benefits for the environment, it must be kept in mind that bringing more services online, and removing the human interaction will affect many people, such as those not used to going online.

17 September 2020

Report of	Assistant Director of Environment	Author	Rosa Tanfield David Carter
Title	Greening Colchester Policy		
Wards affected	All Wards		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 It is the aim of Colchester Borough Council to stop using glyphosate-based products by a phased reduction of use on its land and land owned by partner organisations, Colchester Borough Homes and Amphora.
- 1.2 With the ever increasing awareness of the environment and undesirable effects of glyphosate based herbicides, both to the staff concerned with applying them, the general public and the environment as a whole, alternative methods are being identified and researched at all times, and strict controls are being made by Colchester Borough Council on those herbicides that are still being applied on our sites.
- 1.3 This policy sets out how the Council proposes to reduce, monitor and control the use of glyphosate-based products and how it will use alternative methods for the control of unwanted vegetative growth on Council owned land. As there continues to be emerging new methods, learning and understanding, this document will be frequently reviewed, updated and changed to align to the latest and most appropriate approaches.
- 1.4 This policy relates to glyphosate-based products used by Colchester Borough Council and appointed Council contractors carrying out all grounds maintenance operations for the Council on Borough owned land. Where possible Colchester Borough Council will encourage glyphosate free/reduced use across the Borough including advice to internal and external partners, Town and Parish Councils, businesses, schools and other organisations who may use glyphosate-based products for the control of weeds, moss and lichens.
- 1.5 As part of the council's commitment to the phased removal of the use of glyphosate-based products this policy is also to stop or reduce grass cutting in specific areas. Changing the management regime can improve the biodiversity and visual amenity of the grass verges. These areas will be left to re-wild and be managed as wildflower areas or left to naturalise as woodland. Each location will be assessed on a site by site basis for suitability and health and safety.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To recommend to Cabinet to approve the phasing out of the use of glyphosate-based chemicals (herbicides) in grounds maintenance operations on CBC owned land and trial alternative methods of weed control as set out in this report and appendices.
- 2.2 To recommend to Cabinet to approve a change in grass cutting frequency on selected grass verges and areas of open space to be managed as areas to encouraged wildflower or naturalisation as set out in this report and appendices.
- 2.3 To recommend to Cabinet to delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Environment to make minor changes to the Greening Colchester Policy should it be necessary. Any changes considered by the Assistant Director for Environment to be significant will be reported back to the Environment and Sustainability Panel.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 One of the key priorities of the strategic plan for 2020 – 2023 is tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability, a key element of which is to conserve and enhance biodiversity across Colchester.
- 3.2 The decision supports the Council's commitment to encouraging biodiversity and reducing environmental impact across the Borough.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 There are no alternative options. The Council made a commitment in 2019 to phase out the use of glyphosate-based products used in grounds maintenance.
- 4.2 All products containing glyphosate are registered and approved by the European Pesticides Commission. The licence for the use of glyphosate expires in 2022.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 Colchester Borough Council aims to provide a high standard of grounds maintenance for all of its sites within the Borough. These sites include parks, recreation grounds, countryside sites, sports fields, open spaces, cemetery and crematorium, play areas, beachfronts, highway verges and Colchester Borough Homes housing areas. To achieve these high standards, a high reliance has been made on the use of glyphosate-based herbicides to control or eradicate unwanted vegetation. For example, spraying obstacles in the grass and fence lines.
- 5.2 On 17 July 2019, Colchester Borough Council declared a climate emergency, acknowledging that urgent action was required to limit the environmental impacts produced by the climate crisis. One of the main actions from the declaration was the formation of the Conservation and Environmental Sustainability Task and Finish Group.
- 5.3 In November 2019, the Council's Cabinet committed the Council to end the use of potentially harmful glyphosate weed killer. The decision followed a recommendation from the Council's Environmental Sustainability Task and Finish Group, who advised Cabinet that the change would encourage biodiversity and reduce environmental impact.
- 5.5 Due to large scale habitat loss in the countryside, and large-scale pesticide uses in agriculture, wildlife such as birds, insects and bees are seeking refuge in our towns. This makes it very important that within our areas, we create safe, glyphosate reduced, or ideally free, areas. More information on glyphosate pesticide is provided in Appendix 1 (Appendix A of the policy).
- 5.6 Unwanted vegetation control (or weed control) measures are currently in place for the following areas across the Borough (Appendix 1 (Appendix C of the policy provides images of typical areas where weed control measures are in place):
- Shrub Borders
 - Cultivated mowing margins
 - Fence lines (adjacent to footways, parks, play areas, etc)
 - Grass obstacles (bollards, post and rail fencing, etc)
 - Hard surfaces (e.g. car parks and footways)
 - Hedge lines and tree bases
 - Around beach huts
- 5.7 Several sites to stop or reduce grass cutting have been identified for a trial and shown in Appendix 1 (Appendix E of the policy). These sites will be monitored to identify the impact of reduced grass cutting on the existing habitat and local area.

Alternatives to using glyphosate-based products

- 5.8 Non-glyphosate-based methods of vegetation control will be used as a first choice wherever possible. The number of alternatives is currently limited but with the current concerns over the use of glyphosate-based products it is likely that the range and number of alternative methods will increase significantly in the future.
- 5.9 Currently there is no like for like replacement for glyphosate which can be used on all areas currently sprayed. It is proposed that a range of alternative methods will be used to control weed growth and unwanted vegetation. Alternative methods of weed control is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – Alternative methods of weed control

Method	Use	Advantages	Disadvantages
Hot Foam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weeds in hard surfaces Moss on hard surfaces and play area safety surfacing, Grass growth around trees, non-chemical graffiti removal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foam holds hot water against plant. Pesticide free. Can be used in all weather. Kills 95% of targeted weeds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New technology – needs refinement. Expensive to purchase Additional cost of plant oil extract, diesel consumption and pollution. Amount of water used. Noise from diesel generator, foam left on pathways after application. Hose cannot be left on grass when being used as heat will mark the grass, addition cost for a hose guard.
Hot Water / Steam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weeds in hard surfaces, play area surfacing, non-chemical graffiti removal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower initial purchase cost. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires more treatments as heat is not held onto the plant. Diesel consumption and pollution. Amount of water used.
Propane / Flame gun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weeds on hard surfaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relatively cheap to purchase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Safety Risks. Not particularly effective.
Manual Weeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weeds in general 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very effective if done well. Low set up costs (excluding labour). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very time consuming. Requires large amount of labour which adds to the cost.
Mulching – bark and or membrane.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weed control within shrub borders, under trees etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves appearance of the site and retains moisture in the soil to aid plant growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be labour intensive. May be expensive depending on supply of material.
Mowing and hand pulling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undesirable weeds in sensitive natural habitats and on farmland Weed control around fence lines, bollards and obstructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No licence required and no damage to the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be labour intensive to carry out and expensive for disposal of specific species. It can be difficult to cut close to fence lines, bollards and obstructions.
Intensive grazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undesirable weeds in sensitive natural habitats and on farmland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wildlife friendly with sufficient control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not suitable for all ground conditions and can damage sensitive soils.
Vinegar based solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weeds in hard surfaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No licence required for application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has been trialled but has not been effective. Strong smell can give operator headache.
Non glyphosate chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weeds in general 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very effective, natural fatty acid. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher cost per m2 than glyphosate. Different non glyphosate chemicals will need to be used as no one product can be used on all surfaces.

Approach to reducing glyphosate-based weed killer 2020/21

Glyphosate free parks and open spaces

- 5.10 The aim of creating glyphosate free sites is to create areas which are safe for children, adults and wildlife. These sites and parks will be signposted as glyphosate free so that everyone knows that they can use the parks safely and only environmentally friendly solutions will be used.
- 5.11 All these sites will become safe havens for wildlife. Wherever possible we will also promote the creation of wildlife friendly habitats and pollinator plants.
- 5.12 Colchester Borough Council will phase out the use of glyphosate-based products from April 2020 to end March 2021 on the following sites:
- Castle Park
 - Castle Park Sports Ground
 - The Recreation Ground, Old Heath
 - Mile End Sports Ground
 - Lexden King George
 - West End Sports Ground
 - Shrub End Sports Ground
 - Mill Road Sports Ground
 - All children play parks maintained (74 sites)
 - All Parkland (23 sites)
 - Open Spaces (these include small areas of land in housing estates approx. 189 sites)
 - Non HRA 190 (former Housing land which is now public open space)
 - West Mersea Beach huts (384)
 - Closed Churchyards (16)
- 5.13 Appendix1 (Appendix B of the policy) sets out the individual sites maintained by Colchester Council and identifies possible alternative methods for weed control using non-glyphosate-based methods.

Glyphosate free beach huts

- 5.14 The Council will consult with Beach Hut owners during 2020/21 and explore options on stopping the use of weed killer around the perimeter of Beach Huts, allowing native plants to grow and naturalise, and/or exploring options for owners to plant and maintain their own areas.

Obstructions in verges

- 5.15 The location of post and fence rails, posts and bollards within grass verges mean that close cutting with mowers is difficult to achieve. Spraying is usually therefore undertaken. Removing the items will enable full mowing and negates the need for spraying or weed treatment. Therefore, when items are broken or removed, Officers will assess whether items should be replaced based on need

for health and safety, inconsiderate/illegal/unsafe parking or where there is another clear need.

Grounds maintenance specifications

- 5.16 To ensure that Council's contractors comply fully with the Council's requirements, all grounds maintenance specifications will include detailed information of the Council's Greening Colchester policy, the requirements for glyphosate free /reduced areas and conditions for the use of glyphosate-based herbicides where essential. The use of glyphosate-based herbicides will not be permitted in any contract unless no other suitable alternative is available.

Community enabling

- 5.17 The Council will engage and educate the community in helping to create a greener environment to live and work by reducing the use of glyphosate used in the home and garden. A number of home and garden weed killers are now available glyphosate free.
- 5.18 The Council will work with existing community and volunteer groups, in addition to supporting new groups and networks in order to build community capacity to support the maintenance of green spaces and play areas, to reduce the use of glyphosate to control weeds in areas where children play.

A combined approach with chemical based products

- 5.19 Although every effort will be made to use non-glyphosate-based methods of control, there will still be some areas where alternative methods are not currently available or effective. Wherever this is the case, integrated control will be practised wherever possible i.e. a combination of cultural and herbicide use to resolve a problem with the least impact on the environment.

Fine turf areas

- 5.20 One of the main areas where chemicals will still be used will be for maintaining fine turf areas such as bowling greens, cricket squares and tennis courts. These areas are maintained to a high standard to allow the games to be played to a good standard and to meet the expectations of the customer. The use of chemicals will be minimised to only be used where necessary and no alternative method is available.
- 5.21 Selective herbicides will be permitted for use on fine turf and sports pitches to control broadleaf weeds. Selective weed killing will only take place where there is weed growth affecting the use of the area of play and will not be applied where there is not a weed problem. Hand weeding where possible will always be encouraged as the preferred method.

Tree stump regrowth

- 5.22 The use of herbicides will be permitted for the control of tree stump regrowth to restore and maintain valuable ecological grassland habitats and to stop the spread of invasive non-native trees. This may also be carried out for areas

where stump grinding is not viable. Eco-plug is currently used to control tree stump regrowth on Council land. Eco-plug contains 204mg of glyphosate and is driven into a drilled hole in the tree stump. Once the plug is inserted the opening is sealed so that no substance can escape resulting in only the selected tree coming into contact with the chemical.

Fungal attacks

- 5.23 Fungicides will be permitted to be used to prevent and remove fungal attacks on grass. Where practical grounds maintenance improvements such as increased aeration/brushing have and will continue to be increased in grounds maintenance specifications to reduce the occurrence of fungal attack and therefore reduce the need for fungicide application.

Inaccessible or difficult to reach locations

- 5.24 The maintenance of hard surfaces such as paths, garage blocks, on a large scale may still require the use of herbicides where other methods cannot be used i.e. inaccessible to Foamstream machines. However, where this operation is carried out, weeds will be individually targeted by applicator reducing the amount of herbicide used and preventing any excess herbicide being lost into the environment.

Invasive and destructive weeds

- 5.25 The only other occasion where glyphosate-based herbicides will be applied is for one off operation to control the spread of invasive weeds such as Japanese knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and Giant Hogweed. On all these occasions a glyphosate-based pesticide will only be used if no alternative method is suitable.

Timeline to phase out the use of glyphosate-based products 2020-21

- 5.26 Colchester Borough Council will phase out the use of glyphosate-based products from use in grounds maintenance operations from April 2020 over a 12 month period until end March 2021 where an alternative method of weed control can be identified.

Site **2020**

All children play parks maintained (74 sites)
West Mersea Beach huts (384)
The Recreation Ground, Old Heath
All Parkland (23 sites)
Open Spaces (these include small areas of land
in housing estates approx. 189 sites)
Castle Park
Castle Park Sports Ground
Mill Road Sports Ground

Glyphosate free from

April 2020
April 2020
April 2020
September 2020
September 2020
September 2020
September 2020
October 2020

2021

Mile End Sports Ground	March 2021
Lexden King George Sports Ground	March 2021
West End Sports Ground	March 2021
Shrub End Sports Ground	March 2021
Non HRA 190 (former Housing land)	March 2021
Closed Churchyards (16)	March 2021
Highway verges	March 2021

CBH Owned Land	TBC
Estates (Amphora) Owned Land	TBC

5.27 Officers are currently working with partners Colchester Borough Homes and Amphora to identify a way that phases out the use of glyphosate on these areas of land but still maintains the grounds maintenance expectations and requirements of their customers.

5.28 It is estimated that by the end of March 2021 the use of glyphosate-based products in grounds maintenance activities carried out by CBC will be reduced by 95-98%. This will be constantly reviewed and monitored as alternative methods to control weed growth are trialled.

Currently the use of glyphosate-based products has reduced by 100% on the following areas:

- Play Areas
- Castle Park
- The Recreation Ground, Old Heath.
- Parkland and Open Spaces
- West Mersea Beach Huts

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared for the Local Plan, and is Attached to this report as Appendix 2.

7. Strategic Plan References

7.1 The Strategic Plan is relevant, in particular in contributing towards priorities under the themes of Responsibility (encouraging everyone to do their bit towards making our borough even better) and Opportunity (promoting and improving Colchester and its environment)

8. Consultation

8.1 There are no consultation implications.

9. Publicity Considerations

- 9.1 The Greening Policy is new to Colchester and may/will warrant press attention. Communications will be prepared to inform relevant parties.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1 Alternative methods of weed control may increase the cost of the ground's maintenance contract after the trial even though the aim is to work within agreed budgets.

11. Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 There are no 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.

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 14.1 The use of glyphosate-based herbicides can have a devastating effect on our environment and its biodiversity. When used on hard surfaces, such as pavements, there is a possibility of run off or residues which can contaminate water courses and contaminate aquatic wildlife. They may kill plants which are beneficial and relied upon by birds, insects and other wildlife. When used on soft surfaces, such as vegetation or grass swards, there is a possibility of spray drift and contamination of adjacent areas.
- 14.2 This report sets out the Council's aims and plans to reduce the use of glyphosate-based herbicides, whilst also considering the permitting of long grass to encourage biodiversity and reduce environmental impact.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Greening Colchester Policy – The use of Glyphosate based products for Grounds Maintenance.

Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment.

Appendix 1 - Greening Colchester Policy – The use of Glyphosate based products for Grounds Maintenance

**Colchester Borough Council
Neighbourhood Services**

**Greening Colchester Policy – The use of
Glyphosate based products for Grounds
Maintenance**

17th September 2020

Wards affected - All

Document Version

Date	Revisions/Amendments	Officer
05/03/2020	Draft 1	David Carter
12/03/2020	Draft 2	Rosa Tanfield
11/06/2020	Draft 3	David Carter
3/8/2020	Draft 4	David Carter
28/8/20	Draft 5	David Carter

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4. Approach to reducing glyphosate-based weed killer 2020/21
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6. Policy statements

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Appendix B – Methods of weed control on individual sites

Appendix C – Typical weed control areas

Appendix D – Management of grass areas

Appendix E – Re-wilding locations and timeline

1. Introduction

Colchester Borough Council aims to provide a high standard of grounds maintenance for all of its sites within the Borough.

These sites include parks, recreation grounds, countryside sites, sports fields, open spaces, cemetery and crematorium, play areas, beachfronts, highway verges and Colchester Borough Homes housing areas.

To achieve these high standards, a high reliance has been made on the use of glyphosate-based herbicides to control or eradicate unwanted vegetation. For example, spraying obstacles in the grass and fence lines.

With the ever increasing awareness of the environment and undesirable effects of glyphosate based herbicides, both to the staff concerned with applying them, the general public and the environment as a whole, alternative methods are being identified and researched at all times, and strict controls are being made by Colchester Borough Council on those herbicides that are still being applied on our sites.

It is the aim of Colchester Borough Council to stop using glyphosate-based products by a phased reduction of use on its land and land owned by partner organisations, Colchester Borough Homes and Amphora. At present it may not always be possible to cut out the use of glyphosate-based products altogether.

This policy sets out how the Council proposes to reduce, monitor and control the use of glyphosate-based products and how it will use alternative methods for the control of unwanted vegetative growth on Council owned land. As there continues to be emerging new methods, learning and understanding, this document will be frequently reviewed, updated and changed to align to the latest and most appropriate approaches.

This policy relates to glyphosate-based products used by Colchester Borough Council and appointed Council contractors carrying out all grounds maintenance operations for the Council on Borough owned land. Where possible Colchester Borough Council will encourage glyphosate free/reduced use across the Borough including advice to internal and external partners, Town and Parish Councils, businesses, schools and other organisations who may use glyphosate-based products for the control of weeds, moss and lichens.

2. Environmental considerations

One of the key priorities of the strategic plan for 2020 – 2023 is tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability, a key element of which is to conserve and enhance biodiversity across Colchester.

The use of glyphosate-based herbicides can have a devastating effect on our environment and its biodiversity.

When used on hard surfaces, such as pavements, there is a possibility of run off or residues which can contaminate water courses and contaminate aquatic wildlife. They may kill plants which are beneficial and relied upon by birds, insects and other wildlife.

When used on soft surfaces, such as vegetation or grass swards, there is a possibility of spray drift and contamination of adjacent areas.

Due to large scale habitat loss in the countryside, and large-scale pesticide uses in agriculture, wildlife such as birds, insects and bees are seeking refuge in our towns. This makes it very important that within our areas, we create safe, glyphosate reduced, or ideally free, areas.

More information on glyphosate pesticide is provided in Appendix A.

Unwanted vegetation control (or weed control) measures are currently in place for the following areas across the Borough (Appendix C provide images of typical areas where weed control measures are in place):

- Borders
- Cultivated margins
- Fence lines (adjacent to footways, parks, play areas, etc)
- Grass obstacles (bollards, post and rail fencing, etc)
- Hard surfaces (e.g. car parks and footways)
- Hedge lines and tree bases
- Around beach huts

As part of the council's commitment to the phased removal of the use of glyphosate-based products is also to stop or reduce grass cutting in specific areas. Changing the management regime can improve the biodiversity and visual amenity of the grass verges. These areas will be left to re-wild and be managed as wildflower areas or left to naturalise as woodland. Each location will be assessed on a site by site basis for suitability and health and safety. Several sites to stop or reduce grass cutting have been identified for a trial and shown in Appendix E. These sites will be monitored to identify the impact of reduced grass cutting on the existing habitat and local area.

3. Alternatives to using glyphosate-based products

Non-glyphosate-based methods of vegetation control will be used as a first choice wherever possible. The number of alternatives is currently limited but with the current concerns over the use of glyphosate-based products it is likely that the range and number of alternative methods will increase significantly in the future.

Alternative methods of weed control is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – Alternative methods of weed control

Method	Use	Advantages	Disadvantages
Hot Foam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weeds in hard surfaces Moss on hard surfaces and play area safety surfacing, Grass growth around trees, non-chemical graffiti removal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foam holds hot water against plant. Pesticide free. Can be used in all weather. Kills 95% of targeted weeds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New technology – needs refinement. Expensive to purchase Additional cost of plant oil extract, diesel consumption and pollution. Amount of water used. Noise from diesel generator, foam left on pathways after application. Hose cannot be left on grass when being used as heat will mark the grass, addition cost for a hose guard.
Hot Water / Steam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weeds in hard surfaces, play area surfacing, non-chemical graffiti removal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower initial purchase cost. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires more treatments as heat is not held onto the plant. Diesel consumption and pollution. Amount of water used.
Propane / Flame gun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weeds on hard surfaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relatively cheap to purchase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Safety Risks. Not particularly effective.
Manual Weeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weeds in general 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very effective if done well. Low set up costs (excluding labour). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very time consuming. Requires large amount of labour which adds to the cost.
Mulching – bark and or membrane.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weed control within shrub borders, under trees etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves appearance of the site and retains moisture in the soil to aid plant growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be labour intensive. May be expensive depending on supply of material.
Mowing and hand pulling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undesirable weeds in sensitive natural habitats and on farmland Weed control around fence lines, bollards and obstructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No licence required and no damage to the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be labour intensive to carry out and expensive for disposal of specific species. It can be difficult to cut close to fence lines, bollards and obstructions.
Intensive grazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undesirable weeds in sensitive natural habitats and on farmland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wildlife friendly with sufficient control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not suitable for all ground conditions and can damage sensitive soils.
Vinegar based solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weeds in hard surfaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No licence required for application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has been trialled but has not been effective. Strong smell can give operator headache.
Non glyphosate chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weeds in general 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very effective, natural fatty acid. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher cost per m2 than glyphosate. Different non glyphosate chemicals will need to be used as no one product can be used on all surfaces.

4. Approach to reducing glyphosate-based weed killer 2020/21

Glyphosate free parks and open spaces

The aim of creating glyphosate free sites is to create areas which are safe for children, adults and wildlife. These sites and parks will be signposted as glyphosate free so that everyone knows that they can use the parks safely and only environmentally friendly solutions will be used.

All these sites will become safe havens for wildlife. Wherever possible we will also promote the creation of wildlife friendly habitats and pollinator plants.

Colchester Borough Council will phase out the use of glyphosate-based products from April 2020 on the following sites.

- Castle Park
- Castle Park Sports Ground
- The Recreation Ground, Old Heath
- Mile End Sports Ground
- Lexden King George
- West End Sports Ground
- Shrub End Sports Ground
- Mill Road Sports Ground
- All children play parks maintained (74 sites)
- All Parkland (23 sites)
- Open Spaces (these include small areas of land in housing estates approx. 189 sites)
- Non HRA 190 (former Housing land which is now public open space)
- West Mersea Beach huts (384)
- Closed Churchyards (16)

Appendix B sets out the individual sites maintained by Colchester Council and identifies possible alternative methods for weed control using non-glyphosate-based methods.

Glyphosate free beach huts

The Council will consult with Beach Hut owners during 2020/21 and explore options on stopping the use of weed killer around the perimeter of Beach Huts, allowing native plants to grow and naturalise, and/or exploring options for owners to plant and maintain their own areas.

Obstructions in verges

The location of post and fence rails, posts and bollards within grass verges mean that close cutting with mowers is difficult to achieve. Spraying is usually therefore undertaken. Removing the items will enable full mowing and negates the need for spraying or weed treatment. Therefore, when items are broken or removed, Officers will assess whether items should be replaced based on need for health and safety, inconsiderate/illegal/unsafe parking or where there is another clear need.

Grounds maintenance specifications

To ensure that Council's contractors comply fully with the Council's requirements, all grounds maintenance specifications will include detailed information of the Council's weed control policy, the requirements for glyphosate free /reduced areas and conditions for the use of glyphosate-based herbicides where essential. The use of glyphosate-based herbicides will not be permitted in any contract unless no other suitable alternative is available.

Community enabling

The Council will engage and educate the community in helping to create a greener environment to live and work by reducing the use of glyphosate used in the home and garden. The Council will work with existing community and volunteer groups, in addition to supporting new groups and networks in order to build community capacity to support the maintenance of green spaces and play areas, to reduce the use of glyphosate to control weeds in areas where children play.

5. A combined approach with chemical based products

Although every effort will be made to use non-glyphosate-based methods of control, there will still be some areas where alternative methods are not currently available or effective. Wherever this is the case, integrated control will be practised wherever possible i.e. a combination of cultural and herbicide use to resolve a problem with the least impact on the environment.

Fine turf areas

One of the main areas where chemicals will still be used will be for maintaining fine turf areas such as bowling greens, cricket squares and tennis courts. These areas are maintained to a high standard to allow the games to be played to a good standard and to meet the expectations of the customer. The use of chemicals will be minimised to only be used where necessary and no alternative method is available.

Selective herbicides will be permitted for use on fine turf and sports pitches to control broadleaf weeds. Selective weed killing will only take place where there is weed growth affecting the use of the area of play and will not be applied where there is not a weed problem. Hand weeding where possible will always be encouraged as the preferred method.

Tree stump regrowth

The use of herbicides will be permitted for the control of tree stump regrowth to restore and maintain valuable ecological grassland habitats and to stop the spread of invasive non-native trees. This may also be carried out for areas where stump grinding is not viable. Eco-plug is currently used to control tree stump regrowth on Council land. Eco-plug contains 204mg of glyphosate and is driven into a drilled hole in the tree stump. Once the plug is inserted the opening is sealed so that no substance can escape resulting in only the selected tree coming into contact with the chemical.

Fungal attacks

Fungicides will be permitted to be used to prevent and remove fungal attacks on grass. Where practical grounds maintenance improvements such as increased aeration/brushing have and will continue to be increased in grounds maintenance specifications to reduce the occurrence of fungal attack and therefore reduce the need for fungicide application.

Inaccessible or difficult to reach locations

The maintenance of hard surfaces such as paths, garage blocks, on a large scale may still require the use of herbicides where other methods cannot be used i.e. inaccessible to Foamstream machines. However, where this operation is carried out, weeds will be individually targeted by

applicator reducing the amount of herbicide used and preventing any excess herbicide being lost into the environment.

Invasive and destructive weeds

The only other occasion where glyphosate-based herbicides will be applied is for one off operation to control the spread of invasive weeds such as Japanese knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and Giant Hogweed. On all these occasions a glyphosate-based pesticide will only be used if no alternative method is suitable.

Timeline to phase out the use of glyphosate-based products 2020-21

Colchester Borough Council will phase out the use of glyphosate-based products from use in grounds maintenance operations from April 2020 over a 12 month period until end March 2021 where an alternative method of weed control can be identified.

<u>Site</u>	<u>Glyphosate free from</u>
<u>2020</u>	
All children play parks maintained (74 sites)	April 2020
West Mersea Beach huts (384)	April 2020
The Recreation Ground, Old Heath	April 2020
All Parkland (23 sites)	September 2020
Open Spaces (these include small areas of land in housing estates approx. 189 sites)	September 2020
Castle Park	September 2020
Castle Park Sports Ground	September 2020
Mill Road Sports Ground	October 2020
<u>2021</u>	
Mile End Sports Ground	March 2021
Lexden King George Sports Ground	March 2021
West End Sports Ground	March 2021
Shrub End Sports Ground	March 2021
Non HRA 190 (former Housing land)	March 2021
Closed Churchyards (16)	March 2021
Highway verges	March 2021
CBH Owned Land	TBC
Estates (Amphora) Owned Land	TBC

Officers are currently working with partners Colchester Borough Homes and Amphora to identify a way that phases out the use of glyphosate on these areas of land but still maintains the grounds maintenance expectations and requirements of their customers.

6. Policy statements

The following statements set out the clear direction and principles for the management of weed control in the Borough of Colchester from April 2020.

Policy Statement 1

Before permission is given for any herbicide application on land under our management, we will consider the below points:

- Consider whether any action is required, i.e. do we need to control the weed etc?
- Ensure that the weed, fungus has been correctly identified.
- Identify any non-glyphosate-based control options and use these as a first choice.
- Look at whether any integrated control measures are available as a second choice.
- Look at using an approved glyphosate herbicide ONLY if the above options are not suitable.
- Look at what alternative weed control methods are available.
- Look at what would be the most “environmentally friendly” way to control weed growth.
- Consider whether it is an appropriate time of year to control the problem.
- Look at whether the risks of using a glyphosate herbicide are greater than the problem itself?
- Consult the product data to ensure there is no specific environmental risk? e.g., a risk to bees, water courses.
- Ensure that there are no other environmental considerations? i.e., adjacent water course, wildlife (Environmental Assessment).
- Consider whether, after any one-off application of a glyphosate-based product, there are there any other long-term non-glyphosate solutions for the problem.
- Obtain any higher-level permission required such as that from the Environment Agency or Natural England.

Policy Statement 2

Nonchemical weed control will always be used as a “first choice”.

Before any permission is given for a herbicide application, full consideration will be given to the surrounding environment, and the effect that any herbicide would have on wildlife and the public.

We will not use residual herbicides designed to stay in the ground and control weed regrowth.

We will not use growth restricting regulators on grass areas.

We will look to remove obstructions and bollards in verges and grassed areas wherever possible, to reduce the need to weed control and improve methods for grass cutting

Policy Statement 3

We will continuously review new methods of non-chemical weed control as they become available, with a view to adopting these as appropriate.

Policy Statement 4

We will continue to accelerate the development of “glyphosate free parks” in the Borough of Colchester.

We will promote glyphosate free parks through signage and publicity

Policy Statement 5

The Councils will permit the use of approved herbicides, where no suitable or viable alternative has yet been found. However, priority will always be given to the use of non-chemical solutions.

Policy Statement 6

Wherever possible, we will phase out the use of glyphosate-based weed killers and we will continue to monitor the legal issues regarding it.

Policy Statement 7

We will ensure that, where all weed control options must be used, they are only applied by trained and competent operatives.

Policy Statement 9

We will ensure that all future contracts, and where possible existing ones, will have detailed information on the council's requirements for the control of weeds. These requirements will not be optional.

We will monitor these contracts to ensure that they are confirming to these requirements and that nonchemical weed control methods are used as the first choice wherever specified.

We will ensure that all herbicides are applied by trained and certified staff, using the best method that is the least harmful to the environment.

We will ensure that flexibility is built into the contracts to ensure that new improved weed control methods can be introduced as and when they are developed.

Policy Statement 10

Before permission is given for any change in grass cutting frequency on land under our management, we will consider the below points.

Is the current grass species suitable for reduced grass cutting activity and can be left to grow?

Are there any Health and Safety concerns which need to be considered? E.G. is the grass verge part of a highway sightline or footpath, increase in litter and/or dog fouling.

Increase of pollen near residential properties, businesses or Schools.

Will additional costs be incurred to managed as a wildflower area.

A minimum of a 1m strip will be cut around the area of grass to prevent long grass obstructing footpaths, roads and signs where required.

All long grass areas will be cut either none, one or two times per year depending on location and grass/wildflower species.

Appendix A – Glyphosate pesticide

There is currently particular concern regarding Glyphosate weed killers, which are widely used on hard surfaces and to clear vegetative sites.

In April 2015, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, part of the World Health Organisation, concluded that Glyphosate based weed killer was “probably carcinogenic to humans”. Other studies have linked glyphosate to birth defects and a rise in antibiotic resistance.

Glyphosate is a broad spectrum (non-selective) weed killer that is an organophosphorus compound. It is supplied in many different forms, usually with other chemicals, such as spreaders, drift reducers, wetting agents etc added.

Glyphosate is absorbed through the plants leaf and is absorbed into plant roots.

All products containing Glyphosate must be registered and approved by the European Pesticides Commission.

Glyphosate was re-registered and approved in June 2016, but for a limited period of 18 months (until the end of 2017). It has since had a further 5-year extension which expires in December 2022. It is unknown if the licence for glyphosate will be renewed after 2022 as there are concerns that the chemical could be harmful to animals, bees and biodiversity.

By removing vegetation so effectively, the herbicide indirectly affects biodiversity through changes to ecosystems and food sources. Where Glyphosate, and other pesticides, are used, there are fewer food sources for insects, birds and animals in the urban environment.

As part of this approval extension, the Commission also presented some recommendations to be considered by member states. One of these recommendations was to *“minimise the use of the substance (glyphosate) in public parks, public playgrounds and gardens”*

The Pesticide Action Network (PAN) UK have a “precautionary principle” that states that *“When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some of the cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically”*. In other words, although some evidence against the use of pesticides appears inconclusive, it is far better to work towards using less or ideally no pesticides.

In August 2018, a landmark case in the USA agreed with a groundsman’s claim that his rare form of cancer was caused by exposure to a glyphosate-based weed killer and the company was fined a significant sum of money. This may well lead to future claims, and potentially, an increased effort in finding more environmentally friendly products to market. This case is currently under appeal (April 2019) by the manufacturer.

The Environmental Protection Agency is an independent agency of the United States federal government for environmental protection, has finished a regulatory review that found glyphosate, the most widely used weed killer in the United States, is not a carcinogen and does not cause cancer. (January 2020)

Appendix B – Methods of weed control on individual sites

Site	Glyphosate free from March 2020	Contractor hand weeding	Leave to rewild/ grow long	Foam stream	Volunteer and Community engagement to carry out hand weeding	Wildflower planting	Spray with Katoun Gold non glyphosate weed killer	Strim grass only
Castle Park	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Highwoods Country Park	Yes	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y
Sports Grounds								
Mile End	Yes	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y
Mill Road	Yes	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y
Shrub End	Yes	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y
Lexden King George	Yes	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y
Old Heath Recreation Ground	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Baden Powell OS	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Hickory Avenue	Yes							
Holt Drive OS	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Magnolia Drive OS	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mill Road OS	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Monkwick OS	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Pondfield OS	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Tile House Farm OS	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Beach huts								
West Mersea Beach huts	Yes	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
All open spaces								
All Open Spaces	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Estates/Amphora								
Estates/Amphora	No	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Crematorium and Churchyards								
Cemetery	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Closed Churchyards	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Play Areas								
Play Areas	Yes	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Colchester Borough Homes								
CBH Communal Grounds	No	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
CBH Sheltered Schemes	No	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Car parks								
NEPP Car Parks	No	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Highways								
Highway Verges	No	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y

Appendix C – Typical weed control areas



Play areas



Hard surfaces



Fence lines



Obstructions in verges



Obstructions in verges



Borders



Fences and hard surfaces



Obstructions

Appendix D – Management of grass areas

Current Position

Public Open Spaces / Countryside Areas

- These can be large areas of grass and trees of a number of hectares
- Small areas of land between houses on housing estates of a couple of hundred m²
- On some of the large areas of open space there are different frequencies of grass cutting from: -
 - Regular grass cutting which is every 3-4 weeks
 - Areas left which are cut at the end of the summer in September / October
- On the Public Open Space, the boundaries and obstacles are currently sprayed with Glyphosate

Highway Verges

- The verges are cut on a Performance specification, when the grass cannot exceed a certain length, on average the verges are cut on fourteen occasions a year.
- Cutting is from mid-March to the end of October.
- The boundaries and obstacles are currently sprayed with Glyphosate
- On some areas of the town have prestige cutting, these are the roundabouts which are cut 14 occasions.

Colchester Borough Homes

- The general grass on Housing sites are cut on fourteen occasions a year
- Cutting is from mid-March to the end of October.
- Sheltered Accommodation Sites are prestige grass cut, and these are cut on twenty four occasions.
- CBH residents pay a fee in their rent for grounds maintenance, they will inform the Council if they don't receive what is on the programme of work

Considerations To Be Taken Into Account On Verges That To Be Left To Grow

- Idverde Contract
 - At the start of the Idverde Contract the Highways verges were cut less often than the Colchester Borough Homes and Open Spaces
 - The Highway verges were cut on twelve occasions
 - The result on some roads, some verges were not cut when others were
 - This resulted in phone calls regarding missed cutting of verges
 - Idverde had to have different teams cutting different verges, which was not good division of labour
 - Resulted in Idverde cutting all grass at fourteen times a year

- **Residents Grass Cutting**

- Residents will cut the Highway verges at the front of their properties, to make their area of the road tidier.
- If verges are left to grow there will be quite a mosaic of grass cutting in some area.
- If the Housing Market is tough at present, by not cutting the verges will we get complaints about the impact of long grass lowering of house prices
- In some locations Residents do use weed killer along fence lines to stop grass weeds growing into their properties this is also on public open spaces at the rear of people properties.

- **The Way Forward For Rewilding Verges**

- Each road and verge would need to be looked at individually to see if it appropriate to left to grow longer
- If verges are left to grow, some grass cutting will be needed on site lines and junctions
- There needs to be a balance between rewilding verges and formal verges
- The maintenance needs to be undertaken in such a way that it does not make the area look like the area has been abandoned, but still makes the area look loved
- Do not want to put people of for visiting the Borough, for there could be a knock-on effect for retail and tourism
- Not all residents will agree with cutting less
- The Highway grass seed mixture is amenity grass, that is designed to be short mown
- If the grass is left long, we could get complaints about more pollen and Hay Fever

- **Verges That Still Will Be Cut**

- Where areas that will still have fourteen cuts, how are the obstacles and fence lines going to be managed.
- Currently they are sprayed with Glyphosate
- Alternatives they can be left and tided up at the end of the growing season
- We strim on every occasion, strimming if not undertaken correctly can damage bark on trees
- Use another chemical which is more environmentally friendly

- **New Grass Cutting Consideration**

- What is the criteria for letting the verge grow?
- What is the criteria for keeping the grass short?
- Leave areas to grow / how often should other area to be cut, still keep to fourteen cuts?
- On areas cut fourteen times what do we do with long grass around obstacles, fence lines and trees
 - Strim
 - Leave to end of year and cut back
 - Leave to naturally die back
 - Spray non Glyphosate

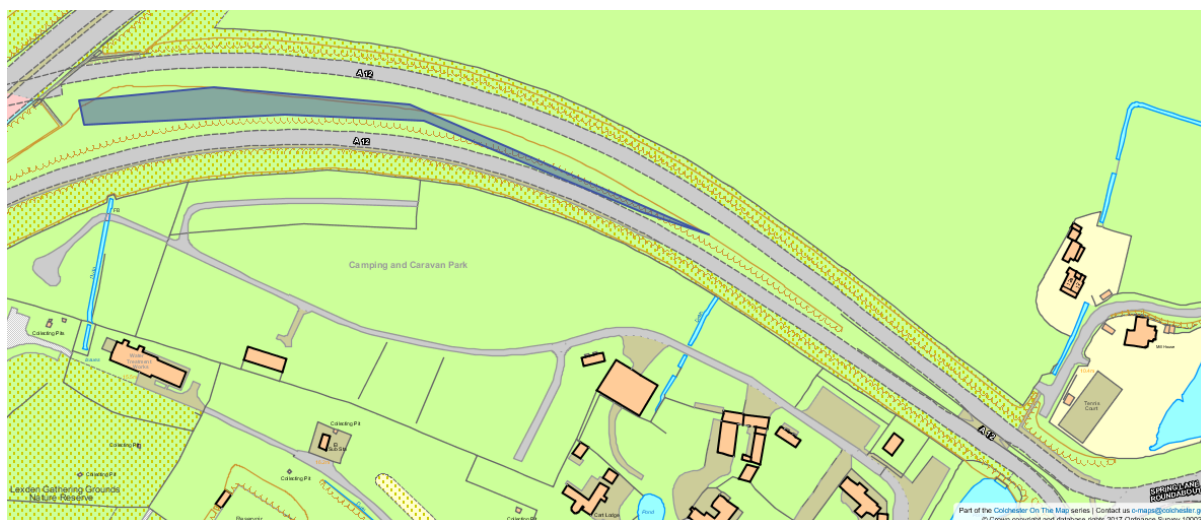
These are items that we need to consider what maintenance is required.

Appendix E – Re-wilding/wildflower locations

Stanway Bypass

Leave the centre reservation uncut, highlighted below, but still cut a mowers width along the edge of the roadway side.



Clingoe Hill

Leave areas in Blue but still cut a mowers width by the roadside and the rear of the properties

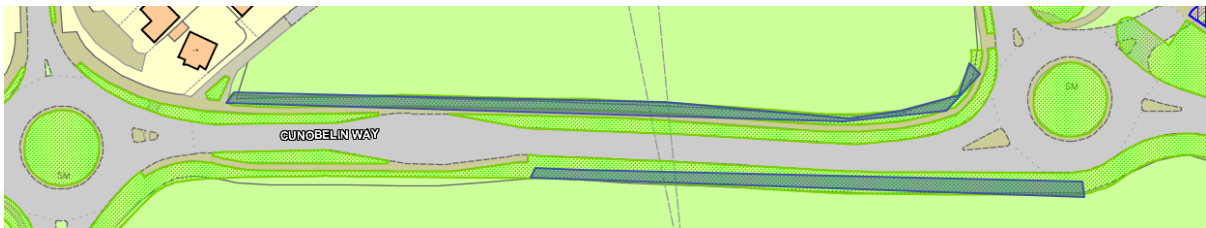


Cunobelin Way

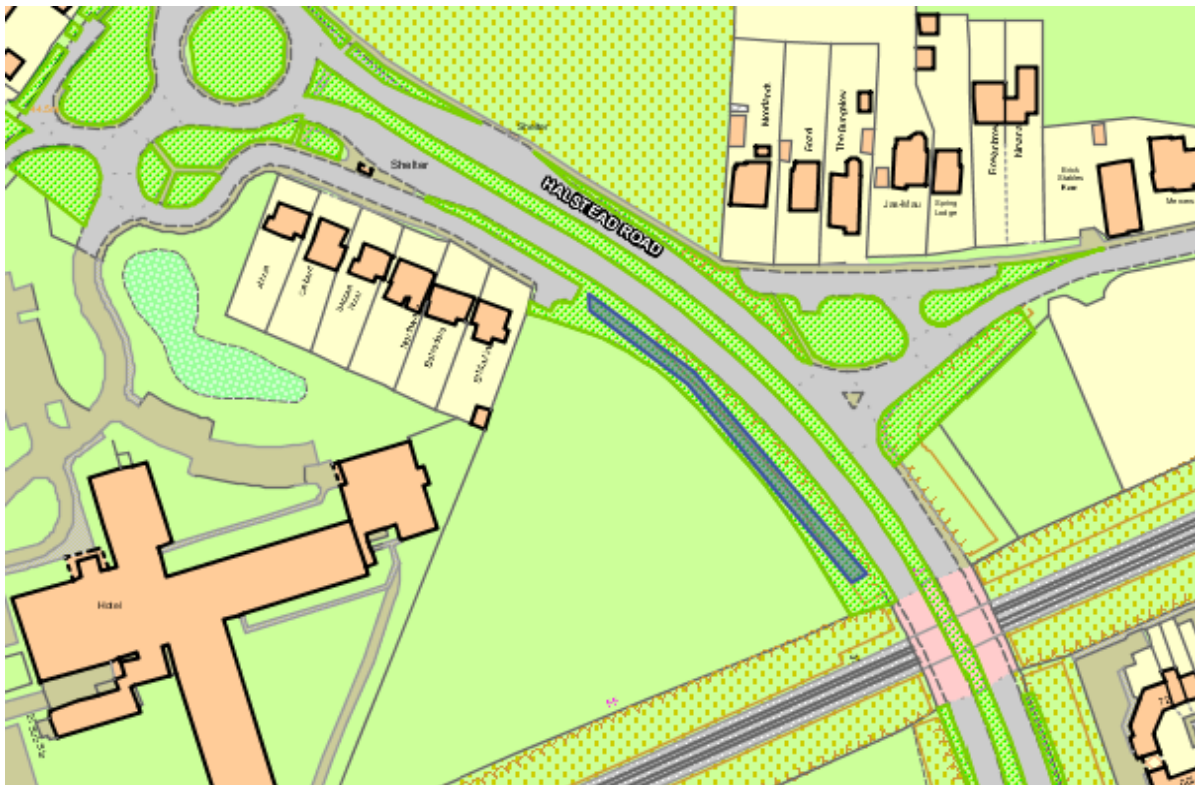
The grass will be left uncut along the footpath and at the rear of the block of houses.



Cunobelin Way Continued

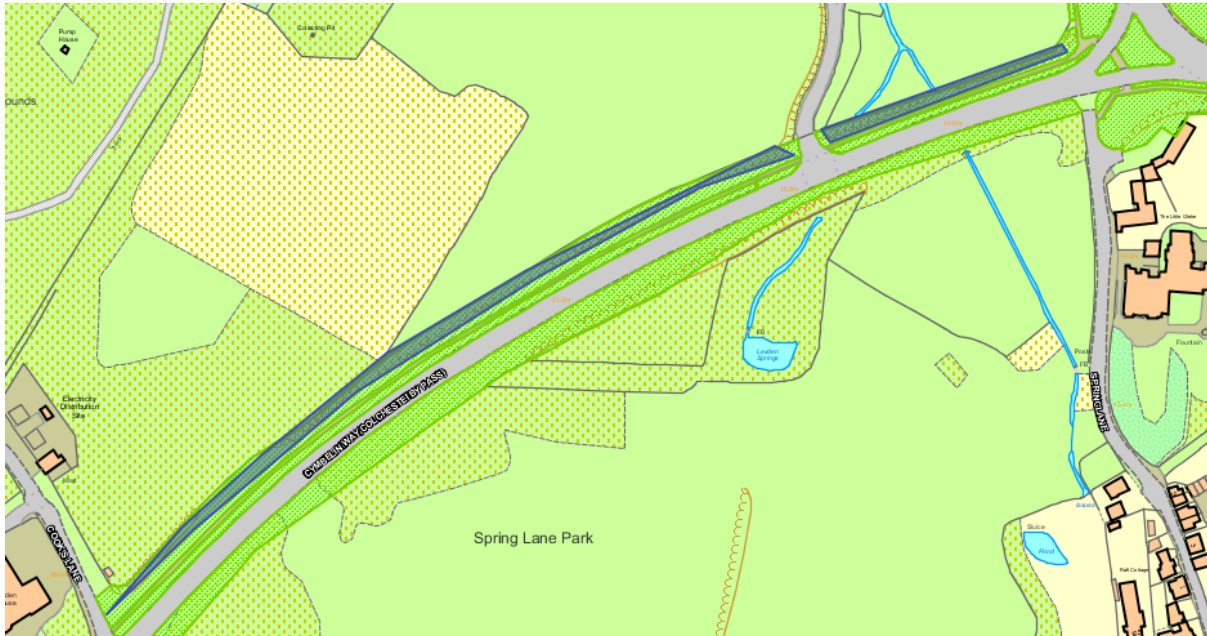


Halstead Road to A12



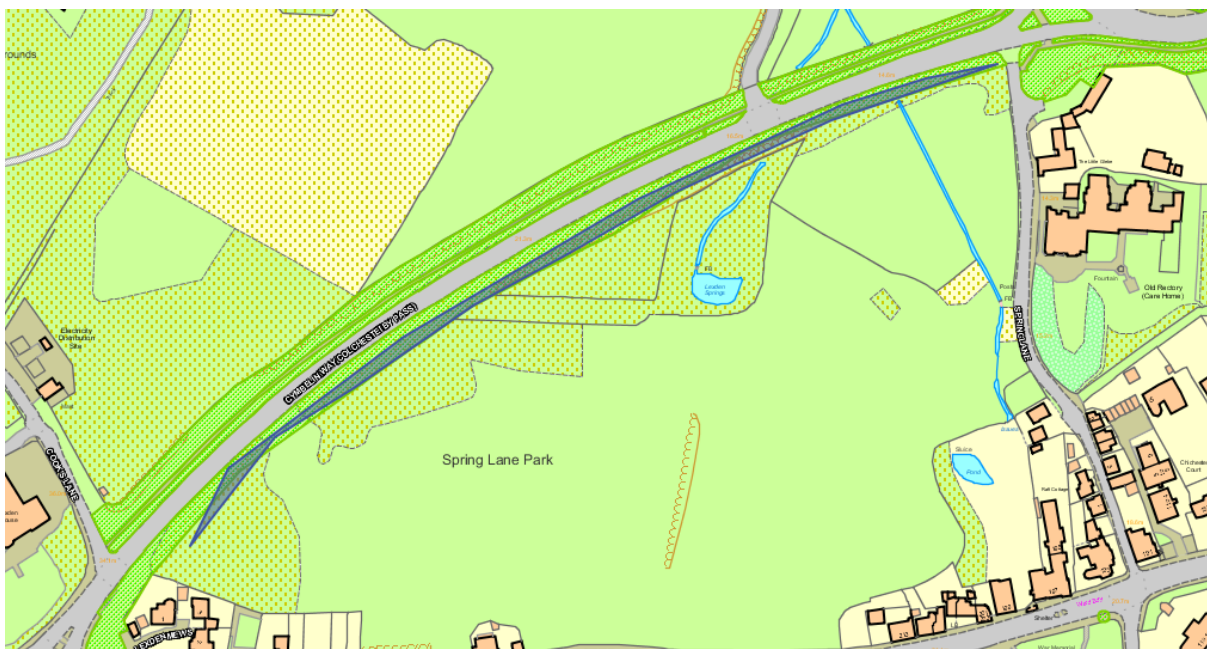
Cymbeline Way Colchester Bypass (Spring Lane roundabout to London Road junction)

Mow a strip along the footpath, so vegetation does not fall onto the footpath



Cymbeline Way Colchester Bypass (Spring Lane roundabout to London Road junction)

Mow a strip between the road and the long grass.



A120/Godmans Lane West

A strip would be cut along the edge of the footpath.



A120/Godmans Lane East

A strip would be cut along the edge of the footpath



Avenue of Remembrance (Spring Lane roundabout to Sheepen Road)



Avenue of Remembrance continued (Spring Lane roundabout to Sheepen Road)



Changes to grass cutting around Castle Park, Riverside Walk and Land Lane

Please see the below recommendations for areas that should be left uncut for the development of wildflowers. Wildflower meadows have decreased by 97% in the last 70 years and we as a Council can have a positive impact on the numbers we find around Colchester and take a lead on encouraging people to do more for wildflowers and the species they support. Lots of what we find around the park is valuable in supporting specific species of insect so allowing it to develop is important in reducing the loss of biodiversity in recent decades.

Some signage is already being developed by the Council to promote the reasons and benefits of managing the grass-covered spaces in this way.

All areas that are being left to grow that border a path should have a mown buffer of one unit width to avoid growth onto the path and as an obvious sign to visitors that the area is being deliberately managed in this way.

All the sites should be left and cut once during the autumn unless there are issues with certain areas that may need addressing. If this is necessary, advice will be sought amongst all parties (CBC, CNHS, EWT, Idverde).

Land Lane

The bank on the north side of the Roman wall and folly footpath was strimmed in early spring. With some supplementary seeding of wildflowers to encourage heterogeneity we can leave this to be cut **once a year**.



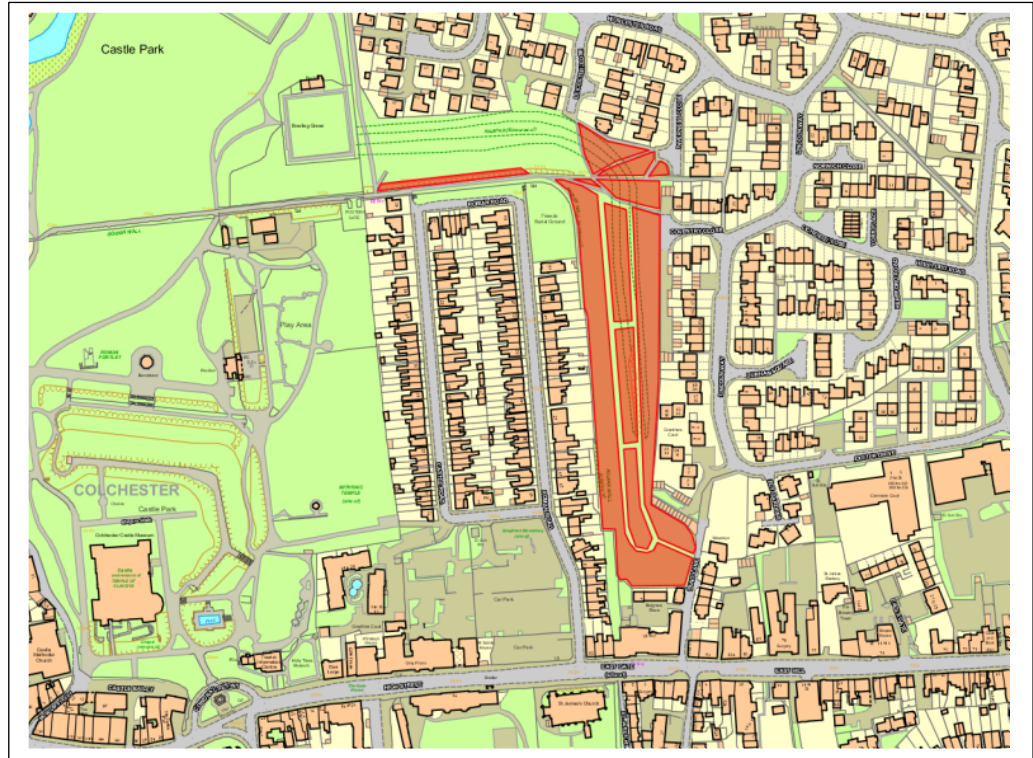
Land Lane, May 2020

Where this bank turns to head south there are grassy areas intersected with footpaths (shown on accompanying map below). These can also be left to grow.

Areas along the strip that heads southwards along the backs of the gardens on Roman Road can be cut less frequently. **A mower-width footpath** following the circuitous desire lines made by pedestrians can be regularly cut, leaving the rest to grow. A large meadow

can then be encouraged with species such as: alkanet, cuckoo flowers, daisies, buttercups, dandelions, cow parsley, nettles, forget me nots, clover, dovesfoot cranesbill and germander speedwell, greater celandine and common columbine already present.

Pictures below showing the views and natural pathways of Land Lane, May 2020.



Map of Land Lane showing the areas of grass to be left uncut hatched in red.

Riverside Estate wet grassland

This area has been uncut this season due to standing water coming from an unknown/natural source. This has led to a great array of buttercups and cuckoo flowers and a fine habitat for invertebrates and amphibians. The standing water is drying but the flora can be still be encouraged by not cutting.

Below: The wet areas of Riverside Estate without grass cutting in 2020.



Map showing Riverside Estate Wet Grassland hatched in red.

Riverside path

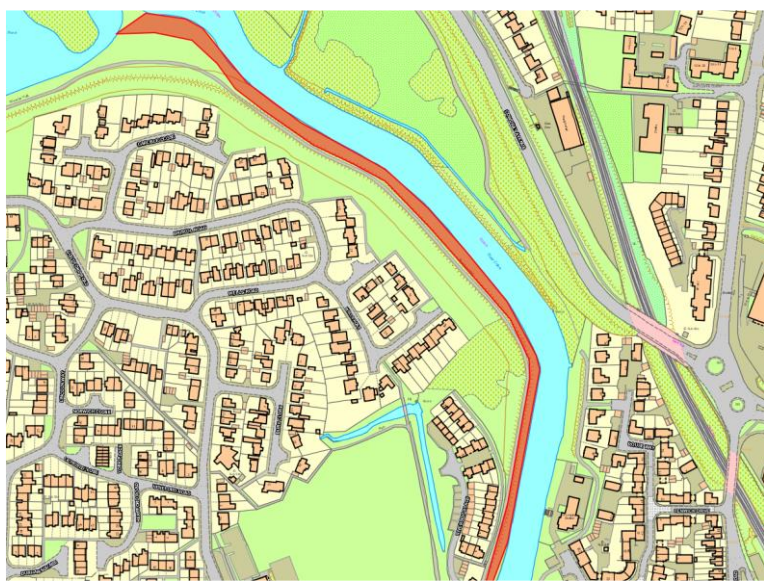
From the east edge of the lake along the entire length of the riverside path to the bridge above the East Bay weir to Riverside Place can be left uncut on the river side of the footpath. Mow a meandering path to allow people to walk closer to the river although there is already a strong desire line from regular footfall.

This area should encompass the ring of poplars and the area surrounding the willows. This is a good wet grassland and shows buttercups, cuckoo flowers and cow parsley in good numbers.

Below: Photos showing the area through Riverside Pathway including the ring of Poplars below.



The poplars in the ring are due to be halved in height for safety reasons, this is a good opportunity to create a large hibernaculum in the centre of this ring of trees. We would simply need to lay the cut logs in the area, and they will provide a habitat for beetles, insects and amphibians to feed and hibernate – this will be especially appealing for them seeing as it is wet ground. These cut logs could also be used to make a feature of the Mayor's Wood which is planned for planting this autumn.



Location of the long grass areas along Riverside Walk hatched in red.

King's Head Meadow

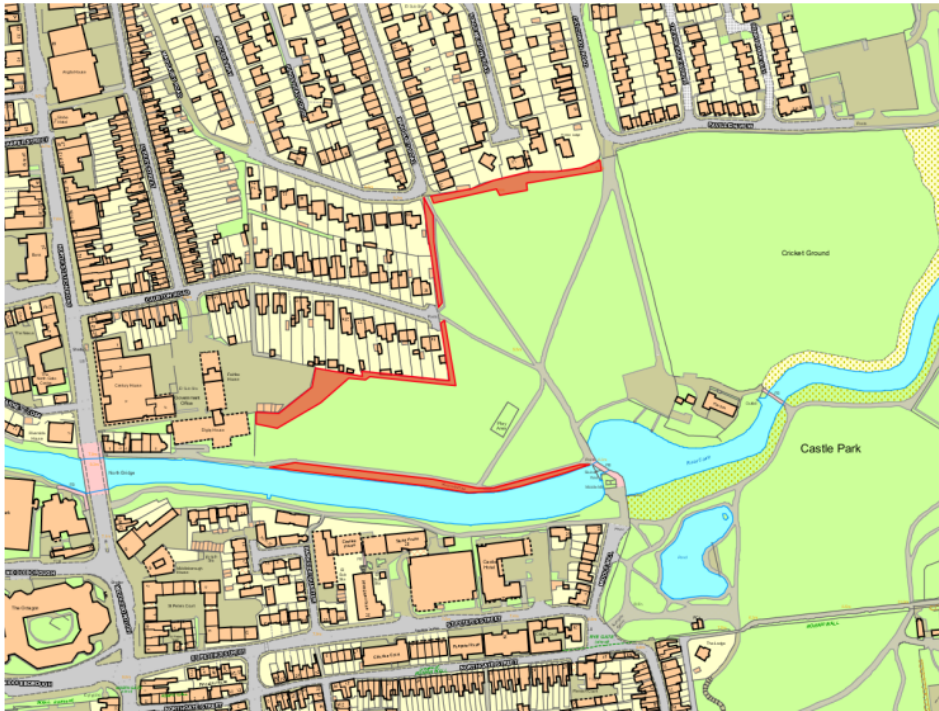
A mower's width should be left uncut along the hedged borders (along the north most edges – see map). The northernmost hedgerow that connects Margaret Road and Catchpool Road also has an area of sedge is growing which should be left uncut.



The hedge line that runs east from the Woodland Project planting should, as well as having a mower's width border left uncut, be left untrimmed until autumn owing to the white bryony growing in it. See pictures below.



The woodland project planting at the far west corner King's Head Meadow cannot be cut by the mower so should be **strimmed by Rangers** meaning we can leave any flowers and encourage biodiversity.



Locations of the long grass areas and hedges in Kings Head Meadow.

Proposed Timeline to implement changes to grass cutting

Week	Items
17 May to 23 May	Areas left in Riverside Walk Open Space near Castle Park to Rewild.
24 May to 27 June	N/A
28 June to 4 July	Conformation that CBC will undertake some rewilding of verges
5 July to 11 July	CBC to look through data to look at proposals, and to see if the proposals could be worked
12 July to 18 July	CBC to look through data to look at proposals, and to see if the proposals could be worked
19 July to 25 July	<p>Confirm other areas of Rewilding: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parts of Clingoe Hill • Parts of St Andrews Avenue • Parts of Stanway Bypass • Parts of Avenue of Remembrance from Colne Bank Avenue Roundabout to Spring Lane Roundabout • Cunobelin Way • Halstead Road to A12 • Cymbeline Way Colchester Bypass (Spring Lane roundabout to London Road junction)
26 July to 1 August	Speak with Idverde about the rewilding, produce schedule of verges that will be maintained differently
2 August to 8 August	Speak with Idverde about the rewilding, produce schedule of verges that will be maintained differently
9 August to 15 August	Joint Press Release about the trial
16 August to 22 August	Trial Starts

End.

Appendix 2

Colchester Borough Council

Equality Impact Assessment Form - An Analysis of the Effects on Equality

Section 1: Initial Equality Impact Assessment

Name of policy* to be assessed: Greening Colchester Policy – The use of Glyphosate based products for Grounds Maintenance.

(*Please note that the term 'policy' is used broadly to include a service, strategy or key decision.)

Where published, please provide a link here – and remove this advice.

1. What is the main purpose of the policy?

- To set out how the Council proposes to reduce, monitor and control the use of glyphosate - based products used in grounds maintenance.

2. What main areas or activities does it cover?

- To phase out the use of glyphosate-based products used in grounds maintenance.
- To set out alternatives to using glyphosate-based products.
- Management of grass verges for wildflowers and/or re-wilding.

3. Are there changes to an existing policy being considered in this assessment? If so, what are they?

- None

4. Who are the main audience, users or customers who will be affected by the policy?

- All users within the Borough of Colchester.

5. What outcomes do you want to achieve from the policy?

- To phase out the use of glyphosate-based products used in grounds maintenance by end March 2021.
- To work with partners, contractors and the community to reduce the use of glyphosate-based products.

- To provide information and advice on alternative methods to control unwanted vegetation.
- To work with partners, businesses, Town & Parish Councils to identify grass verges which could be managed as wildflower areas.

6. Are other service areas or partner agencies involved in delivery? If so, please give details below.

- Colchester Borough Homes
- Estates/Amphora
- Idverde
- ECC

7. Are you aware of any relevant information, data, surveys or consultations¹ which help us to assess the likely or actual impact of the policy upon customers or staff? *If so, provide details and include a link to the document or source where available.*

- Greening Colchester Policy is to be discussed at the Environment and Sustainability Panel on 17 September 2020.

8. The 'general duty' states that we must have "due regard" to the need to:

- (a) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a 'protected characteristic'² and those who do not³
- (c) foster good relations between people who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not⁴

Not all policies help us to meet the 'general duty', but most do.

Where applicable, explain how this policy helps us to meet the 'general duty':

¹Click on [Customer Insight](#) for more information. The Council's surveys and consultations include 'equality monitoring information' to help us identify any particular concerns or views expressed by any particular group or 'protected characteristic'. It can also help us to assess how representative of our customers the respondent group is. Local data on the 'protected characteristics' is available [on this page](#) of Sharepoint.

² The Equality Act's 'protected characteristics' include age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sex and sexual orientation. It also covers marriage and civil partnerships, but not for all aspects of the duty.

³ This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to: (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a 'protected characteristic' that are connected to that characteristic; (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant 'protected characteristic' that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it, and (c) encourage persons who share a relevant 'protected characteristic' to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

⁴ This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to (a) tackle prejudice, and (b) promote understanding.

The policy helps us to 'foster good relations...' in the following way(s):

- CBC parks and open spaces are free and assessable to all. Phasing out the use of glyphosate throughout the borough and creating wildflower verges will provide a greener and healthier environment.

9. The Council has an important role in improving residents' health under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. This relates to both its 'core functions' (such as housing, leisure, green spaces and environmental health) and to its 'enabling roles' (such as economic development, planning and engaging with communities)⁵. The Council recognises that its Public Sector Equality Duty and its role in improving health are interrelated and mutually supportive. This is especially true across the 'protected characteristics' of age and disability.

"Health inequalities are the unjust and avoidable differences in people's health across the population. They come from the unequal distribution of income, wealth and power and influence the wider determinants of health such as work, education, social support and housing. Currently, in England people living in the least deprived areas will live around 20 years longer in good health than those in the most deprived areas. Reducing health inequalities means giving everyone the same opportunities to lead a healthy life, no matter where they live or who they are."

Where applicable, explain how this policy helps us to improve health/reduce health inequalities for residents:

- This policy reduces the use of a chemical which can have a devastating effect on the environment and biodiversity. It will help to provide a safe and greener borough for all.

⁵ The King's Fund: [The district council contribution to public health: a time of challenge and opportunity, 2015](#)

10. This section helps us to identify any disproportionate equality impacts. Please indicate in the table below whether the policy is likely to particularly benefit or disadvantage any of the 'protected characteristics'.

Remember to include reference to any relevant consultation, data or information.

'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could particularly benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could particularly disadvantage the group
Age	Older people (60+)				
	Younger people (17-25) and children (0-16)				
Disability	Physical				
	Sensory				
	Learning				
	Mental health issues				
	Other – <i>specify</i>				
Ethnicity ⁶	White				
	Black				
	Chinese				
	Mixed Ethnic Origin				
	Gypsies/ Travellers				
	Other – <i>specify</i>				
Language	English not first language				
Pregnancy and Maternity	Women who are pregnant or have given birth in last 26 weeks				

⁶ National Census 2011 categories are: Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, Other Asian (Asian or Asian British), African, Caribbean, Other Black (Black or Black British), White and Black African, White and Asian, White and Black Caribbean (Mixed), British, Irish, Other White (White), Chinese, Other (Other Ethnic Group).

'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could particularly benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could particularly disadvantage the group
Religion or Belief	People with a religious belief (or none)				
Sex	Men				
	Women				
Gender Reassignment ⁷	Transgender/ Transsexual				
Sexual Orientation	Bisexual, Heterosexual, Gay or Lesbian				
Marriage and Civil Partnership	People who are married or in a civil partnership				

11. If you have identified any negative impacts (above), how can they be minimised or removed?

- No negative impacts have been identified.

12. Could the policy discriminate⁸ against any 'protected characteristic', either directly or indirectly⁹?

- No

⁷ The 'protected characteristic' of gender reassignment is defined by the Equality Act 2010 as "a person proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex." This is a personal process that may involve medical interventions such as counselling, psychotherapy, hormone therapy or surgery, but does not have to.

⁸ The Council has a general duty to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation'. Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another in a comparable situation because of their 'protected characteristic' whether on grounds of age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, ethnicity; religion or belief; sex (gender), sexual orientation, or marriage and civil partnership. Indirect discrimination occurs when an apparently neutral provision or practice would nevertheless disadvantage people on the grounds of their 'protected characteristic'.

⁹ If you answer 'yes' to question 11 (above) you will need to complete the following section *and* go on to complete Section 2 in order to conduct a full Equality Impact Assessment.

Summary and findings of Initial Equality Impact Assessment

13. Please put a tick in the relevant box to confirm your findings, and what the next step is:

Findings	Action required
A. No negative impacts have been identified <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and finish.
B. Negative impacts have been identified but have been minimised or removed <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and finish.
C. Negative impacts could not be minimised or removed <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and complete a full impact assessment – Section 2.
D. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and complete a full impact assessment – Section 2.

14. Name and job title of person completing this form:

- David Carter, Parks, Contracts and Volunteering Specialist.

15. Date of completion:

- 27 August 2020

16. Date for update or review of this screening¹⁰:

- 1 September 2023

If you have selected A or B (above), you have completed the assessment and can remove this paragraph and everything that appears below. In this case please:(a) send a copy to the relevant Assistant Director and the Equality and Safeguarding Officer; (b) arrange for it to be published on the Council's website [here](#) (under the relevant service area heading); and (c) update the Corporate Spreadsheet by clicking [here](#) and selecting and updating the first document. If you have selected C or D (above), you must complete Section Two (below).

¹⁰ This is normally three years, but not always: You may know that the policy itself will be reviewed earlier in which case the EqIA should be reviewed at that time. Or, in the case of a five year strategy, you may want to have a review date of five years. In the case of a "one off" decision, such as closing a service, a review date may not be needed - in which case you should indicate 'N/A'. In any event, the review date should be brought forward if you receive information or feedback which raises new concerns, or if the public policy context changes. You can speak to the [Equality and Safeguarding Co-ordinator](#) for more advice.

Environment and Sustainability Panel

Item
11

17 September 2020

Report of	Assistant Director Corporate and Improvement Services	Author	Matthew Evans ☎ ext. 8006
Title	Work Programme 2020-2021		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the current Work Programme 2020-2021 for the Environment and Sustainability Panel. This provides details of the reports that are scheduled for each meeting during the municipal year.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to note the contents of the Work Programme for 2020-2021.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 The Work Programme of this Panel is kept under review throughout the municipal year to ensure that business is progressed and Members have the opportunity to review upcoming agenda items.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 This function forms part of the Panel's Terms of Reference and, as such, no alternative options are presented.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 The Environment and Sustainability Panel deals with existing and emerging environmental issues, and will focus on carbon footprint reduction and monitoring and supporting the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan.
- 5.2 The Panel's Work Programme will evolve as the Municipal Year progresses and items of business are commenced and concluded. At each meeting the opportunity is taken for the Work Programme to be reviewed and, if necessary, amended according to current circumstances.

6. Standard References

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

7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 Environmental Sustainability is integral to the delivery of the Strategic Plan's priorities and direction for the Borough as set out under the four themes of growth, responsibility, opportunity and wellbeing.

WORK PROGRAMME 2020-21

Environment and Sustainability Panel
Meeting date / Agenda items -
Environment and Sustainability Panel - 17 September 2020
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Climate Emergency - One Year On2. Greening Colchester
Environment and Sustainability Panel – 29 October 2020
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Sustainability & Community Engagement2. Air Quality Project Update3. Positive Parking Strategy4. Safer, Greener, Healthier update
Environment and Sustainability Panel - 17 December 2020
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Developing a Carbon Management for Colchester (Carbon Trust)2. Discussion of an Interim Action Plan (for 2021)3. Decarbonising our Fleet (EST)

Environment and Sustainability Panel - 28 January 2021
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Sustainability in Planning2. Ecargo bike update3. Developing an Environmental Sustainability Strategy
Environment and Sustainability Panel – 11 March 2021
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Woodland Project Update2. Town Deal

