

# Scrutiny Panel Meeting

**Grand Jury Room, Town Hall, High Street,  
Colchester, CO1 1PJ  
Monday, 16 January 2023 at 18:00**

**The Scrutiny Panel** examines the policies and strategies from a City-wide perspective and ensure the actions of the Cabinet accord with the Council's policies and budget. The Panel reviews corporate strategies that form the Council's Strategic Plan, Council partnerships and the Council's budgetary

guidelines, and scrutinises Cabinet or Portfolio Holder decisions which have been called in.

## **Information for Members of the Public**

### **Access to information and meetings**

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

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

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[www.colchester.gov.uk](http://www.colchester.gov.uk)

## Scrutiny Panel – Terms of Reference

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

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

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

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

**COLCHESTER CITY COUNCIL**  
**Scrutiny Panel**  
**Monday, 16 January 2023 at 18:00**

**The Scrutiny Panel Members are:**

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

Chairman  
Deputy Chairman

**The Scrutiny Panel Substitute Members are:**

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

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

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

**1 Welcome and Announcements**

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

**2 Substitutions**

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

**3 Urgent Items**

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

**4 Declarations of Interest**

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

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

**5 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

There are no minutes to approve at this meeting.

**6 Have Your Say! (Hybrid Panel Meetings)**

Members of the public may make representations to Panel meetings on any item on the agenda or any other matter relating to the business of the Panel. This can be made either in person at the meeting or by joining the meeting remotely and addressing the Council via Zoom. Each representation may be no more than three minutes. Members of the public wishing to address Scrutiny Panel remotely may register their wish to address the meeting by e-mailing [democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk) by 12.00 noon on the working day before the meeting. In addition, a written copy of the representation should be supplied for use in the event of technical difficulties preventing participation at the meeting itself.

There is no requirement to pre-register for those attending in person.

**7 Decisions taken under special urgency provisions**

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

**8 Cabinet or Portfolio Holder Decisions called in for Review**

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

**9 Items requested by members of the Panel and other Members**

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

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

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

**10 Local Government Association Peer Challenge Action Plan 9 - 48**

**11 Work Programme 2022-23 49 - 66**

## **12 Exclusion of the Public (Scrutiny)**

In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in accordance with The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended) to exclude the public, including the press, from the meeting so that any items containing exempt information (for example confidential personal, financial or legal advice), in Part B of this agenda (printed on yellow paper) can be decided. (Exempt information is defined in Section 100I and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

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





<b>Report of</b>	<b>Chief Operating Officer</b>	<b>Author</b> <b>Richard Block</b> <a href="mailto:Richard.block@colchester.gov.uk">Richard.block@colchester.gov.uk</a>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Local Government Association Peer Challenge Action Plan</b>	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All	

## 1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Scrutiny Panel is invited to consider the 25 January 2023 Cabinet report and make recommendations to the Cabinet meeting.

## 2 Reason for Scrutiny

- 2.1 To review the adequacy of the Council's response to the key recommendations made following the Local Government Association Peer Challenge.
- 2.2 To comment or make recommendations to the 26 January 2023 Cabinet meeting.

## 3 Reason for Cabinet Report

- 3.1 To ensure the Council responds appropriately to the key recommendations made by the Local Government Association Peer Challenge and in turn support the continuous improvement of how the Council is operated.

## 4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 To approved alternative actions to respond to the key recommendations of the Peer Challenge.



# Cabinet

25 January 2023

Item

Report of	Chief Operating Officer	Author	Richard Block <a href="mailto:richard.block@colchester.gov.uk">richard.block@colchester.gov.uk</a>
Title	Local Government Association Peer Challenge Report and Action Plan		
Wards affected	All wards		

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Local Government Association peer challenge process provides independent and external improvement support and challenge through a peer review, conducted by a team of councillors and senior officers from other local authorities.
- 1.2 Colchester City Council had a peer challenge in September 2022 and received the full report in November 2022. This report proposes an action plan to respond to the key recommendations from the Peer Challenge for consideration by Cabinet.

## 2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To consider the proposed action plan and approve it as the Council response to the key recommendations made the following the Peer Challenge.

## 3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 To ensure the Council responds appropriately to the key recommendations made by the Local Government Association Peer Challenge and in turn support the continuous improvement of how the Council is operated.

## 4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 To approved alternative actions to respond to the key recommendations of the Peer Challenge.

## 5. Background Information

- 5.1 The Local Government Association (LGA) offers all councils the opportunity to have a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC). This is free, and a tried and trusted 'critical friend' method of improvement.
- 5.2 The challenges faced by councils in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic are unprecedented. The CPC provides independent and external improvement support and challenge to not only assist councils' thinking about recovery but to also support those councils who wish to use this period to reset, reimagine and reinvent as well as rebuild.
- 5.3 Colchester invited a peer challenge team to conduct a peer challenge during the week starting 26 September 2022.
- 5.4 The team used the five core areas that are used for all peer challenges as the overarching areas for the review:
  1. **Local priorities and outcomes:** Are the Council's priorities clear and informed by the local context? Is the council delivering effectively on its priorities and achieving improved outcomes for all of its communities?
  2. **Organisational and place leadership:** Does the Council provide effective local leadership? Are there good relationships with partner organisations and local communities?
  3. **Governance and culture:** Are there clear and robust governance arrangements? Is there a culture of respect, challenge and scrutiny?
  4. **Financial planning and management:** Does the Council have a grip on its current financial position? Does the council have a strategy and a clear plan to address its financial challenges?
  5. **Capacity for improvement:** Is the organisation able to support delivery of local priorities? Does the Council have the capacity to improve?
- 5.5 In addition, the peer team were also asked to provide feedback on the following:

**Transformation and Organisational Development** – Colchester City Council needs to reset and realign its organisation to reflect resource pressures and significant changes in working arrangements to support residents effectively, as Colchester's communities grow.

**Regeneration and Growth** - Colchester, now a city, plays into some important strategic arrangements and has a strong place-based focus when exploring the opportunities ahead for devolution through the Levelling Up and Shared Prosperity Funds.

- 5.6 In conducting the peer challenge, the team deployed a hybrid approach with four days on site in Colchester but with some interviews conducted remotely. During this time, they gathered information and views from more than 45 meetings, in addition to further research and reading, meeting either virtually or in person with over 150 people across the period of the challenge.
- 5.7 The resulting full peer challenge report was previously published by the City Council and a copy can be seen at appendix A.
- 5.8 Key highlights included:
  - With the opportunities afforded by their plans for growth, the new Member and Officer

Leadership team and, most crucially, city status, the City Council and Colchester, the place is on the cusp of something great.

- Colchester City Council has good self-awareness and understands the communities it serves and the economy across the borough.
- Colchester has an incredible heritage and culture offer that competes nationally and Colchester City Council has worked hard over the years to develop resilient and productive relationships and partnerships to ensure this heritage and cultural offer can thrive.
- Colchester City Council is driven and has a strong desire for achievement and delivery, with fantastic people, including staff, councillors, and partners.

5.9 The report also identified 8 key recommendations as follows:

1. Focus on city status. Use this as an opportunity to galvanise partners, improve the borough's economic and cultural strength and raise the voice of Colchester;
2. Get a firmer grip on the capital programme – manage all risks and improve your planning to ensure you have appropriate strategic finance, programme and project capacity and the resources to deliver;
3. Co-design a compelling and longer-term place-based narrative/city vision to define Colchester for the future;
4. Strengthen your political and officer 'leaders of place' roles and look beyond Colchester – map your anchor institutions, partners and stakeholders;
5. Review your priorities and projects and refocus on delivering 'Brilliant Business As Usual' and strengthen your corporate resources;
6. Strongly consider whether changing your election cycle will help you achieve your goals, ambitions and deliver improved services for Colchester's communities;
7. Better define with your staff what 'hybrid working' means for CBC and provide a clear definition. Also, clarify how the new CBC values will be designed and embedded, communicating to staff how these define the Council and will help achieve Colchester's ambition; and,
8. Commission an independent review of Colchester Commercial Holdings Ltd, and its subsidiaries, also undertake an internal review of Colchester Borough Homes to assess whether the companies are realising the benefits they were established to deliver.

5.10 In order to further improve and maximise opportunities available to the Council, it is vital the key recommendations are responded to appropriately. A full proposed action plan has now been developed and is already being delivered against. This is shown at appendix B.

5.11 The action plan will be used to track progress and will also be a key document used by the Peer Challenge team when they conduct a follow up visit which is usually conducted 6 months after the original peer challenge.

5.12 In addition to the key recommendation, several other areas of advice were provided by the Peer Challenge Team. Although not part of the main recommendations covered in this report, this additional advice has also been captured and is being acted upon.

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

- 6.1 The peer challenge team identified a positive approach taken by the Council to equality and diversity making reference to an external audit commissioned to help improve in this area. The team also identified Colchester has a young, diverse and dynamic community and emphasised the Council should work to harness that diversity better.

## **7. Strategic Plan References**

- 7.1 Several of the key recommendations and findings of the peer challenge report will support the creation of the new strategic plan and subsequent delivery plan.

## **8. Consultation**

- 8.1 The consultative nature of the peer challenge process has meant that a broad group of staff, councillors and partner organisations have been involved and have contributed to the final recommendations. The action plan has also been developed in consultation with appropriate staff and Councillors.

## **9. Publicity Considerations**

- 9.1 An end-to-end publicity process has ensured that the peer challenge and resulting report have been widely publicised. Once the action plan is approved, it will also be publicised.

## **10. Financial implications**

- 10.1 Several of the recommendations will have financial implications which will need to be carefully considered e.g. external review of wholly owned companies. There will also be some additional initial costs in implementing the action plan and provision has been made in the 23/24 budget for these.

## **11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications**

- 11.1 Delivery against several of the recommendations from the peer challenge will have a positive direct and indirect impact on, health, wellbeing and community safety.

## **12. Environmental and Sustainability Implications**

- 12.1 There are no specific implications but in responding to the key peer challenge recommendations, the Council will have an even stronger focus on key priorities such Environment and Sustainability.

## **13. Health and Safety Implications**

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

## **14. Risk Management Implications**

- 14.1 In responding to the recommendations from the peer challenge the Council will be better placed to mitigate key strategic risks.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Peer Challenge Report

Appendix B – Peer Challenge Action Plan

**Background Papers**

None





# Colchester Borough Council

## Corporate Peer Challenge

26 – 29 September 2022

Feedback report





## Report Contents

1. <u>Executive summary</u>	<u>3</u>
2. <u>Key recommendations</u>	<u>6</u>
3. <u>Summary of peer challenge approach</u>	<u>7</u>
4. <u>Feedback</u>	<u>9</u>
5. <u>Next steps</u>	<u>23</u>

## 1. Executive summary

Following the May 2022 local government elections, Colchester Borough Council (CBC/the Council) has a new and strong political partnership in place with an administration consisting of an alliance between Liberal Democrat, Labour, and Green Councillors. This approach to political partnerships has served the Council well for many years and it is clear that the Strategic Plan for 2020-23 has maintained this and provided a strong focus for the Council.


CBC also has a new Chief Executive, who is quickly setting her own culture of people centred leadership alongside building her officer leadership team.

In November 2022, Colchester will become a city, presenting considerable opportunities for the economic and cultural development of the area. In addition, the CBC has ambitious plans with partners in Tendring District Council and Essex County Council, to deliver a 7,500 home Garden Community on Colchester's eastern border. They have also secured an £18.2m investment in the town centre through the Towns Fund and, with strategic partners, has a large capital investment programme including delivery of the Northern Gateway.

The peer team believes that with the opportunities afforded by their plans for growth, the new Member and Officer Leadership team and, most crucially, city status, the CBC and Colchester the place is on the cusp of something great.

CBC has good self-awareness and understands the communities it serves and the economy across the borough. Colchester has an incredible heritage and culture offer that competes nationally and CBC has worked hard over the years to develop resilient and productive relationships and partnerships to ensure this heritage and cultural offer can thrive. The Council has many compelling stories to tell about what it has achieved and should ensure it celebrates this both internally and externally.

It was clear during the corporate peer challenge that CBC is a driven Council and has a strong desire for achievement and delivery, with fantastic people, including staff, councillors, and partners. However, the drive for delivery would benefit from the focus that an overall vision and clear corporate delivery plan would bring. A corporate delivery plan would support CBC to refine its priorities and ensure sufficient resource is available to achieve its goals.



The peer team recommends that the Council along with its partners and communities quickly come together to discuss and agree what city status really means for Colchester. This approach will help inform the narrative and vision for Colchester the place. It will also enable the Council to develop a clear understanding of its priority areas and to subsequently undertake a stakeholder mapping exercise against them, identifying key anchor institutions, partners and stakeholders across the borough and beyond. This will enable the Council to focus on those areas that are of most benefit to the communities of Colchester.


The new leadership team also needs to maximise the opportunities that city status brings and seek to extend their focus beyond Colchester. For example, the Devolution/Local Government Reform (LGR) agenda is very live in Essex and requires immediate attention. CBC needs to quickly agree its position to ensure it can advocate for a deal that works for Colchester. The peer team understands that to undertake this activity appropriately the Council will need to identify the required resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its ambitions whilst maximising the opportunities that Devolution/LGR can bring.

CBC has an impressive and very well engaged set of partners. Many of these partners consider CBC to “punch above its weight” and provides the “glue” that holds them together. The NE Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance is an exemplar and should be used as a tool and model to guide your approach to further develop your key stakeholder relationships.

We heard throughout the CPC that resources and capacity across the council are stretched and that in some areas this is impacting on performance. There is, therefore, an urgent need to refocus on delivering ‘Brilliant Business As Usual’ services that maintain the high standards expected by the communities of Colchester.

One area the peer team recommends the Council urgently addresses is its capital programme. With the current external financial environment this has never been more important.

The senior leadership team and Cabinet should undertake an urgent review of the entire capital programme and, as part of this review, consider all the risks including commercial risk to projects or programmes.



To enable the Council to deliver its ambitious agenda it must, as a matter of urgency, implement changes to improve planning, prioritisation, management, oversight and delivery of all capital projects and programmes.

The Council's housing stock of 5,905 homes is managed by an arm's length housing management organisation, Colchester Borough Homes (CBH). The Council's wholly owned group of commercial companies Colchester Commercial Holdings Ltd (CCHL) is delivering on the Council's commercial trading, housing and energy activities.

CBH has been operating since 2003 and it would be timely to undertake an internal review to understand if there is an overlap between Council services and the work of CBH.

CCHL and its three subsidiaries has been operating for over four years and, and whilst delivery has no doubt been impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic, it is recommended that an independent review is commissioned to assess whether the companies are realising the benefits they were established to deliver, that the risks associated with the companies are understood and that the governance arrangements are robust.

There is a lack of clarity how about what hybrid working will mean for the Council when the Council's headquarters Rowan House reopens. The Council needs to define what 'hybrid' means for Colchester and provide a clear definition and communication of where the Council aims to be, and what this means for staff.

Finally, the peer team heard from a wide range of both internal staff and councillors and external partners and stakeholders, including business partners, that the current election cycle of election by thirds, is holding back the Council and making it difficult to make the tough decisions that are needed. The peer team therefore strongly encourages CBC to consider whether moving to a quadrennial election cycle may help build stability.

## 2. Key recommendations

There are number of observations and suggestions within the main section of the report, but following completion of this corporate peer challenge the peer team recommends that Colchester Borough Council should urgently:

1. Focus on city status. Use this is an opportunity to galvanise partners, improve the borough's economic and cultural strength and raise the voice of Colchester;
2. Get a firmer grip on the capital programme – manage all risks and improve your planning to ensure you have appropriate strategic finance, programme and project capacity and the resources to deliver;
3. Co-design a compelling and longer-term place-based narrative/city vision to define Colchester for the future;
4. Strengthen your political and officer 'leaders of place' roles and look beyond Colchester – map your anchor institutions, partners and stakeholders;
5. Review your priorities and projects and refocus on delivering 'Brilliant Business As Usual' and strengthen your corporate resources;
6. Strongly consider whether changing your election cycle will help you achieve your goals, ambitions and deliver improved services for Colchester's communities;
7. Better define with your staff what 'hybrid working' means for CBC and provide a clear definition. Also, clarify how the new CBC values will be designed and embedded, communicating to staff how these define the Council and will help achieve Colchester's ambition; and,
8. Commission an independent review of Colchester Commercial Holdings Ltd, and its subsidiaries, also undertake an internal review of Colchester Borough Homes to assess whether the companies are realising the benefits they were established to deliver.

### 3. Summary of the peer challenge approach

#### The Peer Team


Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The make-up of the peer team reflected the focus of the peer challenge and peers were selected based on their relevant expertise. The peers were:

- Lead Member Peer – Cllr Steve Darling, Torbay Council
- Chief Executive Peer – Donna Nolan, Watford Borough Council
- Member Peer – Cllr Natalie McVey, Malvern Hills District Council
- Member Peer – Cllr Steve Siddons, Scarborough Borough Council
- Officer Peer – Verna Connolly, Hastings Borough Council
- Officer Peer – Claire Upton-Brown, New Forest District Council
- Peer Challenge Manager – Gary Hughes, LGA
- Project Support Officer – Rachel Stevens, LGA

#### Scope and focus

The peer team considered the following five themes which form the core components of all corporate peer challenges. These areas are critical to councils' performance and improvement:

1. **Financial planning and management** - Does the council have a grip on its current financial position? Does the council have a strategy and a plan to address its financial challenges?
2. **Local priorities and outcomes** - Are the council's priorities clear and informed by the local context? Is the council delivering effectively on its priorities?
3. **Organisational and place leadership** - Does the council provide effective local leadership? Are there good relationships with partner organisations and local communities?
4. **Governance and culture** - Are there clear and robust governance arrangements? Is there a culture of challenge and scrutiny?
5. **Capacity for improvement** - Is the organisation able to support delivery of local priorities? Does the council have the capacity to improve?



In addition, CBC asked the peer team to provide feedback on the following:

6. **Transformation and Organisational Development** – CBC needs to reset and realign its organisation to reflect resource pressures and significant changes in working arrangements to support residents effectively, as Colchester's communities grow.
7. **Regeneration and Growth** - Colchester, now a city, plays into some important strategic arrangements and has a strong place-based focus when exploring the opportunities ahead for devolution through the Levelling Up and Shared Prosperity Funds.

### **The peer challenge process**

Peer challenges are improvement focused; it is important to stress that this was not an inspection. The process is not designed to provide an in-depth or technical assessment of plans and proposals or to undertake a forensic analyses of CBC's financial situation. The peer team used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and reviewed this through a strategic lens.

The peer team prepared by reviewing a range of documents and information, including a Position Statement prepared by CBC, to ensure they were familiar with the council and the challenges it is facing.

The team deployed a hybrid approach with four days on site in Colchester but with some interviews conducted remotely. During this time, they gathered information and views from more than 45 meetings, in addition to further research and reading, meeting either virtually or in person with over 150 people across the period of the challenge.

This report provides a summary of the peer team's findings. In presenting feedback, they have done so as fellow local government members and officers.



## 4. Feedback

### Local priorities and outcomes

The borough of Colchester is the largest in Essex with a population of over 192,000 and covers an area of 324 square kilometres in North East Essex. It borders Suffolk in the north, along with three Essex districts – Tendring, Braintree and Maldon. At its centre is the historic soon to be awarded city of Colchester, surrounded by villages and smaller market towns of distinct and complementary character. The city centre of Colchester is a focal point for the whole borough – containing one of the East of England's busiest shopping destinations, as well as nationally important heritage including Colchester Castle, Firstsite - a visual arts organisation based in Colchester which was voted the national Art Fund's Museum of the Year in 2021, the Mercury Theatre producing highly regarded original work under the title "Mercury Productions" and also receiving touring shows and many other notable culture and arts attractions.


Colchester also hosts the University of Essex with 17,000 students, predicted to rise to 25,000 in 10 years and is also a Garrison Town, home to the 16 Air Assault Brigade.

CBC is a driven and ambitious Council, with a notable track record of delivery and accessing funding. The award of £18.2m funding from the Government's Town Deal for the town centre and the Council's successful bid for £20m as part of the Governments Levelling Up Fund illustrates this drive.

The Council understands its communities and throughout the Coronavirus pandemic was recognised and valued by all partners. In response to the pandemic, the Council and its partners developed a comprehensive programme and action plan to help the borough, residents, businesses, and the Council itself recover from the impact of the pandemic and national lockdown regulations.

The Council is in the final year of delivering a three-year Strategic Plan. The 2020-23 plan sets out how the Council will address the key challenges facing the borough through five strategic priority themes:

1. Tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability
2. Creating safe, healthy and active communities
3. Delivering homes for people who need them

- 
4. Growing a fair economy so everyone benefits
  5. Celebrating our heritage and culture.


The Strategic Plan is recognised throughout the borough as the glue that provides a shared purpose, binding partners and politicians together. It was positive to hear that the Council has started the process to develop a new Strategic Plan for adoption in February 2023. The process CBC will use builds on the learning from their current plan and has a greater focus on prioritisation and co-production with partners and residents. This approach is to be applauded.

As part of this approach, it was clear that CBC acts as a proactive convenor bringing together partners and resources from a wide range of sectors. The peer team heard throughout the corporate peer challenge, the value that partners and stakeholders place on the Council's role and the Council is encouraged to continue this. Colchester was amongst a small number of towns granted city status as part of the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee Civic Honours. This will be a great boost for the communities of Colchester as it will no doubt open up new opportunities. The peer challenge team have concluded that city status presents a timely opportunity to strengthen Colchester economically and culturally; an opportunity to take the borough to a new level in terms of its identity and harnessing its unique character.

The peer team recommends that the Council harnesses the excitement and benefits that city status offers and seizes this opportunity with both hands, using it as the platform to raise Colchester's voice - why not convene a cross borough event or summit to celebrate and start dialogue across the city on a new place narrative and vision?

A new vision or place-based narrative will in turn support the development of CBC's new four to five-year strategic plan, which should be developed following engagement with councillors, staff, and stakeholders.

This strategic plan should be clearly linked to a robust resourcing plan for people and finance as well as the Council's wide portfolio of programmes and projects. Having an annual delivery plan will help monitor delivery but will also enable the Council to be fleet of foot. It is also timely to review the authority's KPIs to ensure they are relevant for the future.



The need for a 'golden rope' linking all the Council's strategies and operations is critical if all staff and councillors are to be enabled to buy-in to the future direction and decisions regarding resourcing. This is critical due to CBC's stretched resources.

The peer team use the term 'Golden Rope' as opposed to golden thread as it reflects the scale of the multi-layers and multi-faceted approach the Council will need to consider in achieving the full breath of its ambitions.

### **Organisational and place leadership**

The new Chief Executive has established positive and valued relationships across partnerships with trust and respect from both staff and partners. We heard that

*“Pam is a catalyst for change” and “my ideas are welcomed and valued”*

In addition, the political leadership is also highly valued and respected, and we heard that:


*“The Leader is appreciative and wants to help”*

The new leadership team brings complementary styles and should work together across the borough, County and wide sub-region to promote Colchester.

The Council has a range of innovative and inclusive partnerships and is well regarded in the system by statutory and local partners. We heard that the Council 'punches above its weight' and 'is the dollop of glue that binds us together'. However, there are times when resources are stretched, and the peer team recommends that CBC maps its key anchor institutions, partners and stakeholders to ensure the relevant resources and engagement is focused on the relationships that will have most impact on the residents of the borough and enables the delivery of the Strategic Plan.

It was clear that councillors across the borough bring passion, enthusiasm, drive and a real a love for Colchester. This needs to be harnessed better to ensure that all the authority's councillors are aware of, engaged in and supportive of the Council's future plans, particularly the opportunities that city status bring.

The North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance is an exemplar and could be used as a tool to guide Colchester's approach to further develop its key stakeholder



relationships. Having the Alliance Director on the Council's Senior Leadership Team provides opportunities to continue the great work on health, but the Alliance has a challenging agenda to fundamentally change the lives of local people and it is now critical to identify additional internal strategic resource to work alongside the new Alliance Director.

There is also a need to strengthen the Council's political and officer 'leaders of place' roles. It is time for the Council to look beyond Colchester and beyond Essex and to look nationally and internationally.

A new place narrative or vision will give CBC the platform to paint a picture of the future, inspiring and carrying the community and focussing its energy into those partnerships that will improve the lives of local people and fundamentally transform communities for the better. It is important to ensure that members lead, and officers deliver this exciting agenda.

Many in local government will know that the Devolution and Local Government Reform (LGR) debate switches on and off on a regular basis. However, it seems that the devolution agenda is very much alive in Essex. It requires attention by the Council. CBC must assess its position to advocate for a deal that works for Colchester. Active participation in LGR can be resource intense and therefore the peer team recommends that CBC fully consider the resources required to ensure that it can continue to deliver its priorities whilst maximising the opportunities that devolution/LGR could bring for Colchester.

### **Governance and culture**

It was clear that the political partnership in Colchester is strong and in a good place. There is mature cross party-political relationships and considerable respect for the new Leader of the Council. The example of the Leaders' Alumni session is positive and supported by the peer team.

There are positive relationships between officers and councillors, as well as trust and respect between councillors. The peer team welcomes that scrutiny in Colchester is led by the opposition group.

With the recent elections, officers have introduced some new engagement methods with 'all councillor briefings' being delivered and being well regarded.

The peer team also heard strong recognition of the support to Members and Parish Councillors received from the Democratic Services Team and Planning Team.

This cross party, mature political working is to be congratulated and demonstrates the positive focus on Colchester the place rather than the politics of the area.

During the days on site in Colchester, the issue of the current election cycle, and the feasibility of moving to quadrennial all-out elections, was raised. The peer team was struck by the number of times and by the variety of people that raised this issue. The peer team also recognises that this is a significant political decision for the Council, but the overwhelming feedback from staff, partners and stakeholders is that greater political stability would help deliver better outcomes for the communities of Colchester.


If the Council is going to explore a move to quadrennial elections, the peer team recommends that CBC engages with all councillors across the Council on this immediately, to avoid the risk of using precious officer time investigating an option for which there is no political appetite.

Linked with the peer team's recommendation regarding ensuring a steady external focus, it also recommends that CBC further strengthen political and officer leadership engagement with Essex County Council. The peer team heard it is getting better, however there is still more opportunity for improvement.

As is common in three tier local government areas, there can be confusion about responsibilities and a risk of duplication. The peer team encourages CBC to lead the development of a working framework. The peer team does not view this as an action for CBC alone, but one to develop with Essex County Council and parish/town councils to provide clarity to the community on how all the constituent parts will work together.

The peer team also recommends that CBC consider how scrutiny can add greater value and impact through effective programming. This will take resource, but with support scrutiny can provide an invaluable mechanism to challenge and drive forward the work of the administration. Proactive scrutiny can help shape the future direction of the Council and be effective in changing lives in the community.

To enhance the equality and diversity work, and to ensure the Council continues to



comply with its duty under the Equality Act, CBC commissioned an independent external audit in 2021. As part of the audit, an external consultant reviewed the existing HR policies and processes including recruitment, learning and development, the profile of CBC's workforce by protected characteristics and how far equality and diversity was embedded in the Council at all levels and across all services. This is a very positive piece of work that is driving improvement and, in conjunction with the Council's 'Communities Can' approach, building on the strengths that already exist to make improvements or changes that are important locally. The developing work on Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) is also to be supported. However, CBC has identified that it needs to be more proactive in dealing with equality and diversity issues – Colchester has a young, diverse and dynamic community and it should work to harness that diversity better.

### **Financial planning and management**

The strategic approach to the Council's 2023/24 budget and MTFF 2023-28 was agreed by July 2022 by Cabinet. In setting the 2023/24 budget, CBC is taking the following approach:

- Collaborative rather than siloed across services and system partners
- Working in tandem with setting a new Strategic Plan 2023-28
- Including a comprehensive review of the capital and investment programme
- Requiring savings to be generated progressively through the Council's transformation programme
- Revising its strategy to use reserves to balance short term temporary issues but aiming to achieve a long-term sustainable position.

Although the Council has significant savings to identify (£1.5m in 22/23 and £5m in 23/24), it has a good record of delivering agreed savings and councillors and officers fully understand the budget gaps and challenges ahead to close them.

Colchester has a positive approach to financial management and has effective governance and controls in place, nevertheless the financial challenges ahead will be difficult. It is critical that everyone is prepared to tackle these challenges.

External audit delays have caused some disruption to CBC. The Council has yet to

receive an audit opinion for 2020/21 due to long delays with the auditor's BDO. The audit of the 2021/22 accounts is also currently not scheduled to begin by BDO until Summer 2023. In this challenging environment, it is important that external auditors support councils to deliver their savings.

There is one area about which the peer team had significant concerns. The Council's capital programme requires immediate attention. There is a record of underspending on its capital programme. The peer team understands that this is due to a lack of planning, as well as to insufficient strategic finance capacity and resource to progress capital projects. This is crucial and with the current external financial environment has never been more important.

To enable the Council to deliver its ambitious agenda it must, as a matter of urgency, implement changes to improve planning, prioritisation, management, oversight and delivery of all capital projects and programmes. The Council should implement a benefits realisation approach to ensure that it is monitoring the benefits that its projects and programmes deliver.

The senior leadership team and Cabinet should also undertake an urgent review of the entire capital programme and given the external economic environment, as part of this undertake a commercial risk assessment to appropriate projects and programmes.


The peer team understands that there would be a strong appetite from both councillors and partners to take part in budget discussions, and in an exercise to prioritise the scheme of capital projects and programmes. Some partners felt that relationships had matured, and it was now the "time to put our cards on the table", be more honest and share the challenges with them to collectively problem solve.

### **Capacity for improvement**

As the peer team has referenced elsewhere, CBC has great staff who feel valued and are committed and loyal. The Council's focus on wellbeing and the Cost of Living is positive and staff value this.

It was also clear that senior managers and staff across the Council value councillors' insight and engagement. The peer team heard of several examples of where councillors bring new ideas and positive engagement to service areas – with this





there is always a risk of a 'grey area' of roles and responsibilities and councillors should always be aware that their role is to represent their wards and make decisions, whereas the role of officers is to give advice, to deliver services and to carry out the decisions of councillors.

There are many exemplars of best practice across the Council, such as the work during the Coronavirus pandemic, the support and work with refugees and asylum seekers, and the Neighbourhood Model being deployed across the town centre, with system partners working collaboratively to tackle the complex needs of Colchester's most vulnerable residents. It would be powerful if this practice was shared more widely throughout the organisation and across services. There is an opportunity to use this approach as a peer-to-peer support network and to bring the organisation together. Consider initiatives such as 'lunch and learn' sessions, with a balanced focus on the lunch as well as the learning. When this is embedded, assess whether this approach could be shared wider to include partners and to provide an opportunity to share projects across the system.

The Council has impressive project and performance management systems, but these systems are not used as effectively as they could be across the organisation. The peer team asks whether they are becoming overly bureaucratic and could be streamlined, or whether there is insufficient resource to make best use of the project and performance management systems already in place?


It was clear that the Council has some excellent and highly engaged voluntary and third sector partners who also want to step up and lean in to support the Council. CBC should therefore continue to capitalise on its ABCD way of working and utilise the passion and support that is available.

During the verbal feedback, the peer team shared its concerns regarding stretched resources, declining performance and too many projects and the need to focus on delivering 'Brilliant Business As Usual' and strengthening corporate resources.

The peer team does have concerns about capacity. To be successful in delivering a new strategic plan and achieve the ambitions for the borough, there is a need to focus on priorities and resourcing.

CBC should consider if it is possible to deliver all the programmes successfully and how and where it can build extra capacity and resilience within the organisation.





There are many ways this could be achieved, but based on the peer team's conversations and reflections the following is recommended:

- Undertake a review of all services, and make some difficult decisions about future levels of service delivery – the peer team heard enthusiasm from both officers and councillors to focus on delivering basics brilliantly
- Avoid continually chipping away at corporate support services as the impact of this is being felt across the entire Council. Proactively involving corporate support services at the project initiation stage will also ease capacity, as the services will spend less time solving problems that would not have arisen with earlier engagement.

As previously mentioned, the peer team would strongly recommend CBC bolsters strategic finance and reflects on the capacity within its Human Resource and Organisational Development teams to ensure there is sufficient capacity to change and achieve continuous improvement and deliver the authority's People Strategy. In terms of the Council's people approach, the peer team suggests further developing a corporate apprentice and graduate programme – great for Colchester's young people and great for CBC.

CBC has recruitment and retentions challenges; like many Councils' and with the current external environment this is not unusual. The peer team recommends that CBC develops its 'employer of choice' approach whilst also working with partners to identify and develop opportunities for shared services – this might not only be in Essex, but beyond county boundaries.

As mentioned, CBC is not alone with its recruitment and retention challenges. Shared services discussions with other Essex Councils should continue to be pursued, and the agenda around devolution/LGR could also be used as a route to look more strategically at the issues.

Throughout the visit to Colchester, the peer team have seen excellent performance and project management systems. However, we would recommend that the Council considers developing its project and programme management approach. With the depth and breadth of CBC's ambition it does not appear that programme and project management methodology have been adequately defined. Given the issues with delivery of the capital programme, we would recommend that the Council reflects on

its approach and investigates the option of re-creating the project management office (PMO) in the corporate centre of the organisation.

Re-establishing a strong corporate PMO would enable the Council to improve the rigour, of its monitoring and provide strategic oversight and better control of resources across all its projects and programmes. It would enable the Council to clearly identify the inter-dependencies between projects and provide clear identification of any pinch points or duplication. One area the peer team identified would be to improve and share lessons learned and identify good practice across projects, to ensure a high level and consistent approach which would improve the management of risk and create manageable workloads, allowing effective prioritisation and creating a strong framework for the golden rope.

In terms of governance, the peer team recommends that there should be more councillor oversight of the delivery of projects and programmes, this could be achieved via a councillor led Major Projects Board.

There is a lack of clarity about what hybrid working will mean for the Council when Rowan House reopens. The Council needs to define what 'hybrid' means for Colchester and provide a clear definition and communication of where the Council aims to be, and what this means for staff.


For example, options could be that centralised staff are told when they must come into the office; team by team, whereby individual teams devise their own patterns to meet service demands; and fully distributed where every individual makes the decision about where and when they work.

In addition, there are some LGA resources that CBC may find useful. These include a roundtable event with over 135 local authorities to discuss the challenges and opportunities of hybrid working - [Feedback from the LGA hybrid working roundtable events May 2021 | Local Government Association](#)

A regularly updated new ways of working website - <https://www.local.gov.uk/new-ways-working-local-government>

And a recent blog from the LGA's Head of Workforce - [June 2021: Hybrid working will be the new normal . . . sort of | Local Government Association](#)

CBC should consider the creation of corporate apprenticeship and graduate schemes



and continue to promote the grow your own approach. The apprenticeship levy is used in some service areas and more use is anticipated particularly for staff at the lower entry level. But the levy should be considered for existing staff to help them advance their careers or to move into a new field such as planning, project management or leisure management.

Finally, the peer team urgently encourages CBC to review its Waste Service. The peer team understands that there are differing models of delivery across the borough so there is a need to consider rationalising the model of delivery to enable increased resilience across the fleet and staff resources moving forward.

Also, as an area of significant cost and budget pressure, every opportunity should be explored to recover reasonable costs associated with delivery of the service. The peer team understands that this will be tough, but we encourage CBC to do it.

### **Transformation and Organisational Development**


The new Chief Executive's people centred approach and focus on wellbeing is welcomed by staff:

- Consultation on the values through the Speak Up Now (SUN) Ambassadors is positive
- The focus of the new Internal Communications Officer with an updated approach to communications which is more inclusive and targets frontline staff
- And the Chief Executive and her senior managers are more visible than ever before.

The new people strategy and management toolkit provides an opportunity to improve training and development and new ways of working across the Council.

The reopening of Rowan House, the Council's Headquarters, provides significant opportunities and staff are looking forward to understanding what the new hybrid working policy will mean. The peer team heard that the new booking system is welcomed.

A new management development programme has begun, and it will be critical that all teams across the Council have a clear understanding of the values and are united



behind them. It is important that the Council's future values are bold and reflect the opportunities city status brings and that they are not just words on a page, they should be lived. To achieve this, it is critical that the SUN group engages across the Council to develop the values and leads the future drive to enact them in everything the Council does.

CBC's People Strategy is critical to enabling the Council to move forward. It should complement the new Strategic Plan by acting as the enabler for improving workforce capability and engagement. There are several areas where the peer team consider there is an opportunity to strengthen the approach:

- Revisit the Reward and Recognition programme to ensure it is inclusive and open regarding nominations and decisions;
- Review ways of improving career progression opportunities through the internal movement and promotion – look at other innovative options and maximise the use of the apprentice levy to support this;
- Become an employer of choice by refocussing on the employee value proposition, repackaging the Council's offer and focussing on what it can provide for future employees;
- CBC has a commitment to talent management but needs to shout about that more – increase the amount of staff information and guidance regarding talent management;
- Finally, to support CBC's internal staff, consider ways of balancing internal upgrading with external recruitment.

## **Regeneration and Growth**

It is clear that CBC has a great team who have a proven record of delivery and a strong track record of accessing funding.

This is underpinned by a strong ethos of collaborative team working across staff, partners, other councils, and the business community. Some examples are

- Staff and partners are committed with a genuine positivity about Colchester the place

- The business community is positive and engaged – messages can always be shared and officers are always accessible
- Work with adjoining authorities has enabled collaborative working to progress – such as the Garden Community initiative,

Impressive growth has been delivered with Colchester one of the fastest growing places in the UK. The council is not sitting on its laurels, rather it is continuing to explore different ways of delivering growth.

The council has high aspirations for Colchester and there are multiple projects and programmes being delivered across services. It would be helpful to develop a plan to link and prioritise these projects and programmes, ensuring a direct link to your new Strategic Plan. This will enable the Council to determine the best approach to resourcing these priorities.

The Council should also take a more proactive approach to target the sectors it wants to attract to its area through its regeneration and growth agenda. Further consideration should be given to how it could use its large asset base to support focused key sector growth. This should be supported by additional work targeting the sectors it wants to attract; engagement with key businesses and investors in the borough on this focused issue would support this approach.; This work would align with work to develop a skills plan for the borough. There would also be merit in considering whether the Council wants to or should play a landowner role within the new garden Community.

The Council's wholly owned group of commercial companies Colchester Commercial Holdings Ltd (CCHL) is delivering on the Council's commercial trading, housing and energy activities. Colchester Commercial Holdings Ltd and its three subsidiaries have been operating for over four years and, whilst delivery has no doubt been impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic, during the corporate peer challenges issues were expressed regarding CCHL as follows:

- that the risks to which the Council was exposed as a result of CCHL were not clear and/or understood.
- there was little evidence that the benefits for which CCHL had been established had been realised or that there were the mechanisms in place to



ensure that there was alignment with the Council's priorities

- the board membership of CCHL could be strengthened by the appointment of independent directors
- senior councillors sitting on the board of CCHL risked conflict between their duty to the company and the interests of the Council, and therefore may be more appropriate for members to act in the capacity of a Shareholder Board (which would need to be established as part of a governance review of the company structure).
- Senior officers sitting on the board questioned whether they had full visibility of the activities of the companies to enable them to make informed decisions as part of the Board and whether they had the appropriate skills and experience to perform this role effectively

With the current challenging external environment, and a number of high-profile failures of council-owned companies it is timely for the Council to take stock of their businesses. The appointment of the new Chief Executive creates an opportunity to refocus on the effectiveness and appropriateness of the existing governance and risk management arrangements in relation to CCHL. A review also provides an opportunity for the Council to obtain external assurance that CCHL is meeting the Council's expectations, delivering real benefits, and providing value for money.

Due to the complexity of the companies, it is recommended that an independent external review is commissioned to assess whether the companies are realising the benefits they were established to deliver, that the risks associated with the companies are understood and that the governance arrangements are robust.

The Council's housing stock of 5,905 homes is managed by an arm's length housing management organisation, Colchester Borough Homes (CBH). CBH has been operating since 2003. Work is underway to recruit a joint post with CBH for an equality and diversity specialist and a dedicated joint post for safeguarding is also now in place.

Similarly, to CCHL it would be timely to undertake a review to understand if there is an overlap between Council services and the work of CBH. The peer team believe the Council has the capacity to undertake this review in-house.

## 5. Next Steps

It is recognised that senior political and managerial leadership will want to consider and reflect on these findings.

To support openness and transparency, the council is expected to publish this report within six weeks. There is also an expectation that an action plan is publicly available alongside the report's publication.

Both the peer team and LGA are keen to build on the relationships and the corporate peer challenge process includes a six-month progress review currently scheduled for June/July 2023. This will be a facilitated session which creates space for the council's senior leadership to update peers on its progress against the action plan and discuss next steps and any further support required.

CBC is already progressing certain aspects and is seeking best practice and working collaboratively with the peer teams' councils.

Rachel Litherland, Principal Adviser for the East of England and Gary Hughes, Peer Challenge Manager are the main contacts between CBC and the Local Government Association. Rachel and Gary are available to discuss any further support.  
[rachel.litherland@local.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.litherland@local.gov.uk) or [gary.hughes@local.gov.uk](mailto:gary.hughes@local.gov.uk) .





## LGA Corporate Peer Challenge – September 2022

### Action Plan – 2022/23

#### Key recommendations:

1. Focus on city status. Use this as an opportunity to galvanise partners, improve the Borough's economic and cultural strength and raise the voice of Colchester;
2. Get a firmer grip on the capital programme – manage all risks and improve your planning to ensure you have appropriate strategic finance, programme and project capacity and the resources to deliver;
3. Co-design a compelling and longer-term place-based narrative/city vision to define Colchester for the future;
4. Strengthen your political and officer 'leaders of place' roles and look beyond Colchester – map your anchor institutions, partners and stakeholders;
5. Review your priorities and projects and refocus on delivering 'Brilliant Business As Usual' and strengthen your corporate resources;
6. Strongly consider whether changing your election cycle will help you achieve your goals, ambitions and deliver improved services for Colchester's communities;
7. Better define with your staff what 'hybrid working' means for CBC and provide a clear definition. Also, clarify how the new CBC values will be designed and embedded, communicating to staff how these define the Council and will help achieve Colchester's ambition; and
8. Commission an independent review of Colchester Commercial Holdings Ltd, and its subsidiaries, also undertake an internal review of Colchester Borough Homes to assess whether the companies are realising the benefits they were established to deliver.

Recommendation:	Plans/Achievements	Lead Officer	Target Completion Date
1. <b>Focus on city status. Use this as an opportunity to galvanise partners, improve the Borough's economic and cultural strength and raise the voice of Colchester.</b>	<p>Working Group and meetings commenced 9/09/2022. Three strands to the City Status Programme identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic – Award of City Status on 23 November 2022 and possible Royal visit, governance arrangements, branding, signage and comms.</li> <li>• Year of Celebration – Commencing 1 January 2023. Focusing on Heritage and cultural events already happening + Big Siege Event and establish a clear marketing strategy.</li> <li>• Legacy and longer-term place making – A year of meeting and listening to our partners/ local businesses/ Town &amp; Parish Councils/ Uni/ schools/ residents to find out what City Status means to them and what they need from it.</li> </ul>	<p>Andrew Weavers Comms – Laura Hardisty</p> <p>Lucie Breadman/ Cllr Pam Cox Comms – Laura Hardisty</p> <p>Lindsay Barker</p>	<p>December 2023</p> <p>December 2023</p> <p>December 2023</p>
2. <b>Get a firmer grip on the capital programme – manage all risks and improve your planning to ensure you have appropriate</b>	<p>Full review of Capital Programme including:</p> <p><b>Update:</b> A working squad of key individuals has been assembled to review the Capital Programme. Monthly meetings commenced in November. A</p>	<p>Lucie Breadman/ Gary Reid</p>	<p>31/03/2023</p>

Recommendation:		Plans/Achievements	Lead Officer	Target Completion Date
	<p><b>strategic finance, programme and project capacity and the resources to deliver.</b></p>	<p><i>squad action plan is being used to monitor progress and task completion.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moratorium on new schemes unless agreed by Senior Board/Leadership as essential and unavoidable.</li> </ul> <p><b>Update – to discuss at Senior Leadership Board</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Board and Leadership to consider fortnightly reports on the capital programme</li> </ul> <p><b>Update – will commence end of January 23, verbal updates till then</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a cadre of project managers across the Council family</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b> <i>Put in place a new strengthened Programme Management Officer complete with a cadre of project managers. A better resourced corporate Project Management Office (PMO) would enable the Council to improve the rigour of its monitoring and provide strategic oversight across all projects and programmes.</i></p> <p><b>Update – to discuss at SLB in light of recruitment freeze.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of all current projects against Cost, Delivery and Time</li> </ul>	<p>Lucie Breadman</p> <p>Richard Block</p> <p>Gary Reid</p>	<p>31 January</p> <p>31 January</p> <p>31 January</p>

Recommendation:	Plans/Achievements	Lead Officer	Target Completion Date
	<p><b><i>Update: This piece of work has started and will include recommendations of what remains, is deferred and what is removed from the Capital Programme.</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and development of a new asset strategy</li> </ul> <p>To include new ways of managing (and potential disposal of non-investment/operational assets) as well as high level investment and disinvestment options of commercial space. Will also take into account future development, eco growth, CC&amp;S and regeneration programme (acquisitions).</p> <p><b><i>Update: A working squad of key individuals has been assembled to assist with the strategy development.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Strategy is being tendered Jan 2023 and will need to account for budget challenges, Council strategies and priorities and will be shaped through officer and member involvement. Full strategy developed for June 2023, but work will run parallel to this) and will involve:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Further sweating of our assets, looking at disposal where possible (where lease and other restrictions allow and loss of income is accounted for), potential for changes of</i></b></li> </ul>	Mandy Jones	

Recommendation:		Plans/Achievements	Lead Officer	Target Completion Date
		<p><i>use, reduction in costs (recent work led to potential additional £200K).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Energy Manager being advertised to reduce energy consumption and costs across the estate (including renewables across the estate - retrofit, solar PV)</i></li> <li>• <i>NE Essex Assets Energy and retrofit group being assembled to investigate planning use of renewables across the joint estate - eg. solar PV, economies of scale for procurement, retrofit opportunities and financing</i></li> <li>• <i>Costs of managing and maintaining assets to be investigated alongside value and income for rounded picture of opportunities.</i></li> <li>• Develop a Capital Strategy that includes our approach to Investment to deliver on our strategic priorities.</li> <li>• Role review of CCHL and CBH to define CCHL and CBH future role in capital projects. To be picked up in CCHL &amp; CBH reviews.</li> <li>• Increased strategic finance capacity through an additional capital accountant</li> </ul> <p><b>Update – new role starting in January</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put in place new strengthened programme management office</li> </ul>	<p>Senior Board Lindsay Barker</p> <p>Richard Block</p>	<p>30/01/2023</p> <p>31 January</p>

Recommendation:		Plans/Achievements	Lead Officer	Target Completion Date
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial findings presented to Senior Board on 23 November 2022 – <b>Update – will be 8<sup>th</sup> December update</b></li> <li>Monthly Working Group Meetings commencing 28 November – <b>Update - done</b></li> </ul>		
3.	<b>Co-design a compelling and longer-term place-based narrative/city vision to define Colchester for the future.</b>	See City Status – Legacy above and work is also underway to develop a new strategic plan - for adoption in February 2023	Lindsay Barker	31/12/2023
4.	<b>Strengthen your political and officer ‘leaders of place’ roles and look beyond Colchester – map your anchor institutions, partners and stakeholders.</b>	<p>This has been added as a standing item for consideration and discussion at each Senior Leadership Board meeting.</p> <p>A full analysis and map of stakeholders will also be undertaken.</p>	Senior Leadership Board	31/01/2023
5.	<b>Review your priorities and projects and refocus on delivering ‘Brilliant Business As Usual’ and strengthen your corporate resources.</b>	<p>New Strategic Plan to be developed with prioritised delivery plan and a “golden rope” to capacity.</p> <p>Define Brilliant Business as usual through reviewing service provision and ensure this is appropriate for a modern green city and is deliverable with the resources available.</p>	Richard Block	High level strategic objectives defined and considered by

Recommendation:		Plans/Achievements	Lead Officer	Target Completion Date
		<p>Review all projects and prioritise against the following tests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery against new strategic plan and delivery plan objectives</li> <li>• Support for refined “Brilliant Business as Usual” services</li> <li>• Available capacity to deliver</li> </ul> <p>Develop a business case for strengthened Corporate Services and deliver by consolidation of services.</p>		<p>Cabinet 24/1/2023</p> <p>Delivery plan developed by 31/03/23</p> <p>Business case developed and implemented by 31/03/2023</p>
6.	<b>Strongly consider whether changing your election cycle will help you achieve your goals, ambitions and deliver improved services for Colchester’s communities.</b>	Full Council Motion to explore the alternative electoral arrangements, whether as now or 'All Up', or a variation. The Council will set up a cross party working group to explore all options with findings to be presented to Full Council in February. Council can then review findings collectively and discuss next steps forward.	Andrew Weavers	Full council motion considered by 1/12/2022
7.	<b>Better define with your staff what ‘hybrid working’ means for CBC and provide a clear definition. Also, clarify how the new CBC values will be designed and embedded, communicating to staff how these define the Council and</b>	<p>Hybrid working guidance incorporated into the Rowan House Hub guidance which has been co-authored by the Rowan House working group comprising 24 representatives across all services.</p> <p>Final draft guidance has been published as part of a wider consultation exercise. All staff have had the opportunity to feed in. Guidance will be launched by end of November.</p>	Jess Douglas	Hybrid Guidance – 30/11/2022

Recommendation:		Plans/Achievements	Lead Officer	Target Completion Date
	<b>will help achieve Colchester's ambition.</b>	<p>An Organisation Development plan has been produced which incorporates the CBC purpose, values work. This was discussed at the November Senior Leadership Board meeting.</p> <p>The SUN Group has been tasked by the CEX to engage colleagues in their services and discuss the new values.</p> <p>Following the Management Conference, a manager working group will work together on a plan to launch and embed the values, team purposes across CBC through a communications and engagement programme.</p>		31/3/2023
8.	<b>Commission an independent review of Colchester Commercial Holdings Ltd, and its subsidiaries, also undertake an internal review of Colchester Borough Homes to assess whether the companies are realising the benefits they were established to deliver.</b>	<p>Reviews have been commissioned. CCHL Risk assessment report received, CIPFA full review commissioned.</p> <p>CBH Risk assessment to report back mid January 2023.</p> <p>CCHL Annual Report for both the Risk Assessment and the CCHL Peer Review.</p>	Lindsay Barker	<p>CCHL review 30/1/2023</p> <p>CBH review 31/03/2023</p>



13 December 2022

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

## 1. Executive Summary

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

## 2. Action Required

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

## 3. Background Information

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

## 4. Standard References

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

## 5. Strategic Plan References

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

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

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Scrutiny Panel Work Programme, 2022-23

Appendix B – Forward Plan of Key Decisions: 1 February 2023 – 31 May 2023

**Work Programme for 2022/23**

<b>Scrutiny Panel meeting – 7 June 2022</b>
<b>Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 1 June 2022</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Town Deal Reporting</li> <li>2. Work Programme 2022-23</li> </ol>
<b>Scrutiny Panel meeting – 5 July 2022</b>
<b>Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 30 June 2022</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Council's disbursement of rebate payments on Council Tax</li> <li>2. Year End 2021/22 Performance Report and Strategic Plan Action Plan</li> <li>3. Housing Strategy</li> <li>4. Annual Scrutiny Report</li> <li>5. Briefing note on Hythe Flooding</li> <li>6. Recap report on previous Scrutiny Panel reviews of local bus services</li> <li>7. Work Programme 2022-23</li> </ol>
<b>Scrutiny Panel meeting - 16 August 2022 Meeting cancelled for lack of business</b>
<b>Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 11 August 2022</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work Programme 2022-23</li> </ol>
<b>Scrutiny Panel (Crime and Disorder Committee) - 13 September 2022</b>
<b>Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 8 September 2022</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Safer Colchester Partnership (Crime and Disorder Committee)</li> </ol>
<b>Scrutiny Panel – 11 October 2022</b>
<b>Scrutiny Panel Chairman's Briefing – 6 October 2022</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Briefing from Cllr Julie Young, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities</li> <li>2. <del>Economic Growth Strategy</del> Deferred</li> <li>3. Review of Colchester Borough Homes: 2021-22 Performance, and discussion of Key Performance Indicator Targets for 2023-24</li> <li>4. Work Programme 2022-23</li> </ol>
<b>Scrutiny Panel meeting - 8 November 2022</b>
<b>Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 3 November 2022</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Budget Strategy for 2023-24</li> <li>2. Update on Town Deal projects' progress</li> <li>3. Family/local affiliation in letting and/or sale of local affordable housing and Gateway to Homechoice Allocations Policy</li> <li>4. Work Programme 2022-23</li> </ol>

<b>Scrutiny Panel meeting - 13 December 2022</b>
<b>Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 8 December 2022</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Briefing by Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Local Economy and Transformation</li> <li>2. Draft Economic Strategy [Was due to come before Scrutiny Panel on 16 August 2022 and then 11 October 2022 but delayed to 13 December 2022]</li> <li>3. Half Year 2022-23 Performance Report</li> <li>4. Strategic Plan Action Plan progress</li> <li>5. Local Council Tax Support – Year 2023/24</li> <li>6. Work Programme 2022-23</li> </ol>
<b>Scrutiny Panel meeting - 16 January 2022</b>
<b>Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 11 January 2022</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Peer Challenge Review report and action plan</li> <li>2. Work Programme 2022-23</li> </ol>
<b>Scrutiny Panel meeting - 24 January 2023</b>
<b>Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 19 January 2023</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Briefing by Portfolio Holder for Resources [focus on Budget 2023-24]</li> <li>2. Budget Strategy for 2023-24</li> <li>3. 2023-24 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme, Medium Term Financial Forecast and Treasury Management Investment Strategy</li> <li>4. Housing Revenue Accounts Estimate and Housing Investment Programme</li> <li>5. Work Programme 2022-23</li> </ol>
<b>Scrutiny Panel - 14 February 2023</b>
<b>Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 9 February 2023</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Briefing by Portfolio Holder for Culture and Heritage</li> <li>2. Briefing by the Leader of the Council</li> <li>3. Corporate Key Performance Indicator Targets for 2022-23</li> <li>4. Work Programme 2022-23</li> </ol>
<b>Scrutiny Panel meeting– 14 March 2023</b>
<b>Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 9 March 2023</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Briefing by Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure</li> <li>2. Collection of Section 106 developer contributions</li> <li>3. One Colchester Partnership</li> <li>4. Scrutiny Panel Annual Report</li> <li>5. Work Programme 2022-23</li> </ol>
<b>Scrutiny Panel meeting– 15 March 2023</b>
<b>Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 9 March 2023</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Briefing by Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services and Waste</li> <li>2. Briefing by Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability</li> <li>3. Town Deal projects progress report</li> <li>4. City Status Programme</li> </ol>

**Items still to schedule, when possible:**

- Council negotiations with Alumno [Monitoring Officer advice is that this will only be able to be scrutinised in open session once the current ongoing legal situation is resolved regarding the Queen Street site]
- Planning trial of local prioritisation for property purchasing [relating to a recent planning application] [Officer advice is that this is at an early stage and is likely to need to wait until 2023-24 to be ready for meaningful scrutiny of scheme and outcomes]



# COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL

## FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS 1 February 2023 – 31 May 2023

During the period from 1 February 2023 – 31 May 2023\* Colchester Borough Council intends to take 'Key Decisions' on the issues set out in the following pages. Key Decisions relate to those executive decisions which are likely to either:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<b>KEY DECISION REQUIRED</b>	<b>DOES DECISION INCLUDE EXEMPT INFORMATION (or information defined by the Government as Confidential)</b>	<b>DATE OF DECISION or PERIOD DECISION TO BE TAKEN</b>	<b>DECISION MAKER (title and name, including Cabinet, portfolio holders and officers) – details of decision makers correct at time of publication</b>	<b>DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED OR TO BE SUBMITTED TO DECISION TAKER TO CONSIDER (and from where they are available)</b>	<b>CONTACT DETAILS FROM WHICH DOCUMENTS CAN BE OBTAINED (name of the authors of the reports)</b>
<b>Approval to complete the purchase of land/property at ‘The Centre’ Greenstead from Notting Hill Genesis, using funding received via the Estates Regeneration Fund</b>	No	January 2023	Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Mark Cory  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Daniel Barton Greenstead and Youth (Town Deal) Projects Manager 01206 282912: Daniel.Barton@colchester.gov.uk
<b>Award of Contract for Unadopted Roads within Council Housing Estates – HIP Programme</b>	Yes	January 2023	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, Councillor Julie Young.  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Geoff Beales Client Services Manager 01206 506514 <a href="mailto:geoff.beales@colchester.gov.uk">geoff.beales@colchester.gov.uk</a>



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Award of Contract for Voids works contract	Yes	January 2023	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, Councillor Julie Young.  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Geoff Beales Client Services Manager 01206 506514 <a href="mailto:geoff.beales@colchester.gov.uk">geoff.beales@colchester.gov.uk</a>
Award of a contract for the construction of affordable homes at Wheeler Close, Colchester	Yes	January 2023	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, Councillor Julie Young.  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Andrew Tyrrell Client and Business Manager <a href="mailto:andrew.tyrrell@colchester.gov.uk">andrew.tyrrell@colchester.gov.uk</a> 01206 2822390

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<b>New Strategic Plan</b> The report will propose a new Council Strategic Plan for Cabinet to consider including that it is recommended for approval by Council.	No	25 January 2023	Cabinet (Cllrs King, Cory, Cox, Fox, Goss, Luxford Vaughan, Nissen, J. Young)  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report	Richard Block Chief Operating Officer 01206 506625 <a href="mailto:Richard.block@colchester.gov.uk">Richard.block@colchester.gov.uk</a>
<b>Local Council Tax Support Scheme</b>	No	25 January 2023	Cabinet (Cllrs King, Cory, Cox, Fox, Goss, Luxford Vaughan, Nissen, J. Young)  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report, draft Scheme	Sam Preston Group Manager, Customer <a href="mailto:Samantha.preston@colchester.gov.uk">Samantha.preston@colchester.gov.uk</a> 07966237492

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<b>Commercial Reform of the Northern Gateway Heat Network</b>	Yes	25 January 2023	Cabinet (Cllrs King, Cory, Cox, Fox, Goss, Luxford Vaughan, Nissen, J. Young)  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report	Andrew Tyrrell Client and Business Manager <a href="mailto:andrew.tyrrell@colchester.gov.uk">andrew.tyrrell@colchester.gov.uk</a> 01206 2822390
<b>Award of the Contract for the Construction of the Renewable Heat Network Energy Centre and at the Northern Gateway</b>	Yes	25 January 2023	Cabinet (Cllrs King, Cory, Cox, Fox, Goss, Luxford Vaughan, Nissen, J. Young)  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report	Andrew Tyrrell Client and Business Manager <a href="mailto:andrew.tyrrell@colchester.gov.uk">andrew.tyrrell@colchester.gov.uk</a> 01206 2822390

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<b>2023-24 Budget, Transformation, Council Tax and Medium Term Financial Forecast</b>	No	25 January 2023	Cabinet (Cllrs King, Cory, Cox, Fox, Goss, Luxford Vaughan, Nissen, J. Young)  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report	Paul Cook Head of Finance <a href="mailto:paul.cookx@colchester.gov.uk">paul.cookx@colchester.gov.uk</a>
<b>Housing Revenue Estimates 2023-24</b>	No	25 January 2023	Cabinet (Cllrs King, Cory, Cox, Fox, Goss, Luxford Vaughan, Nissen, J. Young)  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report	Darren Brown Finance Manager <a href="mailto:darren.brown@colchester.gov.uk">darren.brown@colchester.gov.uk</a> 01206 282891

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<b>Housing Investment Programme 2023-24</b>	No	25 January 2023	Cabinet (Cllrs King, Cory, Cox, Fox, Goss, Luxford Vaughan, Nissen, J. Young)  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report	Darren Brown Finance Manager <a href="mailto:darren.brown@colchester.gov.uk">darren.brown@colchester.gov.uk</a> 01206 282891
<b>Colchester's Economic Strategy 2022-2025</b>	No	25 January 2023	Cabinet (Cllrs King, Cory, Cox, Fox, Goss, Luxford Vaughan, Nissen, J. Young)  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report Draft Strategy document	Karen Turnbull Economic Development Officer 01206 282915 <a href="mailto:karen.turnbull@colchester.gov.uk">karen.turnbull@colchester.gov.uk</a>

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<b>Local Government Association Peer Challenge and Action Plan</b> This report will provide details of the Council's response to the key recommendations identified during the recent Local Government Corporate Peer Challenge. It will request that Cabinet approve an action plan to respond to these.	No	25 January 2023	Cabinet (Cllrs King, Cory, Cox, Fox, Goss, Luxford Vaughan, Nissen, J. Young)  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report, peer challenge report and proposed City Council action plan to respond	Richard Block Chief Operating Officer 01206 506625 <a href="mailto:Richard.block@colchester.gov.uk">Richard.block@colchester.gov.uk</a>
<b>Award of contract for the construction of affordable homes at Veronica Walk, Colchester</b>	Yes	February 2023	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, Councillor Julie Young.  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Andrew Tyrrell Client and Business Manager <a href="mailto:andrew.tyrrell@colchester.gov.uk">andrew.tyrrell@colchester.gov.uk</a> 01206 2822390

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<b>Award of a contract for the construction of affordable homes at Prospero Close, Colchester</b>	Yes	February 2023	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, Councillor Julie Young.  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Andrew Tyrrell Client and Business Manager <a href="mailto:andrew.tyrrell@colchester.gov.uk">andrew.tyrrell@colchester.gov.uk</a> 01206 2822390
<b>Award of a contract for the construction of affordable homes at Hedge Drive, Colchester</b>	Yes	March 2023	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, Councillor Julie Young.  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Andrew Tyrrell Client and Business Manager <a href="mailto:andrew.tyrrell@colchester.gov.uk">andrew.tyrrell@colchester.gov.uk</a> 01206 2822390

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<b>Authority to award Contract for Delivery of Energy Improvements for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Project</b>	No	March 2023	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, Councillor Julie Young.  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Martin Norgett Strategic Client for Asset Management <a href="mailto:martin.norgett@colchester.gov.uk">martin.norgett@colchester.gov.uk</a> 07816 204488
<b>Award of Contract for Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICR's)</b>	No	March 2023	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, Councillor Julie Young.  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Martin Norgett Strategic Client for Asset Management <a href="mailto:martin.norgett@colchester.gov.uk">martin.norgett@colchester.gov.uk</a> 07816 204488



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<b>Award of Contract for Asbestos Removal</b>	No	March 2023	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, Councillor Julie Young.  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Martin Norgett Strategic Client for Asset Management <a href="mailto:martin.norgett@colchester.gov.uk">martin.norgett@colchester.gov.uk</a> 07816 204488
<b>Request for delegated authority for the award of Housing Revenue Account contracts for the 2023/24 Housing Investment Programme financial year.</b>	No	8 March 2023	Cabinet (Cllrs King, Cory, Cox, Fox, Goss, Luxford Vaughan, Nissen, J. Young)  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report	Martin Norgett Strategic Client for Asset Management <a href="mailto:martin.norgett@colchester.gov.uk">martin.norgett@colchester.gov.uk</a> 07816 204488

## CONTACT DETAILS FOR COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL

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**email: [mandy.jones@colchester.gov.uk](mailto:mandy.jones@colchester.gov.uk)**