

Scrutiny Panel Meeting

**Grand Jury Room, Town Hall, High Street,
Colchester, CO1 1PJ**

Tuesday, 05 July 2022 at 18:00

The Scrutiny Panel examines the policies and strategies from a borough-wide perspective and ensure the actions of the Cabinet accord with the Council's policies and budget. The Panel reviews corporate strategies that form the Council's Strategic Plan, Council partnerships and the Council's budgetary guidelines, and scrutinises Cabinet or Portfolio Holder decisions which have been called in.

Information for Members of the Public

Access to information and meetings

You have the right to attend all meetings of the Council, its Committees and Cabinet. You also have the right to see the agenda (the list of items to be discussed at a meeting), which is usually published five working days before the meeting, and minutes once they are published.

Dates of the meetings are available here:

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

Most meetings take place in public. This only changes when certain issues, for instance, commercially sensitive information or details concerning an individual are considered. At this point you will be told whether there are any issues to be discussed in private, if so, you will be asked to leave the meeting.

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Scrutiny Panel – Terms of Reference

1. To fulfil all the functions of an overview and scrutiny committee under section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and in particular (but not limited to):

- (a) To review corporate strategies;
- (b) To ensure that actions of the Cabinet accord with the policies and budget of the Council;
- (c) To monitor and scrutinise the financial performance of the Council, performance reporting and to make recommendations to the Cabinet particularly in relation to annual revenue and capital guidelines, bids and submissions;
- (d) To review the Council's spending proposals to the policy priorities and review progress towards achieving those priorities against the Strategic and Implementation Plans;
- (e) To review the financial performance of the Council and to make recommendations to the Cabinet in relation to financial outturns, revenue and capital expenditure monitors;
- (f) To review or scrutinise executive decisions made by Cabinet, the North Essex Parking Partnership Joint Committee (in relation to decisions relating to off-street matters only) and the Colchester and Ipswich Joint Museums Committee which have been made but not implemented referred to the Panel pursuant to the Call-In Procedure;
- (g) To review or scrutinise executive decisions made by Portfolio Holders and officers taking key decisions which have been made but not implemented referred to the Panel pursuant to the Call-In Procedure;
- (h) To monitor the effectiveness and application of the Call-In Procedure, to report on the number and reasons for Call-In and to make recommendations to the Council on any changes required to ensure the efficient and effective operation of the process;
- (i) To review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of functions which are not the responsibility of the Cabinet;
- (j) At the request of the Cabinet, to make decisions about the priority of referrals made in the event of the volume of reports to the Cabinet or creating difficulty for the management of Cabinet business or jeopardising the efficient running of Council business;

2. To fulfil all the functions of the Council's designated Crime and Disorder Committee ("the Committee") under the Police and Justice Act 2006 and in particular (but not limited to):

- (a) To review and scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions;
- (b) To make reports and recommendations to the Council or the Cabinet with respect to the discharge of those functions.

COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL
Scrutiny Panel
Tuesday, 05 July 2022 at 18:00

The Scrutiny Panel Members are:

Councillor Dennis Willetts
Councillor Sue Lissimore
Councillor Darius Laws
Councillor Mike Lilley
Councillor Sam McCarthy
Councillor Lee Scordis
Councillor Paul Smith

Chairman
Deputy Chairman

The Scrutiny Panel Substitute Members are:

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

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

Please note that Agenda items 1 to 5 are normally dealt with briefly.

1 Welcome and Announcements

The Chairman will welcome members of the public and Councillors and remind everyone to use microphones at all times when they are speaking. The Chairman will also explain action in the event of an emergency, mobile phones switched to silent, audio-recording of the meeting. Councillors who are members of the committee will introduce themselves.

2 Substitutions

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

3 Urgent Items

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

4 Declarations of Interest

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

participating in any vote upon the item, or any other pecuniary interest or non-pecuniary interest.

5 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Councillors will be invited to confirm that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2022 are a correct record.

Scrutiny Panel Minutes 7 June 2022

9 - 14

6 Have Your Say!

The Chairman will invite members of the public to indicate if they wish to speak or present a petition on any item included on the agenda or any other matter relating to the terms of reference of the meeting. Please indicate your wish to speak at this point if your name has not been noted by Council staff.

7 Decisions taken under Special Urgency Provisions

The Councillors will consider any decisions by the Cabinet or a Portfolio Holder which have been taken under Special Urgency Provisions.

8 Cabinet or Portfolio Holder Decisions called in for Review

The Councillors will consider any Cabinet or Portfolio Holder decisions called in for review.

9 Items requested by members of the Panel and other Members

(a) To evaluate requests by members of the Panel for an item relevant to the Panel's functions to be considered.

(b) To evaluate requests by other members of the Council for an item relevant to the Panel's functions to be considered.

Members of the panel may use agenda item 'a' (all other members will use agenda item 'b') as the appropriate route for referring a 'local government matter' in the context of the Councillor Call for Action to the panel. Please refer to the panel's terms of reference for further procedural arrangements.

10 Council Tax Rebate

15 - 18

In February 2022, the Government announced measures to support residents with increasing fuel costs. This included a Council Tax rebate of £150 for all residents liable to pay Council Tax in properties band A-D and funding for Local Authorities to deliver a discretionary scheme. This report presents an update on progress on delivery of this rebate.

11 Year End April 2021 – March 2022 Performance Report Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and Other Performance News

19 - 46

This report provides details of performance against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2021 - 2022. The report also includes other performance news.

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|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 12 | Year End April 2021 to March 2022 Performance Report - 2020-2023 Strategic Plan Action Plan | 47 - 100 |
| | This report provides details of progress in delivering against the Council's Strategic Plan for 2020-2023 at the end of 2021-2022. | |
| 13 | Colchester's Housing Strategy 2022-27 | 101 - 164 |
| | Scrutiny Panel is invited to consider Colchester's Housing Strategy 2022-27 and make recommendations to the 6 July Cabinet meeting. | |
| 14 | Annual Scrutiny Report | 165 - 180 |
| | This report sets out the work of the Scrutiny Panel during 2021/22 and requests that the Panel recommend the report to Full Council for approval on 19 October 2022. | |
| 15 | Haven Road Flooding | 181 - 184 |
| | This report provides Scrutiny Panel with some background information, a summary of work undertaken, and an outline of the roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders involved in relation to the flooding at Haven Road. | |
| 16 | Summary of previous Scrutiny Panel reviews into bus service provision | 185 - 208 |
| | This report presents an overview of the work done to date by the Scrutiny Panel in its two reviews of bus service provision conducted in recent years. | |
| 17 | Work Programme 2022-23 | 209 - 226 |
| | This report sets out the current Work Programme 2022-2023 for the Scrutiny Panel. This provides details of the reports that are scheduled for each meeting during the municipal year. | |
| 18 | Exclusion of the Public (Scrutiny) | |
| | In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in accordance with The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended) to exclude the public, including the press, from the meeting so that any items containing exempt information (for example confidential personal, financial or legal advice), in Part B of this agenda (printed on yellow paper) can be decided. (Exempt information is defined in Section 100I and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972). | |

Part B (not open to the public including the press)

SCRUTINY PANEL

7 June 2022

Present: -

Councillor Laws, Councillor Lilley, Councillor Lissimore, Councillor McCarthy, Councillor Scordis, Councillor Smith, Councillor Willetts

Substitutions: -

Also present: -

348. Minutes of previous meetings

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 15 March 2022 and 25 May 2022 be approved as correct records.

349. Decisions Taken Under Special Urgency Provisions

There were no such decisions to report to this meeting. The Chairman informed members and officers that, for any decisions taken under special urgency provisions, he would expect to be provided with a timeline for the decision-making, to show why there was a need for the special urgency provisions to be used.

350. Items requested by members of the Panel and other Members

Councillor Paul Smith requested that the Panel schedule a future agenda item to scrutinize the methods used by the Council to pay this year's £150 Council Tax rebates (to address energy cost increases) and the ways in which the Council will provide these to those who do not pay Council Tax via direct debit, who were often those who were most financially vulnerable. The Panel considered this request, and it was suggested that this should go ahead, with the potential for a wider-ranging item in the future to look at any issues or problems identified, should such problems potentially have wider ramifications. Richard Block, Assistant Director for Corporate and Improvement, gave assurance that the necessary information could be provided by officers.

Councillor Lee Scordis requested that the Scrutiny Panel scrutinize bus service provision throughout the Borough, highlighting recent service cuts and network problems. Councillor Scordis expressed a wish to examine the reasons for changes to bus services within the Borough, the possible effects on the local economy and on efforts and measures intended to counteract climate change. It was noted that the Scrutiny Panel had already conducted scrutiny work on the Borough's bus services and that it might be hard to persuade the bus service providers to participate in a further review. Richard Block, Assistant Director for Corporate and Improvement, suggested that Council Officers could assimilate the reports received previously by

the Scrutiny Panel, including the outcomes of its last review of bus services, and bring this to the Panel for examination and consideration as to whether the Panel could add any further value by scrutinising the subject. Support was voiced for the intention to examine what impact changes to the bus network might be having to climate change and emissions levels. Officers were asked to inform the appropriate representatives of bus service providers of the Panel's intention to re-examine this issue, and to enquire as to whether they would be willing to participate in this work.

Councillor Lee Scordis requested that the Scrutiny Panel examine the issues caused by flooding at the Hythe, and their effects on Colchester. This would include consideration of the current situation, viable solutions to the problems caused and an assessment as to which stakeholders would need to contribute to finding solutions and/or mitigations. A Panel member suggested that it would be advisable to obtain an update from Will Quince, Member of Parliament for Colchester, who had brought together the stakeholders to meet and discuss the issues.

It was noted that the flooding problems had many stakeholders involved and that it would be hard for the Panel to scrutinise further than the officers and actions of the Council. The Panel considered whether it would be best to invite stakeholders and what the scope of the scrutiny work would be, whether an update on the situation was wanted or whether the Panel wanted to gather and consider evidence. The Chairman emphasised the need for the Panel to concentrate on matters upon which it could put forward a recognisable benefit, and recommended that the Panel receive a briefing note to summarise the current position and actions taken to date on addressing the flooding problem. The Panel could then assess what value it could potentially bring by scrutinising the situation, potentially inviting stakeholders to participate. The Panel noted that the question as to which agency or organisation would be responsible for rectifying the issues in question.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Panel will:

- a) Scrutinise the methods used by the Council to pay this year's £150 Council Tax rebates (to address energy cost increases) and the ways in which the Council will provide these to those who do not pay Council Tax via direct debit, with an item for this to be scheduled for the Panel's meeting on 5 July 2022
- b) Receive a briefing report on bus service provision, detailing the reports received previously on this topic by the Scrutiny Panel, including the outcomes of its last review of bus services, with this to be brought to the Panel's meeting on 5 July 2022 for examination and consideration as to whether to scrutinise the subject further
- c) Receive a briefing note regarding the ongoing flooding at the Hythe, giving the current situation and actions taken to date in aid of solving the problem, with this briefing note to be provided in preparation for the Panel's meeting on 5 July 2022

351. Town Deal Reporting

Matt Sterling, Strategic Economic Growth Manager, presented his report and provided background information on the Scrutiny Panel's consideration of the Town Deal projects' business cases in February 2022, and the overall background of the bidding process which had led to the granting of £18.2 million from central government. Following the Panel's considerations, the business cases had been considered by Cabinet and submitted to central government for approval. Informal positive indications had been received back from central government and it was hoped that formal confirmation of the agreed funding would be received around the end of June.

The Strategic Economic Growth Manager agreed that there would be a valuable role for the Scrutiny Panel in examining progress, planning and synergies betwixt different projects. A walkaround had been held earlier that day, attended by four civil servants, to show the sites for the Town Centre projects. It was proposed that Scrutiny Panel should review progress six months after the funding had been confirmed, and then annually.

The Chairman noted that, when Cabinet had asked the Scrutiny Panel to scrutinise the business cases in early 2022, much work had been needed and the Panel had needed to rely on the views of the Section 151 Officer and members of the management team who had provided assurance regarding such matters as financial viability. The Panel had been given confidence in the strength of the projects and the risk management structure and mitigations put in place. However, concern had been expressed that the Panel did not get the time necessary to consider the business cases in their entirety, albeit receiving the aforementioned strong assurances from the relevant officers.

The Panel considered whether it would be prudent to re-examine the business cases after funding had been confirmed and allocated, giving Panel members the opportunity to question any areas of concern, especially given current inflationary pressures and the need to accommodate these. A request was made for a brief report on the business cases once funding had been approved. It was suggested that this should include a timeline of key events in the timeline for the projects, showing expected progress, as well as information on any further potential for leveraging more funding and any likely effects of possible delays or funding issues. Assurance was requested that these matters were under consideration and any risks were being managed. A Panel member underlined the need to avoid any potential loss of funding.

The Strategic Economic Growth Manager confirmed that inflationary pressures had already been encountered and considered. Costings for many of the projects had increased and 'We Are Colchester' had proved adept at adapting projects to accommodate inflationary pressures and remain viable.

A Panel member queried whether the projects had been ranked into an order of priority and, if so, what their ranking was, and what priority had been assigned to the project relating to Jumbo. The Strategic Economic Growth Manager explained that no priority scale had been set for the projects and explained that each was a stand-

alone project, albeit with synergies through linking with other projects. Government expected all projects to proceed unless this can be shown to be impossible. Liaison with government would need to occur over any changes which become necessary.

The Panel considered the timetabling of an update report on the Town Deal projects and, being advised that this could not be guaranteed for the Panel's meeting on 5 July 2022, agreed that this should be brought to the Panel for its meeting on 16 August 2022.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Panel will receive an update report on the progress of the Town Deal projects, to be scheduled for the Scrutiny Panel meeting due to occur on 16 August 2022.

352. Work Programme 2022-23

The Panel discussed potential timings for portfolio holder briefings, and the form which these should take, with the noting of previous concerns raised by Panel members in 2021-22 that these briefings would be more useful if the Panel were to specify matters of particular concern and use these briefings to discuss them with the relevant members of Cabinet. The Panel agreed that this would likely help, especially when considering the timing of each briefing. It was noted that portfolio holders would need some time to gain experience in their new roles, given that this was a new administration, and it was felt that 16 August 2022 would be too early for the first briefing, and that the Cabinet Member for Resources should be invited to brief the Panel after the Council's 2023-24 Budget had been drafted, to scrutinise its aims and content. The Panel noted the importance that these briefings provide a good mix of successes and difficulties.

The Panel discussed how it would sit as the statutory Crime and Disorder Committee of the Council. A Panel member noted that previous meetings had seen all statutory and non-statutory partners invited to provide updates, which had resulted in such lengthy meetings that thorough scrutiny had proved impossible. A request was made that future meetings of that Committee concentrate less on statistics and figures and more on what efforts were being made to deal with perpetrators of crime and antisocial behaviour and to reduce recidivism. The Panel agreed that the Chairman would meet with lead group members to assess how to structure the next meeting of the Crime and Disorder Committee to best scrutinise the work of the Safer Colchester Partnership.

The Panel discussed the problems presented by heavy agendas leading to late finishes for meetings. These included guests being kept waiting before they were called forward for their items, and the Panel requested shorter meetings and a minimization of waiting times for external guests attending to provide evidence. It was noted that hybrid meeting capacity would reduce the need for guests to give evidence in person, and the Council was in the process of obtaining a system to allow for in-house hybrid meetings, live streamed via YouTube.

The Panel considered when it might want to next receive an update on the work of the arts organisations which were in receipt of Council funding. It was suggested by a Panel member that this should be widened to include an update from the relevant

portfolio holder to give an update and assurance that the Council is obtaining value for money from the funding it provided. The Panel agreed that there should be such an update scheduled for this municipal year and a suggestion was made that the Panel should specify the areas it most wants to look at, such as encouraging diversity and nurturing new talent, thus condensing the meeting around specific topics. The potential for a wider, all-councillor briefing was mooted, which could give the arts organisations an opportunity to give a wider explanation of their activities, with Scrutiny Panel then focusing in on a narrower consideration of their activities as they related to the requirements within the funding agreements made by the arts organisations with the Council. It was suggested that the holding of an all-councillor briefing be recommended to Councillor Doctor Pam Cox, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Heritage.

The Panel were informed that the timing of the Panel's Annual Report to Council had been recommended for moving to the end of the 2022-23 municipal year, rather than the start of the 2023-24 municipal year. This would allow the Panel to report back on its work prior to any change in Panel membership which might occur at the start of the 2023-24 municipal year.

RESOLVED that: -

- a) The portfolio holder briefing on 16 August 2022 be cancelled
- b) The Cabinet Member for Resources be invited to brief the Panel after the Council's 2023-24 Budget had been drafted
- c) The Chairman and lead group members meet to assess how to structure the next meeting of the Crime and Disorder Committee to best scrutinise the work of the Safer Colchester Partnership, and how and whether to examine the governance arrangements relating to the Partnership now operating under the oversight of the wider One Colchester Partnership
- d) The Arts Organisations in receipt of Council funding be invited to a future meeting, which would focus on their commitments to the Council within the relevant funding agreements
- e) The Scrutiny Panel approves its Work Programme for 2022-23, with the cancellation of the portfolio holder briefing which had been proposed for 16 August 2022.

RECOMMENDED to the PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR CULTURE AND HERITAGE that an all-councillor briefing be arranged, to give the arts organisations in receipt of Council funding an opportunity to give a wide overview and explanation of their activities

6 July 2022

Report of	Assistant Director for Customer	Author	Sam Preston
Title	Council Tax Rebate		☎ 07966237492
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In February 2022, the Government announced measures to support residents with increasing fuel costs. This included a Council Tax Rebate of £150 for all residents liable to pay Council Tax in properties band A-D and funding for Local Authorities to deliver a discretionary scheme.
- 1.2 In Colchester there are approximately 64,175 properties in council tax bands A-D which would be eligible for the £150 rebate payment. To date 52,706 payments have been made which accounts for 82%. The majority of payments have been made to those paying council tax by direct debit.
- 1.3 In order to collect bank details for those not currently paying by direct debit, an online form was created. To date over 7,300 forms have been completed, 5,500 requesting payment to bank account and 1,800 requesting a credit on account. There is a detailed verification process for applications to ensure eligibility and accuracy. The first batch of 3,325 payments has now been processed. Payments will continue up until September when the scheme ends.
- 1.4 The Council has designed a local discretionary scheme (see background papers) which is now live for applications. The software provider released the system update which enables payments under the discretionary scheme on 15 June. This was quickly implemented/tested, and 96 discretionary payments were made on 17 June.

2. Action Required

- 2.1 To consider the approach for implementation of the above schemes to date and consider any further action required.

3. Reason for Scrutiny

- 3.1 To provide an update on progress.

4. Background Information

- 4.1 Following the Government announcement of the rebate and subsequent guidance being released, it was clear that the biggest challenge for processing payments would be around collecting data from residents not currently paying by direct debit.
- 4.2 Approximately 48,500 eligible accounts were already paid by direct debit, and the rest paid by other means or had nothing to pay due to a discount or exemption. This therefore meant that the team had to collect data for the remaining 15,675 accounts.
- 4.3 A direct debit campaign was started immediately encouraging people to register in order to receive the rebate payment as quickly as possible. Since March we have had approximately 2,500 extra direct debit sign ups, taking the total number of eligible direct debit payers to 51,000.
- 4.4 **Direct Debit Payers** – 97% paid.

In order to receive the payment, the council tax account must match details on the bank account used for direct debit. Contact remains relatively high from customers who have not yet received payment. So far, the following reasons are most common:

- The Council Tax Account is in the name of one person and the direct debit details as in the name of a different person
- The liable person has set up a direct debit using a maiden name and updated the council tax account is in a married name
- There is a spelling discrepancy between the council tax account and direct debit details.

4.5 Cash Payers – 25% paid.

There are around 13,175 accounts where we do not hold bank details. A simple online form was created for those where current bank details are not held. The form was designed to allow residents to choose a payment into their bank account or a credit to the council tax account. All residents eligible for the rebate who are not paying by direct debit were contacted either by email or letter asking them to complete the form by 1 July 2022.

The Council Tax Team along with officers from other areas within Customer have been supporting people by completing the forms over the telephone, where the customer is unable to do so themselves.

Prior to payment into bank account, the applications must be checked and verified in a number of ways, including the use of the Governments Spotlight tool. This is a lengthy process and will lead to a number of applications requiring manual intervention. Of the 7,300 forms processed over 2,000 were rejected during the verification process, with 3,325 having now been paid. The teams are working to resolve the rejected forms as quickly as possible.

Credits to Council Tax Account are now being worked on and expected to be processed early July.

Forms are still being completed by customers daily, however we are clear that many eligible residents are yet to respond. In July we must consider whether to

contact all residents who have not yet responded to previous comms again. It will also be considered whether a credit should be applied to accounts where the resident does not respond, to ensure they do not miss the last payment dates. It will be possible to subsequently refund these accounts if the customer would prefer the payment into bank account.

4.6 Discretionary Scheme - £318,000 available

The local discretionary scheme provides payments of £150 for all Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) claimants in Council Tax bands E-H, along with support for those who can evidence financial hardship. Approximately 250 LCTS claimants will benefit from the payment, with a further 1,800 payments available under hardship.

An online form has been developed for applications under hardship or to collect bank details for those in receipt of LCTS. Very few applications have been received to date under hardship. Modelling is now being completed to target the scheme to vulnerable groups and consider opening the scheme to top up those in bands A-D within certain groups.

Residents in bands E-H in receipt of LCTS have now been paid where we held bank details on accounts. Those where we do not hold bank details are now being contacted to complete the online form.

5 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 5.1 The main and discretionary scheme proposals went through Portfolio Holder Decision process and included an EQIA for the local scheme.

6 Standard References

- 6.1 There are no particular references to the Strategic Plan; consultation or financial; community safety; health and safety or risk management implications.

7 Publicity Considerations

- 7.1 The rebate schemes have been promoted widely through social media, the website, press releases and through Councillors.
- 7.2 Proactive communications directly to residents have been included.

8 Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

- 8.1 The schemes have been designed to support households to meet increased energy costs, helping them to keep warm and well.

9 Risk Management Implications

- 9.1 The payment process has been designed to reduce risk of payment in error. Verification checks are completed across all schemes and payment types.

Background Papers

Council Tax Rebate Scheme

Discretionary Council Tax Rebate Scheme

Scrutiny Panel

Item

11

5 July 2021

Report of	Assistant Director – Corporate and Improvement	Author	Gary Reid ☎ 07874984922
Title	Year End April 2021 – March 2022 Performance Report Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and Other Performance News		
Wards affected	All wards		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides details of performance against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2021 - 2022. The report also includes other performance news.

2. Action Required

- 2.1 To review performance against Key Performance Indicators and, where Key Performance Indicators have not been met, that appropriate corrective action has been taken.
- 2.2 Where concerns about performance are identified, to make recommendations to Cabinet so these can be considered when Cabinet considers the same report in September.

3. Reason for Scrutiny

- 3.1 To review year end performance for 2021 – 2022 and ensure robust performance management of key Council services.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 The Council has agreed key performance indicators which it uses as part of its Performance Management Framework to help monitor progress and improvement. This report provides an update on the Council's Key Performance Indicators and a review of other performance achieved throughout the reporting period.
- 5.2 The report at Appendix A features an improved graphical presentation of year-to-date performance, previous year performance and targets.
- 5.3 At the year end point for April 2021 - March 2022, the overall position was that 8 targets were achieved (or 'green'), and 5 did not meet the target in full ('red').
- 5.4 Of the eight KPIs that have been achieved ('green' KPI's), it is worth noting that some have been exceeded. This is particularly the case in relation to Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Scheme (KPI K1B1) where residents are receiving benefits after an average of two days processing time.
- 5.5 Targets for processing all types of Planning applications have been exceeded.
- 5.6 Targets for processing Council Tax and Business Rates Collections have also have been exceeded.
- 5.7 Targets have not been met for five indicators ('red' KPIs). These are:
- K1H2 Affordable Homes Provided
 - K1H5 Average time to re-let Council Homes
 - K1R3 Sickness
 - K1W1 Residual Household Waste per household
 - K1W2 Household Waste Reused, Recycled and Composted
- 5.8 **Affordable Homes Provided.** Affordable housing delivery is slightly behind at the halfway stage of the strategic target of 380 homes in the period of 2020-2023. Numbers were adversely affected by the pandemic which caused labour and material shortages and instability in the housing construction market. With pandemic settling and regulations easing numbers are expected to increase over the next quarter. This increase has been slower than for general housing as some schemes have delivered private housing first, but there is significant affordable housing delivery forecast in the coming quarters, and we continue to liaise with Registered Providers to monitor delivery.
- 5.9 **Average time to re-let Council Homes.** 220 general needs homes have been let in the year in an average of 30.96 days (4.4 weeks) which is over the expected target of 25 days. The period between November and March was a particularly difficult time with higher numbers of properties becoming empty at a time when resources (contractors, in house team and supplies) were in short supply due to Covid restrictions. CBH have maintained this service despite difficult working environments and reduced the number of homes that are empty at year end to 32 (6 of which are undergoing Major works). The number of voids remains low when compared with previous years and affects time spent in temporary accommodation and transfers for existing tenants. There were only 31 three/four bedroom Council voids during the year.

- 5.10 **Sickness.** Sickness rates increased during 2021 as operational areas fully re-opened following the lockdown in early 2021. As all areas of the Council re-opened – and the restrictions and mitigations in wider society have relaxed - sickness rates increased, especially in operational areas, where staff are not able to work from home so are more exposed to Covid and other general illness. Covid has continued to drive sickness levels up throughout the last 12 months, but more significantly since the Omicron wave in late 2021. Covid is now the biggest individual reason for sickness, in terms of days, lost across Colchester Borough Council. A new Sickness Policy was launched in January 2022 which will improve how sickness is managed and should improve performance against target as the year goes on.
- 5.11 **Residual Household Waste per household.** Residents have continued, in general, to generate more residual waste than recent years. It is proposed that this is an outcome of more residents working from, spending more time at home, increasing online and home delivery shopping and/or changes to their lifestyles. A campaign was launched in September to reinforce the current 3 bag / 1 bin limit., along with a 'reduce waste social media campaign' to encourage residents to reduce their waste #WasteLessColchester. Whilst the target has not been met, it has been improved on the previous year.
- 5.12 **Household Waste Reused, Recycled and Composted.** Whilst behind the target at the beginning of the year, the percentage of household waste reused, recycled and composted has improved, particularly with the reintroduction of textile collections and the reinforcement of the 3 bag / 1 bin limit. Whilst the target has not been met, it has improved on the previous year.
- 5.13 In addition to the performance described above, the Council has again received numerous awards and accreditations, and these are highlighted at the end of Appendix B.

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 6.1 Robust performance management of key Council Services supports the aims of improving both services and the lives of everyone in the borough. Where required, specific Equality Impact Assessments will exist for policies and activities rather than for individual performance indicators or actions.

7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 There are no references to the 2020 – 2023 Strategic Plan.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 The report's contents do not have any direct implications regarding consultation.

9. Publicity Considerations

- 9.1 The performance report contains measures for our key performance indicators. Many of these are used to monitor the performance of our services, and as such these may be of public interest. The report and related information are published on the Performance and Improvement section of the Council's website.

10. Financial implications

10.1 The financial implications of the action plans to deliver the indicators form part of the budget setting process.

11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

11.1 Many of the KPI targets reported above ensure that Council Services that have a positive impact on Health and Wellbeing are delivered effectively.

12. Health and Safety Implications

12.1 There are no direct health and safety implications associated with this report.

13. Risk Management Implications

13.1 There are no direct risk management implications associated with this report.

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

14.1 The KPIs relating to recycling and the levels of residual waste collected are the key indicators that contribute to Environment and Sustainability.

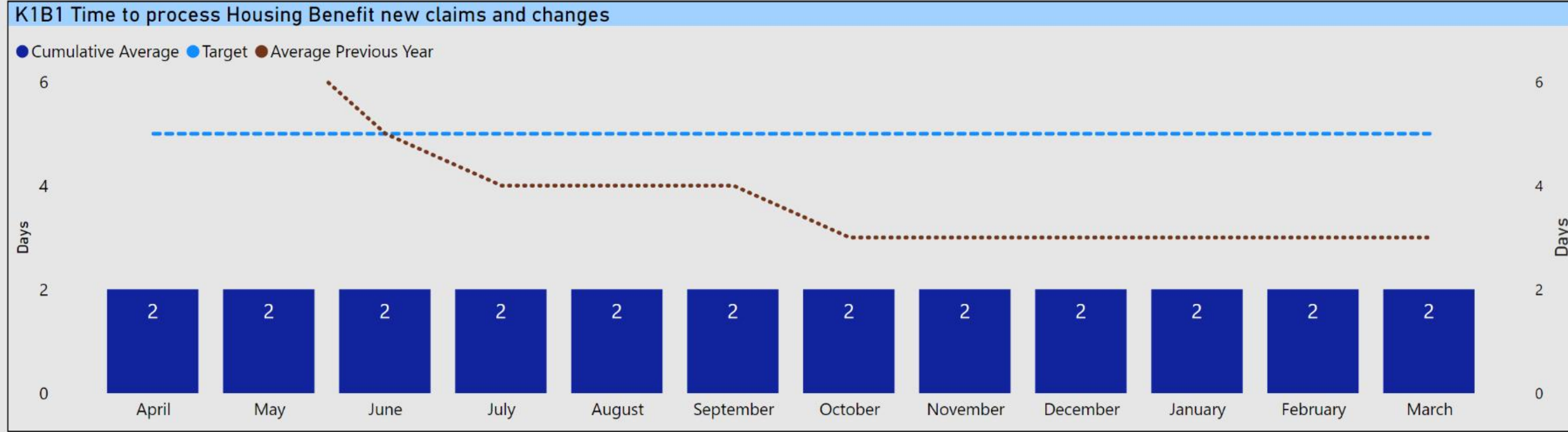
Appendices

A. KPI Year End Report covering April 2021 – March 2022.

B. Awards and Other Performance News covering April 2021 – March 2022.

Corporate Key Performance Indicators Covering April 2021 - March 2022

K1B1 Housing Benefit	→
K1B1 LCTS	→
K1H1 Additional Homes	→
K1H2 Affordable Homes	→
K1H3 Homelessness	→
K1H4 Rent Collected	→
K1H5 Re-lets	→
K1P1 Planning Apps (Majors)	→
K1P1 Planning Apps (Minors)	→
K1P1 Planning Apps (Others)	→
K1R1 Council Tax	→
K1R2 NNDR	→
K1R3 Sickness	→
K1W1 Residual Waste	→
K1W2 Recycled Waste	→
K1W3 % of Scheduled Collections Made	→



Cumulative Average against Target

2✓

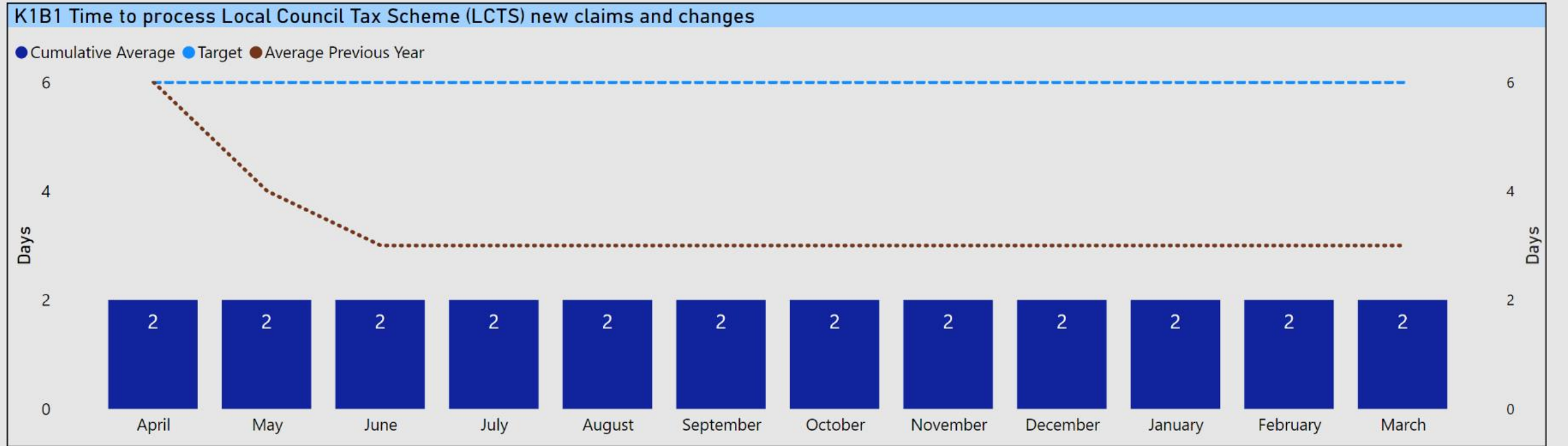
Target: 5 March

Supporting Narrative

The processing team work hard to maintain excellent days to process stats, it is however recognised that room should be given to extend processing times should resources require or if efficiencies can be made.

Proposed Target 2022-2023

5



Cumulative Average against Target

2✓

Target: 6 March

Supporting Narrative

The number of LCTS applications remains high and this is likely to continue with benefits uplift and support during the pandemic now coming to an end. The team have performed exceptionally well exceeding the target for processing local council tax support (LCTS). LCTS has been awarded quickly to residents to help them with financial difficulties.

Proposed Target 2022-2023

6

K1H1 Additional Homes Provided



Actual towards Target

1003✓

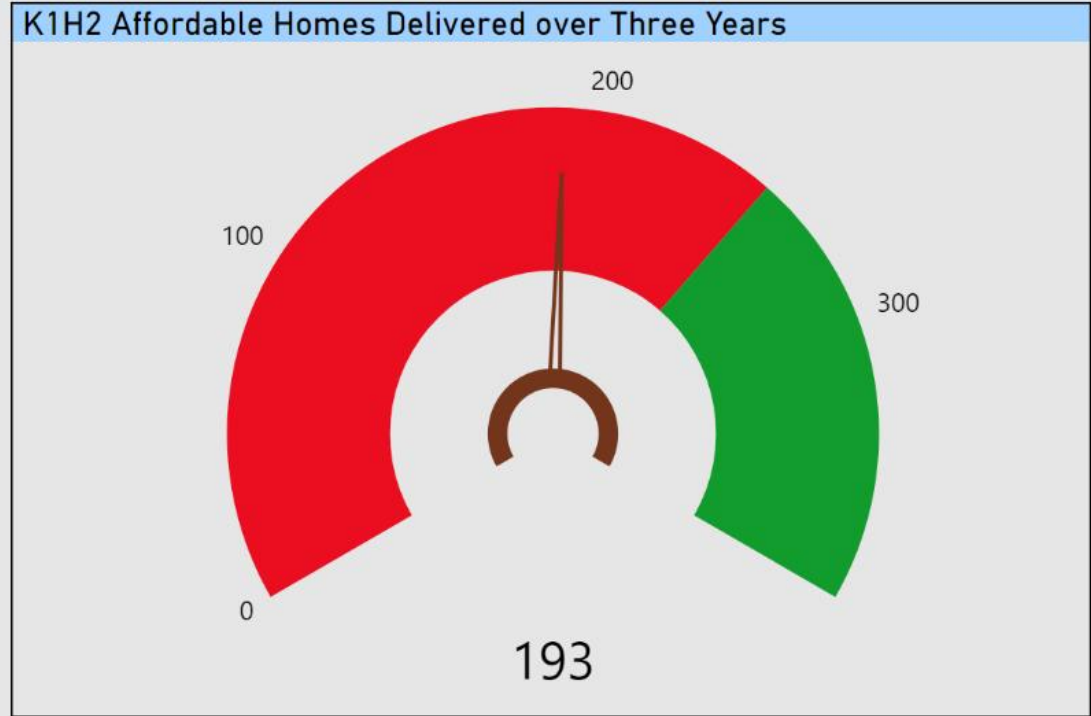
IndicativeTarget: 920
March

Supporting Narrative

The housing market in Colchester remains buoyant and a number of large sites have recently commenced which provide regular delivery of new homes. The figure also reflects some issues with monitoring during Covid which resulted in lower delivery figures.

Proposed Target 202-2023

920



Actual against Year Two Target

193!

Indicative Target: 255
March

Supporting Narrative

Affordable housing delivery is slightly behind at the halfway stage of the strategic target of 380 homes in the period of 2020-2023. Numbers were adversely affected by the pandemic which caused labour and material shortages and instability in the housing construction market. With pandemic settling and regulations easing numbers are expected to increase over the next quarter. This increase has been slower than for general housing as some schemes have delivered private housing first, but there is significant affordable housing delivery forecast in the coming quarters, and we continue to liaise with Registered Providers to monitor delivery.

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Proposed Target
2020-2023

380

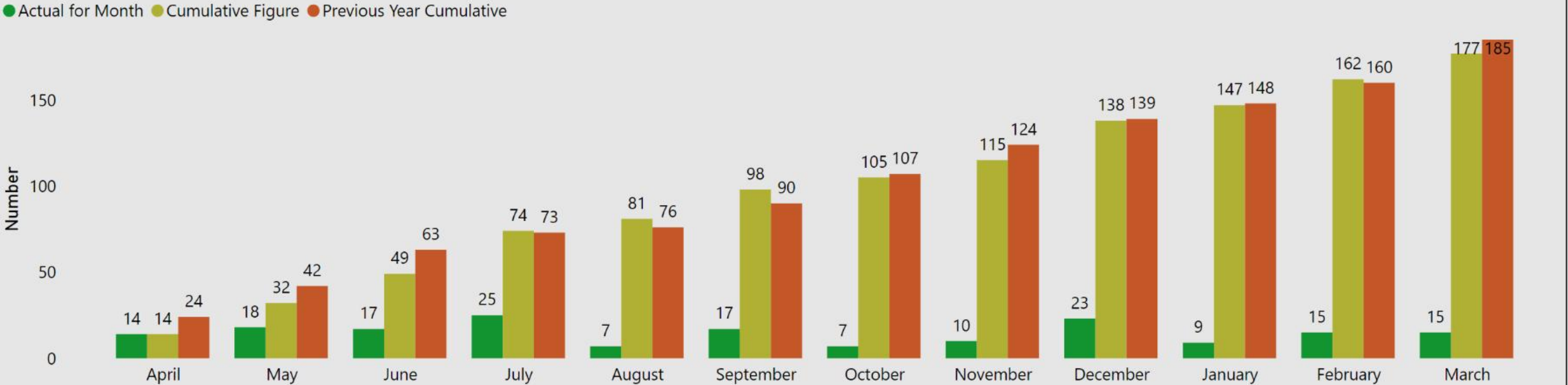
K1H3 Homelessness Duty Owed - number of full duty acceptances

←

→

↶

K1H3 Full Homelessness Duty Owed



- Number of full duty acceptances
- Number of households in temporar...
- Number of preventions
- Number where Relief Duty provided

Supporting Narrative

For this year no target for homelessness was given. Monitoring of demand for the service was completed using total number of applications, prevention and relief of homelessness and the total number of households presenting as homeless. During the year there were 1164 new cases of which 298 were either prevented or relieved from becoming homeless. 177 cases were accepted as having a main Homelessness Duty during the year. The number of households in temporary accommodation at 31 March is 227 (2.80 per 1,000 households in the Borough - based on the new target for 2022/23). This has increased with additional accommodation in place to house Afghan refugees and those who are resettled from rough sleeping. The numbers of households in temporary accommodation will increase further once the transfer and occupation of Plowright house is complete and we expect further presentations from refugees and demand for the service to increase as the cost-of-living increases.

K1H3 Homelessness Duty Owed - number of preventions

←

→

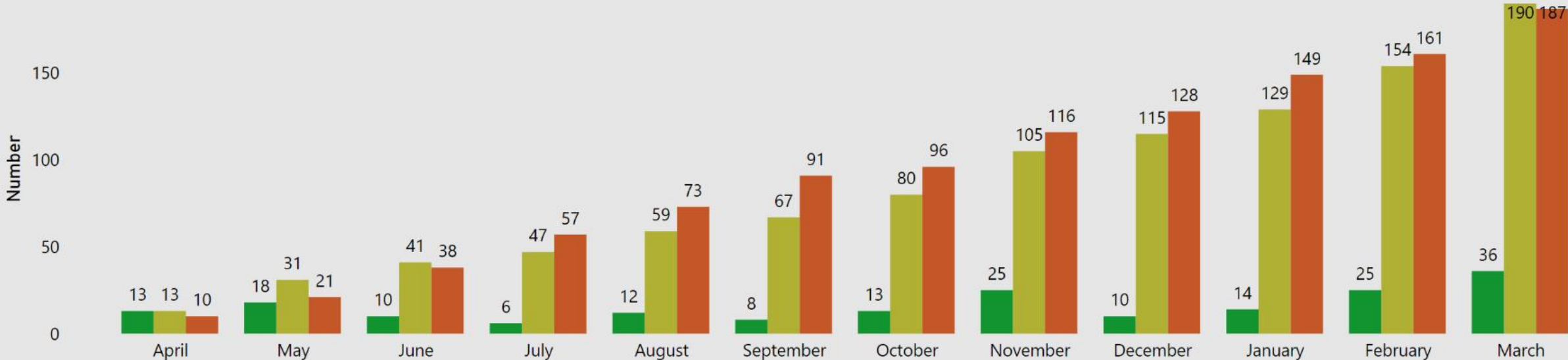
↶

K1H3 Full Homelessness Duty Owed

Actual for Month

Cumulative Figure

Previous Year Cumulative



Number of full duty acceptances

Number of households in temporar...

Number of preventions

Number where Relief Duty provided

Supporting Narrative

For this year no target for homelessness was given. Monitoring of demand for the service was completed using total number of applications, prevention and relief of homelessness and the total number of households presenting as homeless. During the year there were 1164 new cases of which 298 were either prevented or relieved from becoming homeless. 177 cases were accepted as having a main Homelessness Duty during the year. The number of households in temporary accommodation at 31 March is 227 (2.80 per 1,000 households in the Borough - based on the new target for 2022/23). This has increased with additional accommodation in place to house Afghan refugees and those who are resettled from rough sleeping. The numbers of households in temporary accommodation will increase further once the transfer and occupation of Plowright house is complete and we expect further presentations from refugees and demand for the service to increase as the cost-of-living increases.

K1H3 Homelessness Duty Owed - number where Relief Duty provided



K1H3 Full Homelessness Duty Owed

● Actual for Month ● Cumulative Figure ● Previous Year Cumulative



Number of full duty acceptances

Number of households in temporar...

Number of preventions

Number where Relief Duty provided

Supporting Narrative

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2020-2021

2021-2022

April

May

June

July

August

September

October

November

December

January

February

March

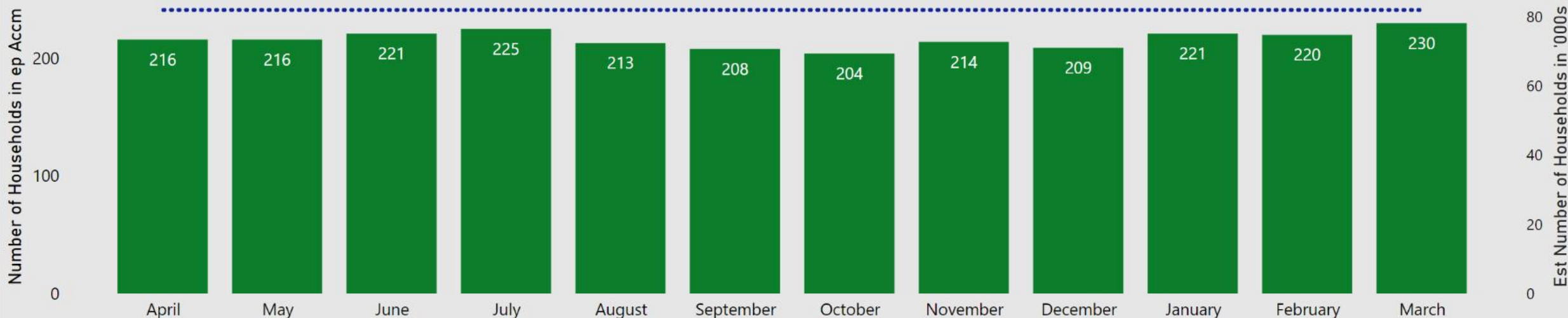
2022-2023

K1H3 Number of households in temporary accommodation per 1,000 households



K1H3 Number of households in temporary accommodation per 1,000 households

● Number of Households in Temp/Interim/B&B ● Estimated Number of Households '000s



Actual against Target

2.80✓

Target: 2.90
March

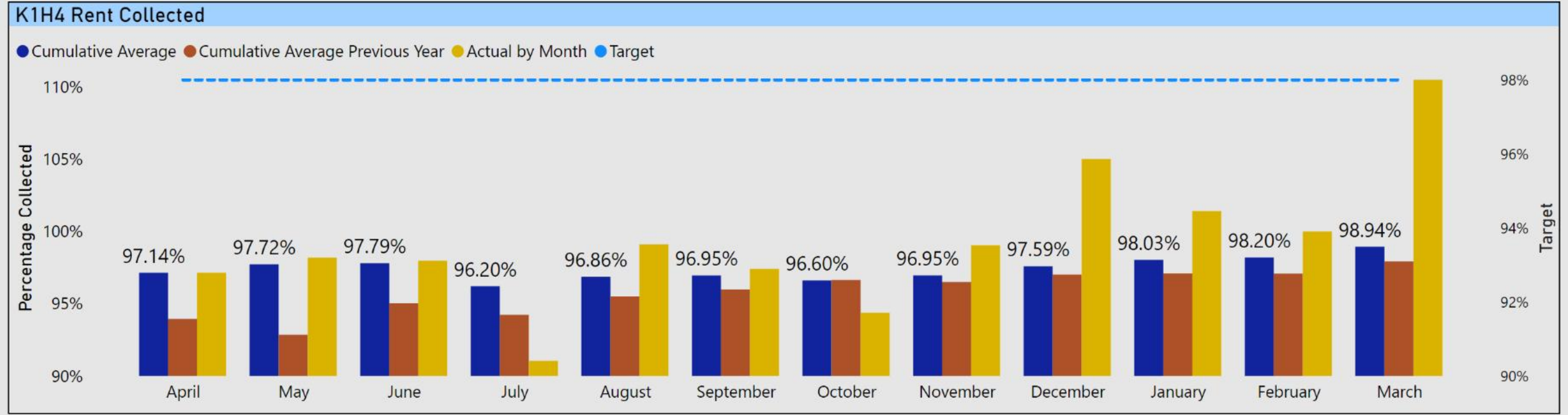
Supporting Narrative

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Proposed Target
2022-2023

2.90



Cumulative against Target

98.94%✓

Target: 98%

March

Supporting Narrative

The year end result of 98.9% exceeds the expected target collection of 98%. Many of our tenants have suffered considerable financial hardship this year due to the Covid pandemic and reductions in Welfare benefits. The Court process for possession had been halted and CBH have implemented a new Housing management system, which led to periods where automated rent account monitoring and generation of arrears letters were not in place. These issues have now been resolved and despite this the target was exceeded. The support that CBH provides to help tenants maintain their tenancy enhances the high rates of rent collected.

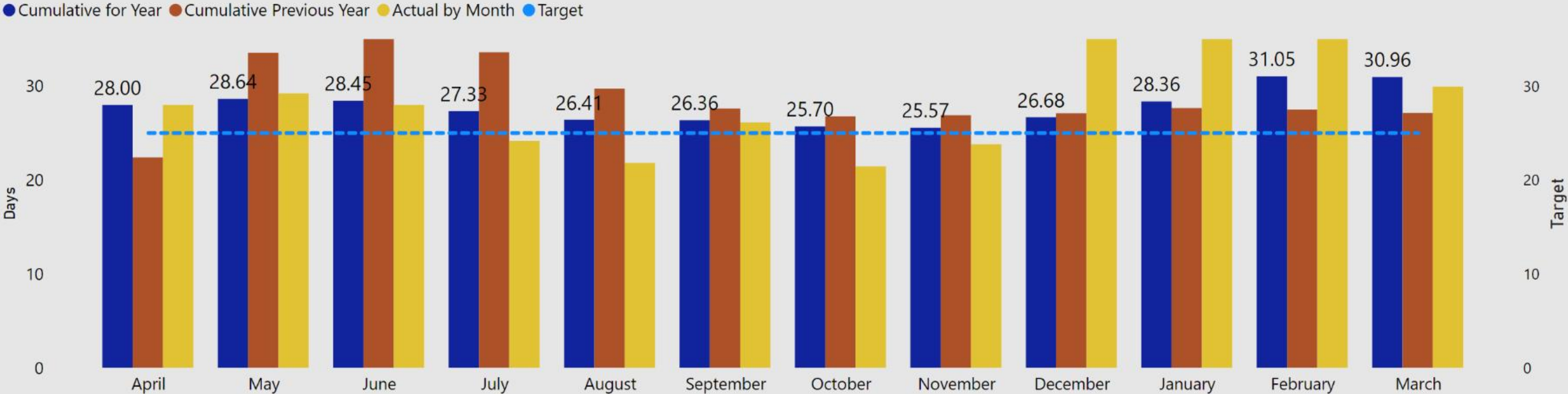
Proposed Target 2022-2023

98%

K1H5 Average time to re-let Council Homes



K1H5 Average time to re-let Council Homes



Cumulative against Target

30.96!

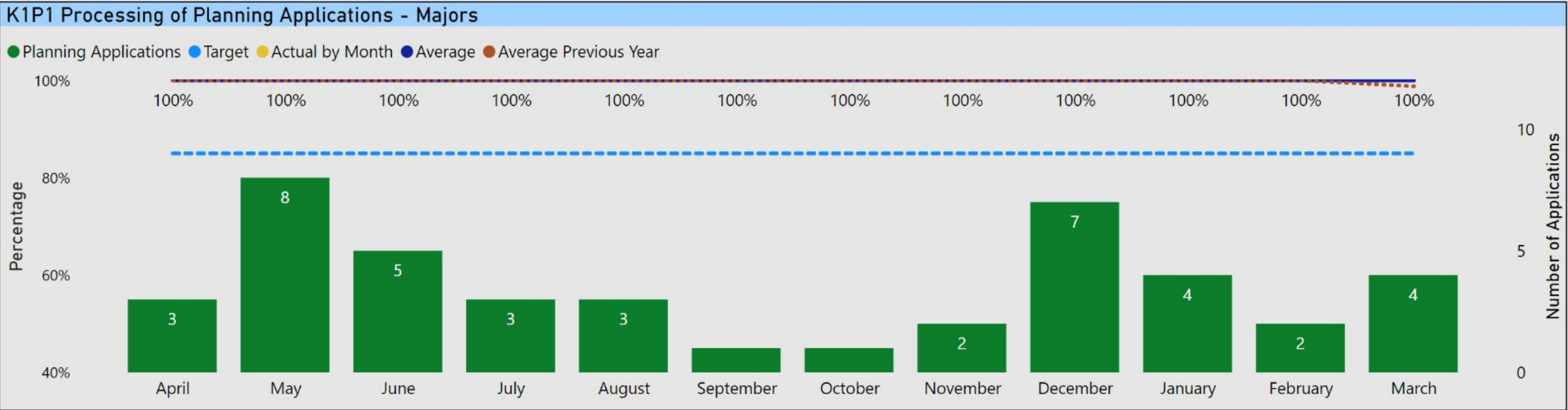
Target: 25
March

Supporting Narrative

220 general needs homes have been let in the year in an average of 30.96 days (4.4 weeks) which is over the expected target of 25 days. The period between November and March was a particularly difficult time with higher numbers of properties becoming empty at a time when resources (contractors, in house team and supplies) were in short supply due to Covid restrictions. CBH have maintained this service despite difficult working environments and reduced the number of homes that are empty at year end to 32 (6 of which are undergoing Major works). The number of voids remains low when compared with previous years and affects time spent in temporary accommodation and transfers for existing tenants. There were only 31 three/four bedroom Council voids during the year.

Proposed Target 2022-2023

28



Average against Target

100%✓

Target: 85%
March

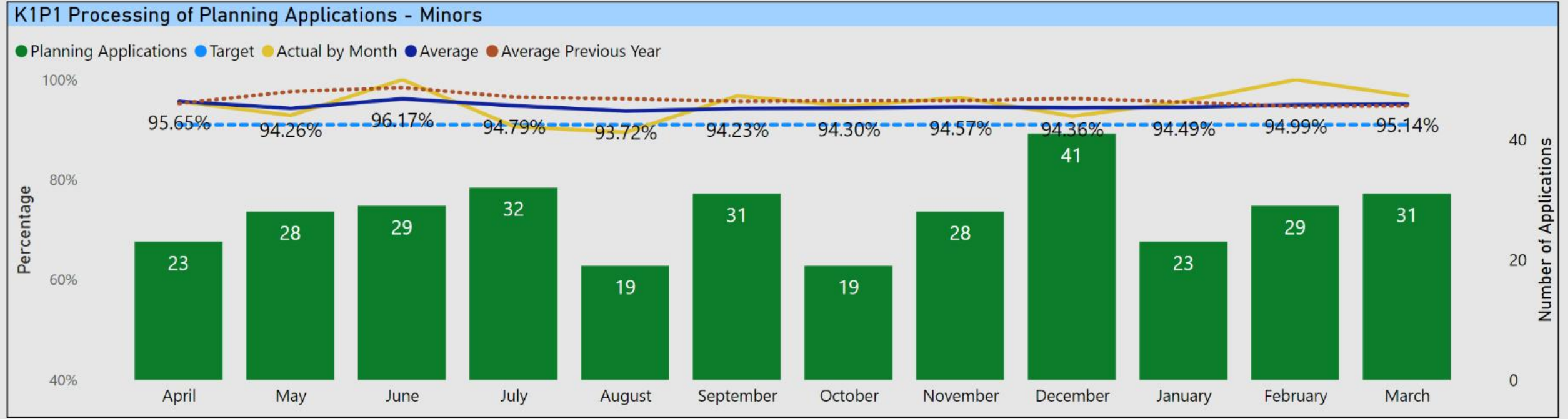
Supporting Narrative

The team achieved a consistently high level of decision making for major applications, 43 major applications were determined during this period, performance is on track and targets are being met despite there being a significant increase in the number of applications submitted and determined.

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Proposed Target
2022-2023

85%



Average against Target

95.14%✓

Target: 91%

March

Supporting Narrative

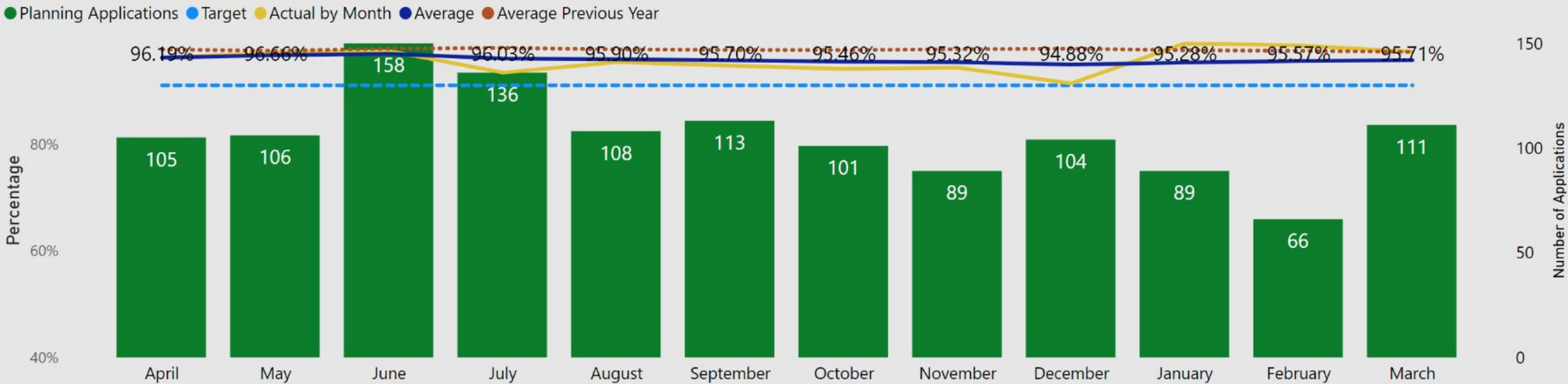
The team achieved a consistently high level of decision making for minor applications, 333 minor applications were determined during this period, in a category that includes applications up to 10 new dwellings, commercial development of up to 1,000 square metres of floorspace, or sites with areas of up to 1 hectare, performance is on track and targets are being met despite there being a significant increase in the number of applications submitted and determined.

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Proposed Target 2021-2022

91%

K1P1 Processing of Planning Applications - Others



Average against Target

95.71%✓

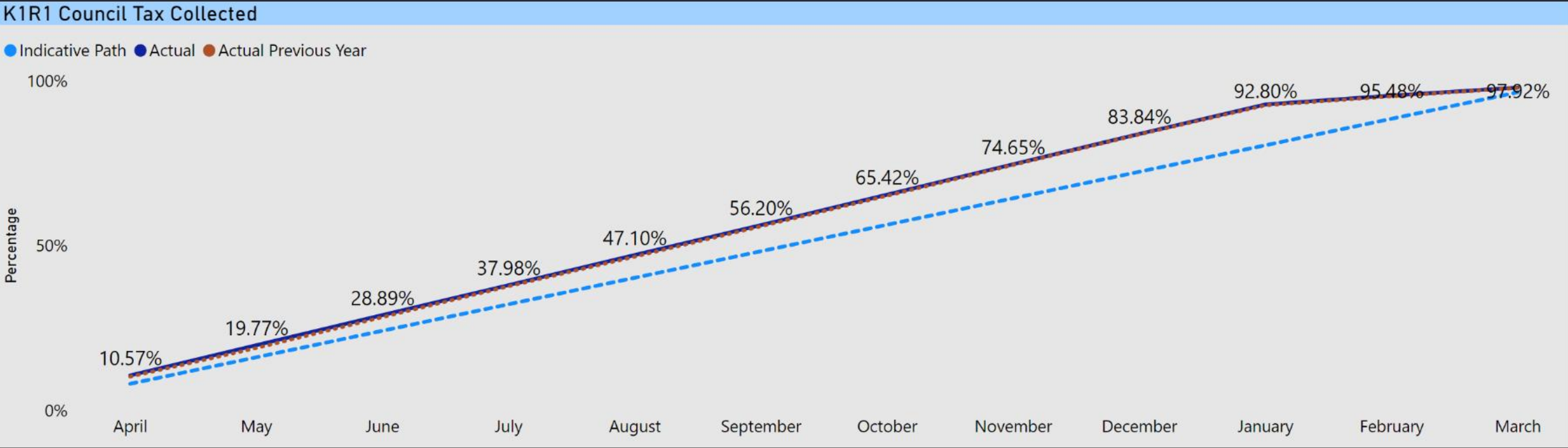
Target: 91%
March

Supporting Narrative

The team achieved a consistently high level of decision making for “other” planning applications, with over 1286 applications determined during this period, in a category which includes householder extensions, changes of use, adverts and lawful development certificates. This category saw the highest number of applications and forms the bulk of the planning work. Performance is on track and targets are being met despite there being a significant increase in the number of applications submitted and determined.

Proposed Target
2022-2023

91%



Actual against Year End Target

97.92%✓

Indicative Path: 96.50%
March

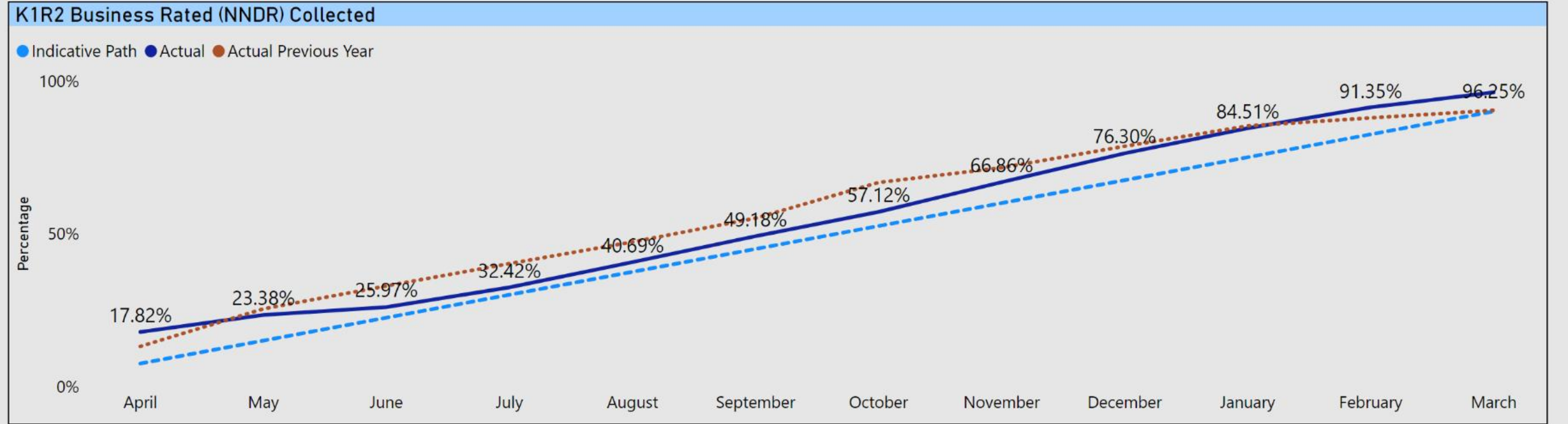
Supporting Narrative

Collection for Council tax has exceeded target and the previous 5 years results, taking us back to pre-covid levels and above. The team have also collected an additional £4m compared to the previous year and the tax base continues to increase significantly every year. The team have continued to work incredibly hard this year supporting those struggling to pay their council tax. This work will continue as we see people struggling due to fuel price increases and will be responsible for delivering the Council Tax Rebates to households.

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Proposed Target 2022-2023

97.50%



Actual against Year End Target

96.25%✓

Indicative Path: 90.00%

March

Supporting Narrative

Collection has exceeded the target by a significant amount; however it still sits well below pre-covid levels. The team predominantly focused on delivering business grants throughout the year and are now recovering normal processes and work. A full recovery plan is being developed to help drive collection back to previous levels as quickly as possible.

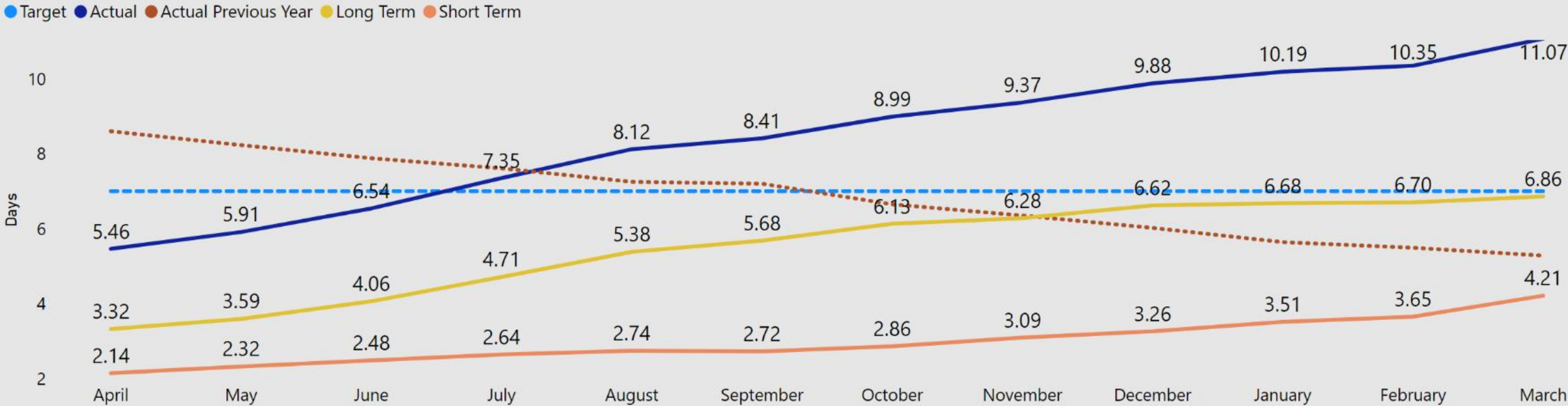
Proposed Target 2022-2023

95%

K1R3 Sickness Rates in Days



K1R3 Sickness Rates (Rolling Figures)



Actual against Target

11.07!

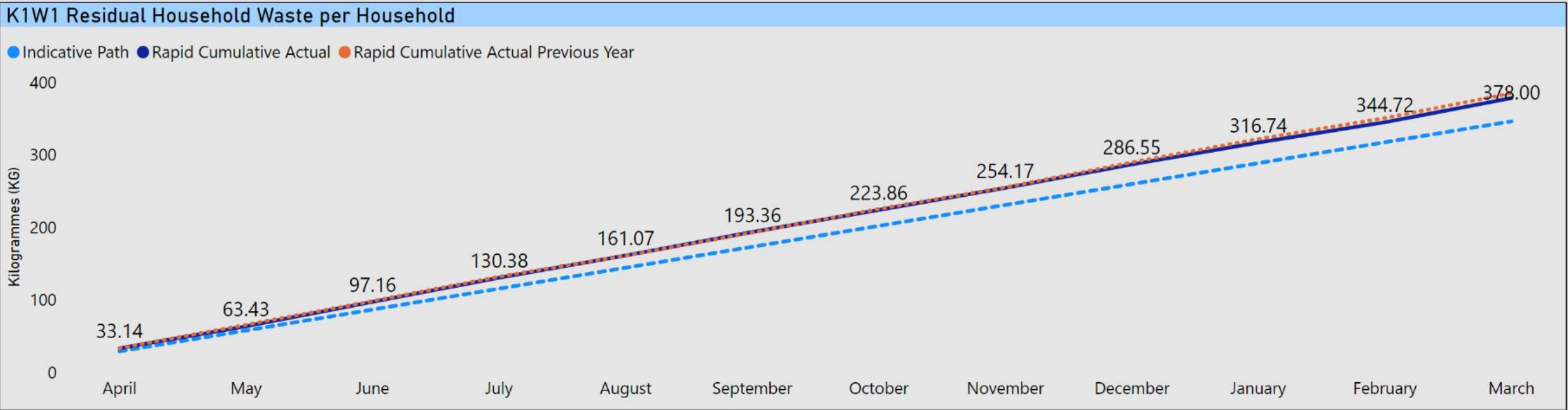
Target: 7
March

Supporting Narrative

Sickness rates increased during 2021 as operational areas fully re-opened following the lockdown in early 2021. As all areas of the Council re-opened – and the restrictions and mitigations in wider society have relaxed - sickness rates increased, especially in operational areas, where staff are not able to work from home so are more exposed to Covid and other general illness. Covid has continued to drive sickness levels up throughout the last 12 months, but more significantly since the Omicron wave in late 2021. Covid is now the biggest individual reason for sickness, in terms of days, lost across Colchester Borough Council. A new Sickness Policy was launched in January 2022 which will improve how sickness is managed and should improve performance against target as the year goes on.

Proposed Target 2022-2023

7



Actual against Target

378.00!

Indicative Path to date: 346.00
March

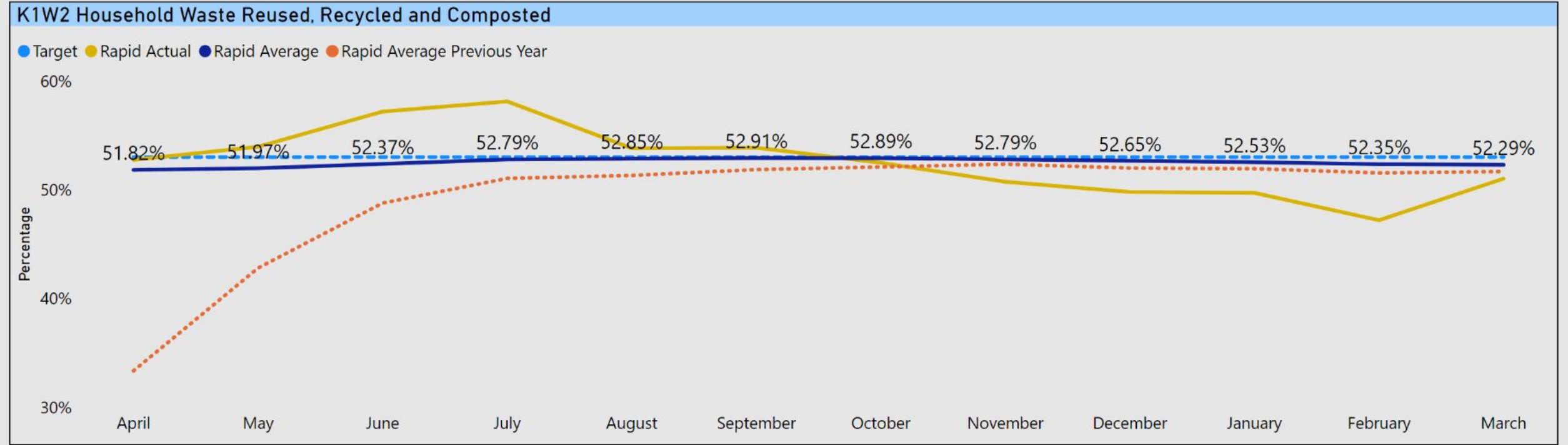
Supporting Narrative

Residents have continued, in general, to generate more residual waste than recent years. It is proposed that this is an outcome of more residents working from, spending more time at home, increasing online and home delivery shopping and/or changes to their lifestyles. A campaign was launched in September to reinforce the current 3 bag / 1 bin limit., along with a 'reduce waste social media campaign' to encourage residents to reduce their waste #WasteLessColchester. Whilst the target has not been met, it has been improved on the previous year.

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Proposed Target 2022-2023

346



Average against Target

52.29%!

Target: 53%

March

Supporting Narrative

Whilst behind the target at the beginning of the year, the percentage of household waste reused, recycled and composted has improved, particularly with the reintroduction of textile collections and the reinforcement of the 3 bag / 1 bin limit. Whilst the target has not been met, it has improved on the previous year.

Proposed Target 2022-2023

55%



Average against Target

99.92✓

Target: 99.94%

March

Supporting Narrative

The service has been impacted by staff absences; There has been some increase in sickness related to Covid, including positive cases, isolation, as well as staff members taking sick leave due to the side effects of Covid vaccinations, as well as general sickness and general annual leave. The sourcing of HGV Team Leaders has been challenging too. As a result, there has been a requirement to use agency staff, and this has all impacted performance. The management team have been working hard to balance the staffing levels, utilisation of agency and the operational delivery.

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Proposed Target 2022-2023

99.94

Other performance news

- **Awards and accreditations**

The highlights are summarised here and also shown on www.colchester.gov.uk as [council-wide](#) and [service-level](#) achievements.

Achieved April 2021 to March 2022 – full-year report	
Essex Family-Friendly Employers Charter	CBC was one of the first employers to sign up and was awarded Charter status from 1 March 2022. The Charter is a set of minimum principles that employers in Essex should meet to be deemed family-friendly. Not all employers can offer flexible working. However, family-friendly policies are about more than being able to work from home. The Charter was launched in March 2022 and sets out how employers can help parents and carers manage their work and caring commitments. We're one of 12 employers to sign up from the beginning. March 2022
Pathfinder councils - modernising planning software	CBC was selected as one of eight councils to lead a pathfinder project to explore ways to enhance digital planning services. The £150,000 project, funded by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), will see the Council work with its existing software provider to improve its development management software, so that it supports the vision set out in the Government's Planning for the Future White Paper . January 2022
Society for Museum Archaeology (SMA) Awards 2021	Colchester Castle won the Engagement and Collaboration Award for its 'Decoding The Roman Dead' exhibition. This exhibition showcased the research that Colchester Museums conducted with archaeologists and specialists from the University of Reading to decode the hidden stories of Colchester's earliest inhabitants and unlock clues about Colchester's Roman past. Find out more in this Dead Interesting: Uncovering Roman Britain in Old Museum Collections website. December 2021
Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Awards	CBC's Bethany Jones won the RTPI's East of England Young Planner award. This summary highlights the impressive breadth of reasons for this success, which range from her professional experience across Minerals and Waste, Development and Flood Risk, and Planning Policy through to heavy involvement in Local Plan preparation/examination; and also from sharing her insight and knowledge and inspiring other planners through her blogs and 'Plan Pals' series through to innovative ways to engage with the public during the pandemic. November 2021
Green Flag Awards	Castle Park, High Woods Country Park and Colchester's Cemetery and Crematorium have received Green Flag Awards. Green Flags set a benchmark of standards for management and maintenance of publicly accessible urban and countryside parks, and they promote the community value of green spaces. As well as receiving its nineteenth Green Flag award, Castle Park has also once again been awarded Green Heritage Site status, which recognises its work to promote its historic surroundings. October 2021

British Parking Awards (BPA) 2021	<p>The North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) won three national awards for organisations that have made a significant contribution to improving parking. The NEPP was also shortlisted in the Communications category for its dedicated coronavirus webpage to keep residents informed, three videos including showing the benefits of using contactless MiPermit payments and work on social media highlighting the Positive Parking Agenda (PPA) and Selfish Parker campaigns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Positive responses to the pandemic award category recognises and honours the exceptional work that parking teams have done to support the NHS, local authority clients and communities across the UK manage, mitigate and fight the coronavirus pandemic. Along with the dedicated coronavirus webpage, NEPP extended support to NHS staff members by offering a free parking permit. Single yellow line restrictions were eased to allow for increased homeworking and less commuters during the lockdown stages of the pandemic. Residents were also offered a three-month extension to their residents parking permits. • The 'Parking as a service award' for creating a positive experience for motorists, recognising work done to create easy-to-understand, non-confrontational and person-centric services. NEPP supported the Positive Parking Agenda which focuses changing perceptions and misconceptions towards parking, as well as the 'Don't be a Selfish Parker' campaign. In addition, recognition is given to the 3PR and Park Safe Schools projects which aim to tackle dangerous and illegal parking around schools. • The MiPermit Inspiration award for making a significant contribution to improving parking was awarded to Richard Walker as an exemplar of excellent practice that has inspired colleagues, clients and the wider parking community. September 2021
Park Mark awards and Park Mark Plus - British Parking Association (BPA)	<p>All 20 CBC-owned car parks across Colchester borough have retained national Park Mark awards for their safety, accessibility and quality management for the thirteenth consecutive year.</p> <p>Last year, CBC's Priory Street Car Park was only the second car park in the country to receive Park Mark Plus status, and it has retained this elite award in 2021. The award recognises only the highest-quality car parks, and assesses a range of criteria, including services, operations, design and build. To qualify for the award, car parks must already have the BPA's Park Mark award and meet the Disability Parking Accreditation criteria. September 2021</p>
Association for Public Excellence (APSE) Annual Service Awards 2021	<p>More than 320 submissions were submitted to award organisers with Colchester Borough Council being shortlisted in two categories - Best Service Team of the Year, and Best Community and Neighbourhood Initiative.</p> <p>CBC's Waste Management and Recycling Service was shortlisted in the Team of the Year category in recognition of the efforts to provide an outstanding service throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and the team's continual improvement to develop a sustainable service for the future.</p>

	The 'Together We Grow Communities' project was shortlisted in the Best Community and Neighbourhood Initiative category in recognition of the partnership work with not-for-profit social enterprise Together We Grow CIC . The partnership has worked together planting trees in communities as part of the Colchester Woodland and Biodiversity Project. August 2021
LGC Awards 2021	CBC was shortlisted in the Economic Support category of the LGC Awards 2021. LGC editor Nick Golding said: “ <i>The past year of Covid response has stretched councils and their staff to the limit, and yet still local government has innovated and provided the leadership places have so desperately needed during the pandemic. The LGC Awards are about recognising the most exceptional local government talent – and in this year, of all years, we can really say that those shortlisted have put in a truly heroic performance.</i> ” July 2021
Museums + Heritage awards	Community Impact Award - Colchester and Ipswich Museums (CIMS) won this category for their Museum From Home activity packs for children, launched during the pandemic. The judges said: “ <i>With long-standing, personal relationships and an approach which ensured access to digital wasn’t a barrier, the winner’s quick-thinking made a real difference to hard-to-reach communities</i> ”. Covid special recognition award – Colchester Museums Manager Pippa Pickles was in a national shortlist of six from hundreds of nominations for this award. It recognises Pippa’s contribution to the pandemic by not only opening Colchester Castle safely following the first lockdown, but for all her hard work in leading Colchester Borough Council’s team in supporting the NHS vaccination programme – more here . July 2021
Disability Confident	As a Disability Confident Committed Employer we have committed to ensure our recruitment process is inclusive and accessible; communicate and promote vacancies; offer an interview to disabled people; anticipate and provide reasonable adjustments as required; support any existing employee who acquires a disability or long-term health condition, enabling them to stay in work. Re-accredited for a further three years to 2024. June 2021
LEXCEL	Legal Services have been re-accredited following the Lexcel standard’s annual inspection, for the 21st consecutive year. Lexcel is the Law Society’s legal practice quality mark for excellence in legal practice management and excellence in client care. June 2021
Park Active - British Parking Association (supported by Department for Transport)	Colchester was proud to be the first Park Active scheme in the UK , which supports the environment and encourages active travel to build healthier communities. The scheme allows people to leave their car at a Park Active location and then walk or cycle for the rest of their journey. In Colchester, motorists pay a discounted parking rate for doing so. April 2021

As a strategic funding partner, CBC congratulated [Firstsite on winning Museum of the Year](#) in September 2021. This [Art Fund](#) award is the world’s largest museum prize and is a celebration of the country’s finest museums and galleries.

Other sources of performance data

Statistics and data – the way we collate and publish a range of council statistics, performance indicators, datasets and information has been updated this year. Pulling all this together (including information previously on the Datashare section of our website) will help us to maintain open and accessible information for customers, businesses, and other interested parties.

The new [Council Data](https://colchester.gov.uk/council-data) section at colchester.gov.uk/council-data is designed so that people can easily find out information we hold, our obligations on open data and transparency, as well as how to make a freedom of information request.

Categories include spending, business rates, democracy, housing, land, parking, planning and licensing, recycling and waste.

Annual reports – the Council produces annual reports on its performance in various areas. These are brought into one place on the Council's website [here](#) for ease of reference, and to make it easier for the public to find which annual reports are available.

[Single Data List](#) -this is a list of all the datasets that local government must submit to central government. The list is reviewed and updated annually. Local authorities are not obliged to provide any data which is not on the list without extra funding.

5 July 2022

Report of	Assistant Director – Corporate and Improvement	Author	Gary Reid ☎ 07874984922
Title	Year End April 2021 to March 2022 Performance Report - 2020-2023 Strategic Plan Action Plan		
Wards affected	All wards		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides details of progress in delivering against the Council's Strategic Plan for 2020-2023 at the end of 2021-2022.

2. Action Required

- 2.1 To confirm satisfactory delivery against the Strategic Plan Action Plan and that the Council has made satisfactory progress in meeting its strategic goals.
- 2.2 Where any areas of concern are identified, to make recommendations to Cabinet so these can be considered when this is considered in September.

3. Reason for Scrutiny

- 3.1 To ensure the Council has robust performance management of delivery against key strategic goals.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 The Council has agreed a new Strategic Plan covering 2020-2023. This report provides a review of progress against the Strategic Plan covering 2021-2022.
- 5.2 Details of progress made in delivering against each aim is shown in the report at Appendix 1.

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 6.1 Progress and improvement of these and many of the actions within the Strategic Plan Action Plan support our aims of improving both services and the lives of everyone in the borough. Where required, specific Equality Impact Assessments will exist for policies and activities rather than for individual performance indicators or actions. Progress on the Council's Equality Objectives are included within the Strategic Plan Action Plan Update.

7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 The Strategic Plan Action Plan demonstrates delivery of across all the current Strategic Plan priorities.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 The report's contents do not have any direct implications, however, the Strategic Plan and priorities were agreed using the results of significant research and taking into account previous public consultations.

9. Publicity Considerations

- 9.1 The performance report contains progress in delivering key goals of the Strategic Plan Action Plan and it is important that residents and businesses are made aware of these. Many of the achievements will have been publicised during the year but the report and related information will also be published on the Performance and Improvement section of the Council's website.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1 All achievements detailed in the Strategic Plan Action Plan were delivered from within existing approved budgets and as such, there are no new financial implications associated with this report.

11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 There are actions within the Strategic Plan Action Plan which aim to improve community safety and as such this report provides progress updates in this area.

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 There are no direct health and safety implications associated with this report.

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 There are no direct risk management implications associated with this report.

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 14.1 Tackling the Climate Challenge and leading sustainability is a key theme of the Strategic Plan and the report at appendix 1 provides details of the progress in delivering the associated goals.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Strategic Plan Action Plan Year End Report.

Better Colchester Strategic Plan Action Plan (SPAP) 2020 – 2023

Year End Report covering April 2021 – March 2022

Themes:

- Tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability
- Creating safe, healthy, and active communities
- Delivering homes for people who need them
- Growing a better economy so everyone benefits
- Celebrating our heritage and culture

Tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability:

- Respond to the Climate Emergency
- Conserve and enhance biodiversity
- Enable more opportunity for walking and cycling around Colchester
- Strategic Priorities achievements and next steps

Respond to the Climate Emergency

Goal	Achievements
Reduce carbon emissions to help achieve a net zero Carbon footprint for Council Services by 2030.	<p>Direct emissions have reduced by 12.8% (791.5 tonnes of CO₂e) since 2020.</p> <p>The Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) 2021-2023 progress is now systematically tracked through the Climate Opportunity Working Group; monitored by the Project Board and by the Environment and Sustainability Panel.</p>

Respond to the Climate Emergency	
Goal	Achievements
	<p>Rowan House has closed ready for the overhaul of the old gas boilers for a green heating and ventilation system (following a successful bid for grant).</p> <p>An offsetting and investment strategy is being developed.</p>
Environment and sustainability embedded within all Council decision making and the adaptation and recovery from Covid-19.	<p>Cross-service collaboration continued through the Climate Opportunity Working Group and partners began to elaborate on outcomes.</p> <p>Input provided into multiple projects, reports, and general workstreams, as well as several grant submissions from different service areas.</p> <p>Use of the Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Assessment tool is established, with new Project Initiation Documents completing the assessment form to a good quality since its introduction in June 2021 to show consideration of impacts on the environment and mitigation.</p> <p>Procurement has begun to incorporate environmental and carbon reduction in contract awards as reviewed as part of the Environment and Sustainability Panel work programme.</p>
Air quality across Colchester is improved.	<p>CAREless pollution 'No idling' campaign awarded 'Highly Commended' at 'Sustainability Leaders Awards 2022'.</p> <p>Toolkit launched to all Colchester schools.</p> <p>Campaign evaluation highlighted:</p>

Respond to the Climate Emergency	
Goal	Achievements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of health impacts of pollution increased by 6% • 53% reported switching off their engines more • Evidenced a 9% increase in cars switching off engines <p>E-cargo bike champions travelled 13,000 miles. Pool bikes were hired by 7 businesses.</p> <p>CBC worked with partners to deliver Colchester's first Eco-Festival with 3000 attending.</p> <p>'Home Burning' campaign raised awareness of pollution from fires and wood burners.</p> <p>'Pay as you go' Electric Car Club and ebike/cargo bike hire hubs launching in the town centre.</p> <p>Further DEFRA funding awarded for an eCargo delivery service.</p>
Continue to support residents to reduce, reuse and recycle their waste.	<p>Waste and recycling generated from homes. The Council has encouraged residents to reuse, recycle and compost 53% of all material through a variety of engagement activities and interventions.</p> <p>Recycling equipment. A 'Click and Collect' service, utilising community outlets launched to replace the doorstep delivery service and following a pilot project. On average 80% of residents are choosing the service.</p> <p>Performance reporting. Progress is underway to improve reporting by Councillors and public.</p>

Respond to the Climate Emergency	
Goal	Achievements
	<p>Communication & Engagement. Community Education and Engagement Wardens have attended some festivals and events. They have also been developing and delivering projects where collections are causing issues for crews or residents.</p> <p>Strategy. The Environment and Sustainability Panel have ratified the launch of the review.</p>
Conserve and enhance biodiversity	
Goal	Achievements
Minimise the environmental impact of our activities.	<p>The fleet has a transition plan for all vehicles to become electric/low carbon by 2030, including timeframes for decarbonisation of particular vehicle types such as vans, food waste collection vehicles. First electric hybrid vehicles are in use in 2022.</p> <p>Elfreda House sheltered housing redevelopment began in September 2021 and will be built to Future Homes Standard 2025.</p> <p>Decarbonisation of Rowan House progressing and will be completed, ready to re-open later in 2022.</p> <p>A new Carbon Management Plan to replace the 2016-2020 is being prepared for 2022-2027, developing plans to reduce emissions at our high emitting assets including Leisure World.</p>

Conserve and enhance biodiversity	
Goal	Achievements
Enhance environments to create more space for nature to grow and thrive through greening and natural seeding.	<p>Essex Forest Partnership</p> <p>Successfully secured funding with the Essex Forest Partnership for the supply, planting and maintenance of 325 standard trees (2-3m high).</p> <p>Nature Recovery Zone Project</p> <p>A trial ‘no sow, no mow’ management regime was completed with Wivenhoe Town Council. The project group are now working to expand the trial further.</p> <p>Legislative change</p> <p>Officers have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • worked with a variety of partners to identify local landowners and farmers willing to plant trees and hedgerows • worked with the current tenant farmer at High Woods Country Park to develop proposals for meadow improvements • been working to draw up Biodiversity Net Gain guidance and to identifying sites for Net Gain <p>Policies, strategies, and planning</p>

Conserve and enhance biodiversity	
Goal	Achievements
	<p>Officers are working on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colchester Orbital Guidelines • Landscape Development Guidance • Green Infrastructure Guide • Natural asset register
Discover, nurture and enable the work led by communities that promotes biodiversity.	<p>The partnership working with Together We Grow CIC has been recognised through the shortlisting of the work in the 'Best Community and Neighbourhood Initiative' category at the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Service Awards 2021.</p> <p>Engagement campaign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An online library has been launched • A tree guardian campaign has been launched • Local schools, farmers and landowners have taken on trees and shrubs <p>Community planting days have been completed.</p> <p>Trees for Years was delivered through a click and collect process.</p> <p><u>Street Tags</u> have been added to all rewilding sites.</p> <p>Greening the orbital:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wayfinding discs have begun to be installed

Conserve and enhance biodiversity	
Goal	Achievements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A leaflet will be distributed this summer • The Orbital has been added to the Go Jaunty App • Officers will work to seek funding and implement the Greening the Orbital programme <p>Street / Urban tree planting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees were provided for the parklets along the High Street. Replacement of highway and street trees has begun through partnership with Essex Forest Partnership
Plant native species and manage our woodlands, meadows and greenspace whilst sustaining existing habitats.	<p>Cymbeline Meadow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial concept plans have been drawn up • Worked with the current Tenant Farmer on proposals • Sought advice and guidance from a variety of organisations on proposals • Impact assessments and archaeological assessments undertaken <p>Engage and enable Parish Councils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town & Parish Councils were offered free trees and shrubs for planting on their land or for distribution to their residents • Worked with Big Green Internet and Woodland Trust to deliver the Red Squirrel Project to plant new hedgerow on Mersea Island <p>Miyawaki Forest</p>

Conserve and enhance biodiversity	
Goal	Achievements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepared plans for a double sized Miyawaki Forest <p>Planting will commence during the planting season 2022-2023.</p>
Work alongside communities to maintain clean, green neighbourhoods and urban spaces that we all look after and enjoy.	<p>‘Tree Guardians’ are now being recognised and provided with the tools to help them continue with their roles. A campaign to recruit more Tree Guardians and showcase the wonderful work they do and the impact they make is has been shared.</p> <p>Community Action Days</p> <p>Several Community Action Days have been held: to work with communities and local businesses to make visible improvements to local areas. As part of these days, council officers also provide residents with information to develop a ‘communities can’ approach to support the maintenance of these spaces in the future. A programme of delivering these action days across the Borough is continuing.</p>

Enable more opportunity for walking and cycling around Colchester	
Goal	Achievements
Work with partners to implement strategies and develop measures to reduce traffic in the town centre.	<p>Worked with ECC on the CFTS, inputting into the strategy and consultation.</p> <p>Worked with ECC on SGH to influence the Active Travel Fund bids, helping gain around £3m investment.</p> <p>Designed and bided for funding through the development process to help fund LCWIP routes; and worked with ECC on the Town Centre to Greenstead and University route.</p> <p>Assisted ECC with the Bus Service Improvement Plan, inputting into consultation and joining discussions on the Enhanced Partnerships.</p> <p>Helped ECC promote Park & Ride in Colchester to help reduce traffic in the town centre.</p> <p>Responded to Transport East's Transport Strategy and National Highways Route Strategy to formulate responses to consultations.</p>
Improve facilities and routes for cyclists and walkers to enable active travel behaviours, healthier lifestyles and reduce car use.	<p>Mapped our sustainable travel projects and plans to show how collective CBC/ECC work aligns and delivers on our key goals to focus priorities in bids for funding.</p> <p>Led the Secure Cycle Parking project to identify the optimum operating model, premises and partners, Initiated the development of a new Sustainable Travel Supplementary Planning Document to support the new Local Plan.</p> <p>Continued to support businesses with implementing workplace travel plans through the Colchester Travel Plan Club hosted by CBC.</p>

Enable more opportunity for walking and cycling around Colchester	
Goal	Achievements
	<p>Worked with Planning team and developers to ensure walking and cycling measures and Travel Plans are delivered through the planning process and via S106 contributions including in east Colchester where several schemes are proposed that combine to benefit the local communities.</p>
Ensure major regeneration projects put physical activity, cycling and walking at the forefront of development.	<p>The new £28.8m Sports Park opened with new pedestrian crossings and cycleways to the facility.</p> <p>'The Walk' provides a new cycleway and pedestrian link through the Northern Gateway completed in November 2021.</p> <p>Project Initiation Documents (PIDs) have embedded sustainability in all emerging projects.</p> <p>Active travel projects are included in the Town Deal bid and several developments in progress with ECC partnership, including Active Travel Fund 2, Local Cycling/Walking Infrastructure Projects 4 (LCWIP 4) and 7, as well as 'Fixing the Link' (Phase 2).</p>
Strategic Priorities achievements and next steps	
Goal	Achievements

<p>To increase biodiversity, wildflowers and accessibility to Council open spaces, the 'Greening Colchester' policy will be further developed through the Woodland and Biodiversity Project and based on the outcomes from the 2021 growing season pilots, in consultation with ward Councillors and the Environment and Sustainability Panel.</p>	<p>Blossom Circles tree planting as a Covid memorial. The tree planting has now been completed and signage is in place, including 4 poems for each circle created by local poets.</p> <p>Wildflower enhancements. A combination of plug planting and seeding has taken place at selected sites during the winter season 2021.</p> <p>Strimmer crew. This crew has been in action and undertaking a rolling programme of strimming across the Borough.</p>
<p>To support residents to reduce, reuse and recycle their waste a budget will be made available to support the delivery of neighbourhood services, such as improving waste bins and containers for recycling materials, where demand has at times outstripped supply, and to ensure our frontline staff always have the equipment they need to do their job.</p>	<p>Several initiatives are underway including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Litter and dog bin policy – agreed and has been launched • Litter engagement strategy - litter picking hubs across the Borough have been launched, enabling people to borrow litter picking kits when they are out • Litter bin route optimisation - new technology has been installed and are being optimised • Volunteer support and education programme – the 'Litter Warrior' initiative has been extended to include the opportunity for residents to undertake weeding in their local areas • Additional operative resource – delivered • 'Smart' bin pilot in Dedham – four solar bins have been installed • Supply of Colchester Market cloth bags – supplied and distributed by market traders
<p>We will invest in improved welfare, safety and compliance at the Shrub End depot whilst working towards a</p>	<p>A variety of work has been completed around the depot facilities, including the installation of a new weighbridge, car park surfacing works and fencing replacements. Planning permission has been granted for a new barn, and plans have been drawn up to improve welfare facilities for frontline staff.</p>

long-term strategy for our operational depot services.	A long-term strategy is currently under development.
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Creating safe, healthy and active communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on community strengths and assets • Tackle the causes of inequality and support our most vulnerable people • Provide opportunities for young people • Strategic Priorities achievements and next steps 	
Build on community strengths and assets	
Goal	Achievements
Take an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Approach and work alongside communities to build a borough where people are more empowered, self-sufficient, healthy, active, happy and doing what they enjoy.	<p>A range of priorities and activities are being community led, co-produced with communities, or utilising the skills and assets within communities.</p> <p>One Colchester continue to enable a community lead approach to supporting the most vulnerable residents with variety of needs. A move from Winter Resilience into advice and assistance with the costs of living crisis.</p> <p>One Colchester - Communities Can and ABCD awareness and training is being rolled out across Council (Members & Officers) and partners.</p>

Build on community strengths and assets	
Goal	Achievements
	One Colchester lead the support effort for Homes 4 Ukraine. Community Enabling, Private Sector Housing, Customer, CBH and One Colchester have come together to support the guest and hosts through this complex process.
Encourage belonging, involvement and responsibility in all Colchester's communities and neighbourhoods.	<p>One Colchester commissioned Asset Mapping completed, and refresh planned for every 6 months. Data continues to inform the systems work.</p> <p>Phase 3 of the Anglian Ruskin University qualitative research is currently being planned as a conclusion to this research piece. The focus of phase 3 will be Community Assets reflecting on Covid and lessons learnt.</p> <p>Awareness and training of ABCD delivered across system and CBC with a planned continuing roll out.</p> <p>Communities Can strategic approach have been agreed through One Colchester. Development and embedding of an ABDC across the whole system are underway.</p> <p>CBC have representation on the Live Well Neighbourhoods Team for Colchester Central.</p>
Work with our partners to make volunteering and community involvement as easy as possible.	One Colchester approach led by C360 to recruit and support volunteers across the Borough. This has created new opportunities and simple mechanisms for recruitment and confirms what is strong in our communities rather than what is wrong.

Build on community strengths and assets	
Goal	Achievements
	<p>The system is ready and prepared for the cost of living, health or social challenges.</p> <p>A range of activities highlighted within the SPAP demonstrate the engagement and co-production taking place across all system partners. Rarely are things done in isolation which demonstrates the momentum and progress being made in working collaboratively with partners and communities. This will become even stronger with the appointment of the new Alliance Director role.</p>
Maximise developer contributions (such as Section 106) and other funding mechanisms to help fund community infrastructure.	Active engagement using ABCD, carried out with community groups, voluntary groups and Town and Parish Councils, to agree a S106 project plan for each ward, in preparation for receipt of S106 developer contributions. A more pro-active approach has been agreed with Planning to make the most of the funds available.

Tackle the causes of inequality and support our most vulnerable people	
Goal	Achievements
Work alongside Public Health to take steps that mitigate Covid-19 infection risks and control outbreaks across the population.	One Colchester system approach to outbreak control led to joined up approach maximising the resources. This included working with Colchester BID, University, Parish and Town Councils, Police, Health Colleagues, Voluntary Sector and many others.

Tackle the causes of inequality and support our most vulnerable people	
Goal	Achievements
	<p>Clear Guidance uploaded to Council Website. Legislation and interpretation shared with businesses. Including 12 letters to update.</p> <p>Over 2900 complaints in relation to non-compliance, results; 800 investigations. 1000 requests responded to.</p> <p>Night and daytime visits undertaken including weekends across all sites. Renewed focus from 29 March 2021.</p> <p>Enforcement taken against 12 businesses.</p> <p>Continued to check and Following the Pandemic the Team have been playing catchup in relation to all the inspections that the team is required to do. By March 2023 we hope to have caught up.</p>
Support residents to do the things they enjoy doing to stay healthy, happy and physically active.	<p>Use of the Local Development Pilot (LDP) and system partners at identify key areas of actions and invest in activity area to encourage inactive residents in the most deprived areas to become more active.</p> <p>Work with One Colchester and continue to lead the Alliance 'Be Well' domain so issue is covered by a system solution.</p> <p>Regular collaboration with Town and Parish Clerks.</p>

Tackle the causes of inequality and support our most vulnerable people	
Goal	Achievements
	<p>Provision of beautiful, safe open spaces and play areas across the Borough. Use of the CCG Inequalities funding for Physical Activity to be invested in our Countryside Open Spaces for Green Prescribing.</p> <p>Encourage active lifestyles and continued working with communities and partners to improve access to walking, cycling and open spaces.</p>
Enable access and involvement in community green space, countryside sites, sport, and leisure facilities.	<p>As well as promoting the facilities to the wider community, we are promoting to specific groups. Notably, we have created a Cycling Information Pack and a Go-Ride leaflet which can be sent to all cycle clubs and schools and a Cricket Awareness leaflet used to engage local clubs.</p> <p>Commissioned a regional campaign to promote the Sports Park and engaged Kat Marketing to specific key audiences and create regional awareness of site and drive new users with creation new website and continue to reach out to British Cycling for joint opportunities. This has led to increase in income, visitors and new users.</p>
Support people to live in healthy homes that meet their needs.	<p>The Senior Occupational Therapist in Housing Project has been extended until 2024 following success in Years 1 and 2. This partnership benefits applicants, CBC and ECC in improved delivery of DFG's.</p> <p>The Discretionary Fast-Track Grant continues to support Hospital Discharge and Admission Avoidance.</p>

Tackle the causes of inequality and support our most vulnerable people	
Goal	Achievements
	<p>Looking at ways to improve the DFG spend to maximise the impact for our residents.</p> <p>The Mental Health and Housing Partnership Project has re-launched after pausing during the pandemic. The partnership consists of CBC, Tendring District Council, Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust and CBH, bringing frontline council and mental health services together to support individuals that are at risk of losing their homes or hospital admission.</p> <p>Checking accommodation for asylum seekers including the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.</p> <p>Processing licences for Houses in Multiple Occupation - 73 licences issued in year and >300 licensed HMOs.</p> <p>Taking robust enforcement against criminal landlords – various legal notices + £19,500 in Final Civil Penalty Notices.</p> <p>Investigating complaints and enforcing standards - removing nearly 1000 serious housing hazards from 335 homes > 500 property inspections/assessments in year.</p> <p>Promoting collaborative working with partners so housing is considered as a wider determinant of health, including with the Live Well Team for Colchester Central.</p> <p>Seeking opportunities for alternative income streams to increase the team's resource.</p>

Tackle the causes of inequality and support our most vulnerable people	
Goal	Achievements
	Planning various CCG funded housing and health projects.
Supporting the most vulnerable residents through our One Colchester partnership.	<p>One Colchester co-design/co-produce projects supporting our most vulnerable residents. (1). Older persons packs - encouraging activities at home, providing awareness around falls prevention (2) Activity packs and food parcels for younger people - encouraging physical activity and healthy eating. (3) Advice and assistance on keeping residents safe and warm in their homes. (4) Winter Resilience leaflet drops to most vulnerable, paper copy of information and support available.</p> <p>Trusted and transparent relationships with community leaders from diverse communities, BAME and Faith communities. Engaging through listening events and regular dialogue.</p> <p>External funding supports our most vulnerable residents. Includes significant funding from North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (NEECCG) to reduce inequalities over Colchester 2022 –2024.</p> <p>Safer Colchester website includes information on staying safe, hidden harms (such as domestic abuse), hate crime and anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Essex County Council funding for Next Chapter to deliver Together We Can project, supporting victims of Domestic Abuse within safe accommodation and the community.</p>

Tackle the causes of inequality and support our most vulnerable people	
Goal	Achievements
	#SeeYouSafer campaign; partnership campaign to help people feel safer when enjoying a night out in Colchester. Launched in December 2019, predominantly using social media, #SeeYouSafer messaging has reached 369,991 between January and March 2022.

Provide opportunities for young people	
Goal	Achievements
Provide positive opportunities for young people to engage with their local community and do things that interests them, keeps them safe, makes them happy and supports improved mental wellbeing.	<p>Transformed Youth Facilities is an umbrella theme within the Town Deal, with £1.3m for capital improvements at Colchester Townhouse, Stanway and Highwoods Youth Centres, all within the Geographical footprint.</p> <p>While the ambition for a Youth Zone, or something similar had initially been included in the Towns Fund programme, the reduced overall amount to £18.2m resulted in some difficult decisions along with the impacts of Covid19 which brought about unexpected financial challenges for the Borough Council. While the Towns Investment Plan still has ambition to provides a Youth Zone, this is dependent on commitment from ECC and other Public Sector partners to help secure a location, capital funding and the annual £400k revenue commitment.</p>

Provide opportunities for young people	
Goal	Achievements
Support the creation of strong, safe, and friendly communities that care about each other.	<p>Continue with the production and updating of the Community Response Pack and Residents Contact Pack.</p> <p>Ensuring Town and Parish Councils are engaged and supported through regular engagement, contact and involvement in local decision-making processes.</p> <p>Virtual Crew delivered to year 6 pupils in June 2021. The aim being to help transition / raise awareness before secondary school to help children recognise an exploitative friendship or relationship via a powerful theatrical performance and interactive workshop. 1884 pupils from 49 primary schools participated in the virtual sessions. A revised, fully live and interactive version of Virtual Crew (renamed) will be delivered to schools in June/July 2022.</p>
Work with Essex Police, Colchester Borough Homes, Essex Youth Service and other partners to reduce anti-social behaviour and tackle serious crime.	<p>Multi Agency Coordination Panel uses combined powers to disrupt criminality; one Organised Crime Group archived.</p> <p>Closures conducted by Colchester Borough Homes to tackle drugs and anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Violence and Vulnerability Unit funding to establish projects to reduce likelihood of residents becoming serious violence offenders.</p> <p>Nights of Action events tackled violence and Anti-Social Behaviour by providing a visible presence, proactive operations, and enforcement.</p>

Provide opportunities for young people	
Goal	Achievements
	<p>Marshal patrolled the Priory and other open spaces throughout the year to deter anti-social behaviour and enforce breaches of the public space protection order.</p> <p>Multi agency working group established to tackle youth crime and ASB in Greenstead.</p>
Work alongside our partners to improve cleanliness and community safety in the town centre.	<p>Town Centre Action partnership meetings held fortnightly to continue to discuss individuals causing (or vulnerable to) anti-social behaviour, hotspots and problem solve issues.</p> <p>Joint working with the Police and the Town Centre Business Improvement District to help businesses safely re-open within Covid-19 guidelines and help develop the Leisure Recovery Plan.</p> <p>#SeeYouSafer campaign; a major multi partnership campaign to help people feel safer when enjoying a night out in Colchester was launched in December 2019. Predominantly using social media, the #SeeYouSafer messaging has reached 369,991 between January and March 2022.</p>
Upgrade and extend the CCTV network to reach more places.	The CCTV infrastructure was installed by July 2020 and April 2021, with the project closure completed in July 2021. The project was delivered throughout lock down periods in the Covid pandemic and remained on time and on budget, with over 100km of cable installed, expanding the coverage from the town other parts of urban Colchester including the new Sports Park at the Northern Gateway.

Provide opportunities for young people	
Goal	Achievements
	<p>The first arrests were made with assistance from CCTV in the first week of deployment, with the improved picture quality being beneficial immediately.</p> <p>Almost 40 older non-working cameras were replaced with new cameras and the number of cameras was significantly increased, as was coverage from cameras, alongside the quality of imagery.</p>

Strategic Priorities achievements and next steps	
Goal	Achievements
<p>We recognise the excellent progress made in tackling Covid but we cannot be complacent. We will continue to prioritise all efforts to reduce the transmission of coronavirus and risks of infection, including local track and trace, whilst doing everything we can to protect the livelihoods of our residents and businesses.</p>	<p>Covid19 response included community led approaches across the borough supporting most vulnerable with food deliveries, medicines, and befriending schemes.</p> <p>Thousands of additional volunteers engaged and supporting communities throughout the last 18 months, many specifically supporting the most vulnerable during Covid19 pandemic.</p> <p>One Colchester approach led by C360 to recruit and support volunteers across the Borough. This has created new opportunities and simple mechanisms for recruitment.</p> <p>The system is ready and prepared for any winter issues relating to Covid or other health, financial and social challenges.</p>

<p>We will expedite progress on delivering new Community Halls at St Mark's, Highwoods and Western by-pass, Stanway.</p>	<p>St Marks Community Centre. Work is progressing well with project. Previous building demolished and site cleared. Ongoing investigations to the site and wider NGW scheme continue. Drainage delayed publishing the Tender Pack.</p> <p>BREAM energy to reduce costs. Heads of Terms discussions ongoing with trustees. Ongoing discussions with CCG/NHS regarding NHS presence.</p> <p>Stanway Lakelands Centre. Construction under way to the agreed timescale. Handover planned to SPC in July 2022. Discussions continue regarding the lease. The Totem Signage Artist has been appointed & price being agreed to budget. Toucan Crossing design and construction costs have been obtained. Conversations ongoing for Phase 2 S106 contributions - outside space.</p>
<p>Members' Locality Budgets for 2021-2022 were cut by 50% as part of the budget strategy process in the previous financial year and these will be restored back to £2,000 with immediate effect so that every councillor can support local priorities in their wards.</p>	<p>This goal has been delivered.</p>
<p>Our open spaces have become increasingly significant and important to support residents' physical and mental wellbeing during the Covid pandemic. Funding will be allocated to enhance the security of our open spaces and</p>	<p>The audit has been completed and orders placed for the equipment and materials required. There has been a delay with some aspects of the project by virtue of concrete posts failing at the point of installation of a height barrier. So, officers have paused to review the construction of these ahead of installing other barriers. There is an additional challenge with one site where</p>

prevent unauthorised access that could pose a risk to the biodiversity and accessibility of these important locations.	a legal agreement needs to be reviewed. All other sites are proceeding as planned with high priority sites having had the additional barriers, bollards and chains installed as planned.
We will investigate opportunities to brighten-up multi-story car parks (MSCP), for example through decoration or other environmental improvements.	<p>A 'UK first' innovative EV charging solution has been installed in Priory Street Car Park. The solution includes associated charging points, bay painting and signage. Charge points include bay sensor technology linked to the MiPermit system, which is used to pay for parking and electricity in one transaction.</p> <p>Redecoration of the main access and ground floor of St Mary's multi-storey car park, with widened bays and simpler entrance and exit layout has been completed.</p> <p>The audio system in St Mary's multi-storey car park was amended to enable background music to be played over the Christmas period with appropriate music licensing.</p>

Delivering homes for people who need them:

- Increase the number, quality and types of homes
- Prevent households from experiencing homelessness
- Create new communities and adopt a new Local Plan that delivers jobs, homes and the infrastructure to meet the borough's future needs
- Strategic Priorities achievements and next steps

Increase the number, quality and types of homes	
Goal	Achievements
Deliver 30% affordable housing across all our mixed tenure housing sites.	<p>The first housing site developed by Amphora Homes was completed in July 2021 and contained 2 affordable homes and 6 private sale market homes.</p> <p>Colchester Northern Gateway gained outline planning permission for 350 homes that Amphora will build here from 2023 which will include 30% affordable housing.</p> <p>Exploration of various other new sites, including around the town centre, continues.</p>
Deliver 380 affordable council and housing association homes by 2023.	<p>96 affordable homes have been delivered in Colchester. 72 homes were existing properties purchased by the Council, 6 were newbuild council homes and 18 were delivered by Registered Providers through Section 106 developers' obligations. The running total of affordable homes delivered is 197 out of the target of 380.</p>
Improve existing Council homes to keep them in good repair and improve energy efficiency.	<p>The Housing Investment Programme continues to be delivered and the Council's properties are maintained to a high standard of decency.</p> <p>Notwithstanding this, the programme will carry forwards over £2m of works as it has been affected throughout all of 2021-2022 by the pandemic, 'Brexit' and other global issues that combine and hinder supply chains, materials, and labour.</p> <p>The nature of the work (being in people's homes) meant that safe working practices also slowed some works and that more tenants (often more vulnerable) refused entry to properties to have improvements undertaken.</p>

Increase the number, quality and types of homes	
Goal	Achievements
	A new Asset Management Strategy and HRA Business Plan was agreed in early 2022 and shows a viable programme for the Housing Revenue Account, including decency, safety compliance, new build and sustainability works.
Deliver new low/zero carbon Council homes for our residents.	<p>Construction of 6 new homes completed in 2021 and a further 20 are due to complete in 2022. Planning permissions are being sought on the 'Phase 3 garage sites' to add to this in 2022-2023.</p> <p>Elfreda House adds to the general need's homes, with new sheltered accommodation that will be completed in 2023 too.</p> <p>The new Council homes are being built to 'Future Homes 2025' principles making them the most energy efficient homes that the Council has built to date.</p> <p>In addition, a £4.5m package of "Climate Emergency Response Works" was started during 2021 to increase the EPC ratings of our most inefficient, older, homes and help tackle fuel poverty and inequality.</p> <p>The '100 homes' project, which has acquired 100 additional council homes, also includes works to improve the energy performance of the homes.</p>

Increase the number, quality and types of homes	
Goal	Achievements
Ensure all new homes delivered by the Council are designed to a high quality across all tenures.	<p>The current collection of new homes already delivered, in progress, and soon to be progressed, are the most energy efficient homes CBC have constructed. Most have no gas boilers and are using air source heat or other low carbon measures.</p> <p>Accessibility is also being prioritised. There are several Part M Category 2 properties, with features such as level access showers. Fully adapted properties will be in 'Phase 3' of the Garages Sites now being consulted on and progressed.</p>
Continue to improve and modernise Council owned housing for older people.	<p>Kier Construction procured for Elfreda House. Works have commenced with completion due in 2023.</p> <p>Further work on the next phases of the sheltered housing review is ongoing so a pipeline for the next decade is emerging. The Asset Management review and new HRA Business Plan will reflect the current new build and improvement programmes ensuring that they are affordable and viable.</p>

Prevent households from experiencing homelessness	
Goal	Achievements
Work with partners to implement the 2020-2025 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy delivery plan.	The actions in the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Delivery Plan have been reviewed and updated. The updated Delivery Plan and Progress report has been published on the Colchester Borough Council website.
Intervene early to prevent homelessness and work in partnership with other organisations to sustain people's accommodation.	From April 2021 to the end of March 2022 homelessness was prevented for 132 households and during the same period 69 households were assisted into accommodation under the relief duty.
Tackle rough sleeping in the borough.	<p>During 2021-2022 the Rough Sleeper Team provided advice, support and assistance to 124 rough sleepers and accommodated 38. 16 were accommodated under the governments' Protect and Vaccinate initiative funding. 9 rough sleepers were reconnected.</p> <p>The Rough Sleeper Team is funded under the governments Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) which CBC successfully bid for and were awarded £325,572 for 2021-2022.</p> <p>CBC were awarded £457,500 capital and £105,700 revenue funding under the governments Rough Sleeper Accommodation Pathway (RSAP) to purchase 6 ex local authority one bed flats as move on accommodation and a support worker for 3 years. These properties form part of our accommodation pathway for rough sleepers.</p>

Create new communities and adopt a new Local Plan that delivers jobs, homes and the infrastructure to meet the borough's future needs	
Goal	Achievements
Create a Development Plan Document for Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community to include zero carbon emissions in the community development and green procurement.	<p>Joint work with TDC and ECC continues. Various evidence base reports completed and commissioned. Consultation commenced on draft DPD in March 2022.</p> <p>Link road and RTS progressing under HIF and planning permissions granted to facilitate delivery.</p> <p>Engagement website launched and a number of consultations have taken place. Community Liaison group established.</p>
Establish a Delivery Vehicle and investment package for the next phase of the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community.	<p>First joint committee took place February 2022. Members from the three Authorities agreed draft DPD and allowed public consultation to commence.</p> <p>£135k of funding awarded under the MHCLG Garden Communities programme.</p> <p>Governance arrangements, programme and resource implications continue to be developed.</p>
Develop the Colchester Northern Gateway as a sustainable place to live, work and play.	<p>The Sports Park opened (April) holding an open day (July) and hosting the Women's Tour of Britain (October). The Park has Solar PV, a green roof, electric vehicle charging points and new cycleways and walkways.</p> <p>'The Walk' completed an attractive, tree-lined, avenue dedicated to walking and cycling.</p>

Create new communities and adopt a new Local Plan that delivers jobs, homes and the infrastructure to meet the borough's future needs	
Goal	Achievements
	<p>The Heat Network was tendered with a contractor ready to build the Energy Centre and connections to the pre-laid pipes.</p> <p>Turnstone Developments are starting the construction of the new Northern Gateway Leisure Park after agreements were signed and tenancies with several food and leisure operators were secured.</p> <p>CNG South (Mill Road) also gained outline approval of the planning committee and the Secretary of State.</p>
Ensure the Council has a good supply of land available for new homes and business.	<p>Adopted Local Plan provides for housing land up to 2023 and adequate employment land.</p> <p>Emerging Local Plan will allocate sites to provide land for housing and employment up to 2033 and beyond.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Plans passed referendums in Marks Tey and Mersea</p>
Create great places to live through the provision of new homes with infrastructure and facilities that support sustainable living and promote health and wellbeing.	<p>Progress is being made towards adoption of a new Local Plan and several Neighbourhood Plans have been adopted.</p> <p>Planning applications have continued to be determined which deliver new homes and infrastructure.</p>

Create new communities and adopt a new Local Plan that delivers jobs, homes and the infrastructure to meet the borough's future needs	
Goal	Achievements
	New post agreed to promote Active Environments.

Strategic Priorities achievements and next steps	
Goal	Achievements
To help clear the current backlog of enforcement cases and enable training of a new apprentice role (currently being recruited to), an additional in-year budget contribution will provide additional capacity in the Planning Enforcement team.	<p>The Planning Enforcement team has been bolstered by the appointment of an experienced officer on a fixed term contract which has been extended to March 2023.</p> <p>A replacement for the apprentice post will be recruited to.</p>
We will work with the County Council and local communities to ensure that any proposed developments on Council-owned land reflect the needs of the local community, optimise opportunities to create sustainable and affordable homes, and improve access	<p>Planning applications have been determined which will deliver new homes and infrastructure including sustainable transport options.</p> <p>Planning permissions granted for several Council owned sites ie Northern Gateway and resolution to approve at former Rugby Club site.</p> <p>Council homes are being built to Future Homes 2025 principles, with features such as renewable energy sources.</p>

to public transport and active travel choices.	Housing sites in the town centre are being aligned with wider transport projects including the Active Travel Fund 2, Rapid Transport System.
We will seek to construct a workable proposal for a revised allocation at Middlewick enabling the creation of a Country Park and/or Nature Reserve between Abbot's Road and Birch Brook.	The Local Plan Inspector's final report is still awaited following Modifications. When there is certainty regarding the allocation of Middlewick in principle, more detailed work can begin to inform a masterplan and review ecology implications.

Growing a better economy so everyone benefits:

- Enable Economic Recovery from Covid-19 ensuring all residents benefit from growth
- Work with partners to deliver a shared vision for a vibrant town
- Create an environment that attracts inward investment to Colchester and help businesses to flourish
- Strategic Priorities achievements and next steps

Enable Economic Recovery from Covid-19 ensuring all residents benefit from growth

Goal	Achievements
Ensure our borough becomes stronger post Covid-19 by supporting businesses to recover, adapt and build resilience.	<p>Support and grants have been provided to businesses to support them through the pandemic.</p> <p>As well as providing direct grants, we have worked with partners in North Essex Economic Board to jointly fund business support using Government funding. This has included:</p>

Enable Economic Recovery from Covid-19 ensuring all residents benefit from growth	
Goal	Achievements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Click it Local which provided a year-long pilot online shopping portal for independent local businesses • A suite of business advice services (Digital, Financial, Import/Export, Skills • A Net Zero Business Support Programme <p>These advice schemes are providing monthly monitoring returns.</p> <p>The support we have provided was recognised by the Local Government Chronicle with the Council shortlisted for a national award.</p>
Work with partners to facilitate a high skill, high wage, low carbon workforce.	<p>CBC has maintained ongoing engagement with Partners including SELEP, Colchester Institute, University of Essex, and Essex County Council to encourage and promote skills training and upskilling of the existing and new workforce. This is likely to feature as a priority in the new Economic Strategy.</p> <p>We are engaging with partners at Essex County Council to further the development of growth sectors.</p> <p>We have secured investment to explore a Care Tech initiative locally to boost care and technology businesses working together.</p> <p>We are working with colleagues in North East Essex to support extra IT training for people who have lost work during the pandemic.</p>

Enable Economic Recovery from Covid-19 ensuring all residents benefit from growth	
Goal	Achievements
Develop opportunities to ensure the new economy is greener, sustainable, and more resilient.	<p>Town Deal funding has been awarded including for projects that promote walking and cycling such as a new cross-town cycleway and enhanced public realm. We are considering further such projects as part of developing a Levelling Up Fund bid.</p> <p>We have jointly commissioned advice and training to support business to reduce their carbon footprint. with NEEB partners.</p>
Work with our partners to enable Colchester town centre to be a more vibrant, resilient and adaptable to future change.	<p>We are working with a wide range of partners to archive this goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have worked with the Colchester Business Improvement District (BID) to deliver new parklets on the High Street in October 2021 and are working with them to install new gateway signage to promote use of local town centre retail which will be installed later in 2022. <p>Our work with 'We are Colchester' partners to deliver the Town Deal will include improved public spaces, easier transport, better digital connection, and new community facilities. We have prepared and submitted Business Cases to access funding and have completed considerable feasibility and design work.</p>
Transform the Northern Gateway as a hub for improved wellbeing, physical	The Sports Park opened in May 2021 to provide a £28.8m regional sports complex. The Walk completed September 2021. Turnstone will soon commence the 'Northern Gateway Leisure Park' with several physical activities inside the units and a wide leisure offer. The Northern

Enable Economic Recovery from Covid-19 ensuring all residents benefit from growth	
Goal	Achievements
activity, jobs, housing, and renewable energy.	Gateway has travel plans and is primarily powered by the UK's largest renewable underground heat network which the Council is building.
Address the inequality of access to Gigabit Broadband in communities.	<p>As above, over 100km of broadband cabling was delivered to build a direct link from London to Colchester and the 16km Metronet around urban Colchester also completed, with agreement that Amphora Trading will operate this for the Council, and the first customers benefitting from ultrafast broadband.</p> <p>The Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) Project has led to over £10m of private investment being secured and this will rise to over £40m of private investment that sees ultrafast broadband available in our most deprived wards using our new network, extended network, and parts of Council owned housing estates. These areas would otherwise not be provided for by the open market for many years.</p>
Tackle local skills shortages working with businesses, University of Essex, Colchester Institute and other partners.	<p>During the past two months we have facilitated two workshops with the Ambassadors group to identify new ways to promote skills training.</p> <p>The Town Deal includes investment in digital hubs which will bring significantly expanded skills provision, upskilling the local workforce, and helping them adapt to change.</p> <p>We have secured investment to explore a Care Tech initiative locally to boost care and technology businesses working together.</p>

Work with partners to deliver a shared vision for a vibrant town	
Goal	Achievements
Agree a Town Deal with partners and the Government to attract significant new investment.	On behalf of the 'We Are Colchester' Board, our Town Investment Plan was submitted on 31 October 2020. This culminated in an £18.2m award to Colchester as part of the 3 March 2021 budget statement (in addition to £1m accelerated Town Deal funding for Public Realm in the Town Centre). Business Cases for the Town Deal projects have been prepared and submitted and we expect to hear about our funding in May 2022.
Collaborate with the town centre Business Improvement District (BID).	We continue to collaborate closely with the BID including: Participating on their Board and Advisory Group, Town Centre Task Force and in their Leisure Recovery Board and working with them to deliver specific improvement projects (such as the new High Street parklets) and working to co-ordinate marketing and communications.
Continue to regenerate Colchester Town Centre using Council assets, aligned private investment, the Town Deal and Town Investment Plan.	We have published a tender to produce a Town Centre Masterplan to coordinate the use and development of the Town Centre including our assets. Our Town Deal funding will enable a range of projects to help regenerate the Town Centre including enhancing public spaces. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the creation of digital work hubs • the transformation of facilities for young people • a digital skills hub at the Wilson Marriage Centre (Barrack Street)

Work with partners to deliver a shared vision for a vibrant town	
Goal	Achievements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public realm improvements in the town centre • Contributions towards the restoration of 1,000-year-old Holy Trinity Church, and the first phase in restoring our iconic Victorian water tower ‘Jumbo’ • transformation of community facilities and housing in Greenstead • the accelerated introduction of 5G <p>improved walking and cycling links across the town.</p>
Create an environment that attracts inward investment to Colchester and help businesses to flourish	
Goal	Achievements
Ensure our strategy for inclusive economic growth supports the ambitions outlined in the North Essex Growth Strategy, the Local Industrial Strategy and our Town Deal.	We have started work to produce a new Economic Growth Strategy for the borough. This will set out our priorities for supporting the Borough’s economy and job creation, focus our Economic Development work, and respond to Strategies of partner agencies such as Essex County Council. We expect to publish this this year.

Create an environment that attracts inward investment to Colchester and help businesses to flourish	
Goal	Achievements
Ensure a good supply of employment land and premises to attract new businesses and allow existing firms to expand and thrive.	<p>We have an up to date local plan in place that allocates sufficient land and contains policies to encourage economic growth.</p> <p>Approval of applications in line with policies to attract new businesses and allow existing firms to thrive. The former Andersons Yard at Marks Tey is being redeveloped and extended to facilitate this.</p>
Encourage green technologies and innovative solutions to the Climate Emergency.	<p>Funding received for 25 electric cargo (eCargo) bikes and 5 electric trailers (etrailers) to contribute to decarbonising Council's fleet, as well as ten local businesses.</p> <p>eCargo bikes given to 10 champions. Several eCargo bikes and etrailers loaned out to organisations on short term loans.</p> <p>One eCargo bike given to resident to set up eCargo bike delivery service to deliver goods for other organisations. This has been a huge success.</p> <p>Further funding received to create shared travel hubs for residents to use ebikes, eCargo bikes and electric cars on pay as you go basis.</p> <p>Exploring town centre eCargo delivery model.</p>
Maximise the Social Value benefits derived from third party contracts.	<p>From October 2020, the Council started issuing tenders using the Social Value framework (SVF) developed by the SVP and tailored for Colchester. Given the time needed for submission of bids, evaluation and award of contracts before the period of work starts, it is</p>

Create an environment that attracts inward investment to Colchester and help businesses to flourish	
Goal	Achievements
	<p>anticipated that reporting on the delivered benefits will be available towards the end of 2021-2022.</p> <p>Ongoing – Projects are now being issued encompassing the use of SVP but to date no reports have been produced. As above anticipate delivered benefits being available 2022-2023.</p>
Ensure the Council's assets continue to contribute to economic growth and opportunity. Develop a decarbonisation financial strategy and investment plan.	<p>The Asset Management Strategy was updated to focus on post Covid recovery and asset management initiatives continued to be undertaken on Council-owned sites (operational, investment and surplus) during 2021.</p> <p>Amphora marketed sites identified for disposal and will be proceeding with these during 2022 to secure income and capital receipts. Rent collection remained high and vacant property rates low.</p> <p>Continued strategic and asset management of regeneration and development sites including Colchester Northern Gateway, Hythe, and the Town Centre.</p>

Strategic Priorities achievements and next steps	
Goal	Achievements
Improvements will be made to signage and interpretation around the Town	CBH are now going to project manage this project along with CBC and The Bid.

Centre to support and encourage residents and visitors to make the most of their experience in Colchester and increase the length of time visitors stay.	A task and finish group are just being assembled to carry the project forward.
The Queen celebrates her Platinum Jubilee in 2022 which provides a wonderful opportunity to 'dress' the town and support our local communities to join the celebrations and stimulating the local economy.	<p>Numerous concepts and ideas were suggested and explored for feasibility. Initial ideas included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oak Tree planting across the Borough • Enhanced planting in Castle Park • Bandstand refurbishment/improvement works • Flags and bunting in the town centre • Repairing fountain in Middleborough <p>Other potential items identified at this time include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street party and Jubilee info packs • Special events • Town centre additional planting • Wildflower maze <p>A cross-service officer working group has been created to develop the options and will pull in external partners as appropriate.</p>
As Britain's First City, and oldest recorded town, Colchester has been a highly significant regional centre for over 2,000 years. The Council will look	<p>Webpages launched following Council approval October 2021.</p> <p>An engagement plan involved key stakeholders and members of the public.</p>

to work with partners across Colchester, including the Town Deal Board, to put together a bid for City Status in 2022.	Decision awaited from Her Majesty Spring 2022.
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Celebrating our heritage and culture:

- Agree and implement a new Cultural Strategy that supports our cultural assets
- Strengthen Colchester's tourism sector and welcome more visitors each year
- Protect, enhance and celebrate Colchester's unique heritage
- Strategic Priorities achievements and next steps

Agree and implement a new Cultural Strategy that supports our cultural assets

Goal	Achievements
Work with partners to deliver a collaboration Cultural Vision and Ambitions for the borough with Delivery of Strategy in 2021-2022.	Scope was agreed with stakeholders including CBC's Strategic Arts Partners, the Mercury, Colchester Arts Centre and Firstsite, and Arts Council England (ACE). Specialist consultants Counterculture were then appointed via competitive tender. During the consultation and research phase over 1000 people responded to the public consultation, including attendance of 178 at an open event at the Mercury Theatre, and Counterculture also carried out 45 in person interviews with major stakeholders. The Strategy was developed over winter 2021/22 and after consultation on the draft with external partners including ACE, Creative Colchester, ECC, the BID and One Colchester it was agreed and endorsed by Cabinet on the 9 March 2022.

Agree and implement a new Cultural Strategy that supports our cultural assets	
Goal	Achievements
Agree the key milestones and investment necessary to deliver the strategy.	The new Cultural Strategy to 2030 has been delivered in budget with all key milestones met. Where required investment to deliver the resulting Action Plan will form part of future budget setting discussions.
Continue to provide sustainable grant funding to support Mercury Theatre, Firstsite and Colchester Arts Centre (CAC) and help the sector to adapt and recover from the impact of Covid-19.	<p>In October 2021 the Council extended the current Strategic Arts Partner grant funding commitment to these organisations until 2026-2027.</p> <p>2021-2022 Funding Agreements agreed, and grants raised to schedule. The organisations appeared before the Scrutiny Panel in February 2022 to update Members on their capital projects, recovery programmes and the value for money provided by the grants awarded by CBC.</p> <p>Additional match funding was committed to unlock Cultural Recovery Fund Kick Start funding for the capital project at Colchester Arts Centre (CAC). CAC subsequently received grant of £128,182 from the Fund and the project has been delivered.</p> <p>Mercury and CAC reopened successfully post completion of capital funded projects/end of Covid restrictions.</p> <p>Firstsite reopened in May 2021 and was named Art Fund Museum of the Year in October.</p>

Agree and implement a new Cultural Strategy that supports our cultural assets	
Goal	Achievements
Identify further opportunities to improve the cultural offer for residents and visitors.	<p>Creative Colchester actively supported the sector during Covid. The Board contributed to the development of the Cultural Strategy and expects to take a leading role in the delivery.</p> <p>Grants for the Creative Events Fund for events delayed by Covid were held over and released in 2021-2022, providing cultural opportunities for residents and visitors as restrictions eased.</p> <p>Delivering on an action in the Cultural Strategy the Council has ringfenced funding for cultural micro grants for two years. In year one (22/23), a partnership with the NHS, recognising the potential of culture to have a positive impact on health and wellbeing, will increase the value of the funding available by a third.</p>

Strengthen Colchester's tourism sector and welcome more visitors each year	
Goal	Achievements
Promote Colchester's heritage and visitor attractions to increase visitor numbers and to support jobs.	<p>Due to closure/ restrictions until July, admissions at the Castle were down on pre-pandemic levels by 25%. However, following July, admissions returned to, and in August exceeded pre-pandemic levels. These numbers and new commercial ventures meant income for this period was up 21% (£78,000) and only 5% down for the whole year.</p> <p>Schools' numbers are now returning to pre-pandemic levels.</p>

Strengthen Colchester's tourism sector and welcome more visitors each year	
Goal	Achievements
	<p>Hollytrees Museum only reopened fully in July and has therefore seen fewer than 50% of pre-pandemic figures.</p> <p>The Natural History Museum saw a steady return of numbers and is now the focus of planning for a major redevelopment project.</p>
Expand the events programme to encourage more visitors and position Colchester as a destination for major events.	<p>Events programmes were hugely disrupted by Covid. However, 2021 rekindled events including Olly Murs in Castle Park, the Nearly Festival, Oktoberfest and other events including several sold-out and well-known comedians at Charter Hall.</p> <p>Summer 2022 will see Simply Red, Westlife and (Alfie) Boe & (Michael) Ball entertain Castle Park, before the return of the Anti-Loo Roll and Eco Festivals, as well as another Oktoberfest and other events.</p> <p>The Women's Tour of Britain cycling event took place in Colchester on 8 October 2021 (and will again on 6 June 2022) when we host the Grand Depart prestigious opening round of the internationally televised event with world and Olympic champions competing.</p>
Work with partners and the Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID) to improve the public realm for residents and visitors.	<p>Essex County Council have undertaken a 'Safer, Greener, Healthier' campaign across the County to support town centre recovery.</p> <p>Installation of parklets in the High Street has been completed in partnership with the BID.</p>

Strengthen Colchester's tourism sector and welcome more visitors each year	
Goal	Achievements
	<p>In partnership with the BID, CBH and other key stakeholders the tourism signage replacement programme is underway.</p> <p>Welcome Back Funding: To support Councils to help their local high streets get safely back to business, central Government released funding. Officers have worked with the BID, and others to develop initiatives to the support the opening of High Streets safely.</p> <p>Community Action Days have been held.</p> <p>Funding has been secured with Essex Police and Essex Youth Service to purchase a mobile skate park to engage young people across the Borough. A graffiti education project will then take place designing the equipment at Firstsite.</p>
Improve the information available to Visitors through the launch of a new improved Website.	<p>New www.visitcolchester.com website launched August 2020 with improved functionality (particularly for mobile devices) and content. Design includes extensive use of video recycled from the Colchester tourism ad and newly commissioned for the project.</p> <p>Action achieved.</p>
Promote Colchester and the wider Borough to attract visitors back after the lifting of Covid restrictions and lockdown.	<p>Recovery promotions scheduled alongside the Government Road Map Out Of Lockdown included; new Roman Walls, Siege, River Colne and Mersea heritage trails; the 'Colchester and the Beautiful Borough Welcomes You Back' film; 'Colchester Roman Holiday' themed staycation campaign including sponsorship of the Liverpool Street ticket gates (Network Rail</p>

Strengthen Colchester's tourism sector and welcome more visitors each year	
Goal	Achievements
	<p>915,206 verified passenger contacts); group travel/coach tourism incentive scheme and promotion including free coach parking for qualifying groups launched in March 2022.</p> <p>Partnership working with Visit Essex included London targeted consumer campaign featuring Underground advertising; two of the five campaign images used were in the Borough of Colchester.</p> <p>Local tourism businesses support included free or discounted advertising on 'Visit Colchester ' (extended into 2022).</p>

Protect, enhance and celebrate Colchester's unique heritage	
Goal	Achievements
Enhance and promote our heritage by better revealing our assets by supporting projects and initiatives to increase public awareness and access to their heritage in daily life.	<p>The Roman Church repairs were completed.</p> <p>New interpretation panels were installed at the Roman Church and St Botolph's, Balmerne Gate and Priory Street.</p> <p>Further interpretation is forthcoming for Lieutenant Pinto/ Captain Jones subject to Diocese permissions.</p> <p>Signage and interpretation of the Town to Port trail is in progress.</p>

Protect, enhance and celebrate Colchester's unique heritage	
Goal	Achievements
	<p>Two new interpretation panels are to be installed at the Roman Circus in production and one panel at Berechruch Dyke, funded by the MOD.</p> <p>2021 Heritage Open Days saw 3,692 visitors to 27 sites.</p> <p>Plans progressing for the restoration of Holy Trinity Church and its new lease as Community 360's HQ.</p>
Continue to deliver a major exhibition at Colchester Castle bi-annually.	<p>The Arts Council exhibition, 'Decoding the Roman Dead' opened in July at the Castle and is believed to have significantly contributed to the visitor numbers that exceeded pre-pandemic levels during the summer. Associated podcasts and a film produced with Dan Snow and History Hit is also likely to have boosted the exhibition's profile.</p> <p>To continue momentum, the service is delivering a temporary exhibition on witchcraft at the Castle in 2022. A major exhibition is also planned for 2023 on Gladiators, also funded by Arts Council.</p>
Encourage and support the use of our Heritage sites for Community events, activities and theatre.	<p>CIMS provided non-clinical staffing and volunteer management for the vaccine centre at the Stadium. Pippa Pickles was shortlisted for a national award for her personal contribution.</p> <p>New offers developed to increase income e.g., Escape Room experience, Residentials, Knightz at the Museum to bespoke tours.</p>

Protect, enhance and celebrate Colchester's unique heritage	
Goal	Achievements
	<p>Partnership established with Bernado's and Virgin Care. The Natural History Museum will be a centre every Monday for the Essex Health and Wellbeing Service.</p> <p>Museums commissioned architects and conducted public consultation ahead of Natural History Museum feasibility study.</p> <p>Community360 have prepared a business case for the Town Deal to bring Holy Trinity back into use as a community hub. Subject to the award, C360 will prepare other bids for the remaining funding needed.</p> <p>The Town Deal also supports the repair and repurposing of Jumbo into a restaurant, bar and mixed-use space which will support a range of educational, heritage interpretation and artistic uses.</p>

Strategic Priorities achievements and next steps	
Goal	Achievements
Our museums service will explore the potential to create smaller displays such as 'Cabinets of Curiosity' at external venues to help widen exposure	<p>Undergrowth cleared from the Roman remains of Duncan's Gate by Parks and Monument consent secured for further clearance and excavation works.</p> <p>Geophysical surveys are being conducted across 140 acres of Gosbecks in 2022 as part of a research partnership with Durham University.</p>

<p>to some of our artefacts and exhibitions.</p>	<p>BID's empty shop programme includes art displays in 8-10 units planned for 2022.</p> <p>A collaboration with 'History Hit' in 2021 featured podcasts and films that engaged 500,000 people.</p> <p>A display case of archaeological finds installed at Mercury Theatre and CIMS has contributed to Firstsite exhibitions.</p> <p>Lighting installed in trees around Castle and Natural History Museum with Welcome Back funding.</p>
<p>We will investigate the potential to highlight heritage assets which are not normally seen by the public, and we will look for creative opportunities for events that help celebrate the unique character of Colchester.</p>	<p>A mosaic in Lion Walk has been relocated by Colchester Archaeological Trust. A conservation architect firm has been commissioned to expose the mosaic and display it under glass in situ.</p> <p>Anticipated for completion late in 2022.</p>

Report of	Assistant Director of Place and Client	Author	Karen Paton ☎ 282275
Title	Colchester's Housing Strategy 2022-27		
Wards affected	All		

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Scrutiny Panel is invited to consider Colchester's Housing Strategy 2022-27 and make recommendations to the 6 July Cabinet meeting.

2 Reason for Scrutiny

- 2.1 To review the Housing Strategy as requested by the Panel at their meeting on 7 June 2022.
- 2.2 To comment or make recommendations.

3 Reason for Cabinet Report

- 3.1 To adopt the new Housing Strategy 2022-27 for Colchester.
- 3.2 To recommend to full Council that the Housing Strategy be adopted as part of the Council's Policy Framework.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility to produce and publish a Housing Strategy based on a review of housing in the borough. There are clear risks to not having a robust evidence based strategy in place such as not achieving local priorities, not being able to evidence and articulate Colchester Borough Council's wider vision for housing and not providing a strong focus to our partners about their contribution to meeting our priorities.

5 Overview

- 5.1 See Cabinet Report attached.

6 Consultation

- 6.1 A Consultation workshop was held with representatives from local housing organisations as well as housing teams from CBC and CBH to help shape the new Housing Strategy.
- 6.2 The Draft Housing Strategy has been circulated to Officers and Partners for their comments.
- 6.3 The Portfolio Holder for Housing, CBC Senior Management Team and Colchester Borough Homes Board have been given the opportunity to review the documents.
- 6.4 The responses to consultations have been positive. Where comments, amendments and suggestions have been made these have been incorporated where appropriate.

7 Financial implications

- 7.1 These implications are covered in the standard paragraphs in the cabinet report appended to the covering report.

8 Environmental and Climate Change Implications

- 8.1 These implications are covered in the standard paragraphs in the cabinet report appended to the covering report.

9 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 9.1 These implications are covered in the standard paragraphs in the cabinet report appended to the covering report.

10 Other Standard References

- 10.1 References to Publicity, Human Rights, Community Safety and Health and Safety implications are covered in the standard paragraphs in the cabinet report appended to the covering report.

Report of	Assistant Director of Place and Client	Author	Karen Paton ☎ 282275
Title	Colchester's new Housing Strategy 2022-27		
Wards affected	All wards		

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Colchester's new Housing Strategy is due for publication in 2022.

The new Housing Strategy sets out our ambitions for housing in Colchester over the next 5 years and describes how we intend to use our resources and work with partners in both the public and private sectors to help us achieve our priorities. The new Housing Strategy highlights how our work in housing contributes to wider agendas such as Levelling Up

The Local Government Act 2003 required all local authorities to have a Housing Strategy, which sets out its vision for housing in the local area and provides an overarching framework for policies and plans.

The Housing Strategy is a key strategic document for the Local Authority. It recognises the importance of a safe and affordable home for health and wellbeing.

The Strategy sets out what the Council and its partners will do to help address the key housing issues and challenges facing the residents of Colchester including increasing the supply and access to affordable housing and making better use of what is available, providing support to people to help them maintain their tenancies, improving neighbourhoods to create better communities for people to live in, improving the standard of accommodation in both the public and private rented sector and reducing carbon emissions in homes.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To adopt the new Housing Strategy 2022-27 for Colchester.
- 2.2 To recommend to full Council that the Housing Strategy be adopted as part of the Council's Policy Framework.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility to produce and publish a Housing Strategy based on a review of housing in the borough.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 To not adopt the Housing Strategy. There are however clear risks to not having a robust evidence based strategy in place such as not achieving local priorities, not being able to evidence and articulate Colchester Borough Council's wider vision for housing and not providing a strong focus to our partners about their contribution to meeting our priorities.

Page break after Section 4.

5. Background Information

5.1 Developing the new Housing Strategy

In the process of developing the new Housing Strategy, we have collaborated extensively to ensure it is based on firm evidence.

- We updated and considered an in-depth evidence base to understand the details of housing need.
- We held a Consultation workshop with representatives from local housing organisations to help shape the new Housing Strategy by identifying the current challenges for housing in Colchester for both organisations and residents and how these can be addressed.
- Following the consultation, we established a Project Group with partners to ensure a collaborative approach to designing the new Strategy. The group considered the challenges identified at the workshop and agreed priorities with collaborative actions to improve the housing situation in Colchester.
- The Portfolio Holder for Housing, CBC Senior Management Team and Colchester Borough Homes Board have been given the opportunity to review the documents.
- The Draft Housing Strategy has been circulated to Officers and Partners for their comments and amendments made based on largely positive feedback.
- Senior Managers have reviewed and approved the draft.

5.2 Key Priorities

Colchester's Housing Strategy 2022-27 sets out our vision for housing in the borough:

‘Colchester, where all residents have access to a safe and affordable home that promotes health and equality, in a sustainable community’.

The Housing Strategy recognises the importance of a safe and affordable home in ensuring healthy lives and levelling up access to life opportunities. It provides the overarching framework for the Council's housing policies and plans.

The key priorities that the new Housing Strategy will focus on are:

- Supply – ‘We will increase the supply of quality affordable homes’
- Sustainability and Community – ‘We will support people to maintain their homes and build sustainable communities’
- Structure – ‘We will reduce carbon emissions from homes and improve quality and standards’
- Prevent Homelessness – ‘We will prevent homelessness by working with partners to deliver Colchester's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy’
- (A separate document that sits under the Housing Strategy).

We have considered government policy in the development of the new strategy to ensure that it aligns with the priority housing issues identified nationally especially around:

- Initiatives for increasing housing supply and homeownership
- Reforming the welfare system
- Quality of housing in both the social and private sector
- Levelling Up

We recognise that our work with partners is key to achieving the actions set out in our new Housing Strategy Delivery Plan and we have ensured that this aligns with the work of existing partnerships and programmes.

5.3 Monitoring and Review

The strategy will be a live document that will achieve its aims and objectives through the implementation of a 5-year Delivery Plan, which will be updated by Colchester Borough Council on a regular basis.

6. **Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications**

- 6.1 In completing this section you should give proper weight to equality and diversity considerations and demonstrate how the decision will impact on the promotion of equality and overcome discrimination in relation to gender, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age and race/ethnicity.
- 6.2 An Equality Impact Assessment on the Housing Strategy has been completed and a link to the document can be found below – link to be added
- 6.3 There are no Human Rights implications

7. **Strategic Plan References**

- 7.1 The priorities in the new Housing Strategy will deliver against the Council's current Strategic Plan 2020-23 priorities in particular the pledge to "increase the number, quality and types of homes" and under this the goals to:
- Deliver 30% affordable housing across all our own housing sites
 - Deliver 380 affordable homes
 - Improve existing Council homes to keep them in good repair and improve energy efficiency
 - Build new Council homes for our residents
 - Ensure all new homes are designed to a high quality across all tenures
 - Continue to improve and modernise available housing for older people

8. **Consultation**

- A Consultation workshop was held with representatives from local housing organisations as well as housing teams from CBC and CBH to help shape the new Housing Strategy.
- The Draft Housing Strategy has been circulated to Officers and Partners for their comments.
- The Portfolio Holder for Housing, CBC Senior Management Team and Colchester Borough Homes Board have been given the opportunity to review the documents.
- The responses to consultations have been positive. Where comments, amendments and suggestions have been made these have been incorporated where appropriate.

9. Publicity Considerations

- 9.1 The Housing Strategy documents will be published on the Council's website. A communications plan is being developed to publicise the Strategy and generate interest and commitment to the Delivery Plan.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1 The strategy sets out a challenging and ambitious vision for housing which will be delivered against a backdrop of significant reduction in funding for local government.
In the current financial climate of reduced resources, the Council will need to look carefully at how it will use these resources to deliver the strategy from existing budgets.

The Council will work to encourage its partners to commit their resources to meeting the priorities set out in the strategy. As many of the organisations are members of the Housing Strategy Project Group, they have already helped to shape the strategy and shown their commitment to its delivery.

11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 Providing good quality homes is crucial to people's health and quality of life and the actions set out in the Delivery Plan of the new Housing Strategy aim to improve the health and wellbeing of residents in Colchester by providing affordable, safe and secure housing.
- 11.2 It is anticipated that with the implementation of the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan there will be a positive benefit for Community Safety.

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 Environmental and sustainability implications have been considered throughout the development of the new Housing Strategy, recognising the role that housing must play in the Net Zero Carbon agenda. The Housing Strategy Delivery Plan sets out dedicated actions to improve the energy efficiency of existing homes as well as on new housing developments. These improvements will benefit residents by providing a cost saving on utility bills and improvements to their health and wellbeing.

Appendices

- Appendix A Colchester's Housing Strategy 2022-27
Appendix B Housing Strategy Delivery Plan 2022-27

Colchester's Housing Strategy 2022-2027

Logos and list of partners – to be confirmed

Foreword

Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities

Providing good quality homes is crucial to people's health and quality of life and supporting the provision of new and affordable housing across Colchester, is a key role for the Council.

Our new Housing Strategy for Colchester has been produced taking into account changes to national and local policy as well as the economic and social impacts of the Covid 19 Public Health pandemic.

Demand for all types of housing in Colchester continues to grow whilst the supply of affordable accommodation is reducing. To mitigate this, we need to look at ways in which we can work in partnership to increase the supply of affordable housing and make best use of the stock, as well as ensuring that existing and new homes meet the required standards and help to reduce carbon emissions.

In addition, we will also strive to support people from losing their homes and build sustainable communities where people want to live.

We recognise that there is no magic bullet, no one single action which will make a dramatic difference to the housing situation in Colchester. But by achieving lots of smaller actions and adding these together we believe we can make a significant difference. Working collaboratively in partnership will be key to the success of this Strategy.

The new Housing Strategy will set out our ambitions for housing in Colchester over the next 5 years and describe how we intend to use our resources and work with partners in both the public and private sectors to help us achieve our priorities.

Contents

What the new Housing Strategy will include:

- Foreword – PfH for Planning and Housing
- Executive Summary - What this document is and how it has been produced
- Section 1: Setting the scene – including key Housing Statistics
- Section 2: What we have achieved so far – key successes since the last strategy
- Section 3: Housing in Colchester
- Section 4: Our Vision and Key priorities - How we will deliver the strategy
- Section 5: The way we work
- Section 6: Links to national and local policy
- Section 7: How we will monitor the Housing Strategy

Executive Summary

Colchester's Housing Strategy 2022-27 sets out our vision for housing in the borough:

‘Colchester, where all residents have access to a safe and affordable home that promotes health and equality, in a sustainable community’.

It recognises the importance of a safe and affordable home in ensuring healthy lives and levelling up access to life opportunities.

The Housing Strategy provides the overarching framework for the Council's housing policies and plans.

The new Housing Strategy has been developed by Colchester Borough Council and its partners who have identified the most important priorities and what we should do to:

- address key Housing issues and challenges
- recognise Housing as a key determinant for good health
- provide agreement for action and resource decisions

The scope of our new strategy meets the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003 for all Local authorities to have a Housing Strategy, which sets out 'its vision for housing in its area and objectives, targets, and policies' that explain how it will play a leading role to:

- Assess and plan for current and future housing needs of the local population
- Make the best use of existing housing stock
- Plan and facilitate new supply
- Plan and commission housing support services which link homes to support and other services that people need to live in them
- Have working partnerships that secure effective housing and neighbourhood management

We have collaborated extensively to produce this strategy and to ensure it is based on firm evidence.

We have updated and considered an in-depth evidence base to understand the details of housing need.

We have held a Consultation workshop with representatives from local housing organisations to help shape the new Housing Strategy by identifying the current challenges for housing in Colchester for both organisations and residents and how these can be addressed.

Following the consultation, we established a Project Group with partners to ensure a collaborative approach to designing the new Strategy. The group considered the challenges identified at the workshop and agreed priorities with collaborative actions to improve the housing situation in Colchester. This group met several times.

We have also tested our emerging ideas with Senior Officers, members of Cabinet,

Project Group members

Members of the Project Group include representatives from:

- Colchester Borough Council – Strategic Housing, Housing Client, Private Sector Housing and Planning Policy
- Colchester Borough Homes – Housing Options and Housing Management
- Amphora Homes
- Housing Developer
- Housing Association partners
- Supported Housing Provider
- Essex County Council
- North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group

The Project Group identified the following key priorities that the strategy will focus on:

Supply – ‘We will increase the supply of quality affordable homes’

Sustainability and Community – ‘We will support people to maintain their homes and build sustainable communities’

Structure – ‘We will reduce carbon emissions from homes and improve standards’

Prevent Homelessness – ‘We will prevent homelessness by working with partners to deliver Colchester’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy’

(A separate document that sits under the Housing Strategy).

We have considered government policy in the development of the new strategy to ensure that it aligns with the priority housing issues identified nationally especially around:

- Initiatives for increasing housing supply and homeownership
- Reforming the welfare system
- Quality of housing in both the social and private sector
- Levelling Up

The themes for the new strategy also align with our partners strategies including:

Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
Essex County Council Housing Strategy

Our work with partners is key to achieving the actions set out in our new Housing Strategy and we have ensured that this aligns with the work of existing partnerships and programmes including:

South - East Local Enterprise Partnership - bringing together key leaders from business, local government and education in order to create the most enterprising economy in England.

Gateway to Homechoice Project Board – manage the Allocations policy for the Gateway to Homechoice choice-based lettings scheme which consists of a single Housing Register and a choice-based lettings scheme for allocating social housing.

The North - East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance - brings together authorities, commissioners and providers of health and wellbeing services including the ‘Live well’ approach.

Essex Housing Officers Group – working with local housing authorities across Essex to collaborate and share good practice and oversee the work of the housing sub groups.

The priorities identified for the new strategy will be achieved through the implementation of actions set out in a Delivery Plan, working collaboratively with a wide range of partners in Colchester.

Section 1. Setting the scene – the local picture

The borough of Colchester covers an area of 324 square kilometres in north east Essex. It borders Suffolk in the north, along with three Essex districts – Tendring in the east, Braintree in the west and Maldon in the south west.

At its centre is the town of Colchester, surrounded by villages and smaller towns of distinct and complementary character. Some are in the Dedham Vale, a designated area of outstanding natural beauty.

Our largest towns are Wivenhoe, Tiptree and West Mersea. The island of Mersea is at the south of the borough, and it forms the borough's principal coastal area.

According to the Government's Indices of Deprivation, across Essex County, **Colchester ranks as the 5th most deprived authority** (out of the 12 Essex LAs) - up one place from 2015. This means that deprivation has decreased slightly in Colchester.

The **most deprived areas** of the borough are Magnolia, Forest and Salary Brook South (Greenstead Ward) and St Anne's Estate (St Anne's and St John's Ward).

The **least deprived** areas are Bergholt (Lexden and Braiswick Ward) and Drury (New Town and Christ Church Ward).

The **health** of people in Colchester is generally in line with the average across England. Life expectancy in Colchester for men is 0.6 years better than the average for England, however in women the rate is 0.1 years lower than the England average.

Statistical Profile of Colchester	
The total population of Colchester in mid-2020	197,200
By 2030 the population is expected to grow to:	214,160
In mid-2020, the estimated number of people aged 16-64	126,176 64% of the total population
In mid-2020 the estimated number of people in Colchester who were 65+	34,056 17.3% of the total population
As of 31 March 2021, the number of households in the borough	84,041
As of 31 March 2021, the household size	2.38
Key Housing statistics	
The total number of new homes delivered for the year 2020-21	741

The number of affordable Homes delivered for the year 2019 - 20	101 (of which 59 homes were acquired by the Council).
The average household size (persons)	2.33
The number of properties sold under the Right to Buy scheme during 2020-21 was 46	46
The number of affordable homes let from April 2020 to March 2021	474
The average household price (£) as of April 2021	£338,193
The lower quartile house/flat price (£) as of April 2021	£230,000
The total number of Empty Properties (classified as empty for Council Tax purposes) in April 2021	1,851 empty properties (1,734 privately owned or owned by Registered Providers and 117 owned by CBC)
The length of time that Empty Properties have been empty	0 – 6 months 899 7 – 12 months 360 1 – 2 years 365 2 – 5 years 147 5+ years 80
The number of households on the Housing Register as of March 2021	3,009 households
The number of Homelessness households for 2020-21	The Council accepted a full homeless duty for 185 households. Action was taken to prevent homelessness for 187 households and relieved homelessness for 136 households.
The number of households living in temporary accommodation as of March 2021	209 households.

More detailed information on Housing and Homelessness in Colchester can be found in the Evidence Base that supports Colchester's Housing and Homelessness Strategies
[link to go here....](#)

Section 2: What we have achieved so far – Key successes since the last Housing Strategy

Since the last Housing Strategy was published in 2015, we have worked together to:

- Develop 4,990 new homes in Colchester between April 2016 and March 2021
- Deliver 697 affordable homes in Colchester during the same period with our Housing Association partners
- Bring back 16 ex local authority properties to be used as Temporary Accommodation
Bring back 78 ex local authority properties to be let as General Needs Accommodation at Social Rent – (8 bought in 2018/19, 35 in 2019/20 and 35 in 2020/21)
- Successfully purchase 100 properties through the Council's 100 Homes programme over an 18-month period, to be used as general needs housing, let at social rents through Gateway to Homechoice, for Colchester households.
- Deliver 31 new affordable homes on Council owned garage sites in 2015

- Achieve planning consent on Council land and assets at Creffield Road, Buffett and Scarfe Way, Military Road and Hardings Close delivering 32 new homes, 26 of which are affordable (some of these homes have been completed already, with the remainder due for completion Spring/Summer 2022).
- Achieve planning consent to redevelop an existing sheltered scheme, Elfreda House, which will deliver 36 new homes to a much higher standard than the existing building. The new development will be completed in 2023.
- Develop Colchester's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-25 with organisations and agencies that support people that are homeless
- Implement a number of major projects and initiatives to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings, local businesses and households in the borough.
As of July 2021, Colchester's Council housing stock has an average EPC rating of 'C'
- Administer 399 Disabled Facilities Grants to adapt properties to enable people with disabilities to continue to live in them.
- Improve standards in the Private Sector by
 - Improving the safety of 706 homes
 - Removing 1,600 serious category 1 and 2 hazards from homes
 - Serving 39 improvement notices on non-compliant landlords to ensure compliance with housing standards

In addition, we have worked successfully in partnership with:

- 7 Local Authorities (LA's) in Gateway to Homechoice to review the Allocations Policy and upgrade the system
- 12 District Councils and Essex County Council (ECC) on a Homeless Families protocol, Prisoner release protocol, 16- and 17-year-old protocol and Hospital discharge protocol
- Health on key worker housing
- ECC, Essex LA's and the voluntary sector on the response to our duties under the Domestic Abuse Bill
- ECC on the recommissioning of housing support services
- Private Sector funders, Housing associations, Almshouses and Charities to increase the supply of affordable housing
- Homes England, where the Council now has Investment Partner Status

Section 3: Housing in Colchester

Colchester has a long track record of joint working to meet housing need and tackle issues.

Our consultation workshop and the Housing Strategy Project Group identified the following strengths in this area along with challenges facing housing organisations and residents in Colchester over the next 5 years

Housing Supply

What are our strengths?

Working with developers and Housing Associations to aim to secure 30% affordable housing on newbuild sites

Building on the success of our Acquisition programme to increase the supply of affordable housing

Making better use of the Council's land and assets through our housebuilding programme

What are the challenges?

- Not enough affordable accommodation of all sizes available
- Need to put more pressure on developers to ensure adequate affordable housing is included in developments.
- Developers are focussing on policy changes – little risk with affordable housing but First Homes may change that dynamic.
- Lack of understanding about what type of housing is really needed – need to improve data sharing across organisations and partners
- Affordability
 - House prices
 - Rental prices
- Need to work more closely with private landlords to help meet the needs for affordable housing to reduce reliance on social housing
- Make better use of the Council's housing stock by helping people downsize, to free up larger accommodation for families
- Not enough property that's adapted or can be adapted at reasonable cost to accommodate people with disabilities
- Lack of appropriate, emergency accommodation
- Ever increasing demand for social housing/number of households on the housing register

Sustainability and Community

What are our strengths?

Working in partnership with:

Essex County Council to ensure that the commissioning of supported housing meets the needs for people in Colchester

Private Sector landlords to encourage access to accommodation in the private sector for move-on

Voluntary sector and local organisations to encourage community cohesion, strengthen communities and enable behaviour change to help them become more self-sufficient.

What are the challenges?

- Lack of access to supported housing, particularly when trying to house vulnerable people
- More support needed to enable people to remain in their own home, "lifetime in the community"
- More move-on options from supported accommodation for vulnerable groups
- An increase in more residents with chaotic lifestyles and anti social behaviour which lead to evictions and who are more difficult to move on
- Securing accommodation for asylum seekers and refugees
- More people in temporary housing – lack of security
- Regeneration of estates needed where there are pockets of vulnerability
- Tools made available to the parishes directly to build a neighbourhood/community development plan
- Enable communities to become more self-sufficient and help themselves

Structure, standards and reducing carbon emissions

What are our strengths?

Improving the condition of the housing stock to improve energy efficiency

Successfully working with landlords to improve the condition of housing in the private sector

Our Council approach to driving up standards in homes developed under Permitted Developments

What are the challenges?

- Current housing stock needs to be modernised and improved
- Environmental agenda may impact on affordability.
- Need to improve smart technologies within homes
- Living in poor quality homes links directly to health issues and lower educational attainment
- Housing standards need to be improved as poor housing conditions impact on quality of life
- Homes need to be compliant with modern standards including - damp/mould, carbon emissions/fire safety/adequate heating
- We need to ensure that permitted developments are fit for purpose as difficult to enforce under planning

Section 4: Our Vision and Key Priorities – How we will deliver the Strategy

Our vision for housing:

‘Colchester, where all residents have access to a safe and affordable home that promotes health and equality, in a desirable and sustainable community’.

To achieve this vision and mitigate the challenges for housing in Colchester, 4 Key Priorities have been identified for our new Housing Strategy

Key Priority 1

Supply – ‘*We will increase the supply of quality affordable homes*’

The impact of the pandemic and supply chain issues has resulted in a decrease in the number of affordable homes across the country in the last year with completions of affordable rented homes hit the hardest. This contrasts with the previous year which saw a record number of affordable homes delivered. Colchester has followed this trend.

An increase in households across the borough has had a significant impact on housing growth and the demand for different house types and tenures. The demand for affordable rented housing continues to outstrip supply and with the increase in house prices and the cost of living the gap between the supply and demand for affordable housing is set to widen.

In Colchester’s emerging Local Plan, the allocation for affordable housing is 30% on all proposals considered a major development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more, but current allocations are 20%. (In designated

rural areas the threshold is lower, above 5). Once the local plan is adopted the requirement will be 30% affordable housing on all sites with a mix of housing types and tenures. There has been significant growth and demand for Private Rented Sector accommodation in Colchester and we need to ensure that this provides good quality and affordable accommodation for our residents.

Through our new Housing Strategy:

- We will deliver market and affordable housing to meet housing demand and need through our emerging Local Plan
- We will continue to purchase properties through our Acquisition programme to help increase supply
- We will continue to work in partnership with Developers, Housing Associations and Almshouse charities to maximise the supply of affordable housing on new developments
- We will maximise the Council's land and assets to deliver new housing through our housebuilding programme and identify future developments
- We will continue to partner with Homes England to deliver affordable housing through their Affordable Homes Programme 2021-26
- We will ensure that the Council's new housebuilding programme will provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the range of households on the register, including accessible homes where possible
- We will continue to support government initiatives to help people who wish to buy their first home.
- We will work with Private Sector Landlords to ensure they are supported to provide good quality homes.
- We will provide incentives and support to encourage tenants to downsize to reduce under occupation and make best use of the Council's housing stock.
- We will Identify and support the need for adapted properties as part of new developments

Case study: Increasing the supply of affordable housing - 100 Homes Programme

Building on the success of the Council's Acquisition Project, In September 2020 Cabinet approved the purchase of 100 properties over an 18-month period within the Housing Revenue Account. The properties were to be used as General Needs housing, let at social rents through the Council's Choice Based Lettings system, Gateway to Homechoice, and reserved specifically for Colchester households.

The properties were to be bought through the Right to Buy Back covenant and the open market and would predominantly be ex Local Authority properties. Although there was also the possibility to purchase non-Ex LA properties to suit specific needs if required such as medical requirements or larger properties (4/5 bed properties).

The budget was set at £21,000,000 for the programme with an additional £1,000,000 to achieve an average Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of B across the programme.

There was also a focus on providing more accessible homes.

CBC worked in partnership with CBH on the project and by the end of February 2022 all 100 properties had been identified within the agreed budget.

The programme helped to increase the number of affordable homes during the period of Covid 19 when housing developments had stalled. Although the programme also suffered

from delays in sourcing materials to complete the works on the properties, to bring them up to lettable standard, by working collaboratively and building on the strengths within the partnership solutions were identified.

Key Priority 2

Sustainability and Community – ‘We will support people to maintain their homes and build sustainable communities’

Providing support to people at the right time is essential in helping people maintain their tenancies and build sustainable communities.

Consultation with housing organisations identified a lack of supported housing in Colchester to meet the needs of all groups and move-on opportunities to reduce the reliance on social housing.

We are inspired by One Colchester's Communities Can approach, recognising the strengths in our communities and the value of encouraging self-help. This is all the more important at a time when the demands on organisations and agencies are high and their resources are stretched. We will need to work collaboratively to ensure that these essential services are delivered.

Providing advice and support upstream to residents to help them maintain their homes by offering debt and budgeting advice will help to reduce evictions, preventing people from losing their homes.

Through our new Housing Strategy:

- We will ensure a co-ordinated approach to supported housing across the council, social care and health.
- We will conduct a mapping exercise to identify the current stock profile of supported housing for all groups across Colchester to identify gaps in provision.
- We will continue to work with partners to identify move-on opportunities for vulnerable groups.
- We will work in partnership with other providers to ensure a sufficient supply of housing for older people, including extra care.
- We will work with partners to ensure that there is an adequate supply of specialist housing and support available to meet the needs of residents with a disability.
- We will improve tenancy sustainment by working proactively with residents to provide advice and assistance around budgeting, work and debts.
- We will adapt properties where possible to allow tenants to stay in their homes and remain within existing communities and support networks.
- We will continue to work with residents to improve the external environment on the Council's housing estates.
- We will empower communities to become more self-sufficient by enabling them to help themselves.
- We will work with colleagues and partners to develop masterplans in key areas i.e., the town centre to ensure that housing is included.
- We will capitalise on regeneration schemes i.e., the Heart of Greenstead to ensure good quality housing is delivered.

Case Study - Improving the external environment on the Council's housing estates – Greenstead Housing Panel.

Empowering people to take an active part in the Community that they live in helps us to make improvements where they are most needed and gives residents a say in what is important to them.

In 2018 Colchester Borough Homes developed a local tenant panel to help improve Greenstead Housing Estate. The purpose of the group is to make recommendations and decisions on estate improvement requests and monitor the performance.

The requirements to be a member of the Panel are that you must be a current tenant or leaseholder of Colchester Borough Council living on the Greenstead Housing Estate and therefore have a specific interest and knowledge. The role of a panel member is to help monitor:

- The performance of the local housing management services for Greenstead*
- The quality of maintenance and other contracts within the estate*
- Raise and discuss local housing related issues*
- Agree budget proposals for estate improvements, landscaping schemes and community funding*

Since the panel started it has been responsible for agreeing £10,000 work of community fund projects each year specifically for Greenstead.

The Panel has also approved landscaping improvement schemes and estate improvements. Comments and feedback from the Panel are also fed into the Heart of Greenstead Project. The scheme has helped residents to have a say and take pride in the community that they live in.

CBH also carried out estate tours with tenants and Councillors to identify estate improvements and have developed an Estate management standard and strategy.

Key Priority 3

Structure – ‘We will reduce carbon emissions from homes and improve standards’

Housing is responsible for about one fifth of all carbon emissions, therefore schemes to decarbonise existing homes are just as important as the energy efficiency of new properties. Social housing is generally more energy efficient than privately owned homes but much of it could be better.

An improvement to the fibre of the housing stock in all tenures is needed to enhance standards, reduce carbon emissions, and raise the energy efficiency of housing in the Borough.

Fuel poverty is one of the biggest contributors to health inequalities. Therefore, we must tackle fuel poverty to improve living standards for people on low incomes, and encourage a more energy efficient housing sector

Through our new Housing Strategy:

- We will identify funding opportunities and schemes to help reduce carbon emissions from new and existing homes
- We will encourage the take up of initiatives to reduce fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency of homes across the borough
- We will work with developers to ensure that all new homes are built to future homes standards
- We will invest in Council new build properties to ensure they are thermally efficient
- We will invest in the fabric first approach in reducing energy demand of the Council's existing homes
- We will encourage private landlords and agents to provide well managed and decent quality properties
- We will review our services and adopt new collaborative approaches to continue to deliver effective and efficient services for tenants
- We will ensure that Council and Housing Association homes meet the required standards and building safety compliance regulations
- We will work with tenants to encourage them to adapt their lifestyles to help reduce carbon emissions

Case study - Tackling inequality and improving health outcomes

Helping people live healthy lives is core to our housing work. We know that having an affordable home is a key determiner of people's health.

One of the measures we adopt to increase the supply of affordable homes is to use the proceeds from the sale of Council homes bought under the legal Right to Buy to acquire homes on the open market to increase the stock of social housing. During the coming two years we aim to acquire 90 homes in this way.

These homes are truly affordable to local people as they are let at social rent levels (typically 60% of market rents). They are let based on people's housing need and tend to help house people on the lowest incomes.

However, we also know that these homes need to be warm and dry to be healthy. Cold and damp homes are more expensive to heat, result in more carbon emissions, and have a strong link with poor health.

Our local NHS Clinical Commissioning Group recently awarded us £900,000 to carry out work to these properties to significantly improve their energy efficiency. This work will be on top of the repairs we carry out routinely to ensure they meet the standards for social housing.

This grant funding will enable adaptations that will help reduce bills for low incomes households, avoid the health issues associated with cold housing, and reduce carbon emissions. At a time of increasing fuel bills, making these homes cheaper to heat is crucial to allowing people to keep their homes at a healthy temperature.

All the homes purchased will receive works to improve their energy performance certificate (EPC) rating to an average of C (B for houses, C for flats), with the funding from the CCG

used to achieve this. An EPC measures the energy efficiency of a property on a scale of A-G.

We have found that each property needs on average £7,300 to significantly improve its thermal efficiency. This work includes improving glazing, heating systems, or adding solar panels.

This initiative forms part of our wider efforts to tackle inequalities and improve health outcomes. In particular, it complements our work to improve energy efficiency in private sector housing to improve residents' health outcomes.

Key Priority 4

Prevent Homelessness and Rough Sleeping – ‘We will prevent homelessness by working with partners to deliver Colchester’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-25’

The 4 key aims for the strategy are:

- Increasing access to accommodation and providing settled homes.
- Helping people to sustain their accommodation.
- Improving the health and wellbeing of people who experience homelessness
- Improving communication and challenging the perception and culture of homelessness

[CBC-Housing-Colchester’s-Homelessness-and-Rough-Sleeping-Strategy-2020-25-Colchester’s Homelessness and Rough Seeping Strategy .pdf \(windows.net\)](#)

Section 5: The way we work

Demand for housing in Colchester that is safe, affordable and meets the needs of our residents continues to create challenges that require us to work together and with imagination.

Since the last Housing Strategy, we have:

- Successfully worked in partnership with developers and housing associations to build more affordable homes
- Improved relationships with our health and social care colleagues to provide housing solutions for vulnerable residents to improve their quality of life
- Worked with local organisations to encourage communities to become more self sufficient
- Implemented several major projects and initiatives to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings, local businesses, and households in the borough

What we will do:

Research Influence Collaborate Partner Facilitate

At a time of limited resource for all partners, we need to coordinate our efforts, collaborate inclusively, work to our strengths, and be open-minded about new opportunities. We have developed strong working relationships with Essex County Council, Neighbouring District

Councils, North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group, Registered Provider's and Charities to achieve more than we could alone. We will:

- Increase our understanding of local need and sharing our knowledge with partners
- Identify opportunities to stimulate the development of new affordable homes
- Use existing assets to encourage new investment
- Develop strong relationships to allow productive collaboration with others
- Build on our existing partnerships to make our efforts more effective
- Concentrate on our role as facilitator rather than trying to 'do' everything ourselves

Section 6: National and Local Policy context

This section sets out key national and local policy that was considered in the development of the Housing Strategy.

National Policy

There is currently no national strategy for housing. The last national housing strategy 'Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England' was published by the coalition government in 2011. Since that time the Government has announced a number of policies and policy changes aimed at addressing its priority housing issues.

- ***Increasing housing supply*** – through Planning reforms; a Housing White Paper; supporting Garden Communities; initiatives to unlock land; supporting local authorities and housing associations to increase the supply of affordable housing through Homes England grant funding.
- ***Increasing homeownership*** with a focus on making it more affordable - through the introduction of the Help to Buy equity loan scheme; rent to buy scheme, lifetime ISA, changes to shared ownership minimum shares; mortgage guarantee scheme; changes to stamp duty land tax; stamp duty land tax holiday; introducing a right to shared ownership.
- ***Reforming the welfare system*** – through the implementation of universal credit.
- ***Reforming the private rented sector*** – through a commitment to bring forward a Renters Reform Bill and abolish s21 (no fault) evictions for private renters.
- ***Addressing homelessness and rough sleeping*** – through the Homelessness Reduction Act and financial support to local authorities to reduce rough sleeping, increased financial support during the Covid -19 public health pandemic and a national commitment to ending rough sleeping.
- ***Dealing with cladding and fire safety*** – with the introduction of approved document guidance on Fire Safety to meet the Building Regulations 2010.
- ***Protection for Social Housing Residents*** - The [Social Housing White Paper](#) was published in 2020 with a focus on resident voice and influence. The white paper presents a charter setting out seven commitments that social housing residents should be able to expect from their landlord. The overarching themes are building and resident safety, and resident voice.
- ***Levelling up White Paper published in 2022*** – setting out 12 missions to tackle inequality. The work contained in the Housing Strategy will contribute to achieving a number of these.

Local context

South East Local Enterprise Partnership

The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) brings together key leaders from business, local government, further and higher education in order to create the most enterprising economy in England through exploring opportunities for enterprise while addressing barriers to growth.

The SELEP covers Essex, Southend, Thurrock, Kent, Medway and East Sussex and is the largest strategic enterprise partnership outside of London. The SELEP works at a strategic level across the region, with leaders from the private and public sectors, to create the best possible environment for businesses of all sizes and sectors to fulfil their potential.

Gateway to Homechoice Project Board

The Project Board manage the Allocations policy for the Gateway to Homechoice choice-based lettings scheme which consists of a single Housing Register and a choice-based lettings scheme for allocating social housing. The Partner Organisations (POs) that are part of the scheme include:

Babergh District Council, Braintree District Council, Colchester Borough Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Maldon District Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and East Suffolk District Council.

The Project Board is made up of housing managers from the participating POs and Registered Providers. The scheme is subject to a consortium agreement. Registered providers, charities, community land trusts and almshouses (RPs), also allocate properties using this scheme and are subject to a Service Level Agreement. The list of RPs which participate in the scheme are listed on the Gateway to Homechoice website:

<http://www.gatewaytohomechoice.org.uk/Data/ASPPages/1/277.aspx>

The scheme aims to provide a consistent approach to accessing housing across the diverse area of operation of the scheme and where possible, to ensure that applicants have choice over where they live.

The Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) 2018 – 22

This strategy promotes a shared vision for health and wellbeing in Essex, setting out key countywide strategic priorities, which focus on four areas:

- Improving mental health and wellbeing
- Addressing obesity, improving diet and increasing physical activity
- Influencing conditions and behaviours linked to health inequalities
- Enabling and supporting people with long-term conditions and disabilities.

The priorities are delivered by local government, the NHS and other partners together through the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance

The Alliance brings together authorities, commissioners and providers of health and wellbeing services including the 'Live well' approach which places Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) at its heart.

The partnership work together to tackle the causes of ill health, with a focus on prevention and by adopting a Neighbourhood approach to improve health and wellbeing.

Essex County Council Housing Strategy 2021-2025

The ECC Housing Strategy sets out the actions ECC will take to help achieve progress towards three goals:

1. Growing Essex while protecting the best of the county
2. Enabling people to live independently throughout their life
3. Supporting people facing homelessness or rough sleeping.

Although ECC are not a housing authority the strategy sets out why housing is important at a county council level and acknowledges that the quality of our homes and the places we live play an important role in all our lives.

ECC commission specialist housing, secure infrastructure funding to support housing growth and direct development through Essex Housing. The strategy is a commitment to work with borough, city and district partners who have the responsibility for housing and planning.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014

Colchester Borough Council commissioned research to help shape future housing and planning strategies in the area. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires all local planning authorities to prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).

The SHMA is an assessment of people's housing needs within an area, based on statistical evidence and survey data.

The purpose of a SHMA is to provide local authorities with robust and credible information and data that can be used as part of its evidence base to inform future policies and decision-making related to housing and planning. Such assessments should consider housing market areas, and therefore need to be prepared jointly between neighbouring authorities. The local authorities of Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Colchester have worked collectively in commissioning their SHMAs.

Colchester Borough Council Strategic Plan 2020-23 - [The Council's Strategic Plan](#) . [Colchester Borough Council](#)

The priorities in the new Housing Strategy will deliver against the Council's strategic Plan priorities in particular the pledge to "increase the number, quality and types of homes" and under this the goal to.

- Deliver 30% affordable housing across all our own housing sites
- Deliver 380 affordable homes
- Improve existing Council homes to keep them in good repair and improve energy efficiency
- Build new Council homes for our residents
- Ensure all new homes are designed to a high quality across all tenures
- Continue to improve and modernise available housing for older people

The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2013 – 2043

Colchester's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan sets out the priorities, plans and actions for the Council's homes & tenants over the next 30 years.

The HRA Business Plan shows how Colchester Borough Council will maintain its existing homes; the viability of current plans and how they translate in the long term; identifies that money should be available for investment in new homes, existing homes and services to tenants.

The Plan includes information on the condition of council properties, how much money will be spent on improving properties and how Colchester Borough Council plan to meet the housing needs of its tenants.

The Housing Asset Management Strategy - [Colchester Borough Council](#)

The strategy sets out the key priorities and levels of investment that are planned over the next five years, together with considering the longer-term investment requirements, that link to the Housing Revenue Account (Business Plan).

The strategy broadly covers the following key areas:

- Investing for the Future
- Keeping Your Home Safe and Secure
- Preparing for Climate Change
- Homes for Life
- Rethinking Use

Our Strategy and Climate Emergency Action Plan - [Our Strategy and Climate Emergency Action Plan · Colchester Borough Council](#)

Colchester Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and since then have developed a Climate Emergency Action Plan on how the Council plans to reach carbon neutrality by 2030.

Communities Can ...a collaborative approach - [Communities Can Sept 2021 \(1\).pdf](#)

Echoing the title of the December 2020 COVID-19 Marmot Review, to “build back fairer”, the Communities Can strategy sets out the ways in which the local community will work together to reduce inequalities.

Section 6: How we will monitor the Housing Strategy and Delivery Plan

The Housing Strategy is intended to be a working document and therefore actions will be implemented throughout the life of the strategy.

The Delivery Plan will be monitored by the Housing Strategy Project Group and other key stakeholders and updated.

A report on the progress of the Strategy and Delivery Plan will be produced on an annual basis and circulated to the relevant stakeholders and the Portfolio holder with responsibility for housing. The report will also be published on the Colchester Borough Council website

Housing Strategy Delivery Plan 2022 to 2027

Draft

1. Supply – ‘We will increase the supply of quality affordable homes’

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Deliver Market and Affordable Housing to meet housing need and demand	Produce a new Local Plan which follows the National Planning Policy Framework.	Ensure the Council's planning policies are updated to provide a robust basis for guiding future growth in the Borough.	Spring 2022		CBC Planning Policy Team
	<p>Ensure that the Local Plan meets the requirements of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 with regards to the provision of starter homes and custom and self build homes.</p> <p>Work in partnership with Parish Council's, the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE), Registered Providers and private developers to enable the delivery of</p>	Delivery of more affordable housing in rural areas of Colchester	2022-27		CBC – Housing Strategy Team Parish Council's, RCCE, Registered Providers and private developers

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	<p>affordable housing in rural areas.</p> <p>Ensure that the planning policy framework for the proposed Garden Communities provides for a mix of housing types and tenures including self- and custom-build and includes a minimum of 30% affordable housing which will be phased through the development</p>		2022		CBC Planning Policy Team
Work in partnership with Developers and Housing Associations to maximise the supply of affordable housing on new developments	<p>Implement Colchester's Local Plan which seeks 30% of all new homes to be affordable on sites with over 5 homes in rural areas and more than 10 in urban areas.</p> <p>Continue to purchase ex local</p>	<p>Affordable housing supply target of 380 affordable Council and Housing Association homes is met (by 2023)</p> <p>Different ways of delivering affordable housing explored and successfully implemented</p>	2022-2027		CBC – Housing Strategy Team, Development Team, Planning Officers, Registered Providers

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	<p>authority properties through the Acquisition programme (using right to buy receipts) to increase the supply of affordable housing</p> <p>Support and promote government initiatives for first-time buyers. Research and identify the process for the implementation of the First Homes initiative for Colchester</p> <p>Influence the allocation of S106 contributions to ensure the delivery of affordable housing is maximised not compromised</p>				

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	<p>Ensure a balance is reached between delivering new homes and the need for affordable housing by considering viability.</p> <p>Consider if commuted sums can be used to deliver affordable housing elsewhere in the borough</p> <p>Explore how we can use the Affordable Housing New Homes Bonus to increase the supply of housing</p> <p>Work with Registered Providers to seek Homes England funding to help deliver more affordable units on new schemes</p>				

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Understand and identify housing needs in terms of number, size, tenure, quality of properties and associated facilities.	<p>Clearly set out the level of housing required in the borough to meet housing need and demand through an Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) figure, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework</p> <p>Ensure that the new Local Plan includes policies to secure good quality design and space standards for new homes</p> <p>Continue to consider the building of specially adapted</p>	<p>Robust Objectively Assessed Need figure is used to inform production of the local plan</p> <p>The Council can demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply to meet both emerging Local Plan requirements and higher delivery totals resulting from use of the new housing methodology which is applied to current planning applications.</p> <p>Housing delivered in the market is attractive and meets the needs of Borough residents, creating neighbourhoods and communities which are sustainable.</p> <p>Particular groups include larger</p>	2022		<p>CBC Planning Policy Team</p> <p>Planning Policy Team / Housing Strategy Team</p>

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Ensure that Neighborhood Plans which are making housing site allocations are delivered in timely manner consistent with National and Local Policy and provide the policy framework to contribute to meeting local housing need.	properties to accommodate those with specific needs. CBC will support and work with Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Plan Groups where they are developing Neighbourhood Plans which are making housing site allocations. This will help ensure these Plans provide for a mix of housing types and tenures and contribute to meeting local housing need and affordable housing.	families, older people and supported housing for vulnerable people. Neighbourhood Plans are consistent with National and Local Policy and provide the policy framework to contribute to meeting local housing need.			Planning Policy Officers (supporting Parish Councils)
Encourage new initiatives, including housing products, which meet housing	Implement Colchester's Planning Policies which seek up to	A range of products and initiatives	2022-2027		CBC Housing Strategy Team

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
need and demand between affordable rented and home ownership.	<p>20% of all affordable housing to be provided as Intermediate housing.</p> <p>Explore increasing the number of equity share properties available</p> <p>Publicise and support national initiatives which seek to bridge the gap between affordable rented and outright home ownership.</p> <p>Provide support for the provision of self-build and custom-build homes and maintain a register as required by the Housing and Planning Act so that households can register their</p>	available to meet housing need.			

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	interest in this product.				
Maximise the use of the Council's land and assets to deliver new housing	<p>Produce a development strategy which sets out the Council's aspirations, a pipeline of development and the funding required to deliver the strategy</p> <p>Identify council owned housing that is no longer viable and consider its potential to enable the development of new homes</p> <p>Identify land opportunities for development of affordable housing</p> <p>Partner with Homes England to deliver affordable housing through</p>	<p>Delivery of new housing on Council owned sites to increase housing</p> <p>In 2019 the Council committed to deliver 350 additional social homes owned by the Council over 5 years.</p> <p>The Council's HRA newbuild developments are designed to meet the "Future Homes 2025" standard (option 2) principles to achieve a 31% carbon saving.</p>	2022-27		<p>Amphora Homes/CBC Client Team/CBH</p> <p>Joint CBC/CBH Asset Management Group</p> <p>CBC Client Team</p> <p>Amphora Homes, CBC</p>

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	<p>their Affordable Homes Programme 2021-26</p> <p>Ensure that the Council new housebuilding programme will provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the range of households on the register, including those who require an accessible home</p>				Client Team, CBH
Work in partnership with ECC and other providers to ensure a sufficient supply of housing for older people including extra care.	<p>Work with ECC to identify funding available and delivery options.</p> <p>Use information available to identify the needs and aspirations of older people, where they want to live and type of accommodation</p>	<p>Funding and schemes identified.</p> <p>Needs and aspirations of older people identified, and provision made within the Local Plan for suitable sites</p>	Ongoing		<p>CBC Housing Strategy Team/ECC</p> <p>Planning Policy Team</p>

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
		Local Plan policy requires developers to demonstrate how their proposal will meet the need for housing for older residents			
Continue to review the Council's existing sheltered housing stock to implement the Colchester Standard through the Sheltered Housing Refurbishment programme A 5-year investment programme is in place, with on-going surveys to identify major works.	Review the remaining Sheltered housing stock through condition surveys and assessing their viability	Colchester Standard achieved on all schemes identified Up to date surveys and viability assessments completed on schemes.	2022-27		CBH Asset Management Team CBC Client Team
Increase the role of the private rented sector in meeting housing need through incentive packages for Private Sector Landlords including the Homestep and Private Sector Leasing schemes	Improve access for those who traditionally face barriers to the private rented sector (PRS)	Increased provision of Private Rented homes to meet housing needs Landlords Forum set up and good	2022-27 Ongoing		CBH - Housing Options Team, CBC – Private Sector Housing Team, Private Landlords

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	<p>Continue to hold a quarterly Landlords Forum</p> <p>Continue to offer a rent bond to landlords to provide affordable rented accommodation and to ensure housing standards are suitable.</p> <p>Deliver housing standards regulation and management training to Private Sector Landlords.</p>	<p>attendance maintained</p> <p>Increase in use of the Private Rented Sector – Monitor take up</p> <p>Training delivered – better informed and broadly compliant landlords.</p>			
Maximise the use of council homes and reduce under-occupation	<p>Implement revised tenant incentive scheme policy to encourage council tenants who are under-occupying to move to a home that better meets their needs</p> <p>Promote the use of mutual</p>	<p>Tenant Incentive Scheme implemented and more under occupied households using the scheme.</p> <p>Mutual exchange publicised and an</p>	Ongoing		CBH –Tenant Support Officers, Registered Providers

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	<p>exchange, to better meet tenants housing needs</p> <p>Maximise take-up of sheltered housing through the major refurbishment programme to free up under-occupied properties</p>	<p>increase in the number of households moving through the scheme.</p> <p>Reduction in sheltered voids.</p> <p>Better use of Council properties to meet housing need.</p> <p>Tenants are housed in properties which are better suited to their housing need.</p>			Tenant Support Officers
Identify and support the need for adaptable and accessible properties as part of new developments	<p>Negotiate the provision of homes built to enhanced accessibility standards (Part M4 Cat 2 & 3) to include wheelchair accessible homes on sites where affordable housing is being provided</p> <p>Include the provision of enhanced accessibility standards in</p>	Increase in the number of wheelchair standard properties			<p>CBC Housing Strategy Team</p> <p>CBC Client Team</p> <p>Amphora</p> <p>CBH</p>

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	Councils newbuild development programme				
Maintain and where possible reduce the currently low levels of long-term empty properties in the Private Sector Provide information to residents on the reality of empty homes – manage the perception	<p>Respond to enquiries regarding long term empty properties and take informal or formal action as appropriate.</p> <p>Offer financial assistance to bring empty properties back in to use wherever possible or to reduce the effect of the property on the neighbourhood.</p>	<p>Reduction in the overall number of empty homes.</p> <p>Make safe and secure empty properties where there is a significant public health or safety impact on the community.</p>	Ongoing		<p>CBC-Private Sector Housing Registered Providers</p> <p>CBC Healthy Homes Team</p>

2. Sustainability and Community – ‘We will support people to maintain their homes and build sustainable communities’

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Ensure a co-ordinated approach to supported housing across the council, social care and health	Continue to work with ECC, Health and Social Care to influence commissioning of supported housing and support services where possible.	An increase and improvement in supported housing and support services for Colchester.	Ongoing		CBC Housing Strategy Team/CBH Housing Options Team/ECC/Health
	Map the existing supply of supported housing in the borough including access to and support options and identify gaps in provision	Supported housing supply is identified to inform the commissioning process.	Ongoing		
	Work in partnership with ECC, CBH and supported housing providers	The housing and support need of Colchester's residents are met			

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Ensure that young people understand the housing options available to them and the risks of	<p>to ensure that the support and housing needs of Colchester's residents are still met and are not compromised following procurement activities undertaken by ECC</p> <p>Continue to work with partners to identify move-on opportunities for vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Continue to review the nominations CBC gives to supported housing providers to ensure that they still meet the strategic priorities of CBC</p> <p>Work in partnership with schools in the borough to educate young people and their parents about</p>	<p>This scarce resource is used to best meet the needs of Colchester's residents</p> <p>Young people and parents are more aware of the risks and lack of housing options available.</p>	Ongoing		CBC/CBH/Supported Housing Providers

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
leaving home in an unplanned way	their housing options				
Improve health & wellbeing of Colchester residents through greater integration of housing, health and social care services.	<p>Engage with partner services and identify opportunities for joint working and service delivery to tackle housing as a long-term barrier to health through the work with the Housing and Health Alliance</p> <p>Explore opportunities for additional Public Health funding.</p> <p>Establish effective multidisciplinary care/referral pathways</p> <p>Work with local community and voluntary sector organisations to improve information, access and support for</p>	<p>Joint working established between housing, health and social care</p> <p>Funding opportunities identified and funding awarded</p> <p>Pathways established, and referral processes improved</p> <p>Continue to develop the Essex Hospital Discharge Protocol with ECC, currently out to consultation and developed with the support of Colchester, as a mechanism to help people whose</p>	2022-27		CBC/CBH/Registered Providers/Health CCG/Essex County Council

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	household health checks. Reduce the number of home hazards most likely to have a negative impact on residents' health and safety.	independence may be at risk to remain in or return to their home in both the private and public sector properties.			CBC-Private Sector Housing Team
Improve tenancy sustainment and work proactively with residents to provide advice and assistance around budgeting, work and debts	Promote pre-tenancy workshops/early intervention for arrears Promote financial Inclusion to help tenants to budget and provide long term improvements for residents in financial difficulty and reduce long term dependency on discretionary funds Identify funding initiatives to support residents	Increase in take up of workshops. Financial resilience encouraged and supported through Money advice outreach work and training sessions. Reduction in the take up of discretionary funds	Ongoing		CBH – Housing Options Team /Supported Housing Organisations/CBH - Tenant Support Officers

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	<p>with the cost-of-living crisis</p> <p>Work with ECC to identify how commissioned services such as the Housing Related Support Floating Support Service and Phoenix Futures can work better with Colchester tenants and landlords alike, supporting households at risk/reducing evictions and building positive relationships between landlords and tenants.</p>				
Support residents affected by Welfare Reforms and those experiencing financial hardship to remove the risk of homelessness	Continue to develop internal and external partnerships to mitigate the effects of welfare reform. Continue to provide proactive support to those affected by the reform	More residents supported and where appropriate alternative housing options identified and risk of homelessness mitigated.	Ongoing		Housing Options Team, CBH, CBC Customer Solutions

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	agenda and experiencing financial hardship				
Help people whose independence may be at risk to remain in or return to their home in both the private and public sector properties.	<p>Increase use of the disabled adaptations in CBC properties to encourage independent living amongst older residents and residents with a disability</p> <p>Respond to recommendations from ECC Occupational Therapy service to process Disabled Facilities Grants in private sector properties.</p> <p>Provide advice on welfare benefits to older people to help them maximise their income and remain in their own home.</p>	<p>Increase in planned and unplanned adaptations</p> <p>100% spend of DFG budget allocation</p> <p>Increase in older people able to remain in their own home</p>	Ongoing		CBC/CBH Asset Management CBC Healthy Homes Team
Increase use of assistive	Publicise the benefits of assistive	More tenants using the service	2022-27		CBH Older Persons Services

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
technologies for Council tenants.	technology to tenants to enable them to remain in their own homes.				
Facilitate integration into the local community for the incoming population including refugees and asylum seekers.	Work with the local community and voluntary sector including Refugee Action and Essex integration to improve information, access and support (especially ethnic minorities)	Community groups set up. Incoming population successfully integrated into the community.	2022-27		CBC Community Initiatives Team
Deliver quality neighbourhoods with adequate infrastructure.	Inform and consult the relevant infrastructure providers including education services of proposed housing developments so they have an opportunity to influence outcomes. Work in partnership with ECC and the Southeast Local Enterprise	High quality communities Projects delivered – Infrastructure needs met	2022-2027 2022-2027		CBC Planning Policy and Transportation Team, Development Management , Community Development Team

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	Partnership (SELEP) to deliver integrated and sustainable transport projects				
Create neighbourhoods and communities which are sustainable	Develop partnerships with residents, the voluntary sector, community organisations and wider local service providers, especially on new housing schemes/developments. Work in partnership with the Community Police to implement new legislation from the ASB Police and Crime Act and undertake enforcement action as necessary	Partnerships set up Continue to hold events including 'Days of Action' and 'Make a difference day', to bring communities together. (8 make a difference day held a year)	2022 - 2027		Zone Wardens, Community Police, Community Initiatives, CBH, Registered Providers, CBC – Private Sector Housing, Community Safety Team
Encourage Community Engagement with housing providers	Introduce a co-ordinated approach to community	Community projects established			Police, Crime Commissioners,

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
and other organisations	<p>engagement with voluntary sector and housing providers.</p> <p>Encourage parishes directly to build a neighbourhood/community development plan</p> <p>Establish a clear focus on a collaborative, cross sector, system wide, partnership approach to creating sustainable, healthy & engaged communities through the Health & Wellbeing Alliance and One Colchester.</p> <p>Maximise employability funding from the SELEP to support the Economic Development Strategy</p>	Funding bids submitted and agreed	2022-27		<p>Colchester Community Voluntary Sector (CCVS), CBH, Registered Providers, CBC Community Safety, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)</p> <p>CBC - Economic Development Team</p>

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
<p>Improve the external environment on the Council's housing estates</p> <p>Enable communities to become more self-sufficient and help themselves</p>	<p>Continue to implement the actions set out in the Estate Management Strategy for the external environment within the Council's housing estates</p> <p>Set up local tenant panels to encourage tenants to take pride in the areas that they live in by making recommendations and decisions on estate improvements</p>	<p>Estate Management Strategy recommendations implemented</p> <p>Local tenant panels developed</p>	Ongoing		CBH Housing Management Team/ Zone Wardens
<p>Improved satisfaction in services that are delivered to Council tenants</p> <p>Implement the Principal areas of the</p>	<p>We will review our services and adopt new collaborative approaches to continue to deliver effective and efficient services for tenants</p> <p>Work with CBH to ensure that CBC</p>	<p>Services reviewed and tenant satisfaction improved</p> <p>Engagement with services improved</p>	Ongoing		CBC Client Team, CBH, Comms Team

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Charter in relation to Social Housing White Paper to improve tenant engagement and satisfaction	tenants and leaseholders are aware of the principal areas of the Charter and how their voice can be heard to improve satisfaction in services that are provided.				
Reduce and tackle anti-social behaviour in partnership with other agencies	<p>Continue to deliver an overarching multi-agency approach to tackling ASB within the Town Centre through the Town Centre Action Plan.</p> <p>Challenge antisocial behaviour and use appropriate sanctions against those who cause a nuisance</p> <p>Work with others to offer a range of interventions to help people</p>	<p>Reduction in antisocial behaviour</p> <p>Town Centre multi agency partnership team set up and continue to meet regularly to agree approach with support and enforcement in place to resolve crime and ASB issues arising in the town centre.</p>	Ongoing		CBH anti-social behaviour team, Police, CBC Community Safety Team/CBH Rough Sleeper Team

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	change their behaviour Provide support to witnesses and victims of antisocial behaviour				
Prevent and reduce Domestic Abuse	<p>Work in partnership with Essex County Council to develop a Domestic Abuse Strategy for Essex in line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021</p> <p>Ensure that the Domestic Abuse Act implications have been considered and the Gateway to Homechoice Allocations policy amended to reflect the new legislation.</p>	Domestic Abuse Strategy produced and implemented			CBC Housing Strategy Team, CBH Housing Options Team, ECC, Registered Providers

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Lower the rates of unemployment in the Borough by supporting and encouraging residents to take up work.	Operate weekly Work Clubs and drop-in centres for advice, support and networking Develop education, employment and training opportunities for council tenants and other residents. Develop the Local Support Services framework, in partnership with Colchester Job Centre Plus, Colchester Borough Homes, Customer Borough Council and other partners to promote employment opportunities and local support services	Work clubs/drop-in centres set up; premises and volunteers to run them identified Unemployment reduced	Ongoing		CBH/CBC Customer Solutions. DWP

3. Structure – ‘We will reduce carbon emissions from homes and improve standards’

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Reduce Carbon emissions in new and existing homes by 2027	Identify funding opportunities and schemes to help reduce carbon emissions from new and existing homes	<p>Funding identified and carbon emissions in new and existing homes reduced</p> <p>The Council's Housing Revenue Account newbuild developments are designed to meet the "Future Homes 2025" standard (option 2) principles to achieve a 31% carbon saving</p>			CBC - Client Team
<p>Reduce fuel poverty in the borough.</p> <p>Increase the take up of the government's Green Deal scheme across the borough, encouraging and supporting residents to make improvements to their home increasing</p>	<p>Promote Warm Home Discount and Priority Services Register for vulnerable residents.</p> <p>Provide fuel poverty advice to households & signpost customers to income maximisation and</p>	<p>Increased take up of Warm Home discount.</p> <p>Reduction in fuel poverty in the borough</p>	2022-2027		<p>CBC – Community Initiatives Team, Voluntary sector</p> <p>Energy suppliers</p> <p>Energy Savings Trust</p> <p>CBC – Healthy Homes Team</p>

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
energy efficiency, and reducing fuel bills.	<p>fuel tariff/debt advice.</p> <p>Continue to work with ECC and other districts/boroughs, work has commenced around supporting the UK Power Networks recently launched Heat Decarbonisation Strategy to support communities that are heavily dependent on oil, to use greener fuels.</p> <p>Signpost customers to Green Deal offers and measures available.</p> <p>Promote the ECO Flex scheme which will allow CBC, through its partners, to provide affordable warmth assistance to fuel poor and low-income households that are vulnerable to the effects of the cold</p>	<p>An uptake of the ECO Flex funding discounts provided by our partners</p> <p>Reduction in fuel poverty in the borough and removal of excess cold hazards.</p> <p>Removal of 80 Excess Cold</p>			<p>CBC Warm Homes partners, Energy suppliers</p> <p>CBC – Healthy Homes Team</p>

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	<p>Enforce the provision of insulation and economic/efficient heating systems in privately rented properties to remove Category 1 and significant Category 2 hazards of Excess Cold.</p> <p>Provide grant/loan aid to owner occupiers (where alternative forms of assistance are not available) to remove Category 1 and significant Category 2 hazards of Excess Cold</p>	hazards in privately rented and owner-occupied homes per annum.			CBC-Private Sector Housing/Healthy Homes Team
Undertake targeted activity to support the most vulnerable members of the community who live in the poorest quality housing containing Category 1 and significant Category 2 hazards	Continue to improve referral pathways between Private Sector Housing & Customer Support Team to raise concerns about the housing conditions of vulnerable residents	<p>Pathways established</p> <p>Progress to achieving an annual target of improving 300 dwellings occupied by vulnerable people including those with long term health conditions.</p>	Ongoing		<p>CBC Private Sector Housing</p> <p>CBC Healthy Homes Team</p>

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	Work with Clinical Commissioning Group and Health and Social Care Services to tie Environmental Health into care planning and patient discharge.	Facilitate quick and ready access to services which resolve property-related barriers to returning to/staying at home.			Registered Providers NEE CCG ECC
Target the work we do to improve homes in the private sector based on evidence and the best information and improve the energy efficiency.	Continue to use bulk Energy Performance data and Tenancy Deposit data to identify rented properties with poor energy performance.	Improved Energy performance rating of private sector homes	Ongoing		CBC-Private Sector Housing Team
	Use the Excess Cold Calculator to assist in the assessment and decision making for enforcement of excess cold hazards	Excess cold hazards removed from properties			
Encourage private landlords & managing agents to provide good quality and well managed properties	Support landlords towards provision of broadly compliant housing accommodation through improved	Landlord training delivered. Participation in Landlord Forums			

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	communication and joint working - Identify common barriers to compliance and provide self-service advice and guidance in order that resources can be targeted toward criminal landlords.	and other similar events. Improvement in the management and quality of private sector accommodation			
Ensure that houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) are safe and well managed	<p>Ensure HMOs are managed in accordance with the Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006 & (additional provisions) Regulations 2007</p> <p>Undertake statutory duty to license all mandatory HMOs under the provisions of the Housing Act 2004 Part 2</p> <p>Use enforcement powers to raise standards where landlords refuse to work with CBC or</p>	<p>Better quality accommodation - Improvement of HMO's from 30 to 50 per annum over the course of the strategy.</p> <p>Reduction in unlicensed HMO's</p> <p>Enforcement action and prosecution of non-compliant/criminal landlords.</p>	Ongoing		CBC - Private Sector Housing Private Landlords

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	where landlords fail to licence properties as necessary.				
Encourage & Support homeowners to maintain and repair their homes and introduce energy efficiency measures.	<p>Remove and mitigate significant hazards and fund energy efficiency improvements where no alternative form of assistance is available by providing financial assistance through grants and loans.</p> <p>Undertake review of Financial Assistance Policy and explore opportunities to further incentivise property improvements through provision of grants and loans.</p>	<p>Improvement in energy efficiency of properties.</p> <p>More grants and loans provided for property improvements.</p>	Ongoing		CBC – Healthy Homes Team
Improvement in the energy efficiency of the Council's housing stock and ensure that Council properties are thermally efficient	Implement the Green Strategy part of the Asset Management Strategy, which provides a holistic approach to making homes more energy efficient.	Increase in homes that are more energy efficient.	Ongoing		CBH Asset Management Team

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	<p>Utilise the Government's and the EU's energy grant and incentive schemes to maximise the number of measures available to individual properties within the stock.</p> <p>Include energy saving measures within the Colchester standard and ensure procurement includes measures within specifications where appropriate.</p>	Energy measure specified in Sheltered Scheme Refurbishments and in the Housing Improvement Programme (HIP) procurement.			CBH Asset Management Team
Understand the viability of implementing new energy efficiency measures for the Council's housing stock	Continue to carry out energy assessments on all properties with the Housing Stock.	Assessments completed, better understanding of costs to inform what new measures are implemented.	Ongoing		CBH Project Surveyor (Energy)
Encourage a proactive approach to dealing with dampness and condensation in flats	Work with Registered providers to identify and improve dwellings through building	Accommodation with damp and condensation problems identified and improved.	Pilot properties identified 2015 2018		CBC -Private Sector Housing-Registered Providers

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	fabric and behaviour change interventions	Damp & Mold hazards mitigated NHS Cost Savings established	Ongoing		
Reduce levels of overcrowding in affordable housing	Promote the use of mutual exchange, to better meet tenants needs (see action above) Assessment of 'crowding and space' under the provisions of part 1 of the Housing Act 2004 to ensure families are correctly prioritised for rehousing	Crowding and space hazards removed or sufficiently mitigated. Crowding and Space hazard considered during every property inspection by the Private Sector Housing team, including inspections for HomeStep and Private Sector Leasing Scheme. An indication is given of acceptable occupancy numbers in the	Ongoing Ongoing		CBH Housing Management Team, Registered Providers CBC – Private Sector Housing Team

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
		property inspection report provided to CBH for each property taken on by CBH for either scheme			
Council and Housing Association homes meet the required standards and building safety compliance regulations set out in the Social Housing White Paper	Work with CBH and Housing Association partners to ensure that the requirements are met.	Council and Housing Association homes meet the required standards and building safety compliance	tbc		CBC Client Team/CBH Asset Management Team

4. Prevent Homelessness and Rough Sleeping – ‘We will prevent homelessness by working with partners to deliver Colchester’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-25’

Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping are addressed in our Homelessness Strategy 2020-2025. The Delivery plan for the strategy can be found by following the link here: [CBC-Policies-and-Strategies-Colchester's-Homelessness-and-Rough-Sleeping-Strategy-Delivery-Plan-2020-25---update-for-2020-21-Colchester's Homelessness and RS Strategy Delivery Plan 2020-25 - update for 2020-21.pdf \(windows.net\)](#)

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Progress on the actions set out in the Homelessness Strategy Delivery plan monitored and updated annually.	Consult with Homelessness Strategy Project Group and other key organisations on progress on actions.	Delivery plan updated, and progress report completed and published on website.	Annually		Housing Strategy Team
To produce a new Homelessness Strategy for Colchester.	Project Group set up with key stakeholders to carry out a review of Homelessness in Colchester and develop a new Homelessness Strategy and Delivery plan.	A new Homelessness Strategy written and published.	2025 - 2026		Housing Strategy Team

5 July 2021

Report of	Assistant Director, Corporate and Improvement Services	Author	Owen Howell Tel. 282518
Title	Annual Scrutiny Report		
Wards affected	Not Applicable		

This is a report setting out the work of the Scrutiny Panel during 2021/22

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the work of the Scrutiny Panel during 2021/22 and requests that the Panel recommend the report to Full Council for approval on 19 October 2022.

2. Action Required

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to consider and comment on the draft Annual Scrutiny Report.
- 2.2 The Panel is asked to recommend this report to Full Council for approval on 19 October 2022.

3. Background Information

- 3.1 The Constitution states the Scrutiny Panel shall report annually to the Full Council on its work and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.
- 3.2 The purpose of the report is to inform the Council of the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Panel, and for the Full Council to form an opinion of the effectiveness of the scrutiny function. The final report will be submitted to Full Council for consideration and approval following endorsement by Scrutiny Panel members.
- 3.3 This Scrutiny Report is a descriptive record of the scrutiny reviews undertaken by the Scrutiny Panel in 2021/22.

4. Standard and Strategic Plan References

- 4.1 Scrutiny and challenge is integral to the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2020-2023 priorities and direction for the Borough as set out under the strategic themes of:
 - [Tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability](#)
 - [Creating safe, healthy and active communities](#)
 - [Delivering homes for people who need them](#)
 - [Growing a fair economy so everyone benefits](#)
 - [Celebrating our heritage and culture](#)

- 4.2 The Council recognises that effective local government relies on establishing and maintaining the public's confidence, and that setting high standards of self-governance provides a clear and demonstrable lead. Effective governance underpins the implementation and application of all aspects of the Council's work.

5. Appendices

- 5.1 Appendix A – Draft Scrutiny Panel Annual Report 2021-22.

Scrutiny Panel Annual Report 2021-22

This Annual Report demonstrates the contribution made by the Scrutiny Panel at Colchester Borough Council.

Scrutiny Panel Role

The role of the Scrutiny Panel is to examine the policies and strategies from a Borough-wide perspective and ensure that the actions of the Cabinet accord with the Council's policies and budget. The Panel also reviews corporate strategies that form the Council's Strategic Plan, Council partnerships and the Council's budgetary guidelines, and scrutinises Cabinet or Portfolio Holder decisions which have been called in.

The Scrutiny Panel in 2021/22

The function of the Scrutiny Panel continued to be important, given the challenges faced by the Council in addressing the continuing effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the formation of a new Council Administration in May 2021. Pressures on the Budget required the Council to address changes in income and to continue to provide services in a safe but successful manner under difficult circumstances. As a consequence, the Council was required to continue to innovate and look for different ways which enabled the continued delivery of vital services throughout the Borough, whilst minimising costs. The Scrutiny Panel played an important role in examining the strategic decision making relating to the Council's delivery of services.

The Panel continued to carry out its annual programme of scrutinising the Council's financial affairs, budget setting and performance against its Strategic Plan.

The success of Scrutiny Panel reviews depended on the involvement of Councillors, Council officers, partner organisations, expert witnesses and members of the public, and the Chairman of the Scrutiny Panel would like to thank everyone for their contribution to the work of the Scrutiny Panel in 2021/22.

Call-ins

The general low level of call-ins and matters of urgency on Scrutiny Panel agendas suggests that the governance arrangements within the Council are working effectively.

No call-ins were received by the Scrutiny Panel during 2021-22

Decisions taken under urgency provisions

Certain decisions were noted as having been taken under urgency provisions within the Constitution, with these decisions relating to the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Decisions taken by Cabinet or Portfolio Holders

under urgency provisions are decisions made to take immediate action on urgent matters, which must then be reported on to the Scrutiny Panel at the earliest possible meeting. Such decisions are not subject to the usual decision making/call in process.

One decision was taken under special urgency provisions during 2021-22, at the Panel meeting on 15 March 2022, and which related to the awarding of the contract for refurbishment and decarbonising of Rowan House. Over £500k of Government funding had been provided for this work. Changes in the building sector had necessitated a series of changes to the plans to ensure these remained within budget; this had delayed the procurement process. To ensure that the Government funding was not lost, the decision had to be taken and contract awarded before the Government's deadline elapsed on 14 March 2022. This was the reason for the use of the urgent decision provisions and the lack of call-in period. Approval for this had been sought and granted by the Chairman of Scrutiny Panel, and the decision report and documents had been circulated to the Scrutiny Panel prior to this meeting.

The Scrutiny Panel underlined the importance of strong decision making and the fundamental importance of the right of councillors to call in decisions about which they held serious concerns for scrutiny by the Panel. Whilst it was accepted that there were occasional needs to use urgency provisions, the Panel underlined the importance of gaining an explanation as to why the decisions had to be taken under the Council's protocol for urgent decisions. Richard Block, Assistant Director for Corporate and Improvement, underlined the Council's reticence to use urgent decision provisions unless absolutely necessary, and noted that this was a rarity, with this being the first urgent decision necessary in the 2021-22 municipal year. If the decision had not been taken in this fashion, it would have cost £500k extra to the Council, to make up for the lost Government funding.

Pre-decision scrutiny of decision making.

During 2021/22 the Scrutiny Panel conducted proactive scrutiny of key areas of decision making by Cabinet, including the setting of Key Performance Indicator Targets, and the process for drafting the Council's Budget for 2022-23.

Setting of Corporate Key Performance Indicator [KPI] targets for 2022-23

On 22 February 2022 the Scrutiny Panel was presented with the proposed KPI targets for 2022-23, many of which were recommended for remaining at the current levels, whilst others had been recommended to return to pre-Pandemic levels, now that service delivery was returning to normal in certain areas of the Council's operations. A new KPI target was proposed for homelessness, which was easier to understand than the previous target and could be benchmarked against other local authorities' performance. This was welcomed by the Panel.

The Panel noted that the target for 'Residual household waste per household' [K1W1] had been proposed to stay static. A member of the Panel suggested that the Council should challenge itself to find opportunities to reduce this. The Assistant Director explained that this was challenging, due to the increase in home working, which was likely to remain to some extent in 2022-23. The target for 'Household waste reused, recycled and composted' [K1W2] was recommended for returning to the pre-pandemic target of 55%, up from 53%. The Panel urged consideration of greater opportunities to promote home recycling options.

The Panel discussed the target for processing housing benefit claims and changes, and Local Council Tax claims and changes. The Assistant Director expanded upon the report to explain that performance here remained strong and well above target. The targets proposed gave a degree of 'slack' but still ensured that performance remained strong and would ensure that the Council continued to perform well in comparison to benchmark performance levels.

A Panel member noted that it would take some time before the effects of the pandemic worked through the system and before long-term changes to targets could be considered without the pandemic affecting them.

It was recommended that Cabinet campaigned and pushed to achieve a reduction in household waste produced and an increase in household recycling. Cabinet approved this recommendation at its meeting on 8 June 2022.

Colchester Borough Homes performance targets for 2022-23

The Scrutiny Panel also considered the draft performance targets for the Council's Arms-Length Management Organisation [ALMO] responsible for managing the Council's stock of housing and corporate premises. These targets were set out for five years in the Medium-Term Delivery Plan and the Government's agenda was changing, with a greater emphasis on compliance, safety, and satisfaction of tenants. The Panel were told that the Housing regulator was consulting on new key performance indicators [KPIs] for repairs.

The target for gas servicing had been removed and a new suite of compliance indicators would be provided to the Council to ensure safety. Work on sustainable homes was set out in the Asset Management Strategy and the aim was for all stock to receive an EPC [Energy Performance Certificate] rating of at least a Band C by 2030. The Panel discussed whether benchmark data could be obtained regarding property energy performance and how the Council compared to other local authorities. The Client Services Manager confirmed that benchmarking could be applied to all targets and that this would be shown when the Panel considers CBH's performance in the Summer of 2022.

Compliments were paid by the Panel for the streamlining of targets and the improvements made.

Returning to an earlier question as to whether a breakdown of performance against the target time for reletting Council properties could be given, broken down to show relet times for properties needing different levels of maintenance work, The Director of Operations explained that this would partly depend on what properties the benchmarking group measured and how they were measured. The definition of major works on void [empty] properties was fluid, but had been tightened. This normally referred to works necessitated by a property being ruled as uninhabitable without such works being carried out. There had been a decrease in relet numbers over time, as pressure on the housing stock continued to rise. Where there were fewer relets, it took fewer lengthy relets to skew the figures.

A Panel member asked if there was any indication as to the percentage of applicants on the housing register who had moved to the area to take advantage of potentially less-strict requirements to get on to the register here than elsewhere. The Director of Operations gave assurance that applicants needed to show a local connection to join the register, such as having family

locally or having local residency for at least six of the previous twelve months. The Homelessness Reduction Act had changed the criteria for owing a duty to house. The Director of Operations offered to provide the figures to members but confirmed that there were not many who moved to the area and then joined the housing register.

The Scrutiny Panel were given assurance by explanations of the proposed targets and did not make any recommendations for changes.

Budget setting for 2022-23

At its meeting on 25 January 2022, Scrutiny Panel scrutinised the draft Budget 2022-23, Capital Programme and Medium-Term Financial Forecast.

Praise was given for the usefulness of the budget workshops which had been held for members. These allowed members to go over subjects such as changes to Minimum Revenue Provision [MRP] and the likely impacts.

The Panel raised questions and discussed issues such as:

- The predicted drop from in capital financing from 2023-24 to 2025-26
- The Administration's stated aim to reduce use of New Homes Bonus [NHB] funds
- The main risks and mitigations relating to the revision of spending needs assessments
- The £623k allocated for one-off schemes in 2022-23
- The planned £250k spending on feasibility costs, and the £250k allocated for 'support to Tendring Colchester Borders and Local Plan'

A Panel member noted that the previous administration had not included some detail on future funding in their last budget and had been criticised. A comparison was drawn to the draft Budget for 2022-23, where similar details were again not present. It was asked if this would only become available once the chance for scrutiny was past.

The Panel discussed previous central government encouragements for local authorities to derive greater value from their assets, resulting in many authorities refocussing on commercial operations. The current approach of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government was said, by one Panel member, to seem to want to punish those councils which had done this. The Portfolio Holder was asked to explain how discussions with central government had gone and how other councils with wholly-owned companies were faring. The Portfolio Holder informed the Panel that the Administration had been concerned that some other councils were not as concerned about this as Colchester Borough Council was. Some finance officers of other authorities were not willing to discuss their situations and views as openly as those of the Council. Responses to the consultation on this needed to be submitted by the second week of February and the Council was waiting to see if the Government changed its approach and planned to submit a response nearer to the deadline date. A response was also expected from a group of finance officers from the local area.

The Panel considered the expectation that Council Tax levels would rise over time, with a Government review indicating this would likely rise by 9%-10% by 2024. The Portfolio Holder gave assurance that the Administration wished to retain as much Council Tax income locally as possible, but argued that the need for these funds at Essex County Council especially for adult social care, was

huge. Explanations were given for the expected increases in Council Tax levels, linked to increasing needs and pressure on services, including increased lifespan of residents. Around 80% of the County Council's income from Council Tax was spent on adult social care. A Panel member suggested that this indicated a need for the restoration of central government grants and argued that the levels of fraud being reported in central government could be used as a reason to lobby for better use of public money locally rather than centrally.

2022-23 Housing Revenue Account estimates and Housing Investment Programme

On 25 January 2022, the Panel considered and discussed the reports provided which detailed the next year's rent increases, which were in line with Government Policy, and the trading position of Colchester Borough Homes [CBH].

Darren Brown, Finance Manager, indicated how easy or difficult it would be to meet the interest cost of HRA debt and highlighted that the Capital Investment Programme was based on investment needs and showed provisions for work on Elfreda House and the refurbishment of sheltered housing.

The Panel questioned and discussed matters such as:

- Investments in the Shrub End Depot by the Council, and no new investment being provided by the County Council.
- The continued building of housing by the Council
- The operations of CBH, the Amphora Companies, and their relationships with the Council
- Changes to 'Right to Buy' receipts introduced in the previous year, including the ability to use a portion of receipts on new shared-ownership homes

The Panel praised the high level of detail in the reports provided, stating that these were laid out in a way that was helpful for non-experts to understand, and approved the approaches and recommended decisions laid out for presentation to Cabinet for approval on 26 January 2022. Cabinet subsequently concurred and approved the recommended decisions.

Prominent Reviews at Colchester Borough Council

The Scrutiny Panel held a number of reviews during 2021/22.

Budget Strategy 2022/23, Transformation and Youth Zones

At its meeting on 20 July 2021, the Panel reviewed progress on the Budget Strategy 2022-23 and Transformation Programme. The Panel indicated that it would like to pre-scrutinise budget reports in future and requested that the timetable of meetings be reviewed to ensure that there was a Scrutiny meeting preceding Cabinet meeting, to facilitate pre scrutiny. Accordingly, on 12 October 2022, the Scrutiny Panel reviewed the Council's financial position and work on the Budget Strategy for 2022-23 and the Medium-Term Financial Forecast [MTFF].

It was noted at that time that some assumptions would not be fully understandable until January, but satisfactory progress had been made thus far in the budget-setting process. Page 171 of 226

The Panel held discussions as to planned youth service provision, the potential for the Council to proceed with work to initiate and build a Youth Zone in the Borough, and the recommendation from officers that this be removed from the MTFF at that time. The view from Adrian Pritchard, Chief Executive, had been that annual revenue costs to the Council would be likely closer to £1m per year, rather than £400k. Councillor Sue Lissimore, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources posited Cabinet's position that, if a Youth Zone was to be pursued, specificity was needed as to what cuts members wished to make to Council spending in order to fund it, and the view that it was more appropriate to work collaboratively with the County Council to improve its youth service provision. The Chief Operating Officer underlined the statutory duty for the Council to present a balanced budget, accompanied by a robust MTFF. It was explained that content relating to a Youth Zone could be reintroduced into the MTFF in January 2022, if alternative budgetary options could be found to make it possible.

A sub-group of the Scrutiny Panel was agreed in order further investigate as to whether any additional funding sources could be found to provide the additional funding necessary for such a project to go ahead.

The Portfolio Holder for resources and the Head of Finance participated in the Panel's discussions and gave additional detail regarding the re-profiled income budget for parking income, the Council's work on Disabled Facilities Grants adaptations, and the approach to mitigating increasing pressures on the Council's Budget.

At its meeting on 25 January 2022, the Scrutiny Panel heard back from the sub-group which reported its recommendations. These were discussed and the following recommendations agreed for putting to Cabinet for approval:

RECOMMENDED to CABINET that Cabinet consider and approve the following points and recommendations put forward by the sub-group on Youth Zones: -

- (a) The sub-group is disappointed at the missed opportunity to provide a Youth Zone for Colchester via the Town Deal but accepts that a Youth Zone will not form one of the Town Deal projects.
- (b) The sub-group recommends that, in the short- to medium-term, the Council cooperates with Essex County Council to boost youth services throughout the Borough, such as those at the Town House, supporting these and an increase in outreach activities.
- (c) It was noted that the aspiration for a Youth Zone had cross-party support in principle. The sub-group recommends that an ambition be maintained for a Youth Zone to be completed in Colchester Borough by 2027.
- (d) It is recommended that the Council continue to engage with Onside to outline the Council's ambitions and expectations, and to understand Onside's criteria for optimum site selection and critical issues for inclusion in a business case for a Youth Zone serving Colchester Borough.
- (e) It is also recommended that the Council engages with the One Colchester Partnership to take the ambition of a Youth Zone from principle to reality, including ways to gain contributions from partners.

The sub-group is convinced that, for a Youth Zone to successfully serve the whole Borough, the concomitant public or project-specific transport plan for the proposed location must be comprehended, costed, and funded to guarantee that a future Youth Zone in the Borough is accessible to all.

Pam Donnelly, Strategic Director of Customer and Relationships, informed the Panel that the One Colchester Board was due to meet on 26 January 2022 and agreed to raise this subject with the Board. It was restated that the Council was not the statutory provider of youth services, but assurance was given that the Council could have a significant influence on the creation of an environment where a Youth Zone would be possible and could work with the charity Onside, who worked on supporting the setting up and acquiring of funding for these facilities. The One Colchester Board had much sympathy for aspirations for a Youth Zone. Youth engagement was wanted and would reduce antisocial behaviour and improve health outcomes. A Youth Zone would, however, be dependent on the support and leadership of statutory partners.

On 26 January 2022 Cabinet considered the Panel's recommendations as an Urgent Item. Cabinet made the following resolutions in response to the Panel's work:

- a) Cabinet thanks the Scrutiny Panel for their work in respect of a potential Youth Zone.
- b) Cabinet notes that there appears to be agreement a Youth Zone cannot proceed at this time. The opportunity for a Youth Zone was explored extensively but the Youth Zone was removed from the Town Deal Fund bid in early 2021 due to a lack of clarity around identifying a suitable site, the capital financing shortfall and the annual running costs.
- c) The recommendation from Cabinet on 13 October 2021 asked for a broad consensus on future funding, an agreed site, and a solution to incorporating the £400,000 or above annual cost in the budget to be identified. The lack of specific recommendations on these leads Cabinet to deduce that the Panel agrees that there is no current acceptable way of incorporating a Youth Zone in the budget's Medium Term Financial Forecast.
- d) Cabinet fully agrees with the recommendation that, in the short to medium-term, the Council cooperates with Essex County Council to boost youth services throughout the Borough, such as those at the Town House, supporting these and an increase in outreach activities.
- e) Cabinet notes and agrees that the aspiration for a Youth Zone had cross-party support in principle. Cabinet accepts the Panel's recommendation that an ambition be maintained for a Youth Zone to be completed in Colchester Borough by 2027. However, to achieve this target a suitable site will need to be identified quickly and gain wide cross-party Councillor support as due to the nature of long term planning and master-planning the necessary land will need to be reserved.
- f) Cabinet accepts the recommendation that the Council continue to engage with Onside to outline the Council's ambitions and expectations, and to understand Onside's criteria for optimum site selection and critical issues for inclusion in a business case for a Youth Zone serving

Colchester Borough. However Cabinet is disappointed that the Scrutiny Panel have failed to suggest any specific potential sites.

- g) Cabinet accepts the recommendation that the Council engages with One Colchester Partnership to take the ambition of a Youth Zone from principle to reality, including ways to gain contributions from partners but it should be noted One Colchester does not have the necessary financial resources itself for a project of this magnitude.
- h) Cabinet agrees with the Panel's comment that, for a Youth Zone to successfully serve the whole Borough, the concomitant public or project-specific transport plan for the proposed location must be comprehended, costed and funded to guarantee that a future Youth Zone in the Borough is accessible to all.

Review of Colchester Borough Homes Performance 2020-21

The annual performance review for Colchester Borough Homes [CBH] was presented by Dirk Paterson, Chairman of the CBH Board, Philip Sullivan, Chief Executive of CBH, and Lyndsay Barker, the Council's Strategic Director of Policy & Place.

Tribute was paid to the work of CBH during the course of the pandemic, including work to maintain service delivery and crucial maintenance work. In November 2020, the Council's Cabinet signed a five-year extension to the Management Agreement with the company. The two-year project to bring in a new housing management system had been completed in August 2021, on time and on budget. In other work, new housing had been completed in places such as Creffield Road [Colchester] and Hardings Close [Fordham], and the renovation of Elfreda House accomplished.

The Chairman of the Board highlighted the strength of the organisation and the oversight provided by the Board, and also by the Council's bodies such as Scrutiny Panel. The Chairman thanked the former Chief Executive, Gareth Mitchell, for his contribution to the Company, as well as the Directors of Operations and Business Improvement for their work as joint interim Chief Executives, prior to the unanimous decision to appoint Philip Sullivan to the position.

The data on performance and tenants was presented and discussed, alongside information on the main areas of work for the Company. All service areas were now judged to be high-performing and low-cost within the benchmarking work carried out by independent assessors, HouseMark.

The Panel discussed the partnership work conducted by CBH during lockdowns, including with the One Colchester Partnership, as well as the excellent performance of the Company during the pandemic, maintaining full gas safety certification on properties, disabled adaption works and widespread insulation of properties (160 properties in total). Praise was given to the communications carried out to show what CBH was doing, aimed at both the public and members.

The Chief Executive, Chairman of the Board and the Council's Strategic Director of Policy & Place answered a broad range of Committee questions on topics such as interim and temporary accommodation, repair work on empty [void] properties, the Administration, commitment to increasing the housing supply,

data collected on tenant demographics, work on antisocial behaviour and increased resident empowerment and opportunities.

The Scrutiny Panel discussed and questioned its guests as to how the CBH/Council relationship could be managed so as to maximise what the Company could offer to the Council and the Borough, and how to ensure efficiency in working between CBH, the Council and the Amphora companies. Formal officer meetings strengthened the relationship, including quarterly four-way meetings between CBH and the Council. These and other meetings ensured that Council scrutiny was effective. It was noted that there had been other councils which had taken back control of their housing stock, dissolving their Arm's Length Management Organisations. These were examples of where relationships had broken down. The Chairman of the Board explained that it was largely for the Council to explain what work it wanted from the Company. Suggestions for new partnership working were always welcome. The Strategic Director of Policy & Place described the Council/CBH relationship as being mature, where challenging discussions could be held. The Chairman of the Board explained that CBH was structured very differently to the Amphora companies and, whilst it was important for them to work well together, it would not be appropriate for CBH to comment on the work of Colchester Commercial Holdings. The Strategic Director of Policy & Place gave an example of collaborative working being the '100 Homes' project. Funding and specifications were provided by the Council, whilst maintenance and management of the new properties would be conducted by CBH.

A request was made that future reviews include greater information on performance data and the benchmarking work conducted by HouseMark.

Although the Panel made no official recommendations, the Strategic Director of Policy & Place gave assurance that the points and suggestions from the Panel would be taken forward to future conversations with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and with CBH.

Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2022-23

The Scrutiny Panel examined and discussed the proposed Scheme for 2022-23.

The Panel discussed the proposals, welcoming the avoidance of reductions, and asked for details of the metrics used to inform the decision to recommend 'no change.' The increase in uptake and the planned review of the situation in January 2022 were queried, including questions as to what exactly would be reviewed in January 2022. The Group Manager explained that officers had consulted regularly with colleagues from across Essex. Colchester's scheme remained one of the most generous, and there was no appetite shown by other authorities to change their schemes. The January review, by Cabinet, would be to ensure the situation regarding uptake, Covid effects etc would continue to be monitored.

Officers were asked whether the Council could be even more generous, especially in helping the most vulnerable, and whether the January review would be too late to effectively identify and mitigate impacts on household incomes. The Group Manager explained that the Scheme and eligibility would be set by Full Council in December 2021, to meet the statutory deadline in place. Comprehensive analysis had been carried out as part of the long process

to get to this point, and, in answer to questions as to whether approval could be delayed, a delay would risk the deadline being missed.

The view was expressed by a Panel member that it would assist the Panel's work to see the comparative data from other local authorities which was used to inform the recommendations of officers on this item. Furthermore, the inclusion of any benchmarking data in reports, where possible, was extolled as a way to help scrutiny be effectively carried out. The Group Manager explained that the benchmarking data had been provided to the Portfolio Holder and agreed to work with the Portfolio Holder to expand the future Cabinet and Council reports on this item to show this data.

Partnership arrangements

Business cases of Town Deal Projects

On 15 February 2022 the Scrutiny Panel conducted an in-depth scrutiny session on the business case of each Town Deal project. Whilst these were overseen by the 'We are Colchester' Board, the Council was the accountable body for the projects, and had a significant investment of officer resource in the projects' management and progression.

Review of Arts Organisations in receipt of Council funding.

The Scrutiny Panel holds an annual session to hear from the local arts organisations which receive Council funding, namely The Mercury Theatre, FirstSite and the Colchester Arts Centre. This was carried out on 22 February 2022.

Representatives of the three organisations briefed the Panel on the effects of Covid-19 on their operations, the outreach work they had conducted during the year and on specific highlights. Following direction from the Panel, the representatives gave information as to the positive effects that Council funding had had on their operations, and their work to comply with the requirements laid out in the funding agreements which they had signed with the Council. This included work on increasing outreach and accessibility to people from demographics which often experienced greater difficulties in engaging with arts organisations. Plans for the future were likewise scrutinised.

The Panel scrutinised funding which had been leveraged, in part, because of the Council's funding. It also discussed performance, partnership working, outreach work, environmental sustainability, press coverage generated, social return on investment and the increased employment and training opportunities provided to local residents.

One Colchester Partnership

The Scrutiny Panel requested the opportunity to question officers of the Council and representatives of One Colchester Partnership and to scrutinise the governance and oversight arrangements introduced when the Safer Colchester Partnership was moved to fall under the oversight of the One Colchester Partnership. A scrutiny session for this was arranged for the Panel's meeting on 15 March 2022, however this was postponed until 2022-23 when the main

speaker, Tracy Rudling, Chief Executive of Community 360, was unable to attend owing to illness.

Scrutiny Panel operating as Crime & Disorder Committee

The Scrutiny Panel sat as the Crime and Disorder Committee to review the performance and operation of the Safer Colchester Partnership on 14 September 2021. An additional meeting was also scheduled for 15 February 2022, however the Scrutiny Panel replaced this with a Panel meeting, in order to give enough time to scrutinise the business cases for the Town Deal projects.

The review held by the Crime and Disorder Committee provided information on the work of the Safer Colchester Partnership during 2021/22, the new governance model of the Partnership now operating within the One Colchester Partnership, the work of the Council, and provided updates from partner organisations covering their work over the year. Additional detail was given on work done to tackle priorities, such as reducing violent offences, exploitation, 'hidden harms', County Lines gangs and the supporting of vulnerable individuals, including action to reduce suicide rates.

The Committee questioned the statistics relating to use of 'stop and search' powers, with Police assurance being given that these powers were used as part of an intelligence-led approach and were only used when it was deemed to be an appropriate and proportionate way to proceed.

The Committee were briefed on approaches to tackling rural crime and antisocial behaviour, including the work of the Rural Engagement Team, and the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's encouragement of a scheme to post officers in villages through the Borough.

The Committee examined further matters, such as likely effects of the merging of probationary services, the work of the Police's Town Centre Team, noise complaints, fly-tipping and other antisocial behaviour levels and changes to partners' operations to reflect the provisions within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

The Committee was given assurance that Colchester Borough compared favourably compared to many other parts of Essex. The overall conviction rate relating to offences within the Borough was given as being 19%.

The Committee thanked the representatives for attending the meetings and responding to members' questions and noted the work of the Partnership. In response to questions from members regarding the governance arrangements now in place for the Safer Colchester Partnership and relating to the One Colchester Partnership, the Committee resolved that an item would be brought before the Scrutiny Panel on this subject later in the year, to allow an in depth scrutiny session to be held.

Councillor Call for Action (CCfA)

There were no CCfA issues brought to the attention of Scrutiny Panel during 2021/22.

Task and Finish Groups

There were no Task and Finish Groups commissioned by the Scrutiny Panel 2021/22. The Panel did form a sub-group to examine potential funding sources and sites for a Youth Zone; the details of this can be found above in the section on prominent reviews conducted during the year.

Appendix

Appendix A – Schedule of Meetings and Reviews for 2021/22.

Schedule of meetings and reviews

Scrutiny Panel 2021 /22

Councillor Cory (Chairman)*, Councillor Bourne (Deputy Chairman)*, Councillor Barton, Councillor Chapman, Councillor Loveland, Councillor Whitehead, Councillor Willetts, Councillor Wood.

8 June 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Programme 2021-22
20 July 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year End 2020/21 Performance Report and Strategic Plan Action Plan 2018-21 • Budget Strategy and Transformation Programme • Annual Scrutiny Report • Work Programme 2021-22
17 August 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Deal • Work Programme 2021-22
14 September 2021 (Crime and Disorder Committee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safer Colchester Partnership (Crime and Disorder Committee)
12 October 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Colchester Borough Homes: 2020-21 Performance • Local Council Tax Support – Year 2022/23 • Budget Strategy for 2022-23 • Work Programme 2021-22
9 November 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio Holder Briefing from Cllr Dundas [Strategy and Leader of the Council] • Work Programme 2021-22
14 December 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio Holder Briefing from Cllr Lissimore [Resources and Deputy Leader] • Half Year 2021-22 Performance Report & Strategic Plan Action Plan progress • Budget Strategy for 2022-23 • Work Programme 2021-22
25 January 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio Holder Briefing from Cllr Oxford [Communities] • 2022-23 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme, Medium Term Financial Forecast and Treasury Management Investment Strategy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Revenue Accounts Estimate and Housing Investment Programme • Recommendation from Panel sub-group on Youth Zones • Work Programme 2021-22
15 February 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio Holder Briefing from Cllr Laws [Economy, Business and Heritage] • Business cases of Town Deal projects • Work Programme 2021-22
22 February 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio Holder Briefing from Cllr Ellis [Housing and Planning] • Reports from Arts Organisations (Mercury, The Arts Centre, FirstSite) • Corporate Key Performance Indicator Targets for 2022-23 • Colchester Borough Homes: Key Performance Indicator Targets for 2022-23
15 March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio Holder Briefing from Cllr Crow [Environment and Sustainability] • One Colchester Partnership/Safer Colchester Partnership [cancelled due to illness of key guest/presenter]

5 July

Report of	Assistant Director Environment	Author	Rory Doyle
Title	Haven Road Flooding		☎ 507855
Wards affected	Old Heath and The Hythe		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 There is a long history of flooding affecting Haven Road in Colchester in the area where it is crossed by Distillery Lane. The flooding is generally associated with high tides, and is exacerbated by heavy rain.
- 1.2 A multi-agency Hythe Task Force was established by the MP in 2021 to explore issues of local concern. This included working with stakeholders to explore options to resolve or mitigate the risk and impact of flooding to Haven Road.
- 1.3 This report provides Scrutiny Panel with some background information, a summary of work undertaken, and an outline of the roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders involved in relation to the flooding at Haven Road.

2. Action Required

- 2.1 Report is for information.

3. Reason for Scrutiny

- 3.1 The Panel has requested information on the work of the Hythe Task Force

4. Background Information

- 4.1 The surface water drainage in the Haven Road area is complex, with some elements of the original Victorian systems remaining, however these have been extended and altered over the years. Much of the area to the west of the Hythe area drains directly or indirectly to Distillery Pond. Distillery Pond also accepts drainage from the Bourne Stream system and other ponds to the west in addition to Anglian Water storm sewers and a storm water connection from the Albany Gardens housing development.
- 4.2 Distillery Pond drains to Haven Road, where it connects with another storm drain. Road gullies in Haven Road are also connected to the system and everything discharges to the River Colne through an outfall in the river wall.
- 4.3 In addition to the surface water drainage systems, there is a combined trunk sewer running along Haven Road. This sewer drains to the main Anglian Water sewage treatment works further along Haven Road.
- 4.4 The ground level at the junction of Haven Road and Distillery Lane is lower than the quay level and is lower than spring high tide levels. The whole system is tide locked at high water, with water routinely spilling onto the highway from the road gullies during high tides. The flooding is more severe when high tide combines with wet weather.
- 4.5 Summary of Issues:
- The road is lower than the high tide level at the outfall meaning flooding is always likely to occur in this location.
 - The frequency of flooding depends on the volume of inflowing water from the Bourne stream system via Distillery Pond, the duration of tide locking where river levels are above the level of the road, and the limited capacity of storage within the drainage system below the road level of Haven Road inland from the tide flap valve
 - There is a redundant tide flap valve previously maintained by Anglian Water just before the outfall in the river wall.
 - A new flap valve was installed by Anglian Water within an inspection chamber further back from the river wall to prevent river water entering the system at high tide.
 - There have been issues with the new tidal flap valve becoming blocked with debris and silt. When it is not operating effectively this has caused river water to enter the drainage system at high tide. This has the effect of further reducing capacity within the drainage system.
 - Whilst this will exacerbate flooding in the locality it is not the root cause of the issue and the road will flood even if the flap valve is operating correctly. As soon as the tide level reaches the level of the junction, the flow of water from Distillery Pond will no longer escape and will fill the chambers of the drainage system discharging onto the road.
 - Heavy rainfall in the locality and the topography of the land further compounds the problem and will affect the frequency and severity of flooding.
 - The hydrostatic pressure of the incoming tidal water may be influencing the severity of flooding affecting the capacity of the surface water drainage system, especially if the sewer network is not sealed as it should be.

4.6 Managing flooding and flood risks: who is responsible:

- **Defra** has overall national responsibility for policy on flood risk management and provides funding for flood risk management authorities through grants to the Environment Agency and local authorities.
- The **Environment Agency** (EA) is responsible for taking a strategic overview of the management of all sources of flooding. This includes providing support and advice on a local level. The Agency also has operational responsibility for managing the risk of flooding from main rivers, reservoirs, estuaries and the sea.
- **Essex County Council** as the **Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)** ECC is responsible for developing, maintaining, and applying a strategy for local flood risk management in the County and for maintaining a register of flood risk assets. They also have lead responsibility for managing the risk of flooding from surface water, groundwater, and ordinary watercourses. As the Highway Authority ECC is responsible for providing and managing highway drainage and must ensure that road projects do not increase flood risk.
- **Colchester Borough Council** is a key partner in planning local flood risk management and can carry out flood risk management works on minor watercourses, working with LLFA and others to do so.
- As the Water Authority **Anglian Water** are responsible for managing the risks of flooding from water and foul or combined sewer systems providing drainage from buildings and yards.

4.8 As the LLFA and Highway Authority ECC is responsible for the surface water drainage system and leading the work to establish a solution at Haven Road. However all authorities mentioned above have a duty to co-operate with each other and to share data and work in partnership as set out in the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

4.9 A summary of work undertaken by the Task Force in relation to this matter is set out below:

- The Task Force has received reports from the EA including data and modelling of tides and tidal surges and the impact on flooding. The EA have also conducted analysis of flood water samples for salinity when testing the effectiveness of the tidal flap valve.
- Reports have been received on previous maintenance, investment and works undertaken to Distillery Pond and the surface water drainage system led by ECC
- Members of the Taskforce have coordinated a controlled test to understand the impact of restricting flow from Distillery pond during a high tide scenario.
- Servicing and maintenance of the existing tidal flap valve has been undertaken with agreement to jointly fund maintenance moving forward led by Anglian Water.
- Commissioning of a drone survey in partnership with the University to survey the wider drainage catchment area.
- Agreed need for highways signage relating to flood water.

- Liaison with the Fire Authority to test temporary/emergency pumping solutions
- Gather costings and exploration of eligibility criteria and available funding mechanisms to secure a high-volume pump solution to mitigate risk and impact of flooding led by ECC with support from the EA.

5. Taskforce work programme


5.1 Current work of partners and proposed next steps are set out below:

- Receive report and consider recommendations following area drone survey undertaken on 21st June.
- Undertake further multi agency site surveys as required.
- ECC to install Highways signage
- Pending installation of alternative valve options continue with inspection and maintenance of current tidal flap valve joint funded by partners.
- ECC with support from partners to complete funding application to the EA for a pump solution and installation of duck bill flap.

Scrutiny Panel

5 July 2022

Item
16

Report of	Assistant Director 12pt	Author	Owen Howell
			282518
Title	Summary of previous Scrutiny Panel reviews into bus service provision		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report presents an overview of the work done to date by the Scrutiny Panel in its two reviews of bus service provision conducted in recent years.

2. Action Required

- 2.1 It is recommended that the appendices to this report be considered and that the Scrutiny Panel look to identify what tangible value a further review might be able to add, and therefore whether to scrutinise bus service provision further.

3. Reason for Scrutiny

- 3.1 At its meeting on 7 June 2022 the Scrutiny Panel received a request from Councillor Lee Scordis for the Panel to scrutinise bus service provision in the Borough of Colchester.
- 3.2 The Panel was informed that the Scrutiny Panel had, in recent years, conducted two reviews of bus service provision in the Borough. The Panel therefore requested a briefing report to brought to its meeting scheduled for 5 July to summarise what work the Panel had previously carried out in its reviews of this subject. The Panel would then decide whether to conduct a further review.

4. Background Information

- 4.1 The Scrutiny Panel has reviewed bus service provisions twice in recent years.
- 4.2 The Scrutiny Panel, at its meeting in September 2017, received a scoping report and agreed to review the bus services operating in Colchester, following a request for them to do so from Councillor Lee Scordis. This review concluded on 16 July 2019, when the Panel recommended that Cabinet consider the evidence collected and consider whether to use this as part of the basis for drafting a Public Transport Strategy. At its meeting on 4 September 2019 Cabinet resolved not to accept this recommendation and reiterated its commitment to working with Essex County Council [the local authority with responsibility for bus transport services in Essex]
- 4.3 At its meeting on 15 December 2020, the Scrutiny Panel considered and approved a second request from Councillor Lee Scordis to review the bus services operating in Colchester. The Panel noted that this could be used to find ways to support the 'Safer, Cleaner, Greener' agenda and agreed to Councillor Scordis' request. This review was conducted and concluded at the Scrutiny Panel meeting on 16 March 2021, at which the Panel made a number of recommendations which were accepted by Cabinet at its meeting on 9 June 2021. These recommendations can be found in Appendix B.
- 4.4 The details of the 2017-19 and 2020-21 reviews are summarised in the appendices to this report, which consist of the summary report and evidence received by Scrutiny Panel on 16 March 2021 [Appendix A], the relevant excerpt from the minutes of that meeting [Appendix B] and the relevant minute excerpt from the Cabinet meeting on 9 June 2021 [Appendix C].
- 4.5 It remains the case that Essex County Council is the Highway and Transport Authority for Essex and remains the local authority with responsibility over bus service provision in Colchester Borough. The Panel should note that Colchester Borough Council has extremely limited influence on bus operations.

5. Appendices

Appendix A: Review of Bus Service Provision [report from 16 March 2021]
Appendix B: Minute extract from Scrutiny Panel meeting on 16 March 2021
Appendix C: Minute extract from Cabinet meeting on 9 June 2021



Scrutiny Panel

Item
10

16 March 2021

Report of	Assistant Director Policy and Corporate	Author	Jane Thompson ☎ 508642
Title	Review of Bus Service Provision		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The Scrutiny Panel has requested a review of bus service provision in Colchester and to consider what further action needs to be taken in respect of the review. This review follows on from the earlier 2017 review, but is a separate review, looking at current circumstances affecting bus services.

2. Reason for Scrutiny

- 2.1 At its meeting in September 2017 the Panel agreed to review the bus services operating in Colchester. Further details of the scope and history of the review are set out in section 4 of this report. However, at its meeting in August 2018 the Panel determined that a series of questions should be sent to Essex County Council (ECC), the bus operators and Community 360. These responses were considered at the Panel meeting in July 2019 and it was agreed to recommend to Cabinet that a Passenger Transport Strategy be drafted.
- 2.2 The Panel decided to carry out a further review of the bus operation and update themselves on the current situation in light of Covid-19, the Council's declared Climate Emergency and new Strategic Plan objectives.
- 2.3 The Panel is also invited to consider what further action, if any, it wishes to undertake to conclude the review.

3. Action Required

- 3.1. To review and note the responses received from Essex County Council, the bus operators and Community 360 to the Panel's request for information and information presented at the meeting
- 3.2. To consider what further action needs to be taken in respect of the review of bus services in Colchester.

4. Background Information

- 4.1. In July 2017 Councillor Scordis submitted a scoping document to the Panel to request a review be held to examine the operations of bus companies in Colchester Borough. In

September 2017 the Scrutiny Panel resolved to hold this review and objectives and a formalised scope were agreed.

4.2. The review followed the objectives as agreed at the September meeting.

These included:

- To understand the strategic role and benefits of bus operation and how it can best serve the community;
- To investigate and scrutinise what bus companies are doing to:
 - Improve the punctuality of services
 - Increase bus usage
 - Reduce emissions
 - Make buses more accessible
 - Communicate with passengers when services are cancelled or altered.
- To improve the dialogue between bus companies that operate in the Borough and Colchester Borough Council, Councillors and Residents.

4.3. The Scrutiny Panel meeting on 16 April 2018 was attended by representatives of bus companies, Community360 and ECC. Prior to this meeting, officers had collected information from the invited organisations and the Panel discussed this with the representatives in attendance.

4.4. The Panel resumed its consideration of the issue in August 2018: A follow-up letter with questions to operators and ECC was approved by Panel. The questions related to the Bus Services Act 2017, Colchester Blueprint and follow-up questions based on the objective areas for the review and responses to the Panel's initial questions. A summary of the responses to the questions are attached as appendix 1.

4.5. At its meeting on 29 January 2019 the Panel resolved to schedule an update on the review for the 2019-20 municipal year. At the Panel meeting held on 11 June 2019 the Panel further resolved that this update be scheduled for its meeting on 16 July 2019, and that the supplementary questions be re-sent to those bus companies which had not yet provided responses.

4.6. At the 16 July 2019 meeting the Panel recommended to Cabinet that the Panel's work in reviewing bus operations presented and that Cabinet be invited to draft a Public Transport Strategy. However, Cabinet chose not to draft a Public Transport Strategy. This was due to public transport not being a mandatory strategy for the Borough Council as it is a function of the Transport Authority, who in this case is ECC. Cabinet did reiterate its commitment to working with ECC on public transport issues.

4.7. Following consideration by Cabinet it was decided to revisit the review and send new questions to ECC, Community 360 and the bus operators. These questions were sent out on 26 February.

4.8 ECC passenger Transport and Sustainable Transport Managers will present their policies to the Panel and explain how the policies help promote bus travel in Colchester.

The bus operators and Community 360 have also been invited to discuss their operational issues with the Panel.

4.9 The Panel has prepared topic areas where they would like to further consider the issues facing the operation of bus services and how more people can be encouraged to use public transport. At the Panel meeting representatives of the bus operators working within the Borough, and representatives of the County Council, as the Transport Authority, will be invited to discuss areas. These are likely to cover:

- Ways in which Covid-19 restrictions are affecting the provision and use of buses
- Post-Covid planning
- How bus provision can affect and be affected by our Council's local plan
- Route planning and new residential developments
- How the Borough's bus network fits into wider transport strategies, such as the transport strategies of Essex County Council
- How the Borough Council engages with transport and environmental strategies at different levels, including those of the County Council.

4.10 The Panel may also consider the following:

Policy Planning and Strategic Issues

- How do bus services fit into wider plans for modal shift away from cars and to public transport, cycling, walking and other sustainable transport options?
- Taking a holistic view of the transport system. How do the County strategies on public transport/bus use fit within the sustainable transport strategy and overarching Transport Strategy?
- How can bus service providers be more involved in the process for designing the Local Plan, and interact with local developments, to ensure services develop to match new communities.
- The potential use, in the medium-term, of transport hubs to allow motorists to drive or cycle, park, then use bus services to journey into Colchester.
- Discussion of ways to potentially improve use of Park & Ride system. E.g., charge per car [not per passenger] and 'park & drop' system to ferry shopping back to car park.
- Impacts on inequality which can be achieved through a comprehensive, accessible and affordable public transport system.
- Concerns for service providers, especially given the effect of the Covid-19 situation and restrictions.

Ticketing

- Cost of tickets, compared to alternative options such as parking or taxis.
- Use of contactless payment and whether this has produced any change in the demographics of service users.
- Whether it would be possible for a one-stop-shop app and/or ticket system to be developed to offer tickets covering a range of different transport services/options, potentially including rail and e-scooter travel. Could this also include a 'booking' system for car sharing?
- Are 'one-touch' scannable passes possible, to reduce payment times and improve punctuality.

Punctuality and Increasing Usership

- What are the driving factors where service unreliability and unpunctuality are experienced?
- How is punctuality measured and what constitutes a late-running bus?
- What new Tech options are there which could improve punctuality, ease of use and passenger numbers.
- Have the service providers conducted any research or sought best-practice ideas to seek to increase service use by the public?
- What incentivisation options are there to entice potential passengers? E.g., discounts on use of service, or work with Colchester BID/businesses for passengers to enjoy benefits from local firms?
- What plans are there for continued improvements in environmental standards of vehicles?

4.11 We are aware of various ticketing arrangements and promotions that are in place to promote bus travel in Colchester;

- University of Essex negotiate a special Uni Card with Firstgroup which give generous annual season ticket for staff and students. This has now been transferred to an app-based ticket.
- Borough Card allows unlimited bus travel in and around Colchester on First Essex, Arriva Colchester, Panther Travel, Ipswich Buses, Stephensons of Essex, and Heddingham Omnibuses.
- PlusBus – bus journey add-on to rail ticket

4.12 It is brought to the Panel's attention that Essex County Council are the Highway and Transport Authority the Borough Council has limited influence on bus operations. However, the Borough Council can influence and assist bus services in the borough is as follows -

1. Responding to ECC's Colchester Future Transport Strategy consultation – the Council endorsed the strategy and included the following in our response –

- **Integrating transport** schemes including creating interchange hubs at bus stops and rail stations with access to e-bikes, e-scooters or quality walking routes, or cycle parking for onward travel to the town centre or other destinations. Also integrated booking and payment systems for easy access to move between transport modes.
- **Public Transport Improvements** Considering options for expanding the public transport offer to allow faster, seamless access and connectivity to destinations. Examples are closer integration with the Park and Ride service, rapid transit and demand responsive transport. As well as looking at prioritising public transport to allow better, inclusive and faster access to destinations, considering smarter ticketing and integration with other transport modes, and working with commercial transport providers to encourage costs effective and family friendly pricing.
- **Eco Parking (Park and Choose)** The recently adopted Positive Parking Strategy includes environmental charging, which seeks to move away from charging for parking and instead focus on the environmental impact of vehicles driving into the town, and the looking at the possibility of a workplace levy on parking spaces. Also, closer integration of the park and ride offer with the newly adopted Colchester Positive Parking Strategy to ensure park and ride is favoured over town centre car parks for those working or visiting Colchester.

2. **The Borough Council's Local Plan and other Planning policies** promote development in sustainable locations, ensuring that development is located to reduce the need to travel or development is of a scale that promotes sustainable transport that is accessible for all.
 3. **Air Quality requirements** – The Borough Council work with operators to consider the impact of their services on the air quality in the town centre and how to reduce emissions. We have also assisted with catalytic conversions of some buses to reduce emissions.
 4. **Colchester Travel Plan Club (CTPC)** – the Council hosts the CTPC which promotes bus use and other forms of sustainable transport to encourage alternatives to car travel to work. The club liaises with the bus operators to offer incentives to use public transport such as ticket discounts. Member organisations employ approximately 10,000 staff and teach 20,000 students in the borough.
 5. **ECC Bus operators meeting** – The Sustainability and Climate Change team attend the quarterly ECC Bus Operators meeting, however meetings ceased for a year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with the last meeting taking place in December 2019. The meetings recommenced in December 2020 and will attend future meetings. Agenda items include future developments, marketing, ticketing and infrastructure. The Environmental Protection Manager also attends meetings to update on air quality and the current Defra project, Clean Air for Colchester, which encourages drivers to switch off their engine while they wait to help reduce air pollution from idling engines, as well as walk and cycle for short journeys.
6. **Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications**
- 6.1 There are no specific implications regarding Human Rights, however there are implications regarding equality and diversity, in that the efficient and comprehensive operation of local bus services should be inclusive of all people and take account of the needs of disabled service users including people who have sensory impairments, such as those people who are partially sighted.
7. **Standard References**
- 7.1 There are no particular references to consultation or publicity considerations or financial, community safety, health and safety or risk management implications.
8. **Strategic Plan References**
- 8.1 The operation of efficient and environmentally sustainable bus services within Colchester Borough has reference to the following themes and priorities of the [Strategic Plan 2020-23](#) -
- [Tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability](#)
 - Reduce carbon emissions to help achieve a net zero Carbon footprint for Council Services by 2030.
 - Air quality across Colchester is improved.

- [Creating safe, healthy and active communities](#)
 - Tackle the causes of inequality and support our most vulnerable people
 - Provide opportunities for young people
- [Growing a fair economy so everyone benefits](#)
 - Enable Economic Recovery from Covid-19 ensuring all residents benefit from growth
 - Work with partners to deliver a shared vision for a vibrant town
 - Create an environment that attracts inward investment to Colchester and help businesses to flourish

Appendices

1. Summary of responses to the 2018 questions to bus operators

Background Information

Borough Council Policies and Plans

CBC Climate Emergency Action Plan - [Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)

Colchester Air Quality Action Plan - [Colchester Air Quality Action Plan 18-03-16.pdf \(windows.net\)](#)

National Policies

Climate Change Act 2008 - [Climate Change Act 2008 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

Clean Air Strategy 2019 - [Clean Air Strategy 2019 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Ambient Air Quality Directive - [LexUriServ.do \(europa.eu\)](#)

Essex County Council Policies

Colchester Future Transport Strategy (consultation document)
[colchester-future-transport-strategy.pdf \(essexhighways.org\)](#)

Getting around in Essex -A Bus and Passenger Transport Strategy
https://www.essexhighways.org/uploads/docs/DS14_4705_Bus_Strategy_WEB.pdf

Other Links

University Discount FirstBus Card

[UoE Student travel | Essex | First Bus \(firstgroup.com\)](#)

Department for Transport – Statistical Release – Annual Bus Statistics 2016/17 -

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/666759/annual-bus-statistics-year-ending-march-2017.pdf

Local Bus Passenger Journeys information datasets

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus01-local-bus-passengerjourneys#table-bus0103>

Transport Focus – Bus Passenger Transport Survey – March 2018

<https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/buspassenger-survey/>

Essex County Council Bus Information

<http://www.essexhighways.org/getting-around/bus.aspx>

Getting Around in Essex – A Bus and Passenger Transport Survey

http://www.essexhighways.org/uploads/files/DS14_4705_Bus_Strategy_WEB.pdf

Concessionary Fares in Essex <http://www.essexhighways.org/bus/Fares-and-bus-passes/concessionaryfares.aspx>

Colchester Travel Plan Club <http://www.colchestertravelplanclub.co.uk/>

Colchester Bus Users Support Group <https://colchesterbususers.wordpress.com/>

Borough Card – one ticket for journeys using more than one bus operator

[Colchester Borough Card | Essex | First Bus \(firstgroup.com\)](#)

Plus Bus – bus journey add-on to rail ticket - [PLUSBUS | Colchester PlusBus](#)

Appendix 1

2019 - Summary of feedback and information from participating companies and organisations including ECC

General feedback

- Town is congested, making bus operations more challenging (Arriva, Panther, Hedingham & First Bus)
- Car parking charges in town centre are too low and prevent modal shift from car to bus (Arriva, Panther & First Bus).
- Community transport schemes benefit from using bus lanes but use of stops is sometimes questioned (when being used for a not-for-profit service run for a community/public use) (Community360 (C360)).
- Community groups operating under Section 19 Permits (transport of members but not the public) also provide support and signposting for service users) (C360).
- Essex County Council (ECC) are investing in local buses, Park and Ride and Community 360. ECC has recorded slight increases for bus use in Colchester and believe competition between operators has kept fares down (ECC).
- Fares and multi-operator season tickets are good value (First Bus).
- Colchester Blueprint meetings are positive and useful (several operators and ECC)
- 40% fewer teenagers have driving licenses, compared to the figures for 1997.

Work underway to improve punctuality

- Arriva: Building live surveillance centres to manage services. All buses have GPS & radios. Trialling of new working method in Southend led to punctuality almost reaching 95%.
- ECC: Reducing congestion by increasing bus use. Bus lanes introduced and A12 junction 28 improved.
- First Bus: Use of AVLS (automatic vehicle location system). Data used to refine future service changes. Feedback from public tracked to improve quality.
- Hedingham: They use satellite tracking and messaging to and from vehicles. Twitter is used to flag issues and a customer line is operated. It would help operators to have ways to work with ECC to manage the impact of road works and recommend a Punctuality Improvement Partnership is developed between ECC and operators.
- Ipswich Buses: Have increased frequency on their route but priority bus lanes on the Ipswich Road route would help.

Current efforts to increase bus usage in Colchester

- Arriva: Looking to engage more with local business community. Lack of ECC funding however leaves a significant risk for operators, with a currently declining market.
- ECC: Held promotional campaign for Park & Ride in early 2018. Promoting use of Colchester Borough Card multi-operator season ticket.
- First Bus: Now using digital platforms, mobile and contactless payment ticketing for buying tickets. This removes barriers. Bus tracking app introduced, and larger buses on busier routes.

- Hedingham: An increase in frequency and timeliness of services can be used as a driver to increase use of buses. Plans include improved marketing/presentation of the fleet and better wi-fi in vehicles.
- Ipswich Buses: A new network is in operation with revised fares, contactless and app payment, along with a new website. Marketing is to be improved.

Work ongoing to reduce emissions

- Arriva: Won £1m from ECC to convert Colchester fleet to the Euro 6 emissions standard.
- Community 360: Have replaced several older, less efficient buses
- ECC Sustainable Travel Planning Team works with firms to implement travel plans. £500k government funding secured to convert 30 Colchester buses to Euro 6 standard.
- First Bus: Introduction of Euro 6 standard buses and upgrading of vehicles already in service. Green road system fitted to improve driving style and cut idling.
- Hedingham: Want to upgrade fleet to Euro 5 standard, but this would be dependent on the awarding of contracts on more than just competitive pricing. Euro 6 standard is commercially sustainable for new additions to the fleet.
- Ipswich Buses: Improving fleet to Euro 5 standard
- Panther: Fleet in Colchester area is 'Low emission zone' compliant

Moves to increase Accessibility

- Arriva: Use of 'ArrivaClick' flexible minibus service.
- Community 360: Most buses are fully accessible. Gradually replacing older models with new ones which include tail lifts. More capital funding support is needed for this.
- ECC: Over 100 smaller infrastructure issues dealt with, but topography and design of town cause difficulties which are difficult to mitigate.
- First Bus: All vehicles now DDA compliant and drivers are trained to consider access issues as part of their CPC course. Improvements to town bus stops would help give access where customers need it.
- Hedingham: Raised concern bus stops present issues e.g. buses not being able to always pull up flush with the kerb, through design of the kerb or illegal parking. Bus station area is poorly laid out (also mentioned by Panther) and improvements for stops should be discussed at Colchester Blueprint meetings.

Ways to achieve improved dialogue with bus companies:

- CBC need to meet bus company representatives individually in private to discuss issues, as commercial sensitivities often apply (Arriva).
- Have a regular meeting for bus users, CBC representatives and bus company representatives to discuss issues and requests (Arriva, Panther and Community 360).
- Make sure that community transport scheme operators are included in meetings on public transport (Community 360)
- Continuation of ECC's 'Colchester Blueprint Programme' (engagement between ECC, CBC and bus operator representatives). Meetings for resident representatives to meet bus operators will continue (ECC and First Bus).
- Voluntary Quality Bus Partnerships can be effective, and it would be useful to engage with key stakeholders (e.g. the BID) to feed into bus operations.

- Regular email newsletters and consultation with operators (Panther).

Minute extract from Scrutiny Panel meeting on 16 March 2021

295. Review of Bus Service Provision

A statement was read out on behalf of a member of the public, Mr Chris Piggott, pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 5(1) of the Council's Remote Meetings Procedure Rules. Mr Piggott wrote to raise issues with a perceived lack of public transport infrastructure, especially in South Colchester, where bus use could involve lengthy journeys and a need to change buses. An assurance that this would be considered in the future was sought.

A statement was read out on behalf of a member of the public, Mr Thomas Rowe, pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 5(1) of the Council's Remote Meetings Procedure Rules.

Mr Rowe wrote to raise the following questions:

1. Whether a circular route from Ipswich Road to the hospital could be investigated.
2. Whether the possibility of the Number 2 bus to stop on Queens Street could be evaluated.
3. Whether rest breaks for drivers could be organised not to coincide with commuting and rush hours.
4. Whether the Council could liaise with Greater Anglia to better coordinate arrival and departure times for improved connections and journey times.
- 4a) How often waiting times are reviewed and what is considered to be an acceptable wait time is for passengers getting off trains.
5. Whether pricing could be more competitive during off-peak hours to encourage more users.
6. Whether buses could run for longer hours to help facilitate the night time economy.
7. How often routes were reviewed, and how demand was measured or predicted to determine new routes and times.

Jane Thompson, Transport and Sustainability Joint Lead, introduced the review and invited Helen Morris, Head of Essex County Council's Integrated Passenger Transport Unit [IPTU] to address the Panel.

The Head of the IPTU asked for any questions about specific issues to be sent to County Council cabinet members, rather than raised at this meeting, as the pre-election period had almost been reached. She then detailed structural issues faced by bus provision under the deregulated model used in Essex. This model entailed the great majority of services being commercially run, with 15% of services supported by the County Council for the good of the public.

A continued decline in passenger numbers had been recorded since 1985, leading to reductions in investment over time. Passenger numbers remain crucial to support service provision. Essex covered many rural areas in which it was a challenge to deliver bus services, with some areas not being served by any routes. Passenger confidence was now an even greater issue, due to Covid-19 fears, and there was a need to shape the bus network to reflect changed travel patterns.

The bus transport sector was currently experiencing market failure, due to Covid-19, so significant public funding had been needed to subsidise the service whilst restrictions had drastically cut passenger numbers. Tribute was paid to those who had kept the network functioning during the pandemic, and partnership working was praised. The County Council's bus strategy had been badly hit and will be adjusted to reflect any Department for Transport guidance issued.

The 'Safer, Greener, Healthier' Strategy was outlined, to reduce car use and improve the environment and public health. £2.5m had been granted by the Department for Transport and the Head of the IPTU explained how the Borough Council and its members could help the Strategy to succeed. This included promotion of bus use, promotion by the Council and members, forming a pro-bus vision and complimentary parking strategy for the Borough and looking to use S106 money from planning applications to help the Borough and County Councils work to provide new routes and stops for new developments.

Richard Gravitt, Essex County Council Strategy, Growth, Infrastructure & Integration Manager, explained that the County Council spent £8-£9m on bus service provision within the year, £20m on school bus transport and £17m on concessionary bus fares. Tracey Vickers, County Council Head of Sustainable Transport, explained that the draft County Travel Strategy was going to be presented, but that the County's Cabinet had agreed to send it for further consultation, following requests for this. The County Council's current strategy was to persuade the public to only travel when necessary, to push modal shift to safer/healthier/sustainable options for travel. Prioritisation had been given to promoting active travel, rebuilding passenger transport and exploring new approaches and driving behaviour change to affordable alternatives to private motor transport.

The Transport and Sustainability Joint Lead gave an overview of views expressed by bus operators in the past, including complaints that congestion was a problem and that parking charges were too low and acted as a disincentive to bus use. Work had been promised to improve punctuality and access, engagement with stakeholders and improving environmental standards.

Piers Marlow, FirstGroup Managing Director, gave more information on how Covid-19 had forced changes to service provision since the previous March. Some routes had experienced drops in usage of up to 90%, with the best performing down by 50%. Social distancing had drastically reduced capacity and forced reductions in vehicle use. Plans were in place for 12 April to meet an increase in traveller numbers. Since schools had reopened, service usage had risen to around 35/40%.

Julian Elliott, FirstGroup, noted that punctuality had improved, thanks to a drop in traffic density and a lowering of the variation in journey times because of this. This shows what was possible, if congestion were to be addressed once Covid-19 restrictions were eased. Travel patterns were expected to change. Hybrid working was expected to remain commonplace, so work was underway to look at a range of tickets for semi-regular passengers.

Two-thirds of passengers were now paying via cashless options. Digital options would continue to be promoted, but cash was still a valid way to pay. Online booking options included tools to check seat availabilities.

FirstGroup's Managing Director regretted that the pandemic had hit their plans for improving environmental performance but gave assurance that efforts were still underway to increase the use of vehicles meeting the Euro 6 standard. A 'Green Road' Strategy was being used to change driving styles, to increase safety and reduce emissions. No new diesel buses would be brought into use after December 2022. Existing diesel vehicles would be phased out and replaced with zero-emission alternatives. FirstGroup operated electric vehicles across the UK and this might be possible to do within the Borough.

The bus operators worked in partnership with the County Council, under the National Bus Strategy, to improve coverage and uptake. All Essex operators met regularly with the County Council to raise and address any issues.

Glenn Shuttleworth, Go East Anglia's District Manager, informed the Panel that Go Ahead [operators of Heddingham and Chambers buses] was investing in new technology, now operating the largest electric fleet within London. Go Ahead had experienced similar effect from the pandemic as FirstGroup, with passenger numbers now returning to levels closer to normal.

The new national Bus Strategy was argued to be a good opportunity for operators and councils to work together to expand bus usage.

The District Manager echoed the view that parking in the Borough was too cheap and added that the bus operators suffered from the lack of a dedicated bus station. It was posited that the use of buses would be improved if the Colchester Business Improvement District could look at efforts to incentivise bus use, such as offers and deals for bus passengers from local outlets.

Michael Jennings, Arriva's Area Head of Commercial, emphasised the challenges in the sector. Focus had been given to maintaining a core network that was safe for use. Like other operators, some routes had lost around 90% of their passenger usage during lockdown.

Partnership working was described as essential to create a strategic approach, increase passenger numbers and to gain access to funding streams. With travel patterns changing, now would be a good opportunity to help shape new travel habits and persuade people to use buses.

Tracey Rudling, Chief Executive of Community 360, described her charity's role in supplying minibuses designed for accessibility. Community 360 had experienced a challenging year, due to Covid-19. Around 50,000 trips were carried out, in a normal year, for vulnerable service users and those who could not access general public transport services. Most clients were classified as being at increased risk of Covid-19, and a significant percentage of the volunteer drivers had been unable to work during the pandemic. Community 360 had experienced an approximate loss of £10k from its community transport operations each month during the pandemic.

The Head of ECC's IPTU praised the successes of community transport schemes and explained the County Council's approach of shaping their operations around community schemes. The Chief Executive of Community 360 detailed their operations and ventured the possibility of partnership working between community schemes and commercial operators.

An investment had been made in five leased buses, contactless payment options had been put in place and measures engaged to minimise any risk of Covid-19 infection. Around 18,000 journeys had been undertaken during 2020, with total mileage of around 1,200 miles and regular checks were carried out to ensure driver and passenger safety. Options had been introduced to allow social activities to move online, to reduce the need for travel to in-person meetings.

The Panel commenced their discussion, raising a range of factors impacting on passenger transport, such as the Ipswich Road roundabout roadworks and the increased number of properties from new developments. A member [Councillor Hogg] requested a comparison be provided to show the route network which will be in place after the ending of Covid-19 restrictions, compared to the network which was operated prior to the pandemic. It was agreed that this request would be added to the questions asked in the 'Have Your Say' contributions from the public and sent to the Head of ECC IPTU so that they could be discussed with operators and responses provided. Owen Howell, Democratic Services Officer, would ensure these were sent to Helen Morris at Essex County Council for this purpose. It was noted that operators were in a difficult position as it had not been possible to conduct a long-term review to envisage future networks. Recent announcements regarding a national bus strategy were noted as potentially heralding a better opportunity for operators and councils to come together to plan for the future. Achieving increased bus usage would 'tick many boxes' involving environmental goals, desirable modal shift, reducing congestion and improving public health.

It was asked whether Essex was too large and heterogenous an area to allow a single transport network to be successful and whether there was scope for services to be provided by mutual organisations and community providers. The Head of ECC's IPTU confirmed that it was the diversity of Essex which presented the greatest challenge, rather than the size. Different network types were required for different types of areas. Department for Transport modelling had only been on areas such as Oxford or Brighton. Granular modelling and planning were required for each different type of area. Issues were greater for rural areas, an example being that there were no 'town deal' funds and fewer funding options for rural areas.

Government funding covered 75% of the cost difference between diesel and electric buses, which did not make it financially viable to fully replace all diesel vehicles. The County Council has raised this concern with Government and has pushed the need for 'branch' schemes which extend beyond the main routes.

The Panel were informed that the new national bus strategy was highly detailed and had a focus on partnership working between transport authorities, bus companies, community transport operators and statutory partners. The Borough Council could support this via its approach to its administration of the planning system, via the local plan, by influencing town development and its parking strategy, and by working with partners such as the Business Improvement District and hospital to design a granular approach for the Borough.

FirstGroup gave assurance that opportunities for improvement would be significant, but that the Council should be patient whilst operators conducted recovery work after the pandemic and worked to bring capacity up to full strength.

A Panel member stressed the importance of reducing congestion and expanding bus use. The guests were asked how long it would be before zero emission vehicles could be brought into use in the Borough. Piers Marlow informed the Panel that FirstGroup's early plans were examining use of electric vehicles, rather than hydrogen-powered. This was unlikely to happen within the coming two years but was possible within three to five years. Infrastructure set-up was the key issue.

Members asked why the £2.5m funding from Government for electric buses had only been used for vehicles in central Essex. The Head of ECC's IPTU explained that the bidding criteria for this funding had been very specific, especially with regard to rurality. Two pilot schemes in rural parts of central Essex had therefore been proposed where no services had previously been possible. These would include trialling of electric minibuses, app functions and methods to push modal shift and give digital support to service users. More details would be provided to members following the meeting.

The guests were asked whether a 'one-stop shop' application could be possible. Non-digital payment tended to slow journey times, and touch-payment was suggested as a way to improve the situation. It was confirmed that the technology existed for this and needed to be examined. The Bus service open data service already provided information on all operators' services and timings and would in the future provide fare data also. This was in line with the statutory requirements laid out in the Bus Services Act 2017. It was noted that research carried out with non-bus users living near stops had found that a lack of knowledge and fear of being caught out was a key disincentive to use of the bus services.

It was queried what councillors could do to help via setting conditions for Section 106 contributions and conditions on new developments to ensure bus stops and infrastructure are provided. The officers of ECC explained that Tier-Two authorities such as borough councils should work with the County Council to include sustainable transport measures and ensure flexible agreements which included the provision of new infrastructure, with new services and infrastructure working together. Part of the planning process was to consider ways to drive modal shift and some past 106

agreements had included enhanced bus provisions. The new national strategy indicated a move towards allowing councils a greater ability to work together, including on the use of online apps to cover multiple council areas. The simpler the online ticketing app was, the easier and quicker it would be for payment and the more likely it would be to increase uptake.

The Panel discussed what possible benefits would be likely were the current High Street restrictions on private vehicle use to be kept in place. Jonathan Ellis, FirstGroup, stressed the importance of enabling buses to quickly enter and leave the town centre. Essex County Council's Strategy, Growth, Infrastructure & Integration Manager noted that bus stop capacity in the Town centre was limited, with many concentrated on the High Street.

Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, explained that Cabinet had held discussions with the Business Improvement District regarding potential ways to use a strategy and offers to increase passenger numbers coming in to Colchester. There was strong support for active and sustainable travel, such as via the County's 'Safer, Greener, Healthier' approach, aiming to move people away from car use.

The Panel discussed pricing difficulties, observing that increased passenger numbers were needed to allow fare prices to be reduced, whilst fare reductions could increase passenger numbers. It was asked what could be done to reduce fare prices and what level of reductions in fare prices would be needed to increase passenger numbers by the required amount [i.e., price elasticity of demand]. The Managing Director of FirstGroup elaborated on his expectation that, post-pandemic, travel patterns would be very different, and that ticket offers would need to match the new patterns and seek to attract new users. There were many options, but all depended on partnership working. Essex County Council's Strategy, Growth, Infrastructure & Integration Manager explained that demand for bus use was price inelastic in the short term, but more elastic over time as alternatives were sought by service users.

It was expected that the majority of expected government funding would commence from 2022 onwards. The Panel were informed that a key challenge was how to accommodate bus routes within the historic streetscape of Colchester. There were design and funding challenges, which required investment to overcome. It was suggested that bus users tended to browse, buy and use services more whilst shopping, and that this should be used to make the case to the town centre retail and service community that increased bus use helps their businesses.

Glenn Shuttleworth, Go East Anglia's District Manager, told the Panel that his firm had been urging local authorities to make different decisions regarding passenger travel contracts. The current system was built around accepting the lowest-cost bids, which makes it harder to improve environmental and service standards. The Head of ECC's IPTU confirmed that the current system was based primarily on cost, to maximise the network coverage that could be afforded. This would need to be addressed when the national bus strategy was considered. With school transport services costing around £30m per annum, this system required modernisation; the current system was still based on rules laid down in 1948.

The Panel discussed whether to make a recommendation that Cabinet work with the Colchester Business Improvement District and bus operators to attempt to find ways to provide offers to bus users in order to drive a modal shift from car use to bus use, in addition to promoting sustainable and active travel options.

The Panel then considered whether to make recommendations to encourage councillors to promote local bus services and for the Council to work with the national Bus Strategy to help improve investment in local buses, to potentially boost the local economy and create jobs. There was also a further recommendation proposed that the Council uses its powers as a tier two authority to incentivise and support bus use and seek lower ticket prices. The Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources advised that recommendations would be most effective if specific and based on the partnership working between the Council and Essex County Council.

A number of recommendations were then proposed formally and agreed as follow below. The Chairman then thanked the Panel's guests for participating in this review.

RECOMMENDATION to CABINET that: -

- (a) Cabinet encourages councillors to take up the '#UseTheBus challenge', to invest in local communities, jobs and the environment by championing bus travel.
- (b) Cabinet uses the powers available to a Tier Two authority to enhance and highlight modal shift from car use. Powers of Planning, redevelopment of Town Centre and a boroughwide Parking Strategy being examples (but not an exhaustive list) of these powers.
- (c) Cabinet investigates incentives and offers, through the Business Improvement District [BID] and business partners, in developing a level playing field for bus passengers, when compared to parking deals, thus promoting sustainable transport options.
- (d) Guidance be issued to all elected members as to the options available regarding use of Section 106 funds from new developments, potentially to support bus infrastructure and routes.
- (e) Cabinet directs officers to investigate the possibility of working with partners to create a Borough-wide travel app, to support and encourage use of sustainable and active travel options.

Minute extract from Cabinet meeting on 9 June 2021

573. Review of Bus Services

Cabinet considered the recommendation in draft minute 294 of the Scrutiny Panel meeting of 10 March 2021, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor Fox attended and with the consent of the Chair addressed Cabinet. When they had first joined the Council, Councillor Scordis and he had pressed for scrutiny of bus services in Colchester, which remained expensive and unreliable, especially when compared with services in London. He would like to see the introduction of municipal bus companies, but this was currently prohibited by the government. Cabinet were urged to follow the lead of the Labour and Co-operative party to go beyond the recommendations and press Essex County Council to deliver a reliable public transport system fit for the 21st century.

Councillor Crow, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, reminded Cabinet that the Council had declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and had an absolute duty to ensure that it followed the steps in the climate emergency. He was also aware from his ward of the dangers of air pollution from traffic. To address these issues, the Council needed to support sustainable methods of transport to reduce car dependency. He supported the Scrutiny Panel recommendations and proposed that Cabinet accept them with addition of the following resolution:-

“Cabinet acknowledges that a number of the issues raised by the Panel and included in these recommendations, including enabling disabled passengers to travel with confidence, are addressed in the Government’s Bus Strategy (and future detailed regulations); as such, Cabinet will create opportunities to influence the implementation of the strategy for the benefit of residents”.

Councillor Dundas, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, highlighted the difficulties the bus companies had faced because of the pandemic, which had severely reduced their funding. Councillor Lissimore, Portfolio Holder for Resources, highlighted the Bus Back Better strategy, which had been produced by the government in March and which was in line with the spirit of the recommendations. In terms of developing sustainable modes of transport, bus services should be relatively easy to improve as it did not require the development of additional infrastructure.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Cabinet encourages councillors to take up the ‘#UseTheBus challenge’, to invest in local communities, jobs and the environment by championing bus travel.
- (b) Cabinet uses the powers available to a Tier Two authority to enhance and highlight modal shift from car use. Powers of Planning, redevelopment of Town Centre and a boroughwide Parking Strategy being examples (but not an exhaustive list) of these powers.

- (c) Cabinet investigates incentives and offers, through the Business Improvement District [BID] and business partners, in developing a level playing field for bus passengers, when compared to parking deals, thus promoting sustainable transport options.
- (d) Guidance be issued to all elected members as to the options available regarding use of Section 106 funds from new developments, potentially to support bus infrastructure and routes.
- (e) Cabinet directs officers to investigate the possibility of working with partners to create a Borough-wide travel app, to support and encourage use of sustainable and active travel options.
- (f) Cabinet acknowledges that a number of the issues raised by the Panel and included in these recommendations, including enabling disabled passengers to travel with confidence, are addressed in the Government's Bus Strategy (and future detailed regulations); as such, Cabinet will create opportunities to influence the implementation of the strategy for the benefit of residents.

REASONS

As set out in the minute.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

It was open to Cabinet not to approve the recommendations from the Scrutiny Panel.

5 July 2022

Report of	Assistant Director – Corporate and Improvement Services	Author	Owen Howell ☎ 282518
Title	Work Programme 2022-23		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the current Work Programme 2022-2023 for the Scrutiny Panel. This provides details of the reports that are scheduled for each meeting during the municipal year.

2. Action Required

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to consider and approve the contents of the Work Programme for 2022-2023, or request amendments, additions and/or deletions.

3. Background Information

- 3.1 The Panel's work programme evolves as the Municipal Year progresses and items of business are commenced and concluded. At each meeting the opportunity is taken for the work programme to be reviewed and, if necessary, amended according to current circumstances. The draft work programme for 2022-23 is appended to this report. This contains the items which are reviewed each year by the Panel.
- 3.2 The Forward Plan of Key Decisions is included as part of the work programme for the Scrutiny Panel, and this is included an **Appendix A**.

4. Standard References

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

5. Strategic Plan References

- 4.1 Scrutiny and challenge is integral to the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2020-2023 priorities and direction for the Borough as set out under the strategic themes of:
- [Tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability](#)
 - [Creating safe, healthy and active communities](#)
 - [Delivering homes for people who need them](#)
 - [Growing a fair economy so everyone benefits](#)
 - [Celebrating our heritage and culture](#)

- 4.2 The Council recognises that effective local government relies on establishing and maintaining the public's confidence, and that setting high standards of self-governance provides a clear and demonstrable lead. Effective governance underpins the implementation and application of all aspects of the Council's work.

Appendices

Appendix A – Scrutiny Panel Work Programme, 2022-23

Appendix B – Forward Plan of Key Decisions: 1 July – 31 October 2022

Work Programme for 2022/23

Scrutiny Panel meeting – 7 June 2022
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 1 June 2022
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Town Deal Reporting 2. Work Programme 2022-23
Scrutiny Panel meeting – 5 July 2022
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 30 June 2022
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Council's disbursement of rebate payments on Council Tax 2. Year End 2021/22 Performance Report and Strategic Plan Action Plan 3. Housing Strategy 4. Annual Scrutiny Report 5. Briefing note on Hythe Flooding 6. Recap report on previous Scrutiny Panel reviews of local bus services 7. Work Programme 2022-23
Scrutiny Panel meeting - 16 August 2022
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 11 August 2022
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Economic Strategy 2. Town Deal projects update 3. Portfolio Holder Briefing Cancelled at request of the Panel 4. Work Programme 2022-23
Scrutiny Panel (Crime and Disorder Committee) - 13 September 2022
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 8 September 2022
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safer Colchester Partnership (Crime and Disorder Committee)
Scrutiny Panel – 11 October 2022
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's Briefing – 6 October 2022
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Portfolio Holder Briefing – Panel to specify issue and Portfolio 2. Review of Colchester Borough Homes: 2021-22 Performance, and discussion of Key Performance Indicator Targets for 2023-24 3. Local Council Tax Support – Year 2023/24 4. Budget Strategy for 2023-24 5. Work Programme 2022-23
Scrutiny Panel meeting - 8 November 2022
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 3 November 2022
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Portfolio Holder Briefing/s - Panel to specify issue and Portfolio 2. Work Programme 2022-23

Scrutiny Panel meeting - 13 December 2022
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 8 December 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Portfolio Holder Briefing - Panel to specify issue and Portfolio 4. Half Year 2022-23 Performance Report & Strategic Plan Action Plan progress 5. Work Programme 2022-23
Scrutiny Panel meeting - 24 January 2023
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 19 January 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Briefing by Portfolio Holder for Resources [focus on Budget 2023-24] 2. 2023-24 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme, Medium Term Financial Forecast and Treasury Management Investment Strategy 3. Housing Revenue Accounts Estimate and Housing Investment Programme 4. Town Deal projects progress report 5. Work Programme 2022-23
Scrutiny Panel - 14 February 2023
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 9 February 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Portfolio Holder Briefing - Panel to specify issue and Portfolio 2. Reports from Arts Organisations (Mercury, The Arts Centre, FirstSite) 3. Corporate Key Performance Indicator Targets for 2022-23 4. Work Programme 2022-23
Scrutiny Panel meeting– 14 March 2023
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 9 March 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Portfolio Holder Briefing/s - Panel to specify issue and Portfolio 2. Scrutiny Panel Annual Report

COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL

FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS 1 July 2022 – 31 October 2022

During the period from 1 July 2022 – 31 October 2022* Colchester Borough Council intends to take 'Key Decisions' on the issues set out in the following pages. Key Decisions relate to those executive decisions which are likely to either:

- result in the Council spending or saving money in excess of £500,000; or
- have a significant impact on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards within the Borough of Colchester.

This Forward Plan should be seen as an outline of the proposed decisions and it will be updated on a monthly basis. Any questions on specific issues included on the Plan should be addressed to the contact name specified in the Plan. General queries about the Plan itself should be made to Democratic Services (01206) 507832 or email democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk

The Council invites members of the public to attend any of the meetings at which these decisions will be discussed and the documents listed on the Plan and any other documents relevant to each decision which may be submitted to the decision taker can be viewed free of charge although there will be a postage and photocopying charge for any copies made. *All decisions will be available for inspection on the Council's website, www.colchester.gov.uk*

If you wish to request details of documents regarding the 'Key Decisions' outlined in this Plan please contact the individual officer identified.

If you wish to make comments or representations regarding the 'Key Decisions' outlined in this Plan please submit them, in writing, to the Contact Officer highlighted two working days before the date of the decision (as indicated in the brackets in the date of decision column). This will enable your views to be considered by the decision taker. Details of the decision makers are correct at the time of publication.

Contact details for the Council's various service departments are incorporated at the end of this plan.

If you need help with reading or understanding this document please telephone (01206) 282222 or textphone users dial 18001 followed by the full number that you wish to call and we will try to provide a reading service, translation or other formats you may need.

*The Forward Plan also shows decisions which fall before the period covered by the Plan but which have not been taken at the time of the publication of the Plan.

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Levelling Up Fund	No	8 June 2022	Cabinet (Cllrs King, Cory, Cox, Fox, Goss, Luxford Vaughan, Nissen, J. Young) Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report	Matthew Brown Economic Development Projects Manager 01206 507348 matthew.brown@colchester.gov.uk
Approval of land acquisition for development to form part of the Councils housebuilding programme	Yes	8 June 2022	Cabinet (Cllrs King, Cory, Cox, Fox, Goss, Luxford Vaughan, Nissen, J. Young) Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report	Ruth Newcombe Client for Affordable Housebuilding 01206 505845 Ruth.newcombe@colchester.gov.uk

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Disposal of Plot 600, The Crescent, Colchester	Yes	8 June 2022	Cabinet (Cllrs King, Cory, Cox, Fox, Goss, Luxford Vaughan, Nissen, J. Young) Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report	Andrew Tyrrell Client and Business Manager 01206 282390 Andrew.tyrrell@colchester.gov.uk
Approval to complete the purchase of land/property at 'The Centre' Greenstead from Notting Hill Genesis, using funding received via the Estates Regeneration Fund	No	June 2022	Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Mark Cory Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Daniel Barton Greenstead and Youth (Town Deal) Projects Manager 01206 282912: Daniel.Barton@colchester.gov.uk

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Award of Contract for Replacement Telephony System	No	June 2022	<p>Portfolio Holder for Local Economy and Transformation, Cllr Fox, and the Assistant Director for Corporate and Improvement Services, under delegated authority from Cabinet.</p> <p>Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk</p>	Portfolio Holder report	<p>Kieran Johnston Strategic ICT Manager 07983 164744 Kieran.johnston@colchester.gov.uk</p>

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Award of contract for Renewal of Microsoft Licensing agreement	No	June 2022	Portfolio Holder for Local Economy and Transformation, and the Assistant Director for Corporate and Improvement Services, under delegated authority from Cabinet. Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Kieran Johnston Strategic ICT Manager 07983 164744 Kieran.johnston@colchester.gov.uk
Award of Contract for Bathrooms and Wet Rooms in Council owned residential properties	Yes	June 2022	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, Councillor Julie Young Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Geoff Beales Client Services Manager 01206 506514 geoff.beales@colchester.gov.uk

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Approval of Award of Contract for Replacement Windows and Doors	Yes	June 2022	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, Councillor Julie Young Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Ernie Gray Client Asset Manager 01206 282506 ernie.gray@colchester.gov.uk
Award of Contract for External Painting to Council owned residential stock	Yes	June 2022	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, Councillor Julie Young. Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Geoff Beales Client Services Manager 01206 506514 geoff.beales@colchester.gov.uk

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Award of Contract for Acquisitions Refurbishment Programme	Yes	July 2022	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, Councillor Julie Young. Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Geoff Beales Client Services Manager 01206 506514 geoff.beales@colchester.gov.uk
Sale of 125 Gosbecks Road, Colchester	Yes	6 July 2022	Cabinet (Cllrs King, Cory, Cox, Fox, Goss, Luxford Vaughan, Nissen, J. Young) Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report	Andrew Tyrrell Client and Business Manager 01206 282390 Andrew.tyrrell@colchester.gov.uk

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Housing Strategy 2022 - 27 To adopt a new Housing Strategy for Colchester for 2022 to 2027 To recommend to full Council that the strategy be adopted as part of the Council's Policy Framework.	No	6 July 2022	Cabinet (Cllrs King, Cory, Cox, Fox, Goss, Luxford Vaughan, Nissen, J. Young) Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Report Housing Strategy and Delivery Plan Evidence base	Karen Paton Housing Strategy Officer 01206 282275 karen.paton@colchester.gov.uk
Approval of the UK Shared Prosperity Investment Fund	No	6 July 2022	Cabinet (Cllrs King, Cory, Cox, Fox, Goss, Luxford Vaughan, Nissen, J. Young) Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report, Investment Plan	Matt Sterling Strategic Economic Growth Manager matt.sterling@colchester.gov.uk

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Cost of Living Crisis	No	6 July 2022	Cabinet (Cllrs King, Cory, Cox, Fox, Goss, Luxford Vaughan, Nissen, J. Young) Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report	Michelle Tarbun Group Manager, Wellbeing and Prevention 07890 397164 michelle.tarbun@colchester.gov.uk
Budget Strategy and Timetable	No	6 July 2022	Cabinet (Cllrs King, Cory, Cox, Fox, Goss, Luxford Vaughan, Nissen, J. Young) Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report	Paul Cook Head of Finance Paul.cookx@colchester.gov.uk

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Award of the Contract for the Construction of the Renewable Heat Network Energy Centre and at the Northern Gateway	Yes	6 July 2022	Cabinet (Cllrs King, Cory, Cox, Fox, Goss, Luxford Vaughan, Nissen, J. Young) Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report	Andrew Tyrrell Client and Business Manager andrew.tyrrell@colchester.gov.uk
Colchester's Economic Strategy 2022-2025	No	7 September 2022	Cabinet (Cllrs King, Cory, Cox, Fox, Goss, Luxford Vaughan, Nissen, J. Young) Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report Draft Strategy document	Karen Turnbull Economic Development Officer 01206 282915 karen.turnbull@colchester.gov.uk

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Award of Contract for Unadopted Roads within Council Housing estates – HIP Programme	Yes	October 2022	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, Councillor Julie Young. Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Geoff Beales Client Services Manager 01206 506514 geoff.beales@colchester.gov.uk
Award of Contract for Voids works contract	Yes	October 2022	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, Councillor Julie Young. Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Geoff Beales Client Services Manager 01206 506514 geoff.beales@colchester.gov.uk

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