

Cabinet Meeting

**Grand Jury Room, Town Hall, High Street,
Colchester, CO1 1PJ
Wednesday, 18 March 2015 at 18:00**

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

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COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL
Cabinet
Wednesday, 18 March 2015 at 18:00

Member:

Councillor Martin Hunt (Liberal Democrats)	Leader and Chairman
Councillor Anne Turrell (Liberal Democrats)	Deputy Chairman
Councillor Nick Barlow (Liberal Democrats)	
Councillor Tina Bourne (Labour)	
Councillor Annie Feltham (Liberal Democrats)	
Councillor Beverley Oxford (Highwoods Group)	
Councillor Paul Smith (Liberal Democrats)	
Councillor Tim Young (Labour)	

AGENDA - Part A
(open to the public including the press)

Members of the public may wish to note that Agenda items 1 to 5 are normally brief.

1 Welcome and Announcements

- a) The Chairman to welcome members of the public and Councillors and to remind all speakers of the requirement for microphones to be used at all times.
- (b) At the Chairman's discretion, to announce information on:
 - action in the event of an emergency;
 - mobile phones switched to silent;
 - the audio-recording of meetings;
 - location of toilets;
 - introduction of members of the meeting.

2 Urgent Items

To announce any items not on the agenda which the Chairman has agreed to consider because they are urgent, to give reasons for the urgency and to indicate where in the order of business the item will be considered.

3 Declarations of Interest

The Chairman to invite Councillors to declare individually any interests they may have in the items on the agenda. Councillors should consult Meetings General Procedure Rule 7 for full guidance

on the registration and declaration of interests. However Councillors may wish to note the following:-

- Where a Councillor has a disclosable pecuniary interest, other pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary interest in any business of the authority and he/she is present at a meeting of the authority at which the business is considered, the Councillor must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest, whether or not such interest is registered on his/her register of Interests or if he/she has made a pending notification.
- If a Councillor has a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at a meeting, he/she must not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter at the meeting. The Councillor must withdraw from the room where the meeting is being held unless he/she has received a dispensation from the Monitoring Officer.
- Where a Councillor has another pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at a meeting and where the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest, the Councillor must disclose the existence and nature of the interest and withdraw from the room where the meeting is being held unless he/she has received a dispensation from the Monitoring Officer.
- Failure to comply with the arrangements regarding disclosable pecuniary interests without reasonable excuse is a criminal offence, with a penalty of up to £5,000 and disqualification from office for up to 5 years.

4 Have Your Say!

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

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

5 Minutes

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2015.

28-01-15

7 - 16

6	Call-In Procedure	
	To consider any items referred by the Scrutiny Panel under the call-in procedure. At the time of the publication of this agenda, there were none.	
7	Housing and Public Protection	
7(i)	A New Housing Strategy for Colchester 2015-2020	17 - 52
	See report by the Head of Commercial Services	
7(ii)	Future Phases of New Build Council Housing	53 - 56
	See report by the Head of Commercial Services	
8	Community Safety, Licensing and Culture	
8(i)	Mercury Theatre Improvements	57 - 60
	See report by the Head of Community Services	
9	Strategy/Business and Resources	
9(i)	Budgetary Provision for Street Lights	61 - 64
	See report by the Assistant Chief Executive	
10	General	
10(i)	Progress of Responses to the Public	65 - 66
	To note the contents of the Progress Sheet	
11	Business and Resources	
11(i)	Living Wage	67 - 68
	See report by the Assistant Chief Executive	
11(ii)	Magdalen Street (former bus depot) Disposal	69 - 72
	See report by the Head of Commercial Services	
12	Exclusion of the Public (Cabinet)	
	In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act	

1972 and in accordance with The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 to exclude the public, including the press, from the meeting so that any items containing exempt information (for example 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)

13 Business and Resources - Part B

13(i) Magdalen Street (former bus depot) disposal

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

See report by the Head of Commercial Services

CABINET

28 January 2015

Present:- Councillor Hunt (Chairman)
Councillors Barlow, Bourne, Feltham, B. Oxford,
Smith, and T. Young

Also in attendance: - Councillors Cope, Hayes, Sykes and Willetts

49. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2014 be approved as a correct record.

50. Strategic Plan 2015-18

The Chief Operating Officer submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member together with minute 36 of the Scrutiny Panel meeting of 27 January 2015.

Councillor Willetts attended and with the consent of the Chairman addressed the Cabinet. Many of the achievements listed in the Strategic Plan were not the responsibility of the Council and the success of these other organisations should be acknowledged. For example the new junction on the A12 and Phase 3 of the Northern Approach Road had been funded by Essex County Council, but this was not recognised in the Plan. The document was not a Strategic Plan but a bland wish list. A Strategic Plan should set out the priorities of the Council and identify where resources would be put to deliver those priorities. The Scrutiny Panel had highlighted the omission of the University, which was the 3rd largest employer in Colchester. It did not deal with the major issues facing the borough, such as regeneration of the town centre, the development of greater business opportunities, coordinating the various elements of public transport or dealing with the growing gulf between the prosperous and less prosperous parts of the borough.

Councillor Hunt, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy responded and highlighted that the Strategic Plan did acknowledge that the Council had worked with partners to deliver successes and he had also stressed this when presenting the Strategic Plan at the Scrutiny Panel. The Council developed strong and effective relations with partners in order to ensure that these partners devoted resources to Colchester. The Strategic Plan contained a reference to the development of the Knowledge Gateway by the University.

The Strategic Plan did set out the vision and priorities for the borough and the Council for

the next three years. It was informed by considerable consultation both with residents and with officers. Details of how the Strategic Plan would be implemented would follow in the Strategic Plan Action Plan and over £500,000 had been allocated to fund delivery of the Action Plan.

Councillor T. Young, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Licensing and Culture, Councillor Barlow, Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services, and Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, all expressed their support for the Strategic Plan. In particular they highlighted the amount of consultation that had been undertaken and the key words “Vibrant, Prosperous, Thriving, Welcoming” that summed up what the Council was seeking to achieve. It was also highlighted that the University was featured three times in the Strategic Plan. Notwithstanding this, Cabinet accepted the recommendations from the Scrutiny Panel.

RESOLVED that:-

(a) The Strategic Plan 2015-18 be agreed subject to:-

- The University being included in the Strategic Plan;
- The bullet point “Make more of the great culture and heritage in Colchester so that visitors can enjoy the history and passion” be rewritten to incorporate the creativity within Colchester and local residents.

(b) An action plan to achieve commitments in the Strategic Plan be prepared.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that the Strategic Plan be adopted and included within the Policy Framework.

REASONS

The last Strategic Plan was published in February 2012 and runs to 2015. It now needs to be refreshed in light of changing circumstances and expectations

The Strategic Plan is one of the core statutory elements of the Council’s Policy Framework, as set out in Article 4 of the Council’s Constitution. It must therefore be adopted by full Council

The Strategic Plan sets the framework for the Council’s three year Medium Term Financial Forecast and its Capital Programme. Both the Plan and the Budget will be debated at the same full Council on 18 February 2015.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

The current Strategic Plan expires at the end of the financial year. A new plan is required and needs to be adopted by full Council

The absence of a Strategic Plan would create a significant risk of the Council failing to identify and deliver on its core priorities.

51. Colchester's Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2015-2020

The Head of Commercial Services submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Cabinet received a presentation from Wendy Bixby, Sustainability and Projects Officer, which set out the vision behind the Strategy, the challenges facing the Council and Colchester and the achievements to date. The Strategy's two strategic priorities were highlighted: 'Community leadership' by reducing the environmental impact of the Council's building, services and operations and; 'Building resilient communities' by working with residents, business and third sector organisations.

Councillor T. Young, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Licensing and Culture, thanked Wendy for her presentation and for the work involved in drafting the Strategy. This was a vitally important Strategy that cut across all the Council's services and the work of all Portfolio Holders. Officers across the Council had been involved in the creation of the Strategy. The Strategy demonstrated that the Council took its Strategic Plan commitment to be cleaner and greener seriously.

Councillor Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure Services, expressed her support for the Strategy and in particular emphasised the importance of the green spaces in the borough. The Strategy demonstrated the importance of working with partners across the borough and was also an invitation to residents to make a contribution through their individual actions.

RESOLVED that the new Environmental Sustainability Strategy for Colchester for 2015 to 2020 be agreed.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that the new Environmental Sustainability Strategy for Colchester for 2015 to 2020 be adopted as part of the Council's Policy Framework.

REASONS

Environmental sustainability is a strategic priority for the Council. Having an adopted strategy will provide the Council, its partners, employees and residents with a clear statement of direction for its environmental sustainability related activities. The Strategy can show how the Council will undertake the detailed implementation of its priorities. The Council does not have a statutory responsibility to produce and publish an Environmental Sustainability Strategy; however, the strategy does incorporate the Council's statutory responsibilities to produce a Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report and Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) Report.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

To amend or not adopt the Environmental Sustainability 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 the Council's (CBC) wider vision for environmental sustainability and not providing a strong focus to residents and partners about their contribution to meeting our priorities.

52. 2015/16 General Fund Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Forecast

The Assistant Chief Executive submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member together with minutes 37 and 38 of the Scrutiny Panel meeting of 27 January 2015.

Councillor Willetts attended and with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Cabinet and emphasised that the Conservative Group agreed with much of the budget. There was a lack of detail in some areas, for example around town centre funding. The freeze in Council Tax was supported. A rise could not be justified given the level of reserves. The level of savings set out in section 6 of the report was also welcomed and the administration should continue to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council. The reduction in Full Time Equivalent posts was noted and should control of the Council change in the forthcoming elections, he hoped that the groups forming the current administration would support further efficiencies on this scale. The current approach on the use of the New Homes Bonus was also supported, although there was a risk in reliance on the New Homes Bonus given that the government's approach could change depending on the outcome of the General Election.

Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, stressed that the proposed budget directed funding towards strategic plan priorities. £547,000 was specifically allocated to support the delivery of the Strategic Plan in areas where additional resource was needed. Areas that would receive increased funding included heritage, employment, traffic management and the environment. Frontline services were would be protected, despite the significant reduction in the baseline budget. Further efficiencies on the scale proposed by the opposition would inevitably impact on the delivery of front line services.

Councillor Bourne, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Public Protection, expressed her concern about the impact on staff of further efficiencies on the scale proposed by the opposition. This had already been a difficult period for staff, many of whom demonstrated great commitment to the Council.

RESOLVED that:-

(a) It be noted that the outturn for the current financial year is forecast to be within budget and that a reduction in the use of the Food Waste grant is proposed (paragraph 3.5 of the Assistant Chief Executive's report).

(b) The cost pressures, growth items (including proposed use of New Homes Bonus), savings and increased income options identified during the budget forecast process as set out at Appendices B, C, D and E of the Assistant Chief Executive's report be approved.

(c) The 2015/16 Revenue Budget requirement of £23,231k (paragraph 6.7 of the Assistant Chief Executive's report) and the underlying detailed budgets set out in summary at Appendix F and Background Papers to the Assistant Chief Executive's report, subject to the final proposal to be made in respect of Council Tax, be agreed and *RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL*.

(d) Colchester's element of the Council Tax for 2015/16 at £175.23 per Band D property be *RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL*, which represents no change from the current rate, noting that the formal resolution to Council will include Parish, Police, Fire and County Council precepts and any changes arising from the formal Finance Settlement announcement and final completion of the business rates NNDR 1. This will be prepared in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

(e) The provisional Finance Settlement figures set out in Section 7 of the Assistant Chief Executive's report including the figures for the business rates retention scheme and the arrangements for completion of the required return of estimated business rates income as set out at paragraph 7.11 of the Assistant Chief Executive's report be noted.

(f) The Revenue Balances for the financial year 2015/16 as set out at Appendix I of the Assistant Chief Executive's report be agreed and the following also be agreed:-

- the minimum level be set at a minimum of £1,800k
- £71k of balances be applied to finance items in the 2015/16 revenue budget.
- a contribution to balances of £560k be made in respect of the specific items shown at paragraph 9.9 of the Assistant Chief Executive's report.

(g) The updated position on earmarked reserves set out in section 10 of the Assistant Chief Executive's report be noted and the release of £20k from the S106 monitoring reserve be agreed.

(h) It be agreed and *RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL* that £100k of Revenue Balances be earmarked for potential unplanned expenditure within the guidelines set out at paragraph 11.3 of the Assistant Chief Executive's report.

(i) The Medium Term Financial Forecast for the financial years 2015/16 to 2018/19 be noted.

(j) The position on the Capital Programme shown at section 14 of the Assistant Chief Executive's report be noted and:-

- the releases set out in paragraph 14.5 and 14.6 of the Assistant Chief Executive's report be agreed.
- the inclusion in the Capital Programme of the Priory Street Car park scheme set out in paragraph 14.7 of the Assistant Chief Executive's report be *RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL*.

(k) The comments made on the robustness of budget estimates at section 15 of the Assistant Chief Executive's report be noted.

(l) The 2015/16 Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy as set out in the background paper at Appendix M of the Assistant Chief Executive's report be agreed and *RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL*.

REASONS

The reasons for the decisions were set out in detail in the Assistant Chief Executive's report.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Various options were investigated at every stage of the budget setting process.

53. Housing Revenue Account Estimates 2015/16

The Head of Commercial Service submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member together with minute 37 of the Scrutiny Panel meeting of 27 January 2014.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The 2015/16 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revenue estimates as set out in Appendix A of the Commercial Services Report be approved.
- (b) The dwelling rents as calculated in accordance with the rent restructuring formula (set out in paragraph 4.7 of the Head of Commercial Services report) be approved.
- (c) The HRA revenue funded element of £6,754,400 included within the total management fee for Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) (set out in paragraph 4.13 of the Head of Commercial Services report) be approved
- (d) The revenue contribution of £4,689,000 to the Housing Investment Programme included in the budget (paragraph 4.27 of the Head of Commercial Services report) be noted.
- (e) The HRA balances position in Appendix B of the Head of Commercial Services be noted.
- (f) The Medium Term Financial Forecast (MTFF) set out at Appendix C of the Head of Commercial Services and the 30 Year HRA financial position set out at Appendix E of the Head of Commercial Services report be noted.

REASONS

Financial Procedures require the Head of Commercial Services to prepare detailed HRA estimates for approval by the Cabinet, setting the new rent levels for the new financial year.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

No alternative options were set out but it was open to Cabinet to approve different proposals to those outlined in the Head of Commercial Services report.

54. Housing Investment Programme (HIP) 2015/16

The Head of Commercial Services submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member together with minute 37 of the Scrutiny Panel meeting of 27 January 2015.

Councillor Bourne, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Public Protection, presented the proposals to the Cabinet. The proposed allocation for the 2015/16 programme was £14.714 million, which was a substantial increase in investment compared to that on the previous HRA subsidy system. The proposed allocation of the spend was set out in paragraph 8 of the Head of Commercial Services report, but particular attention was drawn to the £3.52 million allocated to the capital investment programme which would help maintain the decency standard, the £0.58 million allocated to the aids and adaptations budget, the £3.73 million allocated to environmental works and the £2.35 million allocated to sheltered accommodation improvements.

Councillor Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure Services, congratulated officers and Colchester Borough Homes for the excellent work done on the upgrade of Worsnop House which demonstrated the benefits that resulted from the Housing Investment Programme. Councillor T. Young, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Licensing and Culture, stressed the need for private landlords to take their responsibilities as seriously as the Council did. He noted that issues of housing need and affordability were of increasing concern and would be key issues in the forthcoming General Election.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The Housing Improvement Programme for 2015/16 be approved.
- (b) The Capital Medium Term Financial Forecast as set out in Appendix A of the Head of Commercial Services report be noted.

REASONS

Each year as part of the process to agree the Council's revenue and capital estimates the Cabinet is required to agree the allocations to the Housing Stock Investment Programme. These allow for work to be undertaken to maintain, improve, and refurbish the housing stock and its environment.

Following the Cabinet meeting on the 30 November 2011 it was agreed in principle to accept a proposed 5 year Housing Investment Programme (HIP) as the framework for procuring housing related planned works, improvements, responsive and void works and cyclical maintenance, subject to overall budget decisions in January 2012 and annually thereafter.

It was also agreed that the proposed 5 year investment programme would be linked to the Asset Management Strategy (AMS) and reviewed annually in the light of available resources and for each annual allocation to continue to be brought to Cabinet for approval as part of the overall HIP report.

The Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) Board has been apprised of the content of the Cabinet report submitted on the 30 November 2011 and is now seeking approval for the

2015/16 Capital programme being the fourth year of the (HIP).

This report seeks the release of funds under grouped headings as described in the AMS and supported by the Management Agreement dated 9th August 2013, which governs the contractual relationship between Colchester Borough Council (CBC) and CBH.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

No alternative options were set out but it was open to Cabinet to approve different proposals to those outlined in the Head of Commercial Services report.

55. Fundamental Service Review of Corporate and Financial Management – Progress Update for the year following the business case

The Assistant Chief Executive submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member together with minute 32 from the Scrutiny Panel meeting of 2 December 2014.

RESOLVED that progress made since the approval of the business case resulting from the Corporate and Financial Management Fundamental Service Review in November 2013 be noted.

REASONS

As with all FSRs, a report is brought back to Cabinet “one year on” from approval of the business case as an opportunity to review the progress made and current plans.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

No alternative option was proposed.

56. Half Yearly Performance Report Including Progress on Strategic Plan Action Plan

The Assistant Chief Executive submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member together with minute 31 of the Scrutiny Panel meeting on 2 December 2014.

Nick Chilvers addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(1). He believed that the Colchester was generally in good hands with the Council. He noted that the comments on Leisure World in the Strategic Plan Action Plan but expressed concern that no hard financial information was provided about how Leisure World was performing against its targets. Also in terms of regeneration, no information was contained about St James House.

Councilor Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure, explained that Leisure World was on schedule to meet its targets. The financial information requested was available and would be supplied to Mr Chilvers. Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, acknowledged that St James House was in need of removal or renovation and explained that negotiations were underway to secure this. For reasons of commercial confidentiality, further information could not be given at this stage.

Councillor Willetts attended and with the consent of the Chairman addressed the Cabinet to express his concern that the Council had failed in its performance on 4 key performance indicators: planning appeals allowed against decision to refuse, rent collection, business rates collected and staff sickness. He believed that the position had not altered on these indicators since the last time they were reported to Cabinet.

Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Business, stressed that the Council's performance was not failing on any of these indicators. They were classified as amber, which meant that they were currently not meeting their target but were expected to do so by the end of the reporting period. The commentary in the report gave further details as to the reasons for the performance on each of the indicators and there were sound reasons why performance against some of the targets was not consistent throughout the year. These were not all the same indicators that had been amber when the report was last submitted to Cabinet.

RESOLVED that the performance update for the Council's key performance measures for the period to the end of September 2014 and on the progress update of the Strategic Plan Action Plan to the end of September 2014 be noted.

REASONS

The Council has agreed a number of key performance areas which it uses as part of its Performance Management Framework to help monitor progress and improvement. The report provides an update of our indicators along with a half-yearly review of progress against our Strategic Plan Action Plan.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

No alternative options were proposed.

57. Progress of Responses to the Public

The Assistant Chief Executive submitted a progress sheet a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Progress Sheet be noted.

REASONS

The progress sheet was a mechanism by which the Cabinet could ensure that public statements and questions were responded to appropriately and promptly.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

No alternative options were presented to the Cabinet.

Report of	Head of Commercial Services	Author	Karen Paton
Title	A New Housing Strategy for Colchester 2015-2020		
Wards affected	All wards		

This report concerns the adoption of a new Housing Strategy for Colchester

1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To adopt a new Housing Strategy for Colchester for 2015 to 2020.
- 1.2 To adopt the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan 2015 to 2020.
- 1.3 To recommend to full Council that the Housing Strategy be adopted as part of the Council's Policy Framework.

2. Reasons for Decision(s)

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

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 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.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The Housing Strategy is intended to be the local housing authority's vision for housing in its area, its objectives, targets and policies on how it intends to manage and deliver its strategic housing role. It forms the overarching framework against which the authority considers and formulates other policies on more specific housing issues.

The Housing Strategy is a key strategic document for the Local Authority. It does not just cover affordable housing but will also set out what Colchester Borough Council and its partners will do to address the key housing issues facing Colchester.

Working in Partnership to deliver a Housing Strategy for Colchester

- 4.2 A Housing Strategy Partnership made up of key stakeholders was set up to identify ways in which the Council and its partner organisations could work together to develop a Housing Strategy for Colchester. The first meeting of the Partnership was held in May 2014.

The Partnership included members from:

Colchester Borough Council
Colchester Borough Homes
Registered Providers - Colne Housing Society and Family Mosaic
Housing Developers - Mersea Homes and Dove Jeffrey Homes
Floating Support – One Floating Support
Private Landlords
Citizens Advice Bureau
Essex County Council.

In order to fulfil its remit the Partnership:

- Compiled an evidence base bringing together all available data on all aspects of housing in Colchester to underpin the strategy and delivery plan.
- Researched national and local drivers that may impact on the strategy.
- Undertook Involvement and consultation to identify residents' and organisations' priorities for housing.
- Highlighted key issues and determined long term goals and priorities for housing in Colchester.
- Developed a Delivery Plan that sets out the actions to achieve the priorities identified for the strategy.

4.3 The overarching vision for the new Housing Strategy is to:

Make Colchester a place where people choose to live in a decent, safe home which;

- *meets their needs,*
- *at a price they can afford and,*
- *in locations and neighbourhoods that are sustainable and desirable.*

Work to improve the quality of life of local residents.

4.4 The Partnership identified 8 key priorities for the Housing Strategy as detailed below:

- Maximise the supply of housing to meet local needs.
- Work with partners and residents to create mixed communities which are economically, environmentally and socially healthy and resilient.
- Prevent homelessness and rough sleeping.
- Improve the life chances of Colchester's residents including their Health and Wellbeing.
- Work with customers to help them make informed choices about their housing options.
- Make the best use of existing homes.
- Work to ensure that existing and new homes are healthy, safe and energy efficient.
- Ensure that housing and related services meet a range of specialist needs.

The new Housing Strategy makes clear links to both national and local strategies and policies and takes into account government legislation and initiatives.

Monitoring and Review

- 4.5 The new Housing Strategy describes how Colchester Borough Council intends to use its resources and work with and influence partners in the public and private sector to help achieve its strategic priorities.

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 on a regular basis.

A progress report on the Delivery plan will be produced annually and presented to the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Housing and circulated to key stakeholders.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 It is proposed that Cabinet adopt the Housing Strategy 2015 - 2020 and in doing so support the implementation of the delivery plan, which will deliver the strategy, within the timescales set out.
- 5.2 That Cabinet recommend to full Council that the Strategy be adopted as part of the Council's Policy Framework.

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 The Housing Strategy will help to achieve the following goals from the Council's Strategic Plan 2015 - 2018:
- Provide opportunities to increase the number of homes available including those that are affordable for local people and to build and refurbish our own Council houses for people in significant need.
 - Be clear about the major opportunities to work in partnership with public, private and voluntary sectors to achieve more for Colchester than we could on our own.
 - Cultivate Colchester's green spaces and opportunities for health, wellbeing and the enjoyment of all.
 - Ensure Colchester is a welcoming and safe place for residents, visitors and businesses with a friendly feel that embraces tolerance and diversity.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 The Housing Strategy has been the subject of consultation, including:
- An on-line survey with residents and organisations on the key priorities for the Housing Strategy (with paper copies available on request).
 - A workshop session with Colchester Borough Council Tenants and Leaseholders to capture their views on the proposed priorities.
 - An opportunity for key stakeholders to comment on the draft Housing Strategy, Evidence Base and Delivery Plan.
 - An all Councillor and Board Member briefing session.
 - An opportunity for Colchester Borough Homes Board 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.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 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.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 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 Partnership they have already helped to shape the strategy and shown their commitment to its delivery.

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment on the Housing Strategy has been completed and a link to the document can be found below.

<http://www.colchester.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=17028&p=0>

11. Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 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

There are no Health and Safety implications.

13. Risk Management Implications

There are no risk management implications

Appendices:

Housing Strategy Brief Summary

Housing Strategy Delivery Plan 2015 - 2020

Background Papers

Housing Strategy 2015-2020

Evidence Base

Colchester's Housing Strategy 2015-2020

The Housing Strategy 2015 – 2020 provides an important summary of how the Council and its partners will achieve its **vision** to:

- Make Colchester a place where people choose to live in a decent, safe and healthy home which; meets their needs, at a price they can afford and in locations and neighbourhoods that are sustainable and desirable
- Work to improve the quality of life of local residents.

Achievements since the last strategy...

- Built a total of 4,573 market homes and 1,166 affordable homes to meet the housing needs of Colchester and its residents.
- Used our own land and assets to deliver the first new council homes in 20 years.
- Attracted grant funding of £27.4 million into the borough as well as investing £537,000 of our own funding and £1.06 million of S106 commuted sums to enable the delivery of new affordable homes.
- Completed and published a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) in 2014.
- Developed a Strategic Tenancy Strategy which set out our response to fixed and flexible tenancies and affordable rent.
- Developed a Financial Assistance policy to encourage landlords and owners of private sector property to keep it in good repair.
- Set up a number of initiatives to bring empty homes back into use.
- Achieved the Decent Homes Standard for the Council's own stock and invested over £34 million during the lifetime of the strategy.
- Produced a new Homelessness Strategy in 2014, in partnership with voluntary and statutory organisations.
- Achieved the Government target to halve the number of households in temporary accommodation by December 2010.
- Prevented 2,152 households from becoming homeless over the life of the strategy.
- Reviewed the Council's temporary accommodation for households who were homeless and as a result embarked on a programme to bring our temporary accommodation up to today's standards.
- Reviewed the Council's sheltered housing to make it fit for the future and fully refurbished two schemes.
- Promoted modern energy efficient building methods and ensuring homes consume fewer resources.

Key Priorities

Maximise the supply of housing to meet local needs by:

- Maximising the supply of affordable housing on new developments by Implementing Colchester's Local Plan.
- Delivering Market and Affordable Housing to meet housing need and demand.
- Ensuring that housing which is built is attractive and meets the needs of Borough residents, creating neighbourhoods and communities which are sustainable.
- Encourage new initiatives including housing products, which meet housing need and demand from affordable and social rented through to home ownership.
- Maximise the use of the Council's land and assets to deliver new housing by producing a Development Strategy.
- Continue to review the Council's existing sheltered housing stock to implement the Colchester Standard.
- Promote a positive message about the need for new housing and align with the need for Homelessness Prevention in the borough and the need for affordable housing of all tenures.
- Increase the role of the private rented sector in meeting housing need.

Work with partners and residents to create mixed communities which are economically, environmentally and socially healthy and resilient by:

- Working with local communities and the voluntary sector to improve information, access and support to facilitate integration into the local community.
- Delivering quality neighbourhoods and meet the infrastructure needs of proposed housing developments.
- Encouraging housing providers and other organisations to participate in Community Engagement.
- Create neighbourhoods and communities that are sustainable by working in partnership with residents, the voluntary sector and community organisations.
- Improve the external environment on the Council's housing estates by developing an Asset Management Strategy.
- Reduce and tackle anti-social behaviour in partnership with other agencies.

Prevent Homelessness and Rough Sleeping.

Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping are addressed in the Homelessness Strategy 2014 - 2019.

The key priorities identified in the Homelessness Strategy are:

- Preventing homelessness by sustaining tenancies
- Mitigating the negative impacts of welfare reform

- Improving the Health and Wellbeing of homeless people
- Changing the perception and culture of social housing through education – managing expectations
- Rough Sleepers

The delivery plan for the strategy can be found below:

<http://www.colchester.gov.uk/homelessnessstrategy>

Work in partnership to improve the Life Chances of Colchester's residents, including their health and well-being by:

- Improving the health & wellbeing of Colchester residents through greater integration of housing, health and social care services.
- Undertaking targeted activity to support the most vulnerable members of the community who live in the poorest quality housing. Demonstrating how housing improvements can have cost savings to the NHS and wider society as well as improving health.
- Providing advice and support with fuel debt relief and help to reduce fuel poverty.
- Maximising resources available for adaptations work by agreeing protocols with Registered Providers.
- Supporting and encouraging residents to take up work to lower the rates of unemployment in the Borough.
Increasing the employability skills of 25-35 year old entrenched unemployed in the most deprived wards in the borough.

Work with customers to enable them to make informed choices about their housing options by:

- Managing clients' expectations and provide support to enable them to resolve their housing issues.
- Ensuring that young people understand the housing options available to them and the risks of leaving home in an unplanned way.
- Increasing housing options in the private rented sector by encouraging, supporting and incentivising private landlords.
- Improving tenancy sustainment and work proactively with residents to provide advice and assistance around budgeting, work and debts
- Supporting residents affected by Welfare Reform by providing proactive support to those households that are affected.

Make the best use of existing homes by:

- Maximising the use of council homes and reducing under-occupation by using incentives to encourage tenants to downsize.
- Reducing the levels of overcrowding in affordable housing by encouraging and promoting the use of mutual exchange to tenants.
- Helping people whose independence may be at risk to remain in, or return to their home.
- Maintaining and where possible reduce the currently low levels of long term empty properties in the borough.
- Ensuring that houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) are safe and well managed.

Work to ensure that existing and new homes are healthy, safe and energy efficient by:

- Commissioning a Private Sector Stock Condition Survey.
- Encouraging private landlords & managing agents to provide good quality and well managed properties by Increasing the number and percentage of accredited landlords.
- Encouraging and support homeowners to maintain and repair their homes and introduce energy efficiency measures.
- Improving the Energy Efficiency of private sector housing in Colchester and contribute to a reduction of households in fuel poverty.
- Improving the energy efficiency of the Council's housing stock by implementing the Green Strategy, part of the Asset Management Strategy.
- Increasing the take up of the Government's Green Deal scheme across the borough.

Ensure that housing and related services meet a range of specialist needs by:

- Working in partnership with other providers to ensure a sufficient supply of housing for older people, including extra care.
- Ensuring a co-ordinated approach to supported housing across the council, social care and health.
- Identifying and supporting the need for adapted properties as part of new developments.
- Increasing the use of assistive technologies for Council tenants by publicising the benefits to tenants to remain in their own homes.

Housing Strategy Delivery Plan 2015 to 2020

1. Maximise the supply of housing to meet local needs.

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Who will do it
Deliver Market and Affordable Housing to meet housing need and demand	<p>Complete the full review of the Local Plan and produce a new plan which is in compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework.</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 affordable housing in rural areas.</p>	<p>Ensure the Council's planning policies are updated to provide a robust basis for guiding future growth in the Borough.</p> <p>Delivery of more affordable housing in rural areas of Colchester</p>	<p>Local Plan adopted 2017</p> <p>2015-2020</p>	<p>CBC Planning Policy Team</p> <p>CBC – Housing Strategy Team Parish Council's, RCCE, Registered Providers and private developers</p>
Maximise the supply of affordable housing on new developments	<p>Implement Colchester's Local Plan which seeks 20% 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>Influence the allocation of S106 contributions to ensure the delivery of affordable housing is maximised not compromised</p>	<p>Affordable housing target of 426 homes between 2015 and 2020.</p>	<p>2015-2020</p> <p>2015-2020</p>	<p>CBC – Affordable Housing Development Officer, Development Team, Planning Officers, Registered Providers</p>

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	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 HCA funding to help deliver more affordable units on new schemes</p>	<p>Different ways of delivering affordable housing</p> <p>Use the New Homes Bonus to deliver new affordable homes</p>	<p>2015 - 2020</p> <p>2015</p>	CBC Housing Strategy Manager, Affordable Housing Development Officer
Understand and identify the 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 the development of an Objectively Assessed Need 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>Consult with the University of Essex</p>	<p>Robust Objectively Assessed Need figure is established to inform production of the local plan</p> <p>5 year housing land supply is established and maintained which provides certainty for developers and ensures new</p>	<p>2017</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	CBC Planning Policy Team

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Who will do it
	<p>when assessing the demand for housing to ensure student needs are addressed.</p> <p>Consult with the Adaptations Manager to consider the building of specially adapted properties to accommodate those with specific needs.</p>	<p>development happens in the right locations</p> <p>Ensure that housing delivered in the market is attractive and meets the needs of Borough residents, creating neighbourhoods and communities which are sustainable. Particular groups include larger families, older people and supported housing for vulnerable people.</p>		CBC Housing Strategy Team
Encourage new initiatives, including housing products, which meet housing need and demand between affordable rented and home ownership.	<p>Implement Colchester's Planning Policies which seek 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>A range of products and initiatives available to meet housing need</p> <p>A fully functioning housing ladder where demand meets supply at a price that is affordable to households in Colchester.</p>	<p>2015-2020</p> <p>2015/2016</p> <p>2015 -2020</p>	CBC Affordable Housing Development Officer
Maximise the use of the Council's land and assets to	Produce a development strategy which sets out the Council's	Delivery of new housing on Council	2015/16	Housing Development

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Who will do it
deliver new housing.	<p>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>	owned sites to increase housing numbers	2015-2020	<p>Officer</p> <p>Joint CBC/CBH Asset Management Group, Housing Development Officer</p>
Continue to review the Council's existing sheltered housing stock to implement the Colchester Standard	<p>Carry out major refurbishment of the Sheltered Housing Stock identified in the 2010 Review.</p> <p>Review the remaining Sheltered housing stock through condition surveys and assessing their viability</p>	<p>Colchester Standard achieved on all schemes identified</p> <p>Up to date surveys and viability assessments completed on schemes.</p>	<p>1st scheme completed March 2015.</p> <p>2nd scheme starting April 2015</p> <p>Annual reviews</p>	CBH Asset Management Team
Promote a positive message about the need for new housing and align with the need for Homelessness Prevention in the borough and the need for affordable housing of all tenures	Publicise the community and economic benefits of new homes and the need for housing to meet local needs through press releases, consultation, committee reports	A better understanding amongst residents as to why additional housing is required	2015-2020	Communications Team, Planning Policy, Registered Providers
Increase the role of the private rented sector in meeting	Improve access for those who traditionally face barriers to the	Increased provision of Private Rented homes	2015-2020	CBH - Housing options Team, CBC – Private

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Who will do it
housing need	private rented sector (PRS) Work with landlords to improve the sometimes poor image of the PRS through implementing the Essex wide landlord accreditation scheme	to meet housing needs Landlord Accreditation scheme implemented and perception of the PRS improved	2015/16	Sector Housing Team, Private Landlords

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2. Work with partners and residents to create mixed communities which are economically, environmentally and socially healthy and resilient

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Who will do it
Facilitate integration into the local community for the incoming population.	Work with local community and voluntary sector to improve information, access and support (especially ethnic minorities)	Community groups set up. Incoming population successfully integrated into the community	2015-2020	CBC Community Initiatives Team
Deliver quality neighbourhoods with adequate infrastructure.	<p>Inform and consult the relevant infrastructure providers including education services of proposed housing developments so they have the opportunity to comment and influence outcomes.</p> <p>Work in partnership with ECC and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) to deliver integrated and sustainable transport projects</p>	<p>High quality communities</p> <p>Projects delivered – Infrastructure needs met</p>	<p>2015-2020</p> <p>2015-2020</p>	CBC Planning Policy and Transportation Team, Development Management, Community Development Team
Encourage Community Engagement with housing providers and other organisations	Introduce a co-ordinated approach to community engagement with voluntary sector and housing providers	<p>Community projects established</p> <p>Projects delivered including Crucial Crew for older and young</p>	2015-2018	Police, Crime Commissioners, CCVS,CBH, Registered Providers

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Who will do it
		people.		
Create neighbourhoods and communities which are sustainable	<p>Develop partnerships with residents, the voluntary sector, community organisations and wider local service providers, especially on new housing schemes/developments.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the Community Police to implement new legislation from the ASB Police and Crime Act and undertake enforcement action as necessary</p> <p>Maximise employability funding from the SELEP to support the Economic Growth Strategy</p>	<p>Partnerships set up</p> <p>Continue to hold events including 'Days of Action' and 'Make a difference day', to bring communities together. (8 make a difference days held a year)</p> <p>Funding bids submitted and agreed</p>	<p>2017</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>2020</p>	<p>Zone Wardens, Community Police, Community Initiatives, CBH, Registered Providers, CBC – Private Sector Housing, Environmental Protection, Animal Services.</p> <p>CBC - Economic Growth Team, Enterprise and Tourism Team</p>
Improve the external environment on the Council's housing estates	<p>Develop an Estate Management Strategy for the external environment within the Council's housing estates</p> <p>Complete a pilot project at Scarfe Way to test the impact of improvements around blocks of flats.</p>	<p>Estate Management Strategy produced with recommendations that can be implemented</p> <p>Pilot project completed</p> <p>Results of the pilot used to inform an ongoing estate improvement</p>	2017	Zone Wardens/CBH

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Who will do it
		programme		
Reduce and tackle anti-social behaviour in partnership with other agencies	<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 change their behaviour</p> <p>Provide support to witnesses and victims of antisocial behaviour</p>	Reduction in antisocial behaviour	2015-2020	CBH anti-social behaviour team, Neighbourhood action panels, Police, CBC Community Initiatives Team, Environmental Protection, Animal Services.

3. Prevent homelessness and rough sleeping

Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping are addressed in our Homelessness Strategy 2014-2019. The Delivery plan for the strategy can be found by following the link below:

<http://www.colchester.gov.uk/homelessnessstrategy>

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	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 Officer
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.	2019/2020	Housing Strategy Officer

4. Work in partnership to improve the Life Chances of Colchester's residents, including their health and well-being

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Who will do it
Improve health & wellbeing of Colchester residents through greater integration of housing, health and social care services.	Engage with partner services and identify opportunities for joint working and service delivery to tackle housing as a long term barrier to health.	Joint working established between housing, health and social care	2015-18	CBC Private Sector Housing, Registered Providers Essex County Council
	Explore opportunities for additional Public Health funding.			NEE CCG
	Establish effective multidisciplinary care/referral pathways	Pathways established and referral processes improved	2015-2020	
	Reduce the number of home hazards most likely to have a negative impact on residents' health and safety.	Home hazards reduced by 300 per annum	2015 - 2020	
	Work with local community and voluntary sector organisations to improve information, access and support for household health checks.	Regular Forums established, Tenancy audits in place to identify vulnerable tenants	2015-2020	Customer Services Solutions, Private Sector Housing
Undertake targeted activity to support the most vulnerable	Establish and pilot new referral pathways between Private Sector	Pathways established	2014-16	CBC Private Sector Housing,

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Who will do it
members of the community who live in the poorest quality housing containing Category 1 and significant Category 2 hazards	<p>Housing & Customer Support Team</p> <p>Work with Clinical Commissioning Group and Health and Social Care Services through the Care Closer to Home Strategy to tie Environmental Health into care planning and patient discharge to</p>	<p>Progress to achieving an annual target of improving 300 dwellings occupied by vulnerable people including those with long term health conditions.</p> <p>Facilitate quick and ready access to services which resolve property-related barriers to returning to/staying at home.</p>		<p>Registered Providers</p> <p>NEE CCG</p> <p>ECC ACE</p>
Achieve cost savings to the NHS and wider society as a result of housing improvements on health.	Purchase housing health cost calculator and populate with data for each intervention or housing assistance case where housing hazards have been removed.	£80,000 NHS Cost savings delivered annually	<p>Cost calculator purchased 2014</p> <p>Cost saving ongoing</p>	CBC Private Sector Housing
Reduce fuel poverty in the borough.	<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 fuel tariff/debt advice.</p>	<p>Increased take up of Warm Home discount.</p> <p>Reduction in fuel poverty in the borough</p>	<p>2015-2020</p> <p>2015-2020</p>	<p>CBC Private Sector Housing</p> <p>CBC – Community Initiatives Team, Voluntary sector Energy suppliers Energy Savings Trust</p>

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Who will do it
	<p>Signpost customers to Green Deal offers and measures available.</p> <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>	<p>Removal of 80 Excess Cold hazards in privately rented and owner occupied homes per annum.</p>	<p>2015 onwards</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	
Maximise resources available for adaptations work	Develop a protocol with RPs which sets out their financial contributions towards adaptations in properties they own for their tenants.	Protocol developed and contributions by RP's are implemented.	2015/16	CBC – Private Sector Housing, Registered Providers
A proactive approach to dealing with dampness and condensation in flats '.	Work with Registered providers and Green Deal providers to identify and improve dwellings through building fabric and behaviour change interventions	<p>Accommodation with damp and condensation problems identified and improved.</p> <p>Damp & Mold hazards mitigated</p> <p>NHS Cost Savings established</p>	<p>Pilot properties identified 2015</p> <p>2018</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Private Sector Housing</p> <p>Registered Providers</p> <p>Green Deal Providers</p>

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	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 for advice, support and networking Develop education, employment and training opportunities for council tenants and other residents	Work clubs set up; premises and volunteers to run them identified	Ongoing	Community Initiatives Team CBH
	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	Unemployment reduced	Ongoing	CBH/CBC Customer Services Solutions.
Increase the employability skills of 25-35 year old entrenched unemployed in St Andrews and surrounding area	Implement Resilience Hub based in Greenstead Housing Office to offer training, work placements and motivational courses	Increase in 25-35 year olds into employment.	2015/2016	DWP, CBC,CBH, Colne Housing, GO4, Signpost, Children Centres and Family Solutions
Encourage better links between housing and crime prevention	Work with organisations to continue to arrange and hold events including; Terry's Army Days/Local ASB Forum/ASB Partnership event.	Events held quarterly	2015-2020	Colchester Borough Homes/Open Road/Police/Catch 22
	Make homes safer and reduce the fear of crime through mitigation of 'entry by intruder' hazards under the provisions of the Housing	Safer homes and reduction in fear of crime – Category 1 & significant category 2	2015-2020	CBC – Private Sector Housing Team

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Who will do it
	<p>Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).</p> <p>Provision of Home Security Grants to lower income households for urgent home security works</p>	<p>'entry by intruder' hazards removed.</p> <p>Minimum 20 'entry by intruder' hazards removed per year by formal or informal enforcement action</p>		
Prevent and reduce Domestic Abuse	Work in partnership with Essex County Council to develop a Domestic Abuse Strategy for Essex	Domestic Abuse Strategy produced and implemented	2015	CBH, ECC, Registered Providers

5. Work with customers to help them make informed choices about their housing options

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Who will do it
Manage customers' expectations and enable them to help themselves	Work with the CBC Customer Service Centre to help promote self serve	More customers able to self-serve More efficient service Financial savings	2015/16	CBH - Housing Options Team, Customer Services Solutions, CBC- Private Sector Housing
Ensure that young people understand the housing options available to them and the risks of leaving home in an unplanned way	Work in partnership with schools in the borough to educate young people and their parents about their housing options and the risks of leaving home in an unplanned way. Publicise COYOHO (Colchester Young Persons Housing) website which offers advice and information for young people on Housing problems.	School projects set up so young people are more informed about housing. Publicised to organisations and groups via e-mail and Social Media	Ongoing 2015/16	Yes/CCVS/Age UK/TACMEP/CBH – Housing Options Team Community Initiatives Team
Increase housing options in the private rented sector encouraging, supporting and incentivising private landlords	Set up a quarterly Landlords Forum Continue to offer a rent bond to landlords to provide affordable rented accommodation and to ensure housing standards are suitable.	Landlords Forum set up and good attendance maintained Increase in use of the Private Rented Sector – Monitor take up	Ongoing	CBH - Housing Options Team Lettings Officer, Private Sector Landlords, CBC – Private Sector Housing Team.

	Deliver housing standards regulation and management training to Private Sector Landlords.	Training delivered – better informed and broadly compliant landlords.	2015-16	
Support residents affected by Welfare Reform	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 agenda.	More residents supported and where appropriate alternative housing options identified.	2015-2020	Housing Options Team, CBH, Customer Services Solutions.
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	Increase in take up of workshops. Reduction in the take up of discretionary funds	2015-2020	CBH – Housing Options Team /Supported Housing Organisations/CBH - Tenant Support Officers

6. Make the best use of existing homes

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Who will do it
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 exchange, to better meet tenants housing needs including a mutual exchange fair where tenants from all landlords in Colchester can be matched to more suitable properties</p> <p>Continue to carry out tenancy audits to ensure tenancy fraud is minimised</p> <p>Ensure the Council's Sheltered Housing Stock is appropriately maintained in accordance with the Colchester Standard.</p> <p>Maximise take-up of sheltered housing through the major refurbishment programme to</p>	<p>Tenant Incentive Scheme implemented and more under occupied households using the scheme.</p> <p>Mutual exchange publicised and an increase in the number of households moving through the scheme. In 2013-14 there were 114.</p> <p>Target of 300 Tenancy audits completed a year. Tenancy fraud reduced.</p> <p>All stock meets Colchester Standard</p> <p>Reduction in sheltered voids.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>5 year and 30 year plan</p>	<p>CBH – Housing Options Team, Tenant Support Officers, Registered Providers</p> <p>CBH – Property Services</p>

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Who will do it
	free up under-occupied properties			
Reduce levels of overcrowding in affordable housing	Promote the use of mutual exchange, to better meet tenants needs (see action above)		Ongoing	CBH Housing Options, Housing Management Teams, Registered Providers
	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.	Ongoing	CBC – Private Sector Housing Team
Help people whose independence may be at risk to remain in or return to their home in both the private and public sector properties.	Increase use of the disabled adaptations in CBC properties to encourage independent living amongst older residents and residents with a disability	Increase in planned and unplanned adaptations 100% spend of DFG budget allocation	Ongoing	CBH Adaptations Manager, Registered Providers
	Respond to recommendations from ECC Occupational Therapy service to process Disabled Facilities Grants in private sector properties.			
	Participate and influence the recommissioning process for Home Improvement Agency services by ECC in 2015.	New HIA service or alternative provision in place from 2015	2015	CBC – Private Sector Housing with Home Improvement Agency support ECC

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Who will do it
	Provide advice on welfare benefits to older people to help them maximise their income and remain in their own home.	Increase in older people able to remain in their own home	Ongoing	CBC Welfare Rights Team
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 affect 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	CBC Private Sector Housing, Registered Providers

7. Work to ensure that existing and new homes are healthy, safe and energy efficient

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Who will do it
Target the work we do to improve homes in the private sector based on evidence and the best information	Commission stock condition survey to provide evidence base and influence future service planning and delivery activities. Purchase Housing Health Costs Calculator	Survey and final report completed and implemented HHCC purchased and in use to demonstrate savings to society resulting from housing interventions	2015/16 2015	Private Sector Housing Team
Encourage private landlords & managing agents to provide good quality and well managed properties	Adoption & Development of Essex Landlord Accreditation Scheme (ELAS) and Colchester's Student Accommodation Accreditation Scheme (SAAS) Review and improve housing conditions through the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS) under the provisions of the Housing Act 2004 Part 1 Support landlords towards provision of broadly compliant housing accommodation through improved	Increase number and percentage of accredited landlords through ELAS and Colchester's Student Accommodation Accreditation Scheme (SAAS) Category 1&2 hazards removed. Minimum of 300 per annum. Update website with self-serve information.	Ongoing 2015 onwards 2015	CBC - Private Sector Housing Team ELAS Local Authority Consortium. Essex University CBC – Private Sector Housing Team

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	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.	Landlord training delivered. Participation in Landlord Forums and other similar events.	Ongoing	
Ensure that houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) are safe and well managed	<p>Develop knowledge of the number and location of private HMOs in Colchester.</p> <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 where landlords fail to licence properties as necessary.</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>	<p>2020</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	CBC - Private Sector Housing, Private Landlords
Encourage & Support homeowners to maintain and repair their homes and	Remove and mitigate significant hazards and fund energy efficiency improvements where no alternative	Improvement in energy efficiency of properties.	2015/16	CBC - Private Sector Housing

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Who will do it
introduce energy efficiency measures.	<p>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>	More grants and loans provided for property improvements.	2015/16	
Improve the Energy Efficiency of private sector housing in Colchester and contribute to a reduction of households in fuel poverty	<p>Undertake Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) excess cold assessments and take appropriate action to ensure dwellings have an effective and affordable means of heating.</p> <p>Provide fuel poverty advice to households & signpost customers to income maximisation and fuel tariff advice.</p>	<p>80 excess cold hazards removed through formal/informal enforcement and financial assistance per annum.</p> <p>Promotional events and activities organised relating to the promotion of energy efficiency and renewable energies available to the domestic market.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>CBC - Private Sector Housing</p> <p>Energy/Green deal suppliers</p> <p>CBC - Community Initiatives Team</p>
Increase the take up of the government's Green Deal scheme across the borough, encouraging and supporting residents to make	Working in partnership with Green Deal installers to make direct contact with households, hold information session to allow residents to find out more about	<p>Information sessions held and grant funding accessed.</p> <p>Use existing funding and identify or draw</p>	2015/16	Community Initiatives Team, CBC Private Sector Housing

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Who will do it
improvements to their home increasing energy efficiency, and reducing fuel bills.	insulating their homes and where possible grant funding may be available. Use social media to promote Green Deal opportunities.	down available ECO or Green Deal funding. More residents benefit/make savings by joining the Green Deal		
Improve the energy efficiency of the Council's housing stock	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.	2020	CBH Asset Management
	Utilise the Government's and the EU's energy grant and incentive schemes to maximise the amount of measures available to individual properties within the stock.		Ongoing	CBH Energy Initiatives Officer
	Continue the Solar PV installation programme with private investors to ensure every viable property within the housing stock has PV installed.	PV Panels installed, tenants save money on fuel bills.	Ongoing	CBH Asset Management
	Include energy saving measures within the Colchester standard and ensure procurement includes measures within specifications where appropriate.		Ongoing	CBH Asset Management


What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Who will do it
Understand the viability of implementing new energy efficiency measures for the Council's housing stock	Energy assessments to be carried out on all properties with the Housing Stock.	Assessments completed, better understanding of costs to inform what new measures are implemented.	2019	CBH Project Surveyor (Energy)

DRAFT

8. Ensure that housing and related services meet a range of specialist needs

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Who will do it
Work in partnership with other providers to ensure a sufficient supply of housing for older people including extra care.	Work with ECC to identify funding available and delivery options. Use information from the SHMA to identify the needs and aspirations of older people, where they want to live and type of accommodation	Funding Identified Needs and aspirations of older people identified and provision made within the Local Plan for suitable sites	Ongoing	CBC Housing Strategy Team, Housing Development Officer
Ensure a co-ordinated approach to supported housing across the council, social care and health	Continue to work with ECC and attend the Housing, Health and Social Care Forum to influence commissioning of supported housing and support services where possible. Review existing supply of supported housing in the borough including access to and support options.	Increase/improvement in supported housing and support services for Colchester. Directory of support services updated. Supported housing supply identified to inform commissioning process.	Ongoing Ongoing	CBC Housing Strategy Team
Identify and support the need for adapted properties as part of new developments	Negotiate the provision of homes built to wheelchair standards on sites where affordable housing is being provided	Increase in the number of wheelchair standard properties	Ongoing	CBC Housing Strategy Team
Increase use of assistive technologies for Council tenants.	Publicise the benefits of assistive technology to tenants to enable them to remain in their own homes.	More tenants using the service	2017	CBH

DRAFT

Report of	Head of Commercial Services	Author	Holly Brett
Title	Future Phases of New Build Council Housing		 01206 508830
Wards affected	Not Applicable		

This report concerns the next proposed phase of Council house new build together with a recommended approach to the delivery of further phases.

1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To note work carried out to date to create a pipeline of sites for future housing development
- 1.2 To approve the recommended next phase of Council house new build sites and associated pre development work to include design, planning, feasibility testing and exploring procurement and delivery routes
- 1.3 To note that further phases of new build will be established following the completion of a development strategy which will seek to create a fast tracked pipeline of future development sites and recommend appropriate financing and delivery methods. The completed strategy will be brought to a future Cabinet meeting for approval.
- 1.4 To delegate to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Public Protection the authority to approve procurement relating to “phase 2” new build including the appointment of the principal contractor for the development.

2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 As the first phase of new build sites comes to a successful completion, there is a need to continue with the Councils house building programme to provide more affordable homes in the borough for residents. The second phase provides for circa 25 new homes (to be confirmed following further site and planning investigations) over a 2 year development period.
- 2.2 The development strategy is required to comprehensively review all potential sites within the HRA and the general fund, if appropriate, to ensure a consistent pipeline of Council build sites is available over the medium to long term. It is therefore inextricably linked to the Asset Management Strategy which Colchester Borough Homes have developed and will include information on delivery models, funding sources including cross subsidy, type of housing versus housing need
- 2.4 By delegating authority to the Portfolio Holder for the procurement of services required, delivery of the next stage in implementation can be moved forward in a timely manner.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 One alternative option would be to rely on registered providers to deliver all affordable homes in the borough either on their own sites, S106 sites or land given the by the Council and support this by providing them with grant funding. This would mean that the Council would not directly develop or own any new assets and would lose the asset of the land in the latter scenario. However, this could preserve HRA borrowing headroom for alternative priorities and would be a means of utilising retained Right To Buy receipts, which may otherwise be repayable to the Government in the future.
- 3.2 Phase 2 could be delayed until the wider development strategy has completed. However given the success of Phase 1 it is important to keep the pipeline of new build sites moving and Phase 2 will ensure units are delivered over the next two years whilst the findings of the strategy are reviewed and implemented.
- 3.3 It could be possible to continue to bring forward sites on an ad hoc basis however this approach may not necessarily make the best use of assets or capital funding available.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 In 2011 Cabinet approved a recommendation for Colchester Council to develop the first new Council homes in the borough for twenty years. This has led to thirty four new council homes being delivered on five garage sites across the borough.
- 4.2 During the construction of Phase 1 a working group was formed to look at the next phase in the development programme and seek to identify possible sites for future development. In June 2014 GVA Property Consultants were appointed to look at a select number of sites which helped to establish what the next phase of development might look like. Although from this work a clear next phase of sites was identified, it also became clear that the Council needed to look more holistically at all of its site ownership to generate maximum outputs, which has established to need for the development strategy.
- 4.3 This next phase of work concentrates on a small number of sites which could be brought forward quickly to deliver circa 25 sites. Some initial feasibility work has already been carried out on this phase which has included initial planning appraisal, desktop site studies and title investigations. Conversations have also been ongoing to establish the HRA funding position in relation to the new build proposals.
- 4.4 If Phase 2 is approved as the next programme of development, further work will be commissioned including initial design work, costings and funding mechanisms. Phase 2 is expected to produce in the region of 25 new affordable homes; however this is subject to further investigation and testing
- 4.5 The development strategy work will include some of the original sites considered by GVA but will also look at a much wider scope of assets within the HRA. Many of the sites previously considered have viability issues which means it might not be possible to bring them forward without a more strategic view. The strategy will set out a longer term pipeline of sites for Council house new build and will consider delivery methods including cross subsidy, ranges of tenures and vehicles for development.
- 4.6 The development strategy work will be procured externally as the necessary resource and expertise does not currently sit within the Housing Development team. It is

anticipated that the work will take up to three months before a further report can be brought back to Cabinet.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 It is proposed to develop circa 25 units (subject to final design process) on potentially three sites across the Borough. Further design and feasibility work will be carried out to establish the types of housing and construction on these sites.
- 5.2 An external specialist will be appointed to assist the Council in producing a Development Strategy that sets out a pipeline of future development sites for the next 5-10 years. The strategy will also consider and recommend appropriate methods of financing/funding and delivery models for the new programme. It will use lessons learnt from the Council's initial phase of Council house new build and test new innovative methods of delivery including construction types, tenures and external funding mechanisms. It is anticipated that a robust pipeline of future sites will further accelerate the Council's new build delivery programme.
- 5.3 It is proposed that the Portfolio Holder should have delegated authority to approve any procurement including the main build contractor related to Phase 2 delivery to enable to work to be progressed in a timely manner and in order to maintain the housing development programme which has been ongoing since the current garage site project commenced.

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 The project will meet the following objective in the Strategic Plan
"provide opportunities to increase the number of homes available including those that are affordable for local people and to build and refurbish our own Council houses for people in significant need"

7. Publicity and Consultation Considerations

- 7.1 As feasibility work on Phase 2 and future plans progress, consultation will take place with stakeholders and residents with the responses used to inform the planning, design and use of any future development
- 7.2 We have considered that a number of groups will be affected by the decision to move forward with Phase 2 of the new build programme. We will seek to consult with residents, members and key stakeholders at the earliest opportunity once we have a sufficient level of information to share. The format will likely be to hold public consultations with those affected invited well in advance and for the outputs from these consultations to be fed back to the consultation attendees, with communication throughout the process of development, as we have done with the current phase of developments, in order to keep all stakeholders informed.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 The initial costings for Phase 2, based upon a programme of circa 25 units, suggest that the development can be funded jointly from existing borrowing headroom in the HRA and 1-4-1 retained capital receipts from Right to Buy sales. The Housing Investment Programme agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 28th January 2015 included an allocation for the next phase of development. Assumptions have been made about the

ability to use retained Right To Buy receipts for this next phase, and therefore the mix between this as a source of funding and the use of remaining HRA borrowing headroom will become clearer once more detailed proposals are determined.

9. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

9.1 An EQIA for the Council New build project has been completed

<http://www.colchester.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=5629&p=0>

10. Community Safety Implications

10.1 It is anticipated that community safety in the areas which are currently bare sites will be improved by the new build.

11. Health and Safety Implications

11.1 As work progresses, especially during the construction phases, there will need to be a comprehensive strategy in place for managing Health and Safety onsite. Until that point there are limited Health and Safety implications for the next phase of work although any contractors carrying out site investigations will need to demonstrate in their methodology how health and safety will be managed..

12. Risk Management Implications

12.1 A comprehensive risk register will be developed as the next phase of feasibility is undertaken. Risks will be subject to ongoing management and monitoring through the Economic Growth Project Management process which includes regular reporting and escalation if required.

Background Papers

None

Report of	Head of Community Services	Author	Lucie Breadman
Title	Mercury Theatre Improvements		☎ 282726
Wards affected	Castle Ward		

This report concerns proposals relating to a match funding contribution towards improvements to the Mercury Theatre

1. Decisions Required

- 1.1. It is recommended that £80k be provided as match funding towards the improvements to the Mercury Theatre and that this be included in the budget and funded from a combination of the funds held by the New Theatre Trust and in the Mercury Reserve as set out in this report.

2. Reasons for Decisions

- 2.1 The Mercury Theatre has been successful in its Arts Council Funding bid and has been awarded £400,000 towards its £580,000 improvement project which will be completed in 2015/16. The bid was made with support from the Council and an indication was made that match funding would be provided. Without this it may not have been possible to bring in this external investment.
- 2.2 The Council, as corporate trustee, of the New Theatre Trust has responsibilities to repair and keep the Mercury Theatre premises in good condition (i.e. the fabric of the building).

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1. If the Council does not provide funding there will be a shortfall in the budget for the proposed works and the Mercury Theatre might not be able to take advantage of this external funding.
- 3.2. The Council could consider alternative sources of funding, however, no other specific budget allocations exist and as such new funding would be required.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1. The Mercury Theatre has an ambitious delivery plan for 2015 to 2018 which will benefit Colchester and mirrors a number of aspirations within Colchester Borough Councils own Strategic Plan. Key to its aims are the following overarching strategic themes:
 - **Creation of an outstanding theatre** that is a regional hub for creative talent development and has increased opportunities for children and young people to get involved.

- **Attraction of new audiences** and targets hard to reach communities with increased accessibility.
- **Transformation of the way they work** with new revitalised buildings that are secure for future generations and unlock new income and funding potential.

4.2. The capital redevelopment will enable some key improvements to the building including the following:

- Installation of new heating and air conditioning in the main house
- The installation of an accessible viewing platform for improved access and seating for disabled audience members (subject to structural survey)
- Upgrade and re-fit of the studio space, including air conditioning and sound proofing.

4.3. Many of these improvements are key to bringing the Theatre up to modern day expectations and are essential to accessibility in addition to supporting the strategic aims and ambitions in the Delivery Plan.

4.4. The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Licensing and Culture agreed to support the bid and indicated that match funding of £80k would be identified to support the redevelopment. Together with the Arts Council £400k and £100k of additional funding secured by the Mercury Theatre itself, the Council's £80k contribution makes up the total £580k anticipated spend.

4.5. The Council is the sole Corporate Trustee of the Colchester New Theatre Trust. The Mercury Theatre (and studio) is owned by the Trust and is leased to the Mercury Theatre Ltd. The lease specifies that the company is responsible for the vast majority of cost relating to the operation of the theatre and internal parts of the building with the Trust being responsible for the structural and exterior of the building.

4.6. There are two potential sources of finance for this project:-

- Funds held by the Trust
- The Mercury reserve

Trust funds

4.7. The accounts of the Trust are included within The Council Statement of Accounts. These show there are funds in total of £80k. It should be noted that no contributions have been made into the Trust, other than interest.

Mercury Reserve

4.8. In 1999/2000 the Council agreed to establish a Mercury Reserve. This was done as part of the recovery plan for the Theatre and specifically the need to improve the approach to the planned repairs and maintenance and investment. The purpose of the Reserve was reported as being to *'help provide for the major replacement of fixed equipment and fittings and the refurbishment of the premises, or part(s) of the premises or particular facilities, to ensure they are kept up to date in a competitive market place and to respond to new operating standards, trends of use and customer demands'*.

4.9. After an initial one off contribution of c£80k the reserve has been added to annually. On the basis of the budgeted contribution in 15/16 of £25k and the forecast position on known movements in this financial year there will be c£45k in the reserve.

- 4.10. While the funding that is available in the Trust and the Mercury Reserve are for the purpose of maintaining the building and making improvements the Council does need to consider its future liabilities, especially as both have been significantly reduced following expenditure on roof repairs carried out in 2013.
- 4.11. The parts of the building that are within the Council's responsibility under the terms of the current lease have been surveyed and building services are confident that the annual reserve (£25k per year) will cover the costs of the replacements and repairs that remain in the Council's responsibility for at least the next five years. Further, the current lease is for 10 years and The Mercury Theatre have indicated that they would like to re-negotiate this during 2015 at which time the Council will have an opportunity to consider the terms of any future lease, including liabilities and income in terms of the developing business.
- 4.12. In total there are sufficient funds in a combination of the funds held by the Trust and in Council's reserve to provide the contribution of £80k.
- 4.13. The Council recognises that this leaves a reduced overall balance across both accounts for longer term liabilities. As such this funding is realised with an expectation that funds will be replenished by the Mercury Theatre, over the next five years, either as part of a re-negotiated lease or from income brought about by the improvements being made.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 It is proposed that Cabinet:-
- (i) Agree to provide funding of £80k towards the Mercury Theatre improvements as match funding towards the £580k re-development being planned.
 - (ii) Agree that this is funded from a combination of the funds held by the Trust and in the Mercury Reserve.

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 The improvements included in the redevelopment of the Mercury Theatre will help to improve the cultural offer in Colchester for residents and visitors which has a direct link to the Council's priority of Vibrant. It will also offer skills development and learning opportunities which supports the Council's priority of Prosperous and will add to the tourism attractions available linked to the Thriving priority.

7. Publicity Considerations

- 7.1 The overall project and award of Arts Council Funding has been made public by the Mercury Theatre, there are no specific publicity considerations for the Council other than our support of the overall project and the benefits it will bring to Colchester.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 The report sets out that funding for Mercury Theatre improvements exists in a combination of the Mercury Reserve and funds held by the Trust, therefore, it will be possible to include the scheme in the budget or capital programme as appropriate.

9. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 9.1 There is no need for a separate Equality Impact Assessment for this decision. The match funding allocation supports a project that will bring about improvements in accessibility for disabled people when attending the Mercury Theatre.

10. Standard References

- 10.1 There are no particular references to consultation considerations; community safety; health and safety or risk management implications.

Background Papers

No Background papers

Report of	Assistant Chief Executive	Author	Sean Plummer ☎ 01206 282347
Title	Budgetary Provision for Street Lights		
Wards affected	All		

This report concerns a proposal to allocate funding to restore lighting in the Borough of Colchester between the hours of midnight and five

1. Decisions Required

- 1.1 To seek agreement with Essex County Council that street lighting is restored in the Borough of Colchester between the hours of midnight and 5am.
- 1.2 That, based on the outcome of these discussions and confirmation of funding requirements Cabinet agree:-
 - (i) to allocate £185,000 from the 2014/15 General Fund budget on the basis of the position set out in this report.
 - (ii) that this funding is provided for 2015/16 only
 - (iii) to note and support Essex County Council's pilot for LED lighting

2. Reasons for Decisions

- 2.1 Essex County Council is responsible for street lighting and introduced a part night lighting policy which was implemented in the Borough of Colchester in 2013.
- 2.2. It was agreed by the Leader of the Council at Full Council on 18 February 2015 that a paper be presented to Cabinet on the option of providing funding to restore lighting provision to that before the changes made by Essex County Council.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 The provision of street lighting is a responsibility of Essex County Council and accordingly Cabinet could decide to not allocate funding to restore this or to consider the matter as part of 2016/17 budget strategy.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The 2015/16 budget was agreed by Full Council on 18 February 2015. This did not include any allocation to restore street lighting and therefore it is necessary to consider other funding options.
- 4.2 We are nearing the end of the 2014/15 financial year and the latest forecast reported to Scrutiny Panel on 24 February 2015 showed a net underspend of £203k. This position

reflects a number of budget variances but the main reason is additional income, in particular from planning fees.

- 4.3. The budget position is reviewed monthly by officers and whilst there remains uncertainty and risk over the final outturn this position remains realistic based on current spending and income levels.
- 4.4. When Council considered the 2015/16 budget it was reported that it was expected that the 2014/15 outturn would be delivered within budget and the forecast balances position therefore reflected a neutral impact from the current year's figures.
- 4.5. It would therefore be possible for the Cabinet to agree a budget transfer (virement) of £185k based on the current outturn forecast without impacting on either the agreed 2015/16 budget or the reported balances position. The budget virement would be made in 2014/15 and then carried forward for use in 2015/16.
- 4.6. The approach outlines above would only resolve any funding for 2015/16. Should the Council wish to continue to fund the cost of street lighting it will be necessary to identify a budget for 2016/17 and beyond in the MTFF. Cabinet will be aware that there is a current forecast budget gap in 2016/17 of over £600k with further gaps of over £1m for each of the following two years. There is a level of risk and to these forecasts in particular given the uncertainty over future Government funding levels.
- 4.7. Essex County Council responded to the motion agreed by Full Council in December in respect of street lighting by saying that their strategy was to implement LED lighting after appropriate pilot studies.

5. Proposals

5.1 It is proposed that:-

- (i) the Council agree to restore lighting in the borough subject to confirmation of costs
- (ii) Subject to the above, £185k be allocated from the 2014/15 budget based on the current forecast net underspend and that this is carried forward to 2015/16.
- (iii) It is agreed that funding is made available for one year.
- (iv) Cabinet note the planned pilot study of LED lighting.

6. Strategic Plan References

6.1 The current Strategic Plan includes reference to working in partnerships to help tackle health and crime issues and also to improving our streets and local environment. The new Strategic Plan for 2015 – 2018 includes aims under the “Welcoming” theme such as ensuring Colchester is a welcoming and safe place.

7. Financial implications

7.1 The main financial considerations are set out within this report. The main areas of risk to highlight are:-

- (i) The proposed virement of £185k is affordable based on the forecast outturn position. Although we are near the end of the financial year there are number of transactions and adjustments which may impact on the final outturn
- (ii) As highlighted in this report there is no funding currently allocated for street lighting in the 15/16 budget or MTFF.

8. **Consultation and publicity, Equality, Diversity, Human Rights implications, Community Safety, Health and Safety Implications and Risk Management.**
- 8.1 This report concerns the possible funding of street lighting. As street lighting comes under the responsibility of Essex County Council there are no specific items to report on in relation to this decision


PETITIONS, PUBLIC STATEMENTS, QUESTIONS

(i) Have Your Say speakers

Date of Meeting	Details of Members of the Public	Subject Matter	Form of Response	Date Completed
Cabinet, 28 January 2015	Nick Chilvers	Financial performance of Leisure World; St James House	Written response provided by Cllr Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure, 4 February 2015	4 February 2015
Council, 18 February 2015	Joan Manhire	Colchester Fairtrade	Verbal response provided at the meeting by Cllr T. Young, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Licensing and Culture	18 February 2015
Council, 18 February 2015	Annesley Hardy	Future use of Essex County Hospital site	Written response by Cllr Hunt, the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy.	4 March 2015
Council, 18 February 2015	Andy Hamilton	Cultural Quarter/Firstsite	Verbal response provided at the meeting by Cllr T. Young, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Licensing and Culture	18 February 2015
Council, 18 February 2015	Nick Chilvers	Community Engagement; Environmental Sustainability Strategy	Verbal response provided at the meeting by Cllr Hunt, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy	18 February 2015

(ii) Petitions

Date petition received	Lead Petitioner	Subject Matter	Form of Response	Date Completed
No valid petitions received				

Report of	Assistant Chief Executive	Author	Matt Sterling
Title	Living Wage		 282577
Wards affected	Not applicable		

This report concerns extending Colchester Borough Council's commitment to the Living Wage to external contractors working on behalf of the Council

1. Decision Required

- 1.1 To agree that a requirement to pay the UK Living Wage as a minimum be included in new tenders for services provided by external contractors directly on behalf of the Council.

2. Reasons for Decision

- 2.1 Colchester Borough Council pays the national Living Wage as a minimum standard for all employees. This is an hourly rate which is set independently and calculated according to the basic cost of living in the UK, and it is higher than the national Minimum Wage. The Council introduced this in 2013 as part of its commitment to being a good employer, and is amongst the first councils to pay the Living Wage.
- 2.2 At present, the Council makes no such minimum provision for contractors providing services on behalf of the Council. This results in different levels of low pay protection for different people who provide Council services depending on their employment status. This decision would end that anomaly and extend the same protection to everyone providing Colchester Borough Council services, whether an employee or a contractor.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 The principal alternative to this decision would be not to extend the Living Wage to contractors. However, this would leave a significant number of people working on behalf of the Council with less protection than Council employees.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The Living Wage is set nationally and calculated to allow employees to cover the basic costs of living. It is reviewed annually in November, and employers have six months from the date of the announcement to implement the rise. Separate rates are set for London and the rest of the UK, with the current UK rate being £7.85 an hour.
- 4.2 Contractors from external private companies provide a wide range of services on behalf of Colchester Borough Council including grounds maintenance, printing, building maintenance, IT support, and cleaning. Unless staff have been transferred recently to these companies from the Council under the terms of the Transfer of Undertakings (Employment) regulations, we are unlikely to know the details of their pay. However, it is possible that some are already paid above the Living Wage.

- 4.3 When the Council seeks tenders for the provision of services from private companies, it includes a detailed list of contract conditions that all suppliers must meet to be considered or be successful. This decision would be enacted by including a requirement in these conditions that staff providing services on behalf of Colchester Borough Council, which results in them being on Council premises for two or more hours per week for eight or more consecutive weeks in the year, be paid the Living Wage as a minimum.
- 4.4 This support for the Living Wage also reflects the Council's Procurement Strategy 2015, and the Social Value Act's requirement "to consider how what is proposed to be procured might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the relevant area". Social value has been defined as "the additional benefit to the community from a commissioning/procurement process over and above the direct purchasing of goods, services and outcomes". The Act applies to public service contracts over the EU threshold (currently £173,934). The Council aims to go further, extending this principle to all new contracts involving staff, whether they exceed the EU threshold or not.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 To include a requirement to pay staff a minimum of the UK Living Wage in new tenders for services provided by external contractors on behalf of the Council, where staff are on Council premises for two or more hours per week for eight or more consecutive weeks in the year, and from 1 June 2015.

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 This decision contributes to achieving the commitment in the Strategic Plan 2015-18 to create the right environment for people to develop and flourish in all aspects of life both business and pleasure.

7. Publicity Considerations

- 7.1 The effect of this decision will be communicated with potential suppliers when we seek tenders for service delivery from contractors.

8. Financial implications


- 8.1 The cost of this decision is difficult to calculate as the number of contractors working on behalf of the Council changes over time, and because many will already be paid above the Living Wage. In the first instance the cost of this decision is borne by suppliers; and requiring this of all new suppliers, we would continue to seek tender proposals that represent the best value for the Council.

9. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 9.1 This decision would apply to all relevant contractors regardless of their age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, or religion or belief. As such there are no negative equality impacts. An Equality Impact Assessment can be found on the website by using the following path: how the council works/equality and diversity/equality impact assessments/corporate and financial management
- 9.3 This decision extends protection for low paid workers and does not have any negative effects on human rights.

10. Standard references

- 10.1 There are no particular references to consultation considerations; or community safety; health and safety or risk management implications.

Report of	Head of Commercial Services	Author	Michael Bennett
Title	Magdalen Street (former bus depot) disposal		 2109
Wards affected	New Town		

This report seeks approval of the winning bid recommendation following the open market advertising and bidding process that has taken place for the disposal of the Magdalen Street former bus depot

Key financial information is detailed in the confidential Part B of this report

1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To approve that the property is surplus to Council requirements and to approve the disposal of the property.
- 1.2 To approve the disposal of the property as recommended in the report on Part B of the agenda.
- 1.3 To delegate to the Strategic Director for Commercial and Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, the authority to agree the final disposal price and agree purchase, once negotiations have taken place with the shortlisted parties.

2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 The Magdalen St site has been used as a bus depot for a number of years by a succession of bus operators. Prior to being a bus depot the site was used as tram depot going back to the mid 19th Century. The site has become surplus to requirements as a new bus depot is being built at the Hythe.
- 2.2 The Magdalen Street area is examined by a planning brief which sets ambitions for the area to be regenerated with both residential and commercial development while improving the environment in terms of air quality and permeability. The disposal of the site will enable these planning ambitions to be brought forward.
- 2.3 The land transaction will bring an important capital receipt to the Council which has already been allocated for reinvestment under the Councils Revolving Investment Fund (RIF).

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 The Council could seek to accept a bid which is not conditional on planning or other factors. Whilst this may be suitable in order to dispose of the property quickly, it may not achieve the highest value and/or the best use of the site although it does remove some of the risks which surround a conditional disposal.

- 3.2 The Council could seek to use the property for other Council functions but as part of an ongoing review of operational property needs, the property has been considered and is not required as a service asset. It will therefore be declared surplus.
- 3.3 The Council could de-risk the site and invest in enabling the site by generating redevelopment proposals, carrying out site surveys i.e. contamination, asbestos etc. Securing a planning permission for a redevelopment and then marketing and disposing of the site. Given that a planning brief has been prepared outlining the parameters for redeveloping the site any enabling works the Council were to undertake would not add any value and would delay the disposal.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 Magdalen Street Bus Depot has been used as a transport depot by a succession of operators and leases more latterly First Essex Buses. First Essex Buses now occupy the site until September 2015 on a licence while the construction of the new bus depot at Haven Road is completed.
- 4.2 A planning brief has been prepared by the CBC Planning Policy Team seeking regeneration of the Magdalen Street area for mixed commercial and residential uses which would be assisted by disposal and redevelopment of the depot site.
- 4.3 Magdalen Street is within an air quality improvement area which could also be addressed by redevelopment of the site

5. Proposals

- 5.1 It is proposed to dispose of the site on a freehold basis to one of the shortlisted bidders following a process of evaluation of bids received. Bids have been scrutinised against set criteria which include site value generated, risks of conditional offers and future proposed use of the site.
- 5.2 A schedule of the bids received is attached to the confidential Part B of this report

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 The project will deliver against the key strategic plan objectives below:

Promote Colchester to attract further inward investment and additional businesses, providing greater and more diverse employment and tourism opportunities

Provide opportunities to increase the number of homes available including those that are affordable for local people and to build and refurbish our own Council houses for people in significant need

7. Consultation

- 7.1 The site itself has been widely marketed by the Council since January 2015.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 To date, no publicity has been carried out in respect of this site due to commercial confidentiality.

- 8.2 Any Planning Application will be made publically as part of any redevelopment that is to take place on the site

9. Financial implications

- 9.1 The detailed financial proposals associated with this disposal are enclosed in the confidential Part B of this report, including a schedule of all the bids received.

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 10.1 This project does not present a change to existing policy nor the introduction of any new policies.
- 10.2 This project does not have any direct implications for the Council regarding the Human Rights Act

11. Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 None identified at this stage

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 None identified at this stage

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 None

Appendix

None

Background Papers

Site Plan

Marketing Particulars

