

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

Scrutiny Panel Half Year Report covering April – September 2021

Themes:

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

Tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability:

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

Respond to the Climate Emergency

Goal	Achievements
Reduce carbon emissions to help achieve a net zero Carbon footprint for Council Services by 2030.	<p>Direct emissions were reduced by 12.8% (791.5 tonnes of CO₂e) between figures recorded for financial year 2019-2020 and financial year 2020-2021.</p> <p>A Climate Challenge and Sustainability strategy document was shared with the Climate Opportunity Working Group and partners to begin to elaborate outcomes and targets.</p>

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Environment and sustainability embedded within all Council decision making and the adaptation and recovery from Covid-19.	All new Project Initiation Documents have a mechanism to assess environmental impacts and 8 projects have completed the assessment since its introduction in June, all of which have shown consideration of their project impacts on the environment and how these can be mitigated.
Air quality across Colchester is improved.	<p>CAReless pollution - No vehicle idling campaign. Launched a school's toolkit to promote Clean Air June 2021. The campaign has been promoted over the summer to raise awareness including in Culver Square, at a local school, Eco Festival, and the Anti Loo Roll Brigade festival.</p> <p>Bikeability resumed in the summer term, and we have continued to carry out pre and post Bikeability surveys with children and their parents.</p>
Continue to support residents to reduce, reuse and recycle their waste.	There has been a slight decline in recycling rates to approximately 52% which is being affected by the amount of household waste that has been generated as result of more residents working from and/or spending more time at home. A reduce waste social media campaign is underway to encourage residents to reduce their waste #WasteLessColchester. A campaign has also been launched to reinforce the current 3 bag / 1 bin limit.
Conserve and enhance biodiversity	
Goal	Achievements
Minimise the environmental impact of our activities.	Our high emitting assets or ways of working have been identified (top 3 are Leisure World, Fleet and affordable housing).

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	<p>Project proposals developed for Housing (HRA) improvements and decarbonisation of Rowan House to reduce asset and travel emissions are well advanced and entering towards delivery phases.</p> <p>A review of the Carbon Management Plan (CMP) 2016-2020 is complete with some actions to be rolled into the upcoming CMP for 2022-2027.</p>
Enhance environments to create more space for nature to grow and thrive through greening and natural seeding.	The Council has been successful in securing funding through a joint application with the Essex Forest Partnership for the supply, planting and maintenance of new standard (2-3m high, not whip trees), in locations across the Borough, beside riverbanks, roads and footways to create shade and mitigate flooding; A total of 325 trees to benefit wildlife, combat flooding and provide shade to reduce drought / heat.
Discover, nurture and enable the work led by communities that promotes biodiversity.	The work delivered in partnership with not-for-profit, social enterprise Together We Grow CIC (TWG) in 2020 has been recognised recently through the nomination of an award in the prestigious Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Service Awards 2021.
Plant native species and manage our woodlands, meadows and greenspace whilst sustaining existing habitats.	<p>All Town and Parish Councils have been contacted and offered free trees and shrubs for planting on their land or for distribution to their residents – 15 have expressed an interest with over 7,000 trees being requested.</p> <p>The project is partnering with Big Green Internet, Woodland Trust to deliver the Red Squirrel Project to plant up to 4kms (20,000 whips) of new hedgerow on Mersea Island.</p>
Work alongside communities to maintain clean, green neighbourhoods	Across many sites in the Borough residents are acting as guardians over the newly planted Woodland sites. These 'Tree Guardians' are now being recognised and provided with the tools

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and urban spaces that we all look after and enjoy.	to help them continue with their roles. A campaign to recruit more Tree Guardians and showcase the wonderful work they do and the impact they make is being shared.
Enable more opportunity for walking and cycling around Colchester	
Goal	Achievements
Work with partners to implement strategies and develop measures to reduce traffic in the town centre.	<p>Worked with partners to promote sustainable travel behaviour change, healthier lifestyles and reduce car dependency including through Colchester Travel Plan Club (CTPC) network.</p> <p>Worked closely with Enform and Eco Colchester to put on Colchester's First Eco festival, with CBC leading on the sustainable transport offer. This included marketing and website to encourage sustainable travel to the festival, ecargo bike try outs, spin scooter training and Wheels for All try outs. Approximately 3000 people attended and over 800 people visited the various sustainable travel related stalls.</p>
Improve facilities and routes for cyclists and walkers to enable active travel behaviours, healthier lifestyles and reduce car use.	<p>Premises identified and planning application submitted for a secure cycle parking facility in the town centre including location and operational requirements and sub-letting to a community bike maintenance organisation.</p> <p>Worked with Colchester Cycle Campaign on review of the Colchester Cycling Delivery Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), and its alignment with the ECC Colchester Cycling Action Plan.</p>

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Ensure major regeneration projects put physical activity, cycling and walking at the forefront of development.	<p>CNG Sports Park construction was completed in November 2020 and opened as Covid restrictions lifted in 2021. The Sports Park has new pedestrian crossings and cycleways on route to the facility.</p> <p>The Walk, a new cycleway and pedestrian link through the heart of the Northern Gateway, from Mill Road has now been completed.</p>
Strategic Priorities achievements and next steps	
Goal	Achievements
To increase biodiversity, wildflowers and accessibility to Council open spaces, the 'Greening Colchester' policy will be further developed through the Woodland and Biodiversity Project and based on the outcomes from the 2021 growing season pilots, in consultation with ward Councillors and the Environment and Sustainability Panel.	A plan for Blossom Circles tree planting as a Covid memorial has been developed. A combination of plug planting and seeding will take place at selected sites during the winter season 2021. A rolling programme of works has been developed for strimming across the Borough.
To support residents to reduce, reuse and recycle their waste a budget will be made available to support the delivery of neighbourhood services, such as improving waste bins and containers for	<p>Several initiatives are underway which include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Litter and dog bin policy • Litter engagement strategy • Litter bin route optimisation

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<p>recycling materials, where demand has at times outstripped supply, and to ensure our frontline staff always have the equipment they need to do their job.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer support and education programme • Additional operative resource • 'Smart' bin pilot in Dedham • Supply of Colchester Market jute/cloth bags
<p>We will invest in improved welfare, safety and compliance at the Shrub End depot whilst working towards a long-term strategy for our operational depot services.</p>	<p>A programme of works to improve welfare, safety, and compliance at the Shrub End depot has been identified. Included in the work programmes are the following considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demolition of weighbridge and removal of 3 "Bird Cage" steel supports • Supply and positioning of concrete interlocking blocks • Storage bay sleeper replacement and steel sheet installation. • Lagoon repairs • Chain link fencing repairs/replacement • Bailing shed • Replacement of surface water drainage, tarmac and concrete surface repairs and white Lining • Pump station refurbishment • Toilets • New lockers • New rest room furniture • Shelter for crewing out • Cycle cage • New weighbridge • Bird netting • Car parks works
<p>Creating safe, healthy and active communities:</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on community strengths and assets • Tackle the causes of inequality and support our most vulnerable people • Provide opportunities for young people • Strategic Priorities achievements and next steps 	
Build on community strengths and assets	
Goal	Achievements
Take an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Approach and work alongside communities to build a borough where people are more empowered, self-sufficient, healthy, active, happy and doing what they enjoy.	<p>New One Colchester Community Hub is now open following a soft launch on 20 September. The Crisi Café is due to open the new space in November.</p> <p>One Colchester partnership working together across all sectors including voluntary and community sector to support and keep people safe and second phase of asset mapping work has been completed.</p> <p>One Colchester - Communities Can approved and ABCD awareness and training is being rolled out across Council and partners in line with Communities Can.</p>
Encourage belonging, involvement and responsibility in all Colchester's communities and neighbourhoods.	<p>One Colchester Commissioned Asset Mapping completed, and refresh planned for every 6 months. Data is being used to inform work with system partners.</p> <p>Awareness and training of ABCD delivered across system and more planned.</p>
Work with our partners to make volunteering and community involvement as easy as possible.	Thousands of additional volunteers engaged and supporting communities throughout the last 18 months, many specifically supporting the most vulnerable during Covid19 pandemic.

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	<p>One Colchester approach led by C360 to recruit and support volunteers across the Borough. This has created new opportunities and simple mechanisms for recruitment.</p> <p>The system is ready and prepared for any winter issues relating to Covid or other health, financial and social challenges.</p>
Maximise developer contributions (such as Section 106) and other funding mechanisms to help fund community infrastructure.	Active engagement, using ABCD, carried out with community groups, voluntary groups and Town and Parish Councils, to agree a S106 project plan for each ward, in preparation for receipt of S106 developer contributions.
Tackle the causes of inequality and support our most vulnerable people	
Goal	Achievements
Work alongside Public Health to take steps that mitigate Covid-19 infection risks and control outbreaks across the population.	One Colchester system approach to outbreak control led to successful and joined up approach maximising the resources. This included working with Colchester Business Improvement District, University, Parish and Town Councils, Police, Health Colleagues, Voluntary Sector, and many others.
Support residents to do the things they enjoy doing to stay healthy, happy and physically active.	<p>Community Response continues to support the most vulnerable and 'Community Response' Pack remains updated to share relevant information, advice, and contacts.</p> <p>Use of the Local Development Pilot (LDP) and system partners at identify key areas of actions and invest in activity area to encourage inactive residents in the most deprived areas to become more active.</p>

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	<p>Work with One Colchester and continue to lead the Alliance 'Be Well' domain so issue is covered by a system solution.</p> <p>Encourage active lifestyles and continued working with communities and partners to improve access to walking, cycling and open spaces.</p>
Enable access and involvement in community green space, countryside sites, sport, and leisure facilities.	<p>We have promoted facilities available to communities through regular email marketing (reaching more than 15K customers / residents monthly), printed advertisement including billboards, paid digital advertising, social media and press releases.</p> <p>An Open Day was held on the 24 July which attracted over 4K residents and customers. This was largely promoted through press releases, 32K leaflets delivered to resident's homes, and strong radio interviews and coverage by BBC Essex and Actual Radio.</p> <p>On the 30 August, the Sports Park social media accounts had over 4K followers and £1.6K has gone towards promoting the Sports Park social media account to North Essex & South Suffolk. Our commissioned cycle track race video and 360 Sports Park tour received good engagement.</p>
Support people to live in healthy homes that meet their needs.	<p>The Senior Occupational Therapist in Housing Project has been extended for a further 3 years to April 2024 as a result of its success from Years 1 and 2. This partnership with Essex County Council improves delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants and joint-working.</p> <p>The Mental Health and Housing Partnership Project has re-launched following being put on hold during the pandemic. This brings frontline council and mental health services together to support vulnerable residents that are at risk of losing their homes or requiring hospital admission.</p>

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Supporting the most vulnerable residents through our One Colchester partnership.	<p>Have worked with One Colchester partners on projects such as the winter warmth project. Building trusted, open, and transparent relationships with community leaders from diverse communities such as our BAME and Faith communities.</p> <p>Used external funding to support our most vulnerable residents – through the Local Delivery Pilot (LDP), North East Essex Health & Wellbeing Alliance and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).</p> <p>Safer Colchester website updated to include information on Covid-19 related issues, alongside information on staying safe, hidden harms (such as domestic abuse), hate crime and anti-social behaviour.</p>
Provide opportunities for young people	
Goal	Achievements
Provide positive opportunities for young people to engage with their local community and do things that interests them, keeps them safe, makes them happy and supports improved mental wellbeing.	Being delivered through a programme within the Towns Fund, with £1.3m included for capital improvements and We Are Colchester working through a multi partner steering group to work up schemes including improvements to Town House and other existing building and facilities within the Geographical footprint.
Support the creation of strong, safe, and friendly communities that care about each other.	Continue with the production and updating of the Community Response Pack and Residents Contact Pack.

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	<p>Ensuring Town and Parish Councils are engaged and supported through regular engagement, contact and involvement in local decision-making processes.</p> <p>Re-launch of the Rural Crime Tool kit and Rural Community Safety Fund to provide communities with ideas, information, support, and funding to make their neighbourhood a better place to live.</p> <p>Re-launch of Keep Safe for Colchester; a free scheme helping vulnerable residents to feel safer and more confident out in the town.</p>
Work with Essex Police, Colchester Borough Homes, Essex Youth Service, and other partners to reduce anti-social behaviour and tackle serious crime.	<p>Working together through the Multi Agency Coordination Panel (MACP) partners have targeted individual criminals and used their combined powers to disrupt the criminal in addition to the criminality. This approach has seen one Organised Crime Group archived. Emerging groups are under review on a bi-monthly basis.</p> <p>Partnership campaign – Safeguarding Vulnerable children on Transport Networks. Essex Results: Face to face engagements – total 976. Digital reach – social media reach over 202,500, social media clicks 1023, social media engagements 2955 and over 87,500 Newsletters.</p>
Work alongside our partners to improve cleanliness and community safety in the town centre.	<p>Town Centre Action Plan (TCAP) partnership meetings held fortnightly to continue to discuss individuals causing (or vulnerable to) anti-social behaviour, hotspots and problem solve issues. New Action Plan produced May 2020 to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of activity.</p> <p>Joint working with the Police and the Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID) to help businesses safely re-open within Covid-19 guidelines.</p>

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Upgrade and extend the CCTV network to reach more places.	The CCTV infrastructure was installed on site between July 2020 and April 2021, with the project closure completed in July 2021. The project was delivered throughout lock down periods in the Covid pandemic and remained on time and on budget, with over 100km of cable installed, expanding the coverage from the town other parts of urban Colchester including the new Sports Park at the Northern Gateway.
Strategic Priorities achievements and next steps	
Goal	Achievements
We will continue to prioritise all efforts to reduce the transmission of coronavirus and risks of infection, including local track and trace, whilst doing everything we can to protect the livelihoods of our residents and businesses.	<p>Covid19 response included community led approaches across the borough supporting most vulnerable with food deliveries, medicines, and befriending schemes.</p> <p>Thousands of additional volunteers engaged and supporting communities throughout the last 18 months, many specifically supporting the most vulnerable during Covid19 pandemic.</p> <p>One Colchester approach led by C360 to recruit and support volunteers across the Borough. This has created new opportunities and simple mechanisms for recruitment.</p> <p>The system is ready and prepared for any winter issues relating to Covid or other health, financial and social challenges.</p>
We will expedite progress on delivering new Community Halls at St Mark's, Highwoods and Western by-pass, Stanway.	<p>St Marks Community Centre</p> <p>Good Progress is being made on the community centre. A community engagement webinar was held in early September with an online survey to accompany it which received 46 responses and very positive feedback.</p>

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	<p>Stanway Community Centre</p> <p>Pre commencement planning conditions have been discharged. Discussions with Stanway Parish Council continue regarding the lease.</p>
Members' Locality Budgets for 2021-2022 were cut by 50% as part of the budget strategy process in the previous financial year and these will be restored back to £2,000 with immediate effect so that every councillor can support local priorities in their wards.	This goal has been delivered.
Our open spaces have become increasingly significant and important to support residents' physical and mental wellbeing during the Covid pandemic. Funding will be allocated to enhance the security of our open spaces and prevent unauthorised access that could pose a risk to the biodiversity and accessibility of these important locations.	The first stage of an audit has been completed. Prioritisation and costings are currently being finalised. A summary of achievements will be included in the year end SPAP report.
We will investigate opportunities to brighten-up multi-story car parks (MSCP), for example through	Proposal for a 'UK first' innovative EV charging solution in Council Carpark completed and with PFH for sign off. Proposal includes associated charging points, bay painting and signage. Charge points to include bay sensor technology linked to the MiPermit system.

decoration or other environmental improvements.	
Delivering homes for people who need them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number, quality and types of homes • Prevent households from experiencing homelessness • Create new communities and adopt a new Local Plan that delivers jobs, homes and the infrastructure to meet the borough's future needs • Strategic Priorities achievements and next steps 	
Increase the number, quality and types of homes	
Goal	Achievements
Deliver 30% affordable housing across all our mixed tenure housing sites.	<p>Work started on site on the first housing site in July 2020 and the first homes were completed in July 2021.</p> <p>The first Amphora Homes site is now occupied, seeing the Council-owned companies first market sales, but also delivering 2 affordable homes.</p> <p>The Northern Gateway South site also gained outline planning permission including for the 350 homes Amphora will build here from 2022 which will include 30% affordable housing.</p>
Deliver 380 affordable council and housing association homes by 2023.	Between April and September 2021, 41 affordable homes have been delivered in Colchester. 38 homes were existing properties purchased by the Council and 2 were new homes delivered through Colchester Amphora Homes a 1 was delivered through Section 106 at Rowhedge

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	Wharf by Chelmer Housing Association (CHP). The running total of affordable homes delivered is 142 out of the target of 380.
Improve existing Council homes to keep them in good repair and improve energy efficiency.	The Housing Investment Programme slowed during the pandemic due to the nature of the work (being in people's homes). Safe working practices were put in place for various works but not all works were possible where tenants are more vulnerable. Supply, materials, cost increases and labour shortages are hindering progress for our contractors in 2021 and combined with the backlog caused by the pandemic the works are continuously reviewed and regularly reprogrammed to attempt to catch up. The programme was on track prior to Covid..
Deliver new low/zero carbon Council homes for our residents.	<p>Construction of 24 new Council homes began in 2020-2021 and all of these are being built to 'Future Homes 2025' principles making them the most energy efficient homes that the Council has built to date. The first homes were completed at Hardings Close, Aldham, in August 2021.</p> <p>£4.5m of 'Climate Emergency Response Works' was agreed in 2020 and this extra investment has been in delivery during 2021 to increase the EPC ratings of our most inefficient, older, homes and help tackle fuel poverty and inequality.</p> <p>The '100 homes' project to acquire 100 additional council homes included work to improve the energy performance of the homes. 78 homes have been secured to date, with many now improved and being occupied.</p>
Ensure all new homes delivered by the Council are designed to a high quality across all tenures.	The current collection of new homes already delivered, in progress, and soon to be progressed, are the most energy efficient homes CBC have constructed. Most have no gas boilers and are using air source heat or other low carbon measures.

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	Accessibility is also being prioritised. There are several Part M Category 2 properties, with features such as level access showers.
Continue to improve and modernise Council owned housing for older people.	Elfreda House was emptied in 2020 and all previous tenants were successfully re-homed with good relationships and communications maintained throughout. The contract for works, to demolish and re-build, was awarded and construction commenced in September 2021.
Prevent households from experiencing homelessness	
Goal	Achievements
Work with partners to implement the 2020-2025 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy delivery plan.	The actions in the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Delivery Plan have been reviewed and updated. The updated Delivery Plan and Progress report has been published on the Colchester Borough Council website.
Intervene early to prevent homelessness and work in partnership with other organisations to sustain people's accommodation.	From April 2021 to the end of September 2021 homelessness was prevented for 67 households and during the same period 66 households were assisted into accommodation under the relief duty.
Tackle rough sleeping in the borough.	<p>The Rough Sleeping Team have worked with 62 people who have been provided with advice, support and assistance.</p> <p>During the same period, 27 rough sleepers or those at risk of sleeping rough have been accommodated in the private rented sector, supported housing, social housing and 4 rough</p>

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	<p>sleepers have been reconnected back to locations where they have a local connection and support networks.</p> <p>Colchester Borough Council (CBC) in conjunction with Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) have successfully bid for funding under the governments Rough Sleeper Accommodation Pathway (RSAP) and were awarded</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £457,500 capital funding to be spent in 2021/2022 to purchase 6 ex local authority one bed flats (50% of total scheme costs and the maximum percentage we could bid for) • £105,700 revenue funding to fund a support worker for 3 years <p>The properties will form part of the housing and support pathway for rough sleepers in addition to the specialist supported housing, based on 'Housing First' principles.</p> <p>The work of the Rough Sleeper Team continues to be funded under the governments Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) which CBC in conjunction with CBH has successfully bid for and been awarded £325,572 for 2021-2022.</p>
Create new communities and adopt a new Local Plan that delivers jobs, homes and the infrastructure to meet the borough's future needs	
Goal	Achievements
Create a Development Plan Document for Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community to include zero	Joint work with TDC and ECC is underway. Having completed review and scope of evidence base various commissions in progress with interim reports be prepared to help inform Drafting the DPD. Link road and RTS progressing under HIF and planning applications submitted. Engagement website launched and several consultations have taken place.

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carbon emissions in the community development and green procurement.	
Establish a Delivery Vehicle and investment package for the next phase of the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community.	Members from the three Authorities have met and confirmed their commitment to achieving the principles of Garden Communities for this site as well as confirming the intent to resource the work necessary. Governance arrangements, programme and resource implications continue to be developed.
Develop the Colchester Northern Gateway as a sustainable place to live, work and play.	<p>The Sports Park was completed in November 2020 and opened in Spring 2021 after Covid restrictions. Improved walking and cycling included 2 new cycleways along Boxted Road and Severalls Lane, as well as dedicated crossings over Junction 28 of the A12 roundabout / slip roads.</p> <p>The Walk commenced in July 2020, but 'Phase 2' started in April 2021 and completed at the end of September to provide an attractive, tree-lined, avenue dedicated to walking and cycling through the heart of the Northern Gateway and connecting to existing communities.</p>
Ensure the Council has a good supply of land available for new homes and business.	<p>Adopted Local Plan provides for housing land up to 2023 and adequate employment land.</p> <p>Emerging Local Plan will allocate sites to provide land for housing and employment up to 2033 and beyond. Section 1 of the Local Plan adopted and Section 2 examination well advanced.</p>
Create great places to live through the provision of new homes with infrastructure and facilities that support	<p>Progress is being made towards adoption of new Local Plan and several Neighbourhood Plans have been adopted.</p> <p>Planning applications have continued to be determined and will deliver new homes and infrastructure.</p>

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sustainable living and promote health and wellbeing.	
Strategic Priorities achievements and next steps	
Goal	Achievements
To help clear the current backlog of enforcement cases and enable training of a new apprentice role (currently being recruited to), an additional in-year budget contribution will provide additional capacity in the Planning Enforcement team.	The Planning Enforcement team has been bolstered by the appointment of an experienced officer on a fixed term contract. An apprentice has also been appointed who covers planning and enforcement.
We will work with the County Council and local communities to ensure that any proposed developments on Council-owned land reflect the needs of the local community, optimise opportunities to create sustainable and affordable homes, and improve access to public transport and active travel choices.	<p>The Council has delivered its first homes through both the Colchester Amphora Homes programme of mixed-tenure housing, as well as the first new build in the Council's own 'New Council Housing Programme'. The Council homes are being built to 'Future Homes 2025' principles, with features such as renewable energy sources included on all new homes.</p> <p>Potential housing sites in the town centre are being aligned with wider transport projects including the Active Travel Fund 2, Rapid Transport System (RTS) and other ideas that are emerging.</p> <p>Non-housing Council developments are also leading with the sustainability agenda, including the flagship Northern Gateway Heat Network. 'The Walk' promotes walking and cycling through</p>

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	the heart of the Northern Gateway, whilst the new LFFN 'Ultrafast' Broadband Network will help people work from home and access services without travelling.
We will seek to construct a workable proposal for a revised allocation at Middlewick enabling the creation of a Country Park and/or Nature Reserve between Abbot's Road and Birch Brook.	The Local Plan Inspector has published suggested Modifications which are currently out for consultation. When the final report is received and there is certainty regarding the allocation of Middlewick in principle, more detailed work can begin to inform a masterplan.
Growing a better economy so everyone benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable Economic Recovery from Covid-19 ensuring all residents benefit from growth • Work with partners to deliver a shared vision for a vibrant town • Create an environment that attracts inward investment to Colchester and help businesses to flourish • Strategic Priorities achievements and next steps 	
Enable Economic Recovery from Covid-19 ensuring all residents benefit from growth	
Goal	Achievements
Ensure our borough becomes stronger post Covid-19 by supporting businesses to recover, adapt and build resilience.	<p>A significant level of advice, support and emergency grants have been provided to local businesses to support them through the pandemic. This has included enhanced business support and advice, delivered by Colbea, enabled through CBC funding.</p> <p>We have also worked with partners in North East Essex to fund enhanced business support. This has included:</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Click it Local initiative which provides an online shopping portal for independent local businesses which launched in April • A suite of business advice and support services is currently being commissioned <p>The support we have provided has been recognised by the Council being shortlisted for an award for Business Support from the Local Government Chronicle.</p>
Work with partners to facilitate a high skill, high wage, low carbon workforce.	<p>CBC has maintained ongoing engagement with Partners including SELEP, Colchester Institute, University of Essex, and Essex County Council to encourage and promote skills training and upskilling of the existing and new workforce.</p> <p>We have secured investment to explore a Care Tech initiative locally to boost care and technology businesses working together.</p> <p>We are working with colleagues in North East Essex to support extra IT training for people who have lost work during the pandemic.</p>
Develop opportunities to ensure the new economy is greener, sustainable and more resilient.	<p>Town Deal funding has been awarded to Colchester including for projects that promote walking and cycling such as a new cross-town cycleway and enhanced public realm.</p> <p>We are currently working with Colbea to fund and launch an advice and training initiative to support business to reduce their carbon footprint.</p>
Work with our partners to enable Colchester town centre to be a more vibrant, resilient, and adaptable to future change.	<p>Our work with 'We are Colchester' partners to deliver the Town Deal will include improved public spaces, easier transport, better digital connection, and new community facilities. We are currently developing Business Cases to access funding for these schemes</p>

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	We have worked with the Colchester Business Improvement District (BID) to deliver new parklets on the High Street and are working with them to install new gateway signage to promote use of local town centre retail.
Transform the Northern Gateway as a hub for improved wellbeing, physical activity, jobs, housing, and renewable energy.	The Sports Park completed in November 2020 and is open. The Walk completed September 2021. CNG South will commence construction in 2022. Turnstone is also agreed and will move into construction phase at the end of 2021 or early 2022, whilst the Energy Centre will also commence in 2021 (see above).
Address the inequality of access to Gigabit Broadband in communities.	<p>Over 100km of broadband cabling has been delivered to build a direct link from London to Colchester and the Metronet is nearing completion. Broadband deployment works started in July 2020 and the High Street works were coordinated with ECC to be deployed early, before the town centre 're-opened', in order to allow the pavement repairs to follow on with minimal disruption to the re-opening town centre businesses.</p> <p>The Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) Project has led to over £10m of private investment being secured from VX Fibre who have also started deploying ultrafast broadband into our most deprived wards using our new network and parts of Council owned sites for equipment. These areas would otherwise not be provided for by the open market for many years.</p>
Tackle local skills shortages working with businesses, University of Essex, Colchester Institute, and other partners.	Engagement has continued with Partners including SELEP, Colchester Institute, University of Essex, and Essex County Council to encourage skills training and upskilling of the existing and new workforce.

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	<p>The Town Deal includes investment in digital hubs which will bring significantly expanded skills provision, upskilling the local workforce and helping them adapt to change. Business Cases to access funding for these schemes are currently being produced.</p> <p>We have secured investment to explore a Care Tech initiative locally to boost care and technology businesses working together.</p>
Work with partners to deliver a shared vision for a vibrant town	
Goal	Achievements
Agree a Town Deal with partners and the Government to attract significant new investment.	On behalf of the 'We Are Colchester' Board, our Town Investment Plan was submitted on 31 October 2020. This culminated in an £18.2m award to Colchester as part of the 3 March 2021 budget statement (in addition to £1m accelerated Town Deal funding for Public Realm in the Town Centre. Business Cases for the Town Deal projects are now being prepared to meet the governments deadline for submission. Considerable support is being provided to ensure these cases are completed on time.
Collaborate with the town centre Business Improvement District (BID).	We continue to collaborate closely with the BID including participating on their Board and Advisory Group, Town Centre Task Force and in their Leisure Recovery Board and working with them to deliver specific improvement projects (such as the new High Street parklets, see above) and working to co-ordinate marketing and communications.
Continue to regenerate Colchester Town Centre using Council assets,	Our Town Deal funding will enable a range of projects to help regenerate the Town Centre including enhancing public spaces.

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aligned private investment, the Town Deal and Town Investment Plan.	
Create an environment that attracts inward investment to Colchester and help businesses to flourish	
Goal	Achievements
Ensure our strategy for inclusive economic growth supports the ambitions outlined in the North Essex Growth Strategy, the Local Industrial Strategy, and our Town Deal.	We have started work to produce a new Economic Growth Strategy for the borough. This will set out our priorities for supporting the Borough's economy and job creation, focus our Economic Development work, and respond to Strategies of partner agencies such as Essex County Council.
Ensure a good supply of employment land and premises to attract new businesses and allow existing firms to expand and thrive.	We have an up to date local plan in place that allocates sufficient land and contains policies to encourage economic growth. Approval of applications are in line with policies adopting a flexible approach where necessary.
Encourage green technologies and innovative solutions to the Climate Emergency.	<p>Council received funding for 25 electric cargo (e-Cargo) bikes and 5 electric trailers (e-trailers) from Energy Saving Trust to contribute to decarbonising the Council's fleet, as well as the fleets of ten local businesses.</p> <p>Electric cargo bikes have been given out to all 10 champions who are using them on a regular basis. Several e-Cargo bikes and e-trailers have also been loaned out to several businesses and organisations on short term loans on a 'try before you buy' basis.</p>

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Maximise the Social Value benefits derived from third party contracts.	From October 2020, the Council started issuing tenders using the Social Value framework (SVF) developed by the SVP and tailored for Colchester. Given the time needed for submission of bids, evaluation, and award of contracts before the period of work starts, it is anticipated that reporting on the delivered benefits will be available towards the end of 2021-2022.
Ensure the Council's assets continue to contribute to economic growth and opportunity. Develop a decarbonisation financial strategy and investment plan.	Work on the Asset Management Strategy continued, and several projects have emerged during 2021 for Council-owned sites.
Strategic Priorities achievements and next steps	
Goal	Achievements
Improvements will be made to signage and interpretation around the Town Centre to support and encourage residents and visitors to make the most of their experience in Colchester and increase the length of time visitors stay.	A task and finish group has been assembled to deliver this goal. A summary of achievements will be included in the year end SPAP report.
The Queen celebrates her Platinum Jubilee in 2022 which provides a wonderful opportunity to 'dress' the town and support our local communities	Numerous concepts and ideas have been established and require further exploration and feasibility. A cross-service officer working group has been created to develop the options and will pull in external partners as appropriate.

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to join the celebrations and stimulating the local economy.	
As Britain's First City, and oldest recorded town, Colchester has been a highly significant regional centre for over 2,000 years. The Council will look to work with partners across Colchester, including the Town Deal Board, to put together a bid for City Status in 2022.	<p>A website due to launch on 14 October 2021.</p> <p>An engagement plan has been developed involving key stakeholders and members of the public. A summary of achievements will be included in the year end SPAP report.</p>
Celebrating our heritage and culture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree and implement a new Cultural Strategy that supports our cultural assets • Strengthen Colchester's tourism sector and welcome more visitors each year • Protect, enhance and celebrate Colchester's unique heritage • Strategic Priorities achievements and next steps 	
Agree and implement a new Cultural Strategy that supports our cultural assets	
Goal	Achievements
Work with partners to deliver a collaboration Cultural Vision and Ambitions for the borough with Delivery of Strategy in 2021-2022.	Between April and October 2021, Counterculture have worked on the research and consultation phase reporting to a client Project Team including the Council's Strategic Arts Partners, the Mercury, Colchester Arts Centre and Firstsite. By the beginning of Sept just under 1000 people had engaged with the public consultation, including attendance of 178 at an evening open event held at the Mercury Theatre. As of the same date over 45 major

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	stakeholder interviews had taken place, with other stakeholders responding via detailed questionnaire. Work on the first draft commenced in September, overlapping with the end of the consultation phase at the end of that month.
Agree the key milestones and investment necessary to deliver the strategy.	Budget and milestones agreed. See above. Investment Strategy resulting from the work will form part of future budget setting discussions.
Continue to provide sustainable grant funding to support Mercury Theatre, Firstsite and Colchester Arts Centre (CAC) and help the sector to adapt and recover from the impact of Covid-19.	<p>Three-year grant funding commitment agreed for 2020-2023. The Council has now extended this commitment until 2026.</p> <p>2020-2021 Strategic Arts Partner grants front loaded at the beginning of year in line with ACE to support organisations through Covid.</p> <p>Additional match funding committed to unlock Cultural Recovery Fund Kick Start funding for in train capital project at Colchester Arts Centre (CAC). CAC subsequently received grant of £128,182 from the Fund.</p>
Identify further opportunities to improve the cultural offer for residents and visitors.	At the onset of lockdown, the Creative Colchester Board and Project Group combined to meet online every two weeks (normally every 2 months), to provide additional representation and support for the sector. The relevant Director and Cabinet Members from CBC Leadership attended to update representatives, signpost to grants, other funding and listen to concerns. Meetings reverted to bimonthly 'in 2021 but replacing Project Group meetings with a regular public forum open to all those working in the creative sector.

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	Grants have been released and postponed events/activity receiving funding from the Creative Events Fund have been taking place throughout summer/autumn 2021 including Colchester Pride, Festival of Rice and Spice, Eco Colchester, Colchester Write Night and others.
Strengthen Colchester's tourism sector and welcome more visitors each year	
Goal	Achievements
Promote Colchester's heritage and visitor attractions to increase visitor numbers and to support jobs.	<p>School visitor numbers were very low although the service responded by creating a digital Schools offer and 360 tour which is anticipated to be a useful legacy well into the future.</p> <p>Reopening in the summer 2021, visitor numbers and income at the Castle soared. Between 'Freedom Day' (19 July) and the end of August the Castle welcomed 13,987 people, more than a 1000 seen in the same period in 2019. Income was 30% up, further buoyed by a temporary VAT decrease. A slow return of schools is however anticipated to weigh down figures from September.</p>
Expand the events programme to encourage more visitors and position Colchester as a destination for major events.	<p>Events programmes were hugely disrupted by Covid. However, 2021 rekindled events including Olly Murs in Castle Park, the Nearly Festival, Oktoberfest and other events all keen to return as soon as safely possible.</p> <p>The Women's Tour of Britain cycling event took place in Colchester on 8 October 2021 (and will again in 2022). This is an internationally televised event with world and Olympic champions competing. Colchester's profile will benefit from such events.</p>
Work with partners and the Town Centre Business Improvement District	Installation of parklets in partnership with the BID in locations in the High Street has been completed. This provides additional space to the footway and outdoor seating areas. In

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<p>(BID) to improve the public realm for residents and visitors.</p>	<p>addition, it provides the opportunity for introducing trees and planting to this urban area. These have proved very successful and are being very well used.</p> <p>Officers have worked with the BID, Wivenhoe, Tiptree, Mersea and Dedham Councils to develop action plans and identify the support required to open High Streets safely using government 'Welcome Back Fund' funding.</p> <p>A successful Community Action Day was held in Colchester town centre on Monday 16 August. CBC Wardens and operatives worked with businesses, residents and were supported by Bid Ambassadors and Cllr's to tidy up certain areas in the Town Centre and residential areas.</p> <p>The Town Deal Bid / Town Investment Plan incorporates improved public realm through specific projects within the Town Deal Boundary, in both the accelerated £1m phase (now in delivery), and the main award.</p>
<p>Improve the information available to Visitors through the launch of a new improved Website.</p>	<p>New www.visitcolchester.com website launched August 2020 with improved functionality (particularly for mobile devices) and content. Design includes extensive use of video recycled from the Colchester tourism ad and newly commissioned for the project.</p>
<p>Promote Colchester and the wider Borough to attract visitors back after the lifting of Covid restrictions and lockdown</p>	<p>Scheduled alongside Government Road Map Out of Lockdown Steps 1-4:</p> <p>Step 1 and 2: focus on outdoor experiences/offer including wider Borough green spaces/coast and urban walks.</p> <p>Step 3: 'Colchester and the Beautiful Borough Welcomes You Back' film launched during English Tourism Week to coincide with major reopening of indoor attractions plus serviced accommodation. Viewed 50K plus times on social media.</p>

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	Step 4: 'Roman Holiday' themed staycation campaign also supporting Decoding Roman Dead Exhibition at Castle launched mid-July with over 80K interactions on social media: also included sponsoring the Liverpool Street Station ticket gates (Network Rail 915,206 verified passengers passing through during this period) launch of new free 'Family Roman Trivia Trail' for summer holidays and Roman themed walking tours, competitions etc. Google Ad words campaign over summer holidays to drive users to website and events (200K plus impressions).
Protect, enhance and celebrate Colchester's unique heritage	
Goal	Achievements
Enhance and promote our heritage by better revealing our assets by supporting projects and initiatives to increase public awareness and access to their heritage in daily life.	<p>The Heritage Manager/ Heritage officer delivered a digital programme for Heritage Open Days in 2020 engaging 14,827 people through 14 films (10 of which produced by the museum service). 7 venues opened for socially distanced visits, including the Roman Circus Centre.</p> <p>COVID still had a significant impact on the 2021 programme, although a good number, 27 venues participated. 3,692 people visited these or participated in the programme of town walks, 1346 of which were castle visitors. Two more films were produced, adding to those created for the 2020 programme and continuing to engage thousands of viewers.</p>
Continue to deliver a major exhibition at Colchester Castle bi-annually.	The exhibition, 'Decoding the Roman Dead' opened in July at the Castle and is believed to have significantly contributed to the visitor numbers that exceeded pre-pandemic levels during the summer. Associated podcasts and a film produced with Dan Snow and History Hit is also likely to have boosted the exhibition's profile.

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Encourage and support the use of our Heritage sites for Community events, activities and theatre.	The Castle team have worked hard to identify activities (new and existing) that can be hosted safely. The Escape room experience and Nightz at the Museum were reinstated, and bespoke tours introduced including 'Dark Tours' for Halloween introduced. General guided tours were reintroduced swiftly following the relaxation of COVID restrictions.
Strategic Priorities achievements and next steps	
Goal	Achievements
Our museums service will explore the potential to create smaller displays such as 'Cabinets of Curiosity' at external venues to help widen exposure to some of our artefacts and exhibitions.	Museums have contributed to permanent display in Mercury Theatre welcome area and to ongoing temporary exhibitions at Firstsite. Proposed displays in vacant shops superseded by BID programme of public artworks.
We will investigate the potential to highlight heritage assets which are not normally seen by the public, and we will look for creative opportunities for events that help celebrate the unique character of Colchester.	<p>Colchester Archaeological Trust have excavated trial pits in Lion Walk but have been unable to locate mosaic. Further investigation commissioned at request of PFH.</p> <p>Works to Duncan's Gate identified and monument consent to be applied for. The Parks team have cleared the site, much improving the aesthetic and helping to protect the walls from plant growth.</p> <p>Small grants scheme for cultural events planned for new year. Online developing application forms based upon previous successful grants administered by Visitor and Cultural Services Manager.</p>

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New interpretation boards being progressed for Roman Circus, Hilly Fields and Brerechurch Dyke - anticipated for completion by financial YE. One new interpretation panel has been installed in St Botolphs Churchyard.

Heritage Open Days in September introduced two new heritage sites to the long-standing participants - Cannock Mill and Gray's Summerhouse. 3,600 people visited heritage locations, many usually inaccessible to the public, and participated in historic tours around Colchester.

The Decoding the Dead exhibition opened in June 2021 and will close in January 2022. The exhibition featured objects not normally on display and contributed to a surge in visitor numbers over the Summer, with figures the highest since the Castle's redevelopment in 2014. A collaboration with History Hit also saw more than 200,000 people from around the world engaging with two podcasts and two films produced on the channel about the exhibition and Colchester's heritage.

Funded by WBF, The Castle sycamore tree will be decorated with fairy lights, turned on by Sir Bob Russell on the 2 December. Further lighting for trees around Castle to be installed in January.