

5 February 2020

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Assistant Director, Corporate and Improvement Services</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Owen Howell</b> ☎ 282518
<b>Title</b>	<b>Task and Finish Groups at Colchester Borough Council</b>		
<b>Wards affected</b>	Not Applicable		

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides information on the task and finish groups operated by Colchester Borough Council and provides the opportunity for the Scrutiny Panel to question and consider best practice and potential ways in which the efficacy of present and future task and finish groups can be maximised.
- 1.2 The lead officer and Chairman or Deputy Chairman for each group will be present to discuss how their groups operate. A questionnaire has also been provided to each group and the feedback gathered from this has been included in the report's appendices.

## 2. Actions Required

- 2.1 To consider and examine the functioning and output of task and finish groups at Colchester Borough Council.
- 2.2 To make recommendations to Cabinet as to ways in which task and finish groups can maximise their effectiveness and efficiency. This can include recommendations relating to how and when such groups are formed, and the drafting and content of their terms of reference.

## 3. Reason for Scrutiny

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Panel has resolved to scrutinise the working practices and progress made by the three task and finish groups in operation at the Council.

## 4. Background Information

- 4.1 At its meeting on 15 October, the Scrutiny Panel discussed potential areas of Council activity which could be brought to the Panel for scrutiny. At this meeting, members suggested and agreed that the operation and outcomes from the Council's task and finish groups would be a suitable subject for the Panel to scrutinise.
- 4.2 The Council's task and finish groups are time-limited sub-groups of elected members which examine a defined subject or area of operations with the aim of delivering specified objectives/tasks. Once a group's objective has been achieved, the intention is that it should then be disbanded.
- 4.3 All current task and finish groups were set up at the direction of the Cabinet, with Cabinet setting draft terms of reference, membership and scoping for each group. There is, however, precedent for groups to be set up by other committees and panels of the Council, as shown below at 4.6.
- 4.4 There is currently no codified procedure or protocol governing the setting up or use of task and finish groups. Some local authorities choose to lay down guidance as to the setting up and operating of task and finish groups, most commonly as sub-groups of their scrutiny and oversight committees. Although this mostly occurs in unitary or county/upper-tier councils, where scrutiny bodies have greater resources and duties, it should be noted that the Council's Constitution does specify that the Scrutiny Panel may form task and finish groups, and that all formal committees and panels (including Cabinet) may form 'ad hoc forums' for purposes they specify. Links to a range of examples can be found in the 'Background Documents' section of this report.
- 4.5 Each current group has a lead officer, from the senior management team, and a Chair appointed by the group's members. The three task and finish groups currently in operation are:
- Alternative Methods of Service Delivery  
Chair: Councillor Martyn Warnes  
Lead Officer: Dan Gascoyne, Chief Operating Officer
  - Heritage and Tourism  
Chair: Councillor Lyn Barton  
Lead Officer: Lucie Breadman, Assistant Director – Communities
  - Conservation and Environmental Sustainability  
Chair: Councillor Mark Cory  
Lead Officer: Rory Doyle, Communities Group Manager

Each group is supported by a range of officers with relevant expertise and receives secretarial and administrative support from a Democratic Services Officer.

- 4.6 Previous task and finish groups have included:
- 20 mph: 2009-2014, reported to Policy, Review and Development Panel;
  - Alcohol Consumption: 2012-2014, reported to Council;
  - Future of the Magistrates' Court: 2011-2012, reported to Cabinet;

- Older Persons' Accommodation: 2011-2012, reported to Policy, Review and Development Panel;
- Technology and Improvements in Community Engagement: 2012-2013, reported to Cabinet;
- Waste Prevention and Recycling Options Appraisal: 2011-2016, report to Cabinet.

4.7 Task and finish group meetings are not currently open to the public, except by specific invitation or if the group should choose to hold an open meeting. This is an important point where the operation of task and finish groups differs from that of formal Council committees and panels, where the presumption is that these should be open to the public (unless confidential information is to be discussed). This can provide more scope for the consideration of ideas and options and allow a freer and more open debate.

4.8 Whilst meetings of task and finish groups are not generally open to the public, the reports and recommendations produced by these groups are presented at open meetings of the appropriate Council body, such as Cabinet, and can be examined and questioned by Councillors and members of the public. This ensures transparency and accountability regarding the output of such groups. The main exception to this is where recommendations involving exempt information are to be considered in private session.

#### Possible subjects for the Panel to consider

4.9 There follows a number of potential questions for the Panel to consider, and on which recommendations could be made. This is included as an aid to the Panel's discussion and is not intended to be prescriptive as to the scope of the Panel's consideration of task and finish groups.

4.10 The success of a task and finish group generally hinges on a number of conditions, such as:

- A clear definition of the subject, problem or issue under consideration and how it relates to the Council's strategic objectives.
- A good understanding of the timescale over which the group is to operate, and its intended end date;
- A clear understanding of when and to whom the group should report;
- Appropriate officer resource and support, to enable information and evidence to be gathered effectively, considered and acted upon
- Use of SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bounded).

The Panel may wish to make recommendations on measures to ensure that these conditions are considered and met whenever a task and finish group is founded and operated.

4.11 The Panel may wish to consider whether it would be helpful for a protocol/procedure to be laid out to guide the scoping and formation of future task and finish groups to ensure that the conditions listed above are considered and noted in the scoping exercise, evidencing that this has been carried out. Examples of such protocols can be found via the links provided in the 'Background Papers' section of this report.

- 4.12 Appendix D to this report gives an example of a form which could form part of such a procedure, ensuring that vital details and requirements are recorded so as to give clarity as to the purpose and methodology of any task and finish group which may be set up. This could provide clear focus and help ensure that elected members and officers understand the remit and operation of such groups, and their individual roles in the set-up process and operation of groups.
- 4.13 Some local authorities specifically require that their task and finish groups hold a strategic focus and avoid low-level, operational matters which may be more efficiently examined as individual agenda items by formal committees such as the Scrutiny Panel itself. The Panel may wish to consider whether such an approach should be recommended for use by the Council.
- 4.14 [Milton Keynes Council](#) is an example of local authorities which choose to operate some task and finish groups which are open to the public. This approach has not been adopted by Colchester Borough Council, for the reasons laid out at 4.7 of this report. The Panel may, however, wish to contemplate potential ways in which task and finish groups could show their value to the public, whilst preserving their ability for free and frank discussion between members. This could include the provision of an explanation on the Council's website, in general terms, of how these groups function, and a list of current groups and the final reports and recommendations made by past groups, where appropriate.

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

- 5.1 No specific implications relating to human rights or equality and diversity.

## **6. Standard References**

- 6.1 There are no particular references to community safety, health and safety, environmental and sustainability or risk management implications.

## **7. Strategic Plan References**

- 7.1 Whilst there are no specific references to the Council's Strategic Plan 2018-21, the effective use of current and future task and finish groups has the potential to improve progress within the four themes and the priorities of the Plan.

## **8. Consultation**

- 8.1 Feedback and views have been sought from current members of task and finish groups. These have been anonymised and the content included within this report.

## **9. Publicity Considerations**

- 9.1 The Panel may wish to consider the publicity implications of conducting business via task and finish groups which are not open to public attendance or scrutiny, and ways in which useful and positive outcomes from such groups can be communicated to the public.

## **10. Financial implications**

- 10.1 There are no definite financial implications, however members should bear in mind that any recommendations relating to the resourcing and officer support of

task and finish groups are certain to entail financial implications to budgets, as well as an opportunity cost relating to officer time. The Panel may wish to consider what measures could be recommended to ensure that finite resources and officer capacity are not overstretched.

## **11. Risk Management Implications**

- 11.1 There are no particular risk management implications, however the effective and judicious use of task and finish groups can enhance existing mitigations or recommend additional mitigations for risks identified within the strategic and operational risk registers. Groups also have the potential to identify new risks.

## **Appendices**

The following appendices relate to this report. Appendices A - C provide a summary of the task and finish group to which they relate, alongside the initial scoping document used to guide the group's formation, terms of reference, recommendations made, and feedback from its members in response to the questionnaire circulated.

Appendix D is an example of the type of form which could be used to lay out all the relevant details needed for the formation of future task and finish groups and provide clarity as to their purpose, timespan of operation and terms of reference.

Appendix A – Heritage and Tourism Task and Finish Group

Appendix B – Alternative Methods of Service Delivery Task and Finish Group

Appendix C – Conservation and Environmental Sustainability Task and Finish Group

Appendix D – Draft Task and Finish Group set-up form

## **Background Papers**

Colchester Borough Council Constitution: Summary and Explanation (Excerpt from Section 5)

‘The role of overview and scrutiny is performed by the Scrutiny Panel. It allows citizens to have a greater say in Council matters by holding public inquiries or establishing task and finish groups into matters of local concern. These lead to reports and recommendations which advise the Cabinet and the Council as a whole on its policies, budget and service delivery.’

Examples of local authority Task & Finish Group Protocols (hyperlinks provided below):

[Stratford-On-Avon District Council](#)

[Chichester District Council](#)

[Somerset County Council](#)

Examples of local authority guidance given to the public on their use of task and finish groups:

Cheshire East Council [Unitary Authority]

[https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/council\\_and\\_democracy/your\\_council/overview\\_and\\_scrutiny/task\\_and\\_finish\\_groups.aspx](https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/your_council/overview_and_scrutiny/task_and_finish_groups.aspx)

Bristol City Council [Unitary Authority]

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/how-council-decisions-are-made/scrutiny/methods-of-scrutiny>

### Heritage and Tourism Task and Finish Group

**Membership:** Seven

**Meetings held:** Seven

**Terms of Reference:**

- To assess opportunities for further promotion of our heritage assets.
- The group will bring forward new and innovative ideas to Cabinet.
- Resources will be allocated to provide costed and developed business plans for the most suitable schemes.
- Successful projects will promote Civic Pride and increase public engagement in our heritage.

**Recommendations made:**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
15 Oct 2018	None.
20 Nov 2018	Recommended to Cabinet to change the town's strapline from "Britain's Oldest Recorded Town" to "Britain's First Roman City and more"
7 Jan 2019	Officers requested to submit an options appraisal, and long-term development plan, for further works at Gosbecks Archaeological Park.
18 Mar 2019	Recommended to Cabinet that the budget for signage should be used to renovate the ceramic signs, repair/replace any broken signs and provide bunting/flags and new finger posts.
13 Aug 2019	None.
8 Oct 2019	None.
9 Dec 2019	<p>Recommended that Cabinet review the situation around Claudius Gateway and engage in further talks with Surya Foods and seek to involve the BID in these discussions to try to ensure that the historic site remains open to the public.</p> <p>Recommendation to Cabinet that funding be made available for a feasibility study to determine the extent of works required to renovate Holy Trinity Church.</p>

## Heritage and Tourism Task and Finish Group Scoping Document

<b>Task &amp; Finish Group Subject</b>	To assess opportunities for further promotion of Colchester's heritage assets.
<b>Start Date</b>	11 July 2018

### Terms of Reference

At its meeting on 6 June 2018, Cabinet approved the establishment of Heritage and Tourism Task and Finish Group and the following Terms of Reference were agreed on 11 July 2018:

- To assess opportunities for further promotion of our heritage assets.
- The group will bring forward new and innovative ideas to Cabinet.
- Resources will be allocated to provide costed and developed business plans for the most suitable schemes.
- Successful projects will promote Civic Pride and increase public engagement in our heritage.

### Specific questions to be answered or concerns to be addressed

Cabinet indicated that the following areas of exploration would exemplify the work expected of this group:

- Assess the 'lighting up' of certain heritage assets,
- Projects to increase visitor numbers, and
- Schemes to attract external funding and investment.

### Relevance to the Strategic Plan and Corporate Priorities

The following Strategic Plan priorities would be supported by the Task and Finish Group:-

- Growth – Help make sure Colchester is a welcoming place for all residents and visitors;
- Opportunity – Promote and enhance Colchester borough's heritage and visitor attractions to increase visitor numbers and to support job creation.

### Key Stakeholders, Partners or other agencies involved

### Evidence and research to be gathered

### Timescales, Communications and Reporting

This group should report to Cabinet every 3 months. It may meet with greater frequency, as agreed by members.

<b>Proposed Chairman</b>	Councillor Darius Laws
<b>Members</b>	Councillors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lyn Barton</li><li>• Nick Cope</li><li>• Adam Fox</li><li>• Patricia Moore</li><li>• Beverley Oxford</li><li>• Lee Scordis</li></ul>
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Lucie Breadman



### **Feedback from a member of the Group**

Name of Task & Finish Group:	Heritage and Tourism Task and Finish Group
<i>Are the Group's Purpose and Terms of Reference clear and understood by its members? Are there any ways in which they could be improved?</i>	
They are, but they probably need to be more focused.	
<i>What positive outcomes have come from the Group's work so far? [NB Recommendations that have been made will be compiled from meeting minutes and don't need to be listed here]</i>	
Very little. Last year it had a budget which was hardly touched.	
<i>Are there any changes in how the Group works which could make it more effective?</i>	
It needs to give clear and realistic recommendations to Cabinet.	
<i>What do you see your role and responsibilities as being, as a member of your task and finish group?</i>	
Inputting ideas, making suggestions and contributing to debates.	
<i>What are the end-point and final actions envisioned for your Task &amp; Finish Group? When do you expect that your Group will conclude its work?</i>	
This is unclear but I would hope that, with more focus, by the end of the municipal year.	
<i>What recommendations or advice do you have for any task and finish groups which may be set up in the future?</i>	
Remember that the 'finish' is as important as the 'task.'	
<i>Please let us have any other comments that you wish to make about the Task and Finish Group.</i>	
They need to be well-chaired and kept on track.	



### Alternative Methods of Service Provision Task and Finish Group

**Membership:** Seven

**Meetings held:** Five

**Terms of Reference:**

- To explore alternative methods of service delivery and contracting of services. To provide alternative business plan options for delivery through mutual or cooperative services.
- The group may use other Local Authority examples to examine models of service delivery and carry out peer reviews of services where appropriate.

**Recommendations made:**

Date of Meeting	Recommendation
19 Dec 2018	None
24 Jan 2019	None
13 Feb 2019	<p><i>RECOMMENDED</i> to Cabinet: -</p> <p>(a) That Cabinet approves the development of methods to measure and report the Social Value benefits derived from contract spend in line with the Strategic Plan priorities.</p> <p>(b) That Cabinet delegates authority to the Portfolio Holder for Resources to agree priority Social Value measures relevant for this borough and identified by the Group as shown in Appendix 4 to the report to the Task and Finish Group, together with the additional measure identified at the Group's meeting on 24 January 2019 in respect of the number of jobs created for current or ex-armed forces personnel.</p> <p>(c) That Cabinet approves the Group's recommendation that 'local' is defined as North Essex and South Suffolk for the purposes of Social Value measures, and authority to approve the exact boundaries be delegated to the Assistant Director - Policy and Corporate, taking into account travel to work and labour market criteria.</p> <p>(d) That Cabinet considers if an additional Social Value performance measure would be appropriate, after further work has been done to develop effective measurement methods that reflect the Council's priorities.</p> <p>(e) That Cabinet agrees that the Group continues its work by further exploring the options for mutual and co-operative services and returning to a future Cabinet meeting with recommendations about alternative service delivery models.</p>

9 July 2019	None
1 Oct 2019	None

## Alternative Methods of Service Delivery Task and Finish Group Scoping Document

<b>Task and Finish Group Subject</b>	To explore alternative methods of service delivery and contracting of services. To provide alternative business plan options for delivery through mutual or cooperative services.
<b>Start Date</b>	December 2018

### Terms of Reference

At its meeting on 6 June 2018, Cabinet approved the establishment of Alternative methods of Service Delivery Task and Finish Group and the following Terms of Reference were agreed on 11 July 2018:

- To explore alternative methods of service delivery and contracting of services. To provide alternative business plan options for delivery through mutual or cooperative services.
- The group may use other Local Authority examples to examine models of service delivery and carry out peer reviews of services where appropriate.

### Specific questions to be answered or concerns to be addressed

- **Current Position on Social Value**  
Revisit the Council's agreed three themes / priorities relating to **Social Value** as resolved by Cabinet in July 2013 to determine if these are still relevant or whether there are new themes and priorities to be considered.
- **Extending the Council's commitment to Social Value**  
Review the 2018 national Social Value Portal framework of Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMS) to explore implications for the Council's approach to Social Value within procurement and how the Council might **measure** the Social Value contributions and community benefits delivered by our partners, suppliers and contractors.
- **Alternative Methods of Service Delivery**  
Review research into **alternative methods of service delivery** to determine potential options to be considered for Council services.

### Relevance to the Strategic Plan and Corporate Priorities

The following Strategic Plan priorities would be supported by the Group:

- Growth – Ensuring all residents benefit from the growth of the borough
- Responsibility – Encouraging everyone to do their bit to make our borough even better
- Opportunity – Promoting and improving Colchester and its environment
- Wellbeing – Making Colchester an even better place to live and supporting those who need most help.

### Key Stakeholders, Partners or other agencies involved

- Relevant CBC officers
- National Social Value Portal & Network – an “*online solution that allows organisations to measure and manage the contribution that their organisation and supply chain makes to society*”
- Cooperative Councils Innovation Network – “*a collaboration between local authorities committed to transforming the way they work with communities*”

- CLES (Centre For Local Economic Strategies) - an “*independent think and do tank realising progressive economics for people and place*”
- Research from the LGA, LGiU and Social Enterprise UK – see section 3
- Other stakeholders tbc.

### **Evidence and research to be gathered**

See pages 3 – 5.

### **Timescales, Communications and Reporting**

#### **19 December 2018**

Initial discussion and agreement to scope for the Task and Finish Group based on this scoping paper and key questions to be explored. Agree work programme for the rest of the municipal year, including expectations / agenda items for the January meeting and agreeing which witnesses could be approached to provide inputs and evidence.

#### **January 2019** (date tbc)

Presentation on the key themes in scope, witness representations and debating the options.

#### **Early February 2019** (date tbc)

Consolidation of work to date and agreement to recommendations to go before the Cabinet (prior to the deadline for submission of the draft report on 18 February).

Subject to the agreed scope these may cover two main areas:

1. The Council's approach to delivering Social Value through procurement
2. Options for alternative service delivery to be explored as part of the Council's overall approach to service improvement.

<b>Proposed Chairman</b>	Councillor Martyn Warnes
<b>Members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Simon Crow</li> <li>• Councillor Cyril Liddy</li> <li>• Councillor Beverley Oxford</li> <li>• Councillor Dennis Willetts</li> <li>• Councillor Helen Chuah</li> <li>• Councillor Nick Cope</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Dan Gascoyne – Assistant Director, Policy and Corporate

## Collated feedback from current Group members

Name of Task & Finish Group:	<b>Alternative Methods of Service Delivery Task and Finish Group</b>
Are the Group's Purpose and Terms of Reference clear and understood by its members? Are there any ways in which they could be improved?	
<p><i>Yes they were clear but over ambitious. Better early definition would help.</i></p> <p><i>The purpose and terms are clear. Unsure on how it can be improved.</i></p>	
What positive outcomes have come from the Group's work so far? [NB Recommendations that have been made will be compiled from meeting minutes and don't need to be listed here]	
<i>As per recommendations: some thoughtful progress. Cross Group working is always helpful. Members given an opportunity to influence policy..</i>	
Are there any changes in how the Group works which could make it more effective?	
<i>Perhaps meeting more frequently and/or email chains. The meetings are sparse and I am not sure what has been achieved so far.</i>	
What do you see your role and responsibilities as being, as a member of your task and finish group?	
<p><i>To help focus on practicality and delivery.</i></p> <p><i>My role is to create a general consensus and represent the views of my party group.</i></p>	
What are the end-point and final actions envisioned for your Task & Finish Group? When do you expect that your Group will conclude its work?	
<p><i>Unclear as yet.</i></p> <p><i>There is no real end-point as such, although things can be achieved rolling year on year. I.E when a contract ends and the group has found an alternative contract that could save the council money and/or be of more benefit to residents.</i></p>	
What recommendations or advice do you have for any task and finish groups which may be set up in the future?	
<p><i>Clarity as to end point in time.</i></p> <p><i>Unsure.</i></p>	
Please let us have any other comments that you wish to make about the Task and Finish Group.	
<i>Worth supporting but tight and time defined remit will help.</i>	

**Further information on the specific areas to be addressed [by the Alternative Methods of Service Delivery Task and Finish Group]:**

**1. Current Position on Social Value**

*Revisit the Council's agreed three themes / priorities relating to **Social Value** as resolved by Cabinet in July 2013 to determine if these are still relevant or whether there are new themes and priorities to be considered (see below).*

See [CBC Social Value page](#) for current publication.

At the Cabinet meeting in July 2013, it was

*RESOLVED that:*

- (a) The Council's procurement process and guidance be amended to include a requirement to consider appropriate and relevant measures to address the impact on the local economy, the environment and compliance with the living wage at the pre-procurement stage of future procurements over the EU threshold.*
- (b) The key social value issues applicable to Colchester Borough Council will be those set out at paragraph. 4.7 of the Assistant Chief Executive's report. (as below)*

*Following discussions at Leadership Team, the following three themes / priorities are recommended as those which should be taken into account when considering social value:*

<b>Social Value Theme</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<i>Impact on local economy</i>	<i>Requirement to advertise employment opportunities locally Skills training / apprenticeships Use of local sub-contractors</i>
<i>Compliance with living wage</i>	<i>Subject to the decision on accreditation; relevant contractor employees would have to be paid at least the living wage (currently £7.49).</i>
<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Requirement to use low emission vehicles Eco-efficiency – doing more with less resource Reduce, reuse and recycle Increase in amenity Visual improvement</i>

**Questions to consider**

- To what extent are these 2013 themes still relevant for 2019 and beyond, and how well do they align with [the Strategic Plan 2018-21](#)?
- Could the Council connect the various aspects of Social Value more clearly on the Council's website to reflect its importance to the organisation and its communities?



## 2. Extending the Council's commitment to Social Value

*Review the 2018 national [Social Value Portal](#) framework of Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMS) to explore implications for the Council's approach to Social Value within procurement and how the Council might **measure** the Social Value contributions and community benefits delivered by our partners, suppliers and contractors.*

In 2018 the Social Value Portal developed a National Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMS) framework.

The Framework has 5 main themes, with up to 35 measures. Individual measures are designed to be selected on a contract-by-contract basis to reflect relevance, suitability and proportionality:

- Jobs: Promote Local Skills and Employment
- Growth: Supporting Growth of Responsible Regional Business
- Social: Healthier, Safer and more Resilient Communities
- Environment: Protecting and Improving Our Environment
- Innovation: Promoting Social Innovation

To some extent, the 2013 themes are being addressed within current tendering processes and HR arrangements, eg [Current Vacancies](#), [Apprenticeships](#) and [Living Wage](#). Likewise, environmental issues are being picked up in a range of activities, eg [the Strategic Plan 2018-21](#), purchase of freighters with Euro 6 diesel engines, [the No Vehicle Idling Policy](#).

The Task and Finish Group could review the 2013 themes and update them for 2019 in line with the Social Value Portal TOMS. More could be done to the Council's website to refresh and connect the relevant content.

If resource was allocated, the Council could hold a "Meet the Buyer" event and produce good practice guidance aimed at local suppliers to inform how to identify and respond to tender opportunities to supplement the information currently provided on the Council's [Supplying the Council](#) page.

### Questions to consider

- Should the TOMS framework approach be adopted for tenders and contracts?
- What other benefits and contributions should be considered that are outside the procurement process?

### 3. Alternative Methods of Service Delivery

*Review the research into **alternative methods of service delivery** to determine potential options to be considered for Council services.*

The following links provide some useful further information and research that the Task and Finish group might care to explore under this theme.

[Social enterprise, mutual, co-operative and collective ownership models](#)

LGA guide to employee-led organisations – see pages 11-15 for definitions, and the important TUPE/pensions considerations in section 4.

[LGiU Essential Guide: Public Service Mutuals](#) - overview for councillors and officers with an interest in or considering 'spinning out' their internal service teams into an external mutual organisation, and for councillors scrutinising existing mutuals.

[Public Service Mutuals: State of the Sector 2018](#) was produced by Social Enterprise UK for DCMS and provides a detailed study of the public service mutual market, with 70% of the sector interviewed. It covers achievements the industry has made so far, while also noting the challenging environment mutuals are operating in, and the key issues raised by those that run them.

[Briefing: Public Service Mutuals: State of the Sector 2018](#)

#### Questions to consider

- Having reviewed the research, does the Task and Finish Group have any suggestions for alternative methods of service delivery that would be a good match for the Council?
- Does the Task and Finish Group have any specific services in mind that would be deliverable in one of the above models?

## Conservation and Environmental Sustainability Task and Finish Group

**Membership:** Eight

**Meetings held:** Three

**Terms of Reference:**

- To acknowledge our “Climate Emergency” and translate aspirations into actions.
- To explore methods of conservation of natural habitats and bio-diversity, whether through adapting existing practices and places or creating new ecologically diverse environments with sustainable practices built in.
- To encourage renewable energy generation and carbon footprint reduction in both the public and private sectors across the borough.
- To encourage environmental stewardship focusing on carbon footprint reduction by examining air quality, water quality, plastic and waste reduction and renewable energy generation in both public and private spheres across the borough.
- To explore and advise the Planning Service on environmental and sustainability measures to direct future development.

**Membership:** The membership should be between 7-8 permanent Councillor members. Guests and experts maybe invited to the Task and Finish Group as appropriate and agreed by members. The political breakdown will be: Liberal Democrat 2, Labour 2, Conservative 2, Highwoods Independents 1, Green Party 1.

**Chairperson:** The appointment of the Chair is for the Task and Finish group to agree at its initial meeting.

**Reporting timescales:** This group should report to Cabinet every 3-4 months. It may meet with greater frequency, as agreed by members.

**Recommendations made:**

Date of Meeting	Recommendation
24 July 2019	<i>RECOMMENDED TO CABINET</i> that resources be made available for the recruitment of an Environmental Project Support Officer to support the work of the Group.
9 Sept 2019	None
28 Oct 2019	<p><i>RECOMMENDED TO CABINET</i> that:-</p> <p>(a) Colchester Council commits to cease the use of glyphosate herbicides, by a phased approach based on the nature of the sites where herbicides are used, the need to encourage biodiversity where possible, and the availability of alternative sustainable practices.</p> <p>(b) Colchester Borough Council will work with other authorities, organisations and companies who use glyphosate herbicides within the borough to encourage them to cease their use of them.</p>

14 January  
2020

*RECOMMENDED TO CABINET* that:

(a) The Climate Emergency Action Plan be approved, subject to the inclusion and clarification of Scope 3 elements to the section entitled "Scope of the Carbon Emission Target".

(b) The Climate Emergency Action Plan be kept under review and that the Council commit to a target in respect of additional Scope 3 emissions once measurement of this wider carbon footprint has been undertaken.

## Conservation and Environmental Sustainability Task and Finish Group Scoping Document

<b>Task &amp; Finish Group Subject</b>	Conservation and Environmental Sustainability
<b>Start Date</b>	10 June 2019

### Terms of Reference

At its meeting on 5 June 2019 Cabinet approved the establishment of the Conservation and Environmental Sustainability Task and Finish Group. The terms of reference as approved at the first meeting of the Group on 24 July 2019 were as follows:-

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

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

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

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

### Specific questions to be answered or concerns to be addressed

At its meeting on 17 July 2019 Council agreed a motion that identified possible actions for the Task and Finish Group. At its first meeting on 24 July 2019 the Group agreed these and added an additional action relating to advising the Planning Service on environmental and sustainability measures. :-

- a) Commission an environmental audit which identifies pollution hotspots, wildlife biodiversity and environmental health issues, and an urban impact assessment with an aim to identify areas of improvement across the borough.
- b) Consult expert opinions in the field, as appropriate.
- c) Collaborate with regional and neighbouring local authorities, as well as communities, to encourage practical measures to reduce emissions, reduce carbon footprints and develop community-based renewable energy projects.
- d) Encourage all sectors of the economy across the borough to take step to reduce waste and become carbon neutral.
- e) To explore and advise the Planning Service on environmental and sustainability measures to direct future development.
- f) Develop a roadmap for Colchester Borough Council to go carbon neutral by 2030.
- g) Report to Cabinet and Full Council within six months with an action plan setting out conservation and environmental sustainability goals to address staged targets by 2030; incorporating proposals on the investment implications of this proposed activity.

### Relevance to the Strategic Plan and Corporate Priorities

The following Strategic Plan priorities would be supported by the Task and Finish Group

Opportunity – Encourage green technologies through green initiatives such as SMART Cities

Wellbeing - Help residents adopt healthier lifestyles by enabling the provision of excellent leisure facilities and beautiful green spaces, countryside and beaches.

#### **Key Stakeholders, Partners or other agencies involved**

Provide clear details of key stakeholders, partners and other agencies involved. How these partners are going to be involved in the project and the communication strategy.

#### **Evidence and research to be gathered**

Note details of evidence to be gathered to support the project, including site visits, consultation exercise or any other forms of engagement required.

#### **Timescales, Communications and Reporting**

It was agreed that the Group should report to Cabinet every three- four months.

The motion agreed at Council specified that the Group should report to Cabinet and Full Council within six months with an action plan setting out conservation and environmental sustainability goals to address targets by 2030; incorporating proposals on the investment implications of this proposed activity.

<b>Chairman</b>	Councillor Cory
<b>Members</b>	Councillor Peter Chillingworth (Conservative) Councillor Robert Davidson (Conservative) Councillor Mark Goacher (Green) Councillor Mike Lilley (Labour) Councillor Andrea Luxford Vaughan (Liberal Democrats) Councillor Beverley Oxford (Highwoods) Councillor Lorcan Whitehead (Labour)
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Rory Doyle

## Collated feedback from current Group members

Name of Task & Finish Group:	<b>Conservation and Environmental Sustainability Task and Finish Group</b>
Are the Group's Purpose and Terms of Reference clear and understood by its members? Are there any ways in which they could be improved?	
<p><i>I think they are clear and give the group a good sense of its remit.</i></p> <p><i>I felt they were too long-winded. Could have been briefer.</i></p>	
What positive outcomes have come from the Group's work so far? [NB Recommendations that have been made will be compiled from meeting minutes and don't need to be listed here]	
<p><i>The group has received briefings from a range of experts and members of the local community which has helped to increase members' understanding of the ways in which the Council can improve environmental sustainability. It has commissioned an audit which will be helpful for informing future actions. It has made a range of recommendations to cabinet</i></p> <p><i>Climate Change Action Plan.</i></p>	
Are there any changes in how the Group works which could make it more effective?	
<p><i>Better support from some members.</i></p>	
What do you see your role and responsibilities as being, as a member of your task and finish group?	
<p><i>To inform myself of the issues both by reading briefing materials and doing independent research so that I can contribute to the discussions in the group, and to help make collective decisions which fulfil the aims that the group has been established to achieve. To challenge the group to be ambitious in its aims, and to critically assess the information we are provided with.</i></p> <p><i>As Vice Chairman, support the Chairman. As member, play active part, ideas, push forward.</i></p>	
What are the end-point and final actions envisioned for your Task & Finish Group? When do you expect that your Group will conclude its work?	
<p><i>The group is in the process of producing its final report to cabinet and will conclude its work soon. The group had a clear remit of reporting to cabinet within 6 months though it was less clear how the ongoing work arising from the group's activity will be overseen so this remains to be discussed by the group.</i></p> <p><i>Mainly producing the Action Plan for Cabinet in six months, fulfil the other items of the terms of reference.</i></p>	
What recommendations or advice do you have for any task and finish groups which may be set up in the future?	

*Focus on clear terms of reference. Don not be too ambitions with limited time and officer resource.*

*I think we have benefited from having a clear remit, with concrete actions we were required to carry out, and a clear timeframe for doing so. I would recommend that other groups have similarly clear remits and timeframes to keep their work focused.*

Please let us have any other comments that you wish to make about the Task and Finish Group.



## Task & Finish Group Set-Up Details

<b>FOR LEAD OFFICER TO COMPLETE</b>	
Title of the Task & Finish Group	
Reporting to which committee	
Reason for creation of a task and finish group	
Lead Service / Officer supporting the group	
Terms of Reference for the group	
Specific areas (if any) excluded from the remit of the group	
Anticipated specific outcomes	
Number of Members and Suggested Member representation	
Details of any co-opted members	
Start and anticipated end date of the group	
Meeting frequency and timing	
Location of meetings	
How will outcomes be reported and frequency of reporting	
Any consultation requirements	
Will the agendas / meeting notes be available on the Council's website?	
Any other issues to consider	
<b>FOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES TO COMPLETE</b>	
Minute reference authorising creation of group	
Allocated Democratic Officer	
Agreed member representation	