

# Policy Review and Development Panel

Grand Jury Room, Town Hall  
10 January 2011 at 6.00pm

The Policy Review Panel deals with reviewing policies and issues at the request of the Cabinet or Portfolio Holder, or pro-actively identifying issues that may require review; dealing with those issues either directly or by establishing Task and Finish Groups, monitoring progress of these Groups and assessing their final reports.

# Information for Members of the Public

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# Terms of Reference

## Policy Review and Development Panel

- To review strategies and policies at the request of the Cabinet either directly or by establishing Task and Finish Groups, and to make recommendations back to Cabinet for decision.
- To review issues at the request of a Portfolio Holder either directly or by establishing Task and Finish Groups and to make recommendations back to the Portfolio Holder for decision.
- To monitor progress of Task and Finish Groups and assess their final reports prior to their submission to either the Cabinet or the Portfolio Holder.
- To proactively identify issues that may require review and improvement and to seek Cabinet's agreement as to whether and how they should be examined.

**COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL**  
**10 January 2011 at 6:00pm**

**Members**

Chairman : Councillor Nigel Offen.  
Deputy Chairman : Councillor Margaret Fisher.  
Councillors Nigel Chapman, Michael Lilley, Mike Hardy,  
Lesley Scott-Boutell and Jill Tod.

**Substitute Members** : All members of the Council who are not Cabinet members or members of this Panel.

**Agenda - Part A**

(open to the public including the media)

**Members of the public may wish to note that Agenda items 1 to 6 are normally brief and the last Agenda Item is a standard one for which there may be no business to consider.**

**Pages**

**1. Welcome and Announcements**

(a) The Chairman to welcome members of the public and Councillors and to remind all speakers of the requirement for microphones to be used at all times.

(b) At the Chairman's discretion, to announce information on:

- action in the event of an emergency;
- mobile phones switched off or to silent;
- location of toilets;
- introduction of members of the meeting.

**2. Substitutions**

Members may arrange for a substitute councillor to attend a meeting on their behalf, subject to prior notice being given. The attendance of substitute councillors must be recorded.

**3. Urgent Items**

To announce any items not on the agenda which the Chairman has agreed to consider because they are urgent and to give reasons for the urgency.

**4. Declarations of Interest**

The Chairman to invite Councillors to declare individually any personal interests they may have in the items on the agenda.

If the personal interest arises because of a Councillor's membership of or position of control or management on:

- any body to which the Councillor has been appointed or nominated by the Council; or
- another public body

then the interest need only be declared if the Councillor intends to speak on that item.

If a Councillor declares a personal interest they must also consider whether they have a prejudicial interest. If they have a prejudicial interest they must leave the room for that item.

If a Councillor wishes to make representations on an item on which they have a prejudicial interest they may do so if members of the public are allowed to make representations. In such circumstances a Councillor must leave the room immediately once they have finished speaking.

An interest is considered to be prejudicial if a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard it as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest.

Councillors should consult paragraph 7 of the Meetings General Procedure Rules for further guidance.

## **5. Have Your Say!**

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

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

## **6. Minutes**

**1 - 9**

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on

## **7. Allotment Strategy**

**10 - 28**

See report by the Head of Life Opportunities.

A representataive from Colchester Allotments Association has been

invited to attend the meeting to assist the Panel in its discussions.

**8. Integrated County Strategy** **29 - 42**

See report by the Executive Management Team

See also Integrated County Strategy Summary Document

**9. Work Programme 2010 -11** **43 - 46**

See report by the Head of Corporate Management.

**10. Exclusion of the public**

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

# POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL

## 8 NOVEMBER 2010

*Present :-* Councillor Nigel Offen (Chairman)  
Councillors Nigel Chapman, Margaret Fisher,  
Mike Hardy, Michael Lilley and Lesley Scott-Boutell

*Substitute Member :-* Councillor Margaret Fairley-Crowe for Councillor Jill Tod

*Also in Attendance :-* Councillor Tim Young

### 13. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2010 were confirmed as a correct record, subject to the amendment of the sixth paragraph of Minute no. 11 to read 'Councillor Barton went on to express the view that complete pedestrianisation would not work in Colchester.'

### 14. Have Your Say!

Mr Andy Hamilton addressed the Panel, pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(1), on the Shopmobility Scheme in Colchester. He was of the view that the Council had acted in a discriminatory manner in moving the scheme from the former bus station to St Mary's car park. He expressed concern for those people with disabilities who were dependent on public transport and so did not have easy access to the car park. He also felt that it was necessary to increase the days and hours of operation. Mr Hamilton referred to his previous offer to operate a mobility scooter service from the former bus station location which had been rejected by the Council on the grounds of the imminent development of the site, a situation which Mr Hamilton considered to be inaccurate.

Councillor Tim Young, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety refuted the allegations made by Mr Hamilton, confirming that these issues had been responded to at length previously by Councillor Tina Dopson. Councillor Young reported that the Shopmobility Scheme administered by Tendring District Council had been curtailed but this Council would continue to support the scheme in Colchester for as long as possible.

**Councillor Nigel Chapman and Councillor Nigel Offen (in respect of being a member of the Board of Colchester Borough Homes) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

**Councillor Tim Young (in respect of being a member of the NHS North East Essex Primary Care Trust ) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

**Councillor Michael Lilley (in respect of his role as a carer for his mother) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

**Councillor Tim Young (in respect of his spouses membership of Essex County Council) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

## **15. Review of Accommodation for Older People**

The Chairman explained that the Panel was taking the opportunity to conduct a debate around the opportunities and challenges regarding accommodation for older people and, with this in mind, a range of partners and interest groups, including Essex County Council, the Homes and Communities Agency and Care and Repair England as well as local housing associations, Colchester Borough Homes, Age UK, local accommodation providers and pensioners groups had been invited to the meeting to contribute to the discussions.

Councillor Tim Young, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety, attended the meeting and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Panel. Councillor Young made reference to Charles Smith House and Walnut Tree House as examples of schemes which had been refurbished at a cost in the order of £1million each. The schemes were good ones but he doubted whether the facilities they provided, whilst acceptable for older people who had lived through the privations of the second world war, would be deemed acceptable to older people of later generations. He considered it was now vitally important to look afresh at the issues in the light of current opinion and he thanked the Panel for giving this matter a sufficient level of priority to allow for the meeting to be mainly dedicated to its consideration and for the gathering of opinions.

Finally Councillor Young confirmed to the meeting the four questions posed in the background report by the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration for the Panel to consider, which were:

- Should the Council continue to provide sheltered housing for older people in the future? And if so,
- What sort of housing should we be providing either directly or with our partners or through other interventions such as the Planning system?
- What are the Panel's views on the Colchester standard?
- How can we best use our assets in a climate of reducing resources?

Tina Hinson, Strategic Housing Manager, presented to the Panel a background report explaining that the Council's Strategic Plan had identified as a requirement the completion of a strategic review of accommodation for older people. The first stage of this review involved the assessment of seven of the Council's sheltered housing schemes and would then broaden out to include all the Council's sheltered housing schemes. The review would ultimately seek to encompass a strategic look at total provision in Colchester Borough.



By way of background Ms Hinson provided a range of supporting information, including:

### **Demand, need and demographics**

- About 60% of older households have no dependent children but occupy homes with a greater number of bedrooms than they need;
- Around a quarter of family homes owned by Colchester Borough Council (CBC) are occupied by a single person;
- Some 68% of those over 65 owned their own homes in 2001, a figure set to rise to 75% by 2026;
- Nationally, life expectancy has risen by five years since 1997. Life expectancy at age 65 is 17.4 years for men and 20.0 years for women;
- In Colchester, some 15% of the Borough's population is over 65 and more than 25% of households are headed by someone over 65. The numbers of people over 65 are likely to grow faster than any other household type over the next 30 years;
- Across the country, 1.3 million people of pensionable age are working. This group has increased 50% since 2000. Conversely, older people spend 70-90% of their time in their homes, much more than any other age group;
- At the end of August 2010 there were 539 people on the Councils housing register who were suitable for sheltered housing, whether or not they had expressed a preference for this type of housing;
- The largest number of applicants (some 40%) were registered in Band E, that is, assessed as being housed in homes that meet their needs and with little or no chance of being re-housed;
- The oldest applicant was 99 years old and the youngest was 46 years old. The oldest application had been active since 1970.

### **Types of provision and current supply**

A spectrum of housing options was available to older people. The options fell broadly into three groups:

- Mainstream or housing which is not designated for a specific group, including 'general needs' housing with no special features, 'lifetime homes' designed to meet access and adaptability standards for everyone including older people and 'adapted homes' changed to meet the needs of its occupier;
- Specialised housing for older people, usually designated for the over 55s, including 'sheltered housing' (independent living, 24-hour alarm system, some sort of warden service, communal facilities, programme of social/wellbeing activities), 'very sheltered/assisted living' (independent living with managed care and support services, may include meals, domestic help, access to assisted bathing), 'extra care' (independent living with managed on-site care and support services, may also include, 24-hour on site staff, communal dining room, hobbies room, hair-dressing, can also be provided for a specific need such as dementia), 'close care housing' (independent living with on-site care and support linked to a care home), 'retirement villages' (large developments with a range of housing types and levels of care and support on one site);
- Residential care, with suites of bedrooms with care and facilities including

'residential or care homes' (accommodation with meals, personal care provided with staff on-site), 'care homes', 'care home with nursing' and 'specialised care homes' (specific needs including for those with dementia).

It was intended that the wider strategic review would look in more detail at what these different types of housing actually provided, what their client groups were, how applicants accessed the accommodation and the services and support provided. It was accepted that much of the current provision was built at a time when life expectancy was lower, expectations were lower and older peoples' care and support needs were not as great.

The Housing our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) had been established in June 2009 to undertake a major good practice exercise, gathering examples from across Europe. There were some real challenges in meeting the housing needs of older people in the current economic climate. However innovative solutions included:

- The potential to integrate/co-locate older persons housing with other services such as GP and other health-care services;
- Re-designating sheltered housing as retirement housing which would appeal to the older active population but would not have the care and support services on site;
- Co-locating older persons housing with extra-care housing to enable older people to benefit from the services offered at the extra-care scheme;
- Meeting the needs of older owner-occupiers who were capital rich but cash poor.
- Meeting the needs of older people whose primary housing need isn't their age but their drug/alcohol problem;
- Adapting general needs housing in a time of decreasing resources.

### **Colchester's Review – overview of findings so far**

The Review was designed to make sure that Sheltered Housing delivered an efficient and effective service and was a valuable asset which included:

- High quality support tailored to residents need;
- Meeting the requirements of the Decent Homes Standard and the Disability Discrimination Act;
- Reduced unplanned maintenance costs for the service as a whole;
- Reducing the potential for sheltered housing tenants to experience fuel poverty by reducing the costs of heating homes;
- Reduced void levels and increased demand;
- Delivering a supported housing service which is a resource to meet the housing support needs of older people in the Borough;
- Ensuring the service was able to meet the requirements of revenue funders such as Supporting People and Adult Social Care.

The review also considered strategic issues including strategic fit, future proofing, meeting need and sustainable homes and communities.

To aid the review a Colchester Standard for Sheltered Housing had been drafted which

set out certain minimum criteria against which future provision could be judged:

- Communal rooms;
- Kitchen, to include sink, units running water;
- Laundry to include commercial white goods;
- Self-contained flats;
- Separate Kitchens;
- Separate bathing facilities to meet the standard for life time homes;
- Separate bedroom;
- Facilities to support mobility scooters;
- Lift – no upper floors without the provision of a lift;
- Separate stairwell to the above;
- Guest Room (further customer insight to be used to establish demand etc.);
- Disability Discrimination Act compliant;
- Heating – cost per unit;
- Door Entry Systems;
- Community Alarm;
- Local Facilities that meet the requirements of the Homes and Communities Agency Standards;
- Setting individual Standard Assessment Procedure energy ratings for dwellings

The Chairman invited Pat Strachan, Housing Action Support Officer from Care and Repair England to make a presentation to the Panel.

Pat explained that Care and Repair England was a small national charity with no local services which aimed to improve living conditions for older and disabled people by campaigning, influencing and informing. She provided some additional facts about older people and housing, both nationally and locally, including the local 61% rise in people with dementia compared to a rise of 44% nationally. She also set out the conclusions from the Older Persons Workshop in terms of the need to plan ahead to enable people to consider their future needs, the opportunities presented by lifetime neighbourhoods and better designed homes and the need for information and advice to all whether they are tenants or owner occupiers. She was clear that there needed to be a wider debate on all the issues including new ideas such as helping people to stay at home with the use of adaptations, telecare, improved services and social activities.

The Chairman invited Susannah Westwood, Senior Planning and Commissioning Officer in Essex County Council's Adults Health and Community Well-Being to make a presentation to the Panel.

Susannah gave a detailed presentation including the following issues:

- Essex County Council's role;
- Social Care Policy Direction;
- Reforms to the Social Care System;
- Key Priorities;
- Personal Budgets;
- Housing Choices;
- Extra Care Housing – Need, Advantages, Challenges and Roles.

The Chairman invited Aaron Elliott to give an update to the Panel of the work of the Homes and Communities Agency, explaining that, over the last three years there had been £81.6m investment in supported housing, including two schemes in Colchester. Communities and Local Government was the sponsor Government Department for the Agency which had previously allocated £8.6bn nationally although this figure had been reduced to £6.8bn and would decline further to £4.4bn over the next four years. However, awaiting the outcome of the new government's Comprehensive Spending Review, the Agency was now working in a new context – less funding, but greater flexibility to deliver on local authority priorities. With less capital expenditure available, the Agency was interested to see what new affordable models of housing would emerge. He offered to circulate some examples of best practice from across the country.

The Chairman opened the discussion to the members of the audience and the following contributions were made:

Michael Siggs, from the Almshouse Movement questioned the mainstream services currently provided for older people in the context of the improvements made to houses for their residents by the Almshouses and the future provision of care for older people in their homes;

Karen Loweman, from Colchester Borough Homes (CBH), explained to the Panel that CBH manages 24 different housing schemes for older people providing a range of solutions for people's various priorities and needs. The hope was that this would help people to avoid having to move as their needs changed. CBH did have a reasonably successful incentive scheme which provide support and assistance to people to help them move to suitable accommodation;

Dave Miller, from Hanover Bloc, made reference to the findings of The Elderflowers Model, a New Type of Housing for Active Older People:

- 3.3 m homes are under-occupied by the 50-69 age group representing 16% of the whole housing stock in England, and 50% of all under-occupied homes;
- In 1981 the proportion of households under-occupying was 25% compared to the current 37%.

He was of the view that although down-sizing ought to be attractive in terms of releasing funds, high levels of under-occupancy were due to a lack of choice in terms of alternative housing. He believed there was a will to help people to move out of larger homes but the lack of suitable alternatives created a block preventing any changes to place;

Councillor Frame, in his capacity as Chairman of Colne Housing Society, stressed the need for the Panel to look into the whole housing for older persons issue and, in particular, to consider the work being undertaken by and the options available from other providers;

Clare Lawrance from Colne Housing Society referred to the fact that 27,000 social rented homes were under-occupied by one bedroom. Older people were being

incentivised by offers of cash but this strategy was not working and she was of the view that it would be more successful to provide practical support to assist people to move;

Pat Strachan was of the view that the current mainstream approaches to older people's accommodation were not sustainable. A range of options were needed which would provide support for people in their homes because that was where they wanted to stay. She felt that Colchester had good provision and there was good work being undertaken but greater efforts need to be done to raise awareness and to bring together all the information about alternatives and initiatives.

The Panel discussed the issues raised in the presentations and by the members of the audience and gave particular consideration to the following issues:-

- The need to find a realistic solution to the issue of home owners with restricted incomes and the benefits of releasing funds through down-sizing in order to generate income to move to better designed properties with adequate heating and other facilities;
- The need for practical support schemes to be made more readily available and their existence to be more widely known;
- The dilemma of encouraging people who are under occupying to move when there are few alternative options specifically for older people;
- Questions regarding the management and provision of housing stock for older people by the Council, especially given that much of it is sub-standard, and the possibility of selling units in order to generate income to improve others;
- The possibility of reinstating the original designation of two bedroom properties in rural areas which had been allocated for older people but which now formed part of the general needs stock;
- The new government's drive towards localism and the anticipated changes to the Planning system which were intended to provide the ability for communities to decide what type of housing they preferred in their areas.

The Chairman thanked the audience and the Panel members for their very valuable contributions and sought guidance from the Portfolio Holder regarding the next stages for the Council in terms of formulating its Strategic Policy on Accommodation for Older People.

Councillor T Young also thanked the Panel and the audience for their attendance and welcomed the suggestions and ideas that had been generated by the debate. He invited the Panel to consider setting up a Task and Finish Group to look into the issues on his behalf and to move the debate towards a broader strategy.

*RESOLVED* that the suggestion from the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety to set up a Task and Finish Group to look into the issues relating to Accommodation for Older People be agreed and arrangements be made by the Democratic Services Manager for nominations from the political groups to be invited and a draft scoping document, including terms of reference for the Group, to be formulated for approval by the Chairman in advance of the Group's first meeting.

## **16. Single Equality Scheme // Action Plan Annual Update**

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Corporate Management asking the Panel to review the Single Equality Action Plan which had been updated to show progress up to October 2010.

Details of the progress made against each of the ten objectives in the action plan was set out in the appendix to the report. Good Progress or work was progressing well in respect of six of the objectives and policies had been put in place to address a further two of the objectives.

Further work would be necessary in respect of the objectives relating to the assessment of how employee and customer data could be more effectively utilised to improve service delivery and the identification of any gaps in this data. The Equality Act 2010 included proposals to place a duty on public authorities to publish a range of equality data relating to their workforce and it would therefore be necessary to comply with these proposals, should they come into force, by April 2011.

It was felt that the requirements set out in the public sector equality duty should form the council's priorities for 2011.

The Panel discussed the issues raised in the report and gave particular consideration to the following issues:-

- The extent to which the equality and diversity issues were becoming embedded in the organisation;
- The impact the processes were having in terms of changes to policies as a consequence;
- The mechanisms used to ensure that contractors undertaking work on behalf of the Council were, in turn, complying with the equality standards;
- The training opportunities to ensure councillors, contractors and staff were fully aware of their equality and diversity responsibilities.

*RESOLVED* that the progress made to date in respect of the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan and the areas of priority for 2011 be noted.

## **17. Work Programme 2010/11**

The Panel considered a report from the Head of Corporate Management setting out the current situation regarding the Panel's work programme for 2010/11.

The Chairman of the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel has confirmed his wish for the Olympics 2012 item to be included in the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel's work programme but that all members of the Policy Review and Development Panel would be welcome to attend the meeting when the matter was considered. The item had therefore been removed from the Policy Review and Development Panel's work programme.

The timetabling for consideration of the Allotments Strategy had not been possible to meet and this item would need to be rescheduled along with the item on Cycle Paths and Cycle Town Initiative.

*RESOLVED* that the current situation regarding work programme for 2010/11 be noted.



## Policy Review and Development Panel

Item  
**7**

10 January 2011

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Head of Life Opportunities</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Bob Penny</b> <b>☎ 282903</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Allotment Strategy</b>		
<b>Wards affected</b>	<b>All</b>		

**The Policy Review and Development Panel is invited to review the draft Allotment Strategy and note the consultation responses that have been received. Comments from the Panel will inform the further development of the Strategy before formal adoption.**

### **1. Action Required**

- 1.1 Members are asked to consider the draft Allotment Strategy and comment on aspects for consideration prior to adoption by the Portfolio Holder for Communities.

### **2 Background**

- 2.1 The consultation draft of the Allotment Strategy was discussed with the Portfolio Holder for Communities in September 2011 and has been made available on the Colchester website for comment. Direct consultation has been made with the Colchester Allotment Association and the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners to seek their views on the draft strategy
- 2.2 The draft Strategy is a comprehensive document (83 pages in total) and has been available electronically to avoid the production of unnecessary copies.
- 2.3 The Strategy has been published on the Council's website and can be accessed via the pathway Home > Culture Leisure Sport > Leisure > Allotments > Allotment Strategy or by using the link below:
- [Allotments Strategy](#)
- 2.4 Although the Council is under no obligation to produce an Allotment Strategy, without an adopted strategy there will be a lack of direction regarding future maintenance and provision, leading to differences of service expectations and service delivery by Members and residents.

### **2 Why the need for an Allotment Strategy?**

- 3.1 There has previously been no formalised approach to the provision and management of allotments by the Council and as a result, there is a real risk that the trends in demand for allotments, pressures on funding and the lack of an adopted approach to the management of the Council's sites could reduce the quality of the Colchester's allotment provision.



## **4. Scope of Policy**

- 4.1 The Strategy is intended to act as a point of reference for the public, Councillors and officers to establish a clearer, consistent and structured approach to the issues affecting allotment provision and management.
- 4.2 Adoption of an Allotment Strategy provides a basis for service delivery and a consistent approach in dealing with the many issues associated with provision and management. The strategy follows 4 key strands
  - 4.2.1 Allotment provision and waiting list management
  - 4.2.2 Site management and user involvement
  - 4.2.3 Allotment infrastructure
  - 4.2.4 Income and expenditure – financial strategy
- 4.3 The Strategy picks up responses obtained from recent surveys of allotment holders and those on the waiting lists for an allotment. Examples of good practice have also been gathered and guidance has been obtained by reference to the Local Government Association Guide “Growing in the Community” 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition published in 2006.
- 4.4 The Allotment Strategy is a significant document in terms of the range of issues that it covers. It is accompanied by a comprehensive Action Plan which picks up the issues referred to above identifying target dates, partners and potential funding sources.

## **5. Funding**

- 5.1 Delivering effective allotment provision and management is as much about working within financial constraints as it is about dealing with usage trends and waiting lists.
- 5.2 Under the current financial model there is a net loss in the allotment budget and therefore an increase in the number of allotments in response to the current demand would result in a greater budget shortfall. As the demand for allotments is high and the survey results of allotment holders and those on the waiting lists confirm that allotments are recognised as good value for money, the strategy proposes an approach where income exceeds expenditure to enable site improvements to be funded by allotment income.
- 5.3 Some funding for allotment projects has been obtained from Section 106 agreements and external funding such as the CORY Environmental Grant scheme. Such sources of funding will continue to be explored to support Council provided allotments and those provided by Town and Parish Councils.

## **6. Future action**

- 6.1 Following the Policy Review Panel review of the draft Colchester Allotment Strategy feedback will be considered along with other consultation responses in a report to the Portfolio Holder for formal adoption in February 2011.

## **7. Strategic Plan References**

- 7.1 Allotments provide a range of benefits to residents of the borough. In addition to the physical benefits resulting from the effort involved in maintaining an allotment there are social benefits and mental health benefits from engaging in such activity. There are also potential financial benefits from sustainable fruit and vegetable production. Whilst the

survey of allotment holders shows a tendency towards the older generation, those on the waiting list are generally of a younger age range.

## **8. Consultation**

- 8.1 The consultation draft of the Allotment Strategy has featured on the Home page of the colchester.gov.uk website being launched on 28 October 2010. The end of the consultation period was 30 November 2010. Respondents were able to download the Consultation Draft and were asked to submit comments either by email or in writing.
- 8.2 In addition to the public consultation, a copy of the consultation draft was provided to the Colchester Allotment Association and the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners. The Strategy was also discussed at the meeting of the Colchester Allotment Site Stewards in November 2010.
- 8.3 Response and comment on the Strategy has been limited. The points raised during consultation are attached at Appendix A.

## **9. Publicity Considerations**

- 9.1 The Strategy has been open to public consultation and discussion with Allotment site stewards and the Colchester Allotment Association. No controversial issues have been identified and it is considered that the strategy will provide support for the improvement and future provision of allotments.

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

- 10.1 An EqIA will be prepared and submitted to the EqIA Officer for approval following the consultation process and the preparation of a final version of the strategy for adoption. Ownership of an allotment is clearly discretionary and each allotment tenant takes a view on the benefits derived from having an allotment, the use to which it is put, the cost of cultivating an allotment and their personal financial priorities.
- 10.2 It is proposed to continue to offer a Concessionary Rate reduction but to change the eligibility criteria from age to those in financial hardship and in receipt of means tested benefits

## **11. Community Safety Implications**

- 11.1 There are no particular community safety implications.

## **12. Health and Safety Implications**

- 12.1 There are no particular health and safety implications.

## **13. Risk Management Implications**

- 13.1 There are no particular risk management implications

## Consultation responses

### Colchester Allotment Association

Points raised at CAA Committee meeting on 6 November 2010 and at subsequent meeting with Council representatives on 29 November.

4.2 CAA has requested further detail of the analysis area breakdown so they can interpret area analysis in relation to existing allotment site locations and provision. *CBC response; Information is being provided*

5.3 Site Stewards. There is an opinion within CAA that some large sites result in a greater workload for Site Stewards and there could be a case for considering more than one steward in such locations and a job description so that Site Stewards knew what was expected of them. It was also suggested by CAA that many people now had camera phones and asked whether photographic evidence of non cultivation of plots would be useful. *CBC response; Information is provided to potential site stewards to inform them of their roles. The information does not confirm that their position will be reviewed in the event that they do not perform their duties satisfactorily although this would be the case in such an event. There has been no experience of Site Stewards not performing their duties although some do need more reminding than others. The idea of site stewards taking photos of poor plots would be helpful but the Council is not in a position to supply camera equipment.*

5.5 CAA raised a comment about the grounds maintenance contract and whether it was flexible. *CBC response that the contract was flexible and enabled works to be added or deleted from the contract on the basis of the rates provided as part of the Contract. If it was felt by CBC that additional works were being charged at an excessive rate they would be challenged and alternatives would be sought.*

5.6 CAA expressed their views that Allotment Watch appears limp and doesn't seem to be working. There were very few instances of Police presence on allotment sites. *CBC response was that there was limited support from the Police although all allotment incidents were reported to the Police. Little feedback is received. CBC to contact Police to confirm information is still being collected and incidents are still being recorded.*

6.1 CAA finds it hard to accept that 80% (of 54%) are happy with amount of uncultivated plots, the majority of complaints we receive are about this issue. *CBC confirmed that the survey was about the process of removing plot holders for non cultivation which people were generally happy about. It is agreed that non cultivation of plots is the cause for complaint and new procedures have been introduced and are being proposed within the strategy to deal with this.*

Why are some existing plot holders being allowed to apply for a second one? *CBC response is that they are not and new plot holders can take only one plot. CBC is honouring those who have been on the waiting list*

Could some with 2 plots be asked/persuaded to give up one? *CBC response is that this has been happening voluntarily and it is up to the plot holder to make that decision*

Should 'mitigating circumstances' include service personnel? *CBC is sympathetic to service personnel who may be on active service and therefore unable to tend their plots. An approach to the Garrison and their land agents may result in further consideration being given by the Garrison as to whether they wish to offer some of their land for allotment purposes either directly to service personnel or others for allotment use or to make the land available to CBC to manage as allotments.*

7.2 IT package. CAA and CBC general discussion about the benefits of allotment management software and the ability of allotment holders and those on the waiting list to be able to do more “self help” This is being considered as part of the website development and general self serve approach.

7.3 CAA comment that if prospective tenants only choose their 3 nearest sites they could be waiting for ever, many tenants now have plots a long way from home to ensure getting one. *CBC response is that allotments should be sustainable and having plot holders travelling across the borough is not a good model. If people select on the basis of convenience then waiting lists will reduce.*

7.6 CAA confirms that they do have ideas for extra info on maps. *CBC welcomes suggestions for additional information that can also be added to websites and shared links.*

8.1 Self management. What is CAA’s role in this? *CBC has discussed this with allotment holders and site stewards previously and it may be that an organisation such as CAA could identify one or some sites that they wished to self manage.*

CAA is unclear of the extent of self management and sought clarification *CBC response that a variety of options were open for groups to organise themselves as self managed sites. It could be as little as a unified approach in collecting rent to full self management in which they collect and retain income and manage the budget for that site from the income generated. CBC is open to discussion on any possibilities.*

8.2 Billing. CAA asked if tenants get a rebate if they leave early? *CBC response is no*

8.5 Notices to Quit. CAA comments that this needs to be made clear in newsletter and in first NTQ. *CBC to check on wording of Notice to Quit to ensure improvement requirements are very clear*

8.5 Non payment. CAA asks why give an option if a plot holder is late in paying?. *CBC response is that a new approach is proposed in which regular poor payers would be putting their agreement at risk and reoccurrence of late payment will result in the allotment being taken from them and offered to the waiting list. CAA are in full support of this approach.*

8.6 Colchester Allotment Association. The welcome packs were their idea and recognise that they need updating and CAA are prepared to do that. CAA has considered both short courses and leaflets on specific topics and have done questionnaires but there doesn’t seem the enthusiasm or support for this (although very new plot holders do need some help they can best be helped by existing, experienced plot holders, these need to be identified and approached). Plenty of books/magazines too. *size etc.. CBC to provide links to CAA information and recommended reading on website*

9.3 Roadway repairs. CAA feels that any existing money spent on on-site roadways could be better spent by upgrading existing path to the Willows as an access road. *CBC response is there is an ongoing issue regarding the lack of a vehicle access to the Willows Allotment which is to be partly provided by the developer and additional funding to be required from external sources.*

9.4 Water tanks. CAA enquires what happens when most plots are halved. *CBC response is that the target provision currently relates to plots and therefore by halving the size of plots and therefore doubling the quantity of plots, more tanks would be needed. The average sized allotment plot is currently 159m<sup>2</sup> therefore using the standard of eleven plot holders sharing one allotment plot would correspond with one water tank serving an area of 1749m<sup>2</sup>. It is therefore proposed that the target provision is changed to one water tank per 1750m<sup>2</sup> of allotment land. Most plot holders with sheds will introduce some water collection measures.*

9.6 Allotment Waste. Cutting down and removal of non-compostable waste is not being

done as a matter of course. *CBC response is that it will arrange for the removal of excessive waste when requested but does not openly promote this service because of budget constraints*

9.7 Carpets. CAA recognises the potential damage in using some carpet fabrics for mulching/weed suppressant and will include information in its newsletters and website. *CBC supports this approach*

9.8 Fly Tipping. CAA comment that it is hard to know what to do with rubbish if no vehicle access. *CBC This comment particularly refers to Willows Allotment site where fly tipping is a problem due to the presence of waste on the site which has the effect of attracting more fly tipping. Issue is to be addressed as part of the road provision.*

9.10 Leaf Pens. CAA note that this is a good idea Let's have more but not possible for some sites.

9.11 Tree Policy. CAA questions the definition of 'mini tree' and why only one mini tree per plot? *CBC response is to expand and clarify the definition and agrees to the number of mini trees being increased to 3 to assist pollination. CBC confirms that fruit trees are an isolated problem but a real problem to those plot holders whose plots are shaded by large trees growing in adjacent plots*

9.12 Biodiversity. CAA asked about the former allotment land at Irvine Road site. *CBC confirmed that the road access was no longer a live issue as the provision of the road was linked to the school receiving government funding which is no longer forthcoming. The area that had been fenced off was now being opened up for public access*

10.1 Rent. CAA asked what is a 'charging strategy'? *CBC confirmed that the charging strategy was a planned approach to recover the cost of allotment management and provision from allotment holders. Currently the allotment income does not cover maintenance costs and it is considered that in order to improve the provision of allotments, those who use the allotments and therefore benefit from the Council's expenditure should pay for that work.*

*Is it really part of CAA's responsibility to 'agree' to a programme of works? CBC wants to work with CAA as the recognised body representing allotment holders and therefore wants to ensure that new works meet plot holders needs and expectations*

10.2 Concessionary Charges. CAA comments that a U-turn on age-related concessions will cause complaints and feelings of betrayal. *CBC comments that new plot holders are not entitled to a concession and this has not had any adverse reaction from plot holders. It is also felt that offering a concession solely on age does not take into account the situations that other allotment holders or those on the waiting list may be facing. Age does not make tending an allotment more or less onerous but financial hardship is factor this is more broad and reflective of the challenges to allotment ownership.*

CAA: With preponderance of retired plot holders responding to questionnaire it's not surprising that they were happy with rents as they had concessions at that time! *CBC response is that those on the waiting list were also surveyed and came back with a clear response that the current prices represented good value for money. The age range of those on the waiting lists was greater than those current allotment holders with many younger people wanting to rent an allotment.*

## Local resident email comment

I think that your proposed policy with regard to fruit trees is rather harsh ie one espalier per plot. Fruit trees are now available where the fruit grows from a single stem. They are designed to be stopped at 1.8 metres and can be planted only 2 feet apart. In that respect they are similar to a row of raspberries that grow to a similar height.

You seem to want to prevent plot holders from growing top fruit which are just as important for healthy eating as other fruit and vegetables. Given that these fruit trees take up so little space I think that you should consider increasing the number that a plot holder can plant.

*As set out in 9.11 above, CBC agrees to amending the strategy to include upto 3 mini fruit trees..*

## Colchester Borough Council Contaminated Land Officer

General comments about the potential for land to be contaminated and the need to investigate the suitability of the land. For all sites in the Borough, for any change of use, it is a requirement that sufficient information should be provided to determine the existence or otherwise of any contamination, its nature and the risks it may pose and whether these can be satisfactorily reduced to an acceptable level (Planning Policy Statement 23, November 2004). As allotment use is considered to be a highly sensitive use, care should be taken to ensure that all sites are suitable for use.

The Spatial Policy team should already be aware of the implications of potentially contaminated land for new developments, but it would be prudent to ensure that this risk is properly highlighted in the final Allotment Strategy. Similarly, I would recommend that it becomes standard practice to consult with the Contaminated Land Officer prior to the acceptance of any new land, or use of existing land, for allotment garden purposes by Colchester Borough Council. I note that s106 agreements for allotment land are considered for new housing developments (page 29) – consideration of contamination should be as standard. The table of Action Points at page 30 should include discussions with the Contaminated Land Officer/Environmental Control.

I would recommend that reference is made to the potential for contamination to exist at any site and that before any agreement is made regarding Colchester Borough Council taking on any new sites, the developer should provide Colchester Borough Council with sufficient information to show that there are no unacceptable risks of contamination. Should any remedial actions be required to achieve this “uncontaminated” status this should be at the expense of the developer, but that Colchester Borough Council should be in agreement that any information submitted is sufficient to show that this is the case.

Consideration of potential contamination would also be true for the use of existing Council owned sites for community gardens or allotments (ASAP 5) and, in certain circumstances, (notably under our duties under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act) it may be necessary for Colchester Borough Council to undertake its own investigations and risk assessments to show that sites are suitable for such use.

Pages 10/11 - The quality of allotments should also include a reference to chemical quality of soils?

Page 29 - I note that Colchester Borough Council will provide support and guidance to Parish and Town Councils – this should include discussion of contamination issues.

Page 43 – Bonfires. Please note that bonfires (in common with some other practices, past or present) have the capacity to introduce new contamination onto an allotment and Environmental Control would therefore welcome the introduction of communal compost heaps as a means of reducing contamination, as well as reducing smoke nuisance complaints.

Early discussion with the Contaminated Land Officer may prove beneficial in terms of health risks and also cost implications. This will ensure that there are no unacceptable risks to health or that sites are not later identified as contaminated when undertaking our duties under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (inspection of the district by Environmental Control is currently in progress). Should any site in the Borough (including allotment sites) be identified in relation to actual adverse health effects, or the requirement for investigations and / or remedial actions, these

will incur costs to Colchester Borough Council. Should insufficient action be undertaken by Colchester Borough Council, we may become liable to legal challenge in the future. Consequently, I think it would be of benefit to highlight the potential risks in the Allotment Strategy. Note that Environmental Control already hold a great deal of information about potential contamination in the Borough and will provide an invaluable “in-house” information resource.

#### Colchester Borough Council Strategic Waste Team Leader

In response to the consultation, I would just like to highlight some areas in which we could maybe work together in the future.

- ECC offer currently (until 31 Mar 11) water butts at a discount – visit [www.colchester.gov.uk/composting](http://www.colchester.gov.uk/composting)
- Waste Busters volunteer scheme for community-minded food lovers, avid gardeners and enthusiastic composters starting now – visit [www.recycleforessex.com](http://www.recycleforessex.com)
- ECC together with most of Essex districts and the Waste Busters will start a home composting campaign in March/April (could last until autumn). ECC offer currently (until 31 Mar 11) different types of compost bins at a discount – visit [www.colchester.gov.uk/composting](http://www.colchester.gov.uk/composting)

#### Colchester Borough Homes Tenancy Services Manager

I would like to suggest that CBC could advertise to owner occupiers who have got too much garden for them to handle suggesting to them that there are people on the waiting list for allotments who could help them tend their garden. All we would need to do is provide some sort of licence agreement which the home owners and vegetable grower could enter into between themselves.

This could be done in conjunction with the Staying Put scheme and would certainly fit with CBC’s policies of trying to build communities.

*CBC accepts this would be a constructive way forward. The Landshare website exists to put those with excess land available for allotment use in touch with those seeking allotments. It is recommended that this existing network be used.*

**Allotment Strategy Action Plan**

Allotment Vision- The 4 Strands	ASAP Reference	Aim	Timescale (Financial Year)					Partners	Funding	Complete
			2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15			
<b>STRAND 1: ALLOTMENT PROVISION AND WAITING LIST MANAGEMENT</b>										
Allotment Provision	ASAP 1	Actively work with Spatial Policy team to ensure that land within new developments is being considered for allotment use	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Planning	Staff time	
	ASAP 2	Identify additional land in suitable condition for potential allotment use to address existing and projected shortfall in provision against agreed standard.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Planning Contaminated Land Officer	Staff time	
	ASAP 3	Improve links with Parish and Town	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Town and Parish Councils	Staff time	



Allotment Vision- The 4 Strands	ASAP Reference	Aim	Timescale (Financial Year)					Partners	Funding	Complete
			2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15			
		Councils so up-to-date allotment provision records can be maintained								
	ASAP 4	Assisting parish and town councils with the creation of allotment sites	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Town and Parish Council Contaminated Land Officer	Staff time	
	ASAP 5	Consider the use of existing Council owned sites for community gardens and allotments	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Contaminated Land Officer	External/ Section 106	
	ASAP 6	Continue looking for funding sources to install infrastructure for new allotment sites	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	P&R	External/ Section 106	
Waiting Lists	ASAP 7	Investigate a new IT package for the allotment waiting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	ICT	Revenue	

Allotment Vision- The 4 Strands	ASAP Reference	Aim	Timescale (Financial Year)					Partners	Funding	Complete
			2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15			
		list and records								
	ASAP 8	Limiting the amount of waiting lists prospective allotment holders can add their names to	✓				LO group support	N/A		
	ASAP 9	All waiting lists are to remain open	✓				LO group support	N/A		
	ASAP 10	New allotment map leaflet			✓		Colchester Allotment Association	Revenue		
	ASAP 11	Improvements to the Council's website pages for allotments	✓	✓			P&R only	Staff time		
<b>STRAND 2 – SITE MANAGEMENT AND USER INVOLVEMENT</b>										
Allotment Management	ASAP 12	Re-investigate self-management of allotment sites			✓		Colchester Allotment Association	Staff time		
	ASAP 13	Review of the allotment billing		✓			Resource Management/LO	Staff time		

Allotment Vision- The 4 Strands	ASAP Reference	Aim	Timescale (Financial Year)					Partners	Funding	Complete
			2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15			
		procedure					group support			
	ASAP 14	Create a staggered approach to payment for the first year of their tenancy	✓				LO group support	Staff time		
	ASAP 15	All vacant plots are to be re-let in a two month period	✓				LO group support	N/A		
	ASAP 16	Send information to site stewards of plots which have been given up and re-let outside of the growing season	✓	✓	✓	✓	P&R only	Staff time		
	ASAP 17	Produce a one-off newsletter to inform allotment holders about the strategy and	✓				P&R only	Revenue/ Staff time		

Allotment Vision- The 4 Strands	ASAP Reference	Aim	Timescale (Financial Year)					Partners	Funding	Complete
			2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15			
		include information regarding allotment inspections the								
	ASAP 18	Following an amnesty, no further joint tenancies will be allowed	✓	✓			LO group support	N/A		
	ASAP 19	New mitigating circumstance for non-cultivation to be used	✓				P&R only	N/A		
	ASAP 20	Introduction of a second Notice to Quit for non-cultivation in three years standing, and the plot is vacated		✓			LO group support	N/A		
	ASAP 21	Requirement of direct debit		✓			LO group support	N/A		

Allotment Vision- The 4 Strands	ASAP Reference	Aim	Timescale (Financial Year)					Partners	Funding	Complete
			2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15			
		payments for allotment holders who are sent second Notice to Quits for non-payment in three year								
User Involvement	ASAP 22	Ensure all allotment holders know who their site steward is	✓				Site stewards	N/A		
	ASAP 23	Regular meetings with the Colchester Allotment Association	✓	✓	✓	✓	Allotment Association	Staff time		
	ASAP 24	To review the welcome pack and consider other methods to help new allotment holders			✓		Colchester Allotment Association	Staff time		
	ASAP 25	To be represented	✓	✓	✓	✓	P&R only	Staff time		

Allotment Vision- The 4 Strands	ASAP Reference	Aim	Timescale (Financial Year)					Partners	Funding	Complete
			2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15			
		at the Allotment Officer Forum								
<b>STRAND 3 - ALLOTMENT INFRASTRUCTURE</b>										
Allotment Infrastructure	ASAP 26	Continuation of ban on hoses/pipes and sprinklers from mains water provided by the Council	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	P&R only	N/A	
	ASAP 27	Meet a standard of one water tank per 1750m <sup>2</sup> of allotment plots	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	P&R only	Revenue	
	ASAP 28	Introduce a maintenance regime for water tanks			✓			P&R only	Revenue	
	ASAP 29	Investigate further a reduced rate water butt scheme for allotment holders			✓			Strategic Waste/ Colchester Allotment Association	External funding	
	ASAP 30	Introduce a	✓					Colchester	Staff time	

Allotment Vision- The 4 Strands	ASAP Reference	Aim	Timescale (Financial Year)					Partners	Funding	Complete
			2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15			
		voluntary ban of carpets and asbestos								
	ASAP 31	Structured programme for the erection of leaf pens	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Revenue		
	ASAP 32	Fixed maximum size for sheds, glasshouses and poly-tunnels	✓				P&R only	N/A		
	ASAP 33	Encourage community spaces on allotments including sheds	✓	✓	✓	✓	P&R only	N/A		
	ASAP 34	No standard fruit trees permitted, but relax restrictions in terms of miniature varieties to max of 3 trees	✓	✓	✓	✓	P&R only	N/A		
	ASAP 35	Regularly review		✓			Essex	Staff time		

Allotment Vision- The 4 Strands	ASAP Reference	Aim	Timescale (Financial Year)					Partners	Funding	Complete
			2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15			
		bee keeping on allotments						Beekeeping Association		
Biodiversity	ASAP 36	Promote and enhance existing and new conservation areas where land is not appropriate for allotmentteering	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	P&R only	External/ Revenue	
	ASAP 37	In accordance with the Council's Tree Policy continue to promote orchard growing of trees on land not appropriate for allotmentteering	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	P&R only	External	

**STRAND 4 - INCOME AND EXPENDITURE – FINANCIAL STRATEGY**



Allotment Vision- The 4 Strands	ASAP Reference	Aim	Timescale (Financial Year)					Partners	Funding	Complete
			2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15			
Financial strategy	ASAP 38	Introduce a charging strategy that will recover allotment direct costs and generate an additional budget to deliver allotment improvements		✓				P&R only	Income	
	ASAP 39	Develop and deliver a programme of works for consistent standards in line with LGA recommendations that are discussed and agreed jointly with the Colchester Allotment		✓	✓	✓	✓	Colchester Allotment Association	Revenue	

Allotment Vision- The 4 Strands	ASAP Reference	Aim	Timescale (Financial Year)					Partners	Funding	Complete
			2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15			
		Association								
	ASAP 40	Extend the review of concessions to offer concessions to all allotment holders with evidence of financial hardship and remove the concession based solely on age.		✓			LO group support	Income		

<b>Glossary</b>	
P&R	Parks and Recreation
ICT	ICT – Business Support and IT Management
LO Group Support	Life Opportunities Group Support



## Policy Review & Development Panel

Item

8

10 January 2011

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Executive Management Team</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Ian Vipond Executive Director ☎ 282717</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Integrated County Strategy (ICS)</b>		
<b>Wards affected</b>	Not applicable		

**This report concerns the vision, strategic focus, and priorities for Greater Essex (the area covered by Essex County, Southend and Thurrock Councils) identified in the Integrated County Strategy (ICS) and the role of Colchester in driving the local economy.**

### 1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To recommend that the Portfolio Holder for Strategy recommends to Cabinet that it endorses the vision, strategic focus, and priorities for Greater Essex identified in the Integrated County Strategy (ICS) in so far as it relates to the Haven Gateway and Colchester.

### 2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 To recommend to Cabinet to approve the work to date recognising that the Strategy seeks to identify the key economic priorities for the recovery of the local economy and its future growth across 'Greater Essex' which is the area covered by Essex County, Southend and Thurrock Councils. To agree the role and scope of the ICS in informing future investment priorities and note the position that various priority themes and investments within Haven Gateway and Colchester Borough will play in the Strategy.
- 2.2 To note the continuation of the ICS into the next stage. This will include considering the resourcing and delivery of more detailed proposals, and will include engagement with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), Regional Growth Fund (RGF) bids, as well as Essex County Councils' own budget planning. The Borough Council will need to continue to relate its own Council Local Investment Programme to this work and where appropriate ensure effective co-ordination of its' future capital programme and use of assets.

### 3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 The Panel could seek amendments to this County wide Strategy, which might now be difficult to incorporate at this level given Essex CC have signed this document off. However the panel could identify issues which it would like to be considered in any further work as the ICS is taken into the next stage. Alternatively the Panel could decide not to recommend approval of the strategy.

### 4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The Essex Chief Executives decided in 2009 to commence work on identifying key issues that were affecting different parts of the County and what key bits of investment

might benefit the local and ultimately the national economy. The basis of that work was that Essex has a diverse economy but that together the sum of all its different parts is a major generator of growth for the Nation. In parallel with this work the County also started an Economic Assessment of the locality and in February 2010 it was agreed that, under the chairmanship of Colchester's Chief Executive that a process was launched, in tandem with all districts/boroughs County and unitary authorities across Greater Essex, to develop and agree an Integrated County Strategy (ICS). We led and engaged in this work for three principal reasons:

- We believed that an ICS, underpinned by strong sub-regions (Haven Gateway; Thames Gateway; West Essex; Heart of Essex) would enable all local authorities and delivery partnerships to align their economic, spatial and regeneration priorities under increasingly difficult circumstances;
- We believed it was to Colchester's and Greater Essex's material disadvantage not have such a body of work in place when funds were being allocated by Government and other funding bodies such as Europe; and
- We anticipated political and legislative changes that signalled to us that an ICS (or such an approach) would equip Greater Essex and in turn Colchester Borough to best take advantage of a new operating environment.

#### 4.2 Partnership working

The ICS has been built from the 'bottom-up' via a series of workshops with all districts the County and unitary authorities. Therefore, the ICS is a joint articulation of priorities rather than an organisation-specific one.

- 4.2.1 The ICS was also conceived as a way of better articulating the spatial and economic development aspirations of a wide area using a process which would support and bolster the quality of partnership working with local authorities and agencies across Greater Essex. In many ways this has been a forerunner of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) arrangements that we are now commencing.

#### 4.3 The ICS - ambition

The ICS aims to provide the connection between national and local policy, identify strengths and potential, and considers how we can use our key assets to improve the area for residents and make Greater Essex an even more attractive location for businesses. Moreover, within the context of public spending cuts and reduced public intervention, the ICS aims to identify the key strategic projects which will provide the maximum return on investment and greatest benefits.

#### 4.4 The ICS process

In February 2010 the Essex Chief Executive Association (ECEA) decided to develop an ICS and a sub group was formed to drive this forward with members from each sub region and Essex County Council. Three workshops were conducted between February and July 2010, and attended by chief executives and senior officers from all 14 district and unitary councils in Greater Essex. The workshops were organised to debate issues facing Greater Essex, and begin to develop some priorities for the future.

- 4.5 Workshops have taken place throughout 2010 with participants separated into sub regional areas to consider the local, county wide, sub-regional, and national issues & priorities that may affect Greater Essex in the future. Initial priorities were based on existing strategies including LDFs, sub-regional strategies and plans and the previous ECEA issues paper. As the workshops continued, these issues were debated further within thematic areas, to develop some more focused priorities for

Greater Essex. An initial collection of over 400 priorities suggested by partners have been tested against strategic impact and deliverability criteria from which a clear, concise and agreed set of priorities have been developed. These priorities will guide future investment in localities and the wider area.

## **5. Proposals**

### **5.1 The ICS outcomes**

The ICS summary document outlines the key outcomes of the ICS process, showing a strategic focus in three areas:

- Low carbon energy, including the important role of Essex University and Harwich port
- Key towns, specifically including Colchester and;
- Thames Gateway South Essex

5.2 A focus on these areas can provide the maximum return on investment and greatest benefits for wider Essex. The ICS then provides a range of priority themes and investments that should be considered within the 3 overarching priorities. These are detailed in the ICS summary document attached.

5.3 The partnership of authorities are seeking endorsement of the ICS by each of the Local Authorities and it has already been approved by Essex CC Cabinet. The document is published and will be potentially launched to central government once agreed by all partners. Thereafter the priorities will be used to influence decisions relating to the LEP's role in determining priorities and bidding for RGF, for example. Following this the second phase of the ICS will begin, which will focus on implementation.

## **6. Strategic Plan References**

6.1 The key objective of the ICS is to guide investment and encourage economic development leading to sustainable job growth which is a key objective of the strategic plan.

## **7. Consultation**

7.1 The ICS has had significant consultation with the Local Authorities and delivery agencies and partnerships within Greater Essex. It is not a statutory document that requires public consultation but the ICS will now become a public document

## **8. Publicity Considerations**

8.1 The ICS presents a broad strategy for a wide area which nevertheless has implications for the Borough its residents and businesses. By bringing the report to this Panel we hope to bring it to the attention of a wider audience before it goes before Cabinet.

## **9. Financial Implications**

9.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the vision, strategic focus and priorities of the ICS which has been the focus of the first phase of the project. There are no significant resource implications for this Council emerging directly from the ICS document. The next phase of the ICS will focus on implementation, delivery and resources.

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

- 10.1 It is not considered that the Strategy contains any adverse implications for Equality, Diversity or Human Rights. The objective of the Strategy is to increase opportunities and it is to be hoped that this will help the promotion of equality and overcome discrimination in relation to gender, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age and race/ethnicity. The ICS does not in itself contain new Council policies.

## **11. Community Safety Implications**

- 11.1 Not applicable to this report.

## **12. Health and Safety Implications**

- 12.1 Not applicable to this report..

## **13. Risk Management Implications**

- 13.1 The ICS project team has regularly reviewed risks which have principally related to partnership and engagement risks. The ICS has been produced on behalf of the Essex Chief Executives Association, with agreement from all 15 county, unitary and district authorities of Greater Essex. The process has included extensive research, and consultation with partners. This approach should ensure endorsement and approval of the ICS vision, strategic focus and investment priorities with local authority partners across Essex.
- 13.2 A Sustainability Assessment was conducted alongside the production of the ICS. It followed five stages to reflect the requirements for SA/SEA (Sustainability Assessment / Strategic Environmental Assessment), whilst allowing for the flexibility of approach required for the ICS as a non-statutory document. Most importantly the report considers the impact of the ICS proposals in relation to sustainability issues in Essex.
- 13.3 The next stage of the ICS will consider implementation and the resources required for delivery of the priorities identified in the ICS document. The second stage will commence following approval of the ICS document by Partners.
- 13.4 Financial risks, at this stage, are minimal. If the ICS was endorsed by Cabinet it would need to pay due regard to any implied or explicit financial commitment this may give rise to.

## **Background Papers**

The ICS summary document (November 2010) is attached to this report.

# Integrated County Strategy



*This document provides an introduction to the Integrated County Strategy, summarising our core priorities guiding investment in our county. This document should be read in conjunction with the full ICS document, which provides a comprehensive analysis of the evidence base, and further details on the investments which should have a transformative effect on our county.*

# Contents

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## 1.0 A Vision for Greater Essex

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## 2.0 Our strategic focus

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## 3.0 Our strengths

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## 4.0 Why is the ICS required?

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## 5.0 Our focus, priority themes and priority investments

- *TGSE*
  - *Key Towns*
  - *Low Carbon Energy*
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## 6.0 Next steps

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## 7.0 The ICS Priorities

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## 1.0 Vision

**1.1** Greater Essex is taking a clear lead in responding to the changing global economy. The Integrated County Strategy (ICS) provides a vision for Greater Essex, identifying the investment needed to maximise our economic growth. The ICS exists to direct investment to projects that will underpin the future economic stability of UK plc.

**1.2** The ICS provides the connection between national and local policy, identifies strength and potential, and considers how we can use our key assets to improve the area for residents and make Greater Essex an even more attractive location for businesses. Moreover, within the context of public spending cuts and reduced public intervention, the ICS aims to identify the key strategic projects which will provide the maximum return on investment and greatest benefits.

**1.3** The ICS has been produced on behalf of the Essex Chief Executives Association with agreement from all 15 county, unitary and district authorities of Greater Essex. A collaborative and rigorous process of research, consultation, and testing of issues and opportunities has identified a tripartite focus that, if adhered to, will most effectively provide economic growth in Greater Essex.



## 2.0 Our strategic focus

**2.1** Our broad strategic focus is set out in the three boxes below:

### Thames Gateway South Essex (TGSE)

**Achieve transformational development and change throughout TGSE to significantly improve the local economy, quality of life of residents, and natural and built environment**

### Key Towns

**Promote opportunities for economic growth, redevelopment, and regeneration in the key urban centres of Southend, Thurrock, Basildon, Harlow, Chelmsford, and Colchester**

### Low Carbon Energy

**Support the growth of renewable and low carbon energy as a key sector and promote the growth and location of associated industries in Greater Essex**

### 3.0 Our strengths

**3.1** Greater Essex has an unparalleled economic offer; our key facets are as follows:

Excellent European and UK location for business

Close proximity to London, Cambridge and Felixstowe

Established international links achieved through good transport links to London and to Europe

Presence of multi-national and leading edge and innovative companies

Buoyant business environment, with a UK-leading reputation for business start-ups and entrepreneurship

World class airports and expanding ports

Internationally significant logistics sector

Good access to higher education facilities

Regional cities, regional town centres, and a major retail offer

Growing agricultural economy supporting related businesses

High quality natural environment



### 4.0 Why is the ICS required?

**4.1** Our ambition for Greater Essex is to create a highly performing and competitive economy that makes a significant contribution to UK economic growth and recovery; provides for the successful regeneration of Essex communities; promotes healthy communities and supports vulnerable people; and provides a high quality of life for our residents.

**4.2** To achieve this, Greater Essex must tackle the key issues that limit the area's ability to maximise the full economic potential that its major strengths provide for. These issues include:

- Connectivity within and between the main towns, especially at times of peak demand
- Economic and physical decline in parts of our major towns
- Rail service needs improvement in terms of quality, service pattern, and travel time
- Below average skills levels at Levels II, III and IV compared to national and regional averages
- Increasing number of young people who are economically inactive
- Low proportion of Essex SMEs who trade internationally
- Shortage of staff to service the expanding logistics sector
- High house prices and localised problems of housing affordability
- Access to broadband in rural areas

**4.3** We recognise that the era of reduced finances make it necessary for us to target any available investment very carefully. The ICS provides a clear statement to:

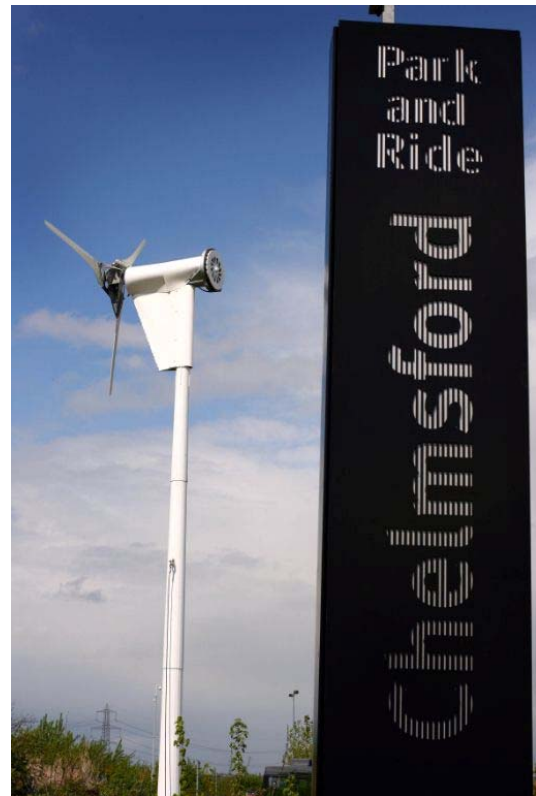
- 1) identify the issues of highest importance; and
- 2) identify the interventions which would produce the greatest benefits

## 5.0 Our strategic focus, priority themes, and priority investments

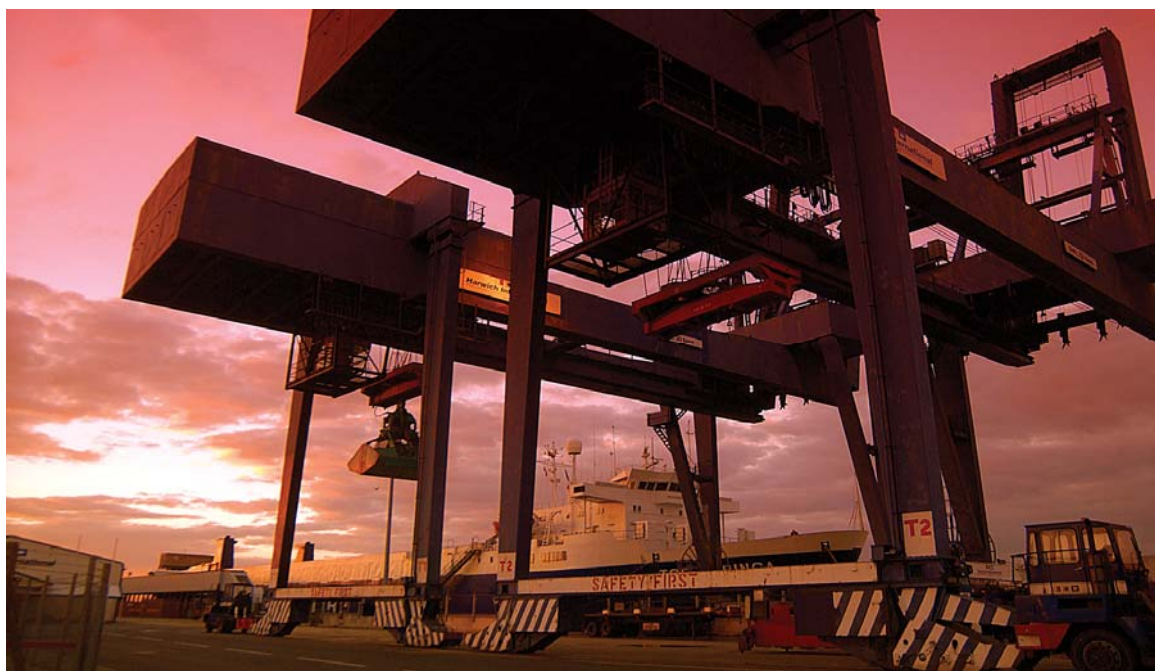
5.1 Research undertaken throughout the production of the ICS identified a number of opportunities for Greater Essex based on our existing assets. The key priorities closely relate to the main opportunities in Greater Essex, and attempt to use existing assets and opportunities to direct investment and provide the most effective approach to realising our significant economic potential.

5.2 Our approach to directing investment will be towards:

- 1) Prioritising the smarter use of our existing assets and maximising benefits arising from new economic opportunities
- 2) Targeting action to tackle key areas of development, growth and regeneration
- 3) Delivering changes that nest within a clear, long term strategy



Section 7 illustrates our approach. It details our tripartite focus (on TGSE, Key Towns and Low Carbon Energy), and demonstrates the link between this, our priority themes, and our priority investments.



## Thames Gateway South Essex (TGSE)

**Achieve transformational development and change throughout TGSE to significantly improve the local economy, quality of life of residents, and natural and built environment**

### Priority Themes:

The Thames Gateway is the UK's top priority for regeneration, and the largest regeneration opportunity in Europe. Despite its industrial heritage, Thames Gateway South Essex is an area of significant untapped potential; and one that has previously punched below its weight in terms of attracting inward investment. To realise its full potential it must improve its image, skills levels, the quality of its town centres, and the transport connections between its towns.

Nevertheless, its close proximity and good connections to London and Europe, large economic base with leading companies, and major development opportunities, have all resulted in the area being earmarked for large scale growth in jobs and homes.

Thus far, this has been supported by robust performance of the logistics, manufacturing and retail sectors. The future and sustained realisation of this growth now requires a clear vision to direct future regeneration so that transformational development and change can be achieved.

The vision for Thames Gateway South Essex is:

**To undertake a major economic, social, and environmental transformation of the urban areas in the sub-region through a programme of large scale regeneration, employment-led development and transport improvements, so that its local economy, quality of life of residents, and its natural and built environment is significantly improved.**

### Priority Investments:

The ICS will focus on the delivery of transformational change within the vision stated above. Priority investments established for the TGSE through the ICS are as follows:

#### **Town centre regeneration in Basildon, Lakeside Basin, and Southend**

- Provide for new housing growth
- Create a more positive image

#### **Promote and advance neighbourhood regeneration needs**

- Deliver regeneration in key neighbourhoods in Basildon

#### **Promote and maximise potential benefits at key sites for employment and further economic development**

#### **Support the delivery of the London Gateway and make best use of the economic opportunities created by its growth**

#### **Maximising the job opportunities arising from the low carbon and digital economy through up skilling the local workforce**

- Improve the skills levels of resident workers

#### **Create an improved economic base and quality office space**

- Improve the quality, availability, and range of employment sites and premises
- Improve the economic base in key urban areas

#### **Enhance connectivity to jobs and services, and deliver reliable and predictable journey times**

- Improve connectivity between the complex pattern of towns and to the strategic transport network
- Improve access to international ports and airports
- Reduce congestion and crowding on transport networks

## Key Towns

**Promote opportunities for economic growth, redevelopment, and regeneration in the key urban centres of Southend, Thurrock, Basildon, Harlow, Chelmsford, and Colchester**

### Priority Themes:

Our main towns are the drivers of the local economy and have been identified as critical to the delivery of the ICS. Commuting patterns within Greater Essex emphasise the key role provided by our main urban areas in serving both their own population and their rural catchments in terms of jobs and services.

This presents an opportunity to build on their role as key economic centres; to promote their self containment; and cement their economic vitality by supporting growth and redevelopment with focused investment around stimulating the economy and improving infrastructure.

Well designed and attractive town centres and neighbourhoods improve perception and encourage new residents and businesses to locate there. We want our towns to be successful. We will ensure the growth is sustainable by creating a high quality of life for residents, and providing employment growth alongside new housing to reduce the need to commute long distances. Appropriate transport provision will be necessary to ensure reliable journey times, manage road traffic congestion, and provide a variety of travel choices. Thriving towns are essential to enhance the competitiveness of local businesses and provide attractive places to live and to invest in.

Regeneration and development is not just about the direct delivery of jobs and homes; it will also

have a catalytic effect of attracting people to live and work in our towns, and improving the economy of Greater Essex as a whole. Attractive town centres that provide a broad range of services and facilities, and good quality housing for a range of people, will enable Essex towns to emerge as nationally significant magnets for investment.

### Priority Investments:

The priority investments in the ICS for the key towns will be:

#### **Town centre regeneration and redevelopment in Chelmsford, Harlow, Colchester, Basildon, Lakeside Basin, and Southend**

- The need for modernisation, physical redevelopment and regeneration, and improvement to the range of services and facilities within town centres
- Ensuring that town centres capture the amount of retail and leisure spend that would be expected for urban areas of their size and rural hinterlands
- Ensuring that connectivity within and between the main towns is appropriate to support a thriving economy

#### **Neighbourhood regeneration and improvements to housing quality and choice in Harlow, Colchester, and Basildon**

- Supporting regeneration needs in neighbourhoods across Greater Essex reduce levels of deprivation and improve housing quality
- Improving affordability and choice of housing to meet the needs of the urban area

#### **Create a balanced pattern of sustainable growth**

- Ensuring that housing is matched with jobs and services, particularly in areas of highest growth
- Ensuring appropriate transport provision is available to support growth



## Low Carbon Energy

**Support the growth of renewable and low carbon energy as a key sector and promote the growth and location of associated industries in Greater Essex**

### Priority Themes:

Greater Essex is at the centre of the world's largest market for offshore wind energy and is next to the UK's most dense area of new offshore development situated between the Humber, Greater Wash, and the Thames Estuary.

Our ports are perfectly located to support this fast growing sector. It is our imperative to promote Greater Essex as *the* place to invest for innovative companies in this sector. We expect that Essex will become predominant nationally in terms of the development and growth of the renewable energy sector. It therefore has to be a focus area for the ICS.

This provides a significant opportunity for Essex to nurture its renewable energy sector, as well as ensuring that our businesses are able to capitalise on the requirements of the manufacture, maintenance, and infrastructure based operations of the offshore wind farms.

With the UK's transition towards a low carbon economy, there will also be a significant opportunity for Greater Essex firms to compete in the growing markets for green technologies and low carbon energy components and products.

Before the decommissioning of Bradwell Nuclear Power Station in 2002, Greater Essex had been an important producer of the UK's low carbon electricity. As part of the Government's programme to increase the UK's production of low carbon energy, Bradwell has been put

forward as a candidate site for the construction of a new nuclear power station.

However, a proposal at Bradwell has yet to be brought forward by a promoter and it would have to be decided by Government. It has not been included in the ICS on that basis.

### Priority Investments:

The priority investments in the ICS for low carbon energy will be:

#### **Support the promotion and location of wind port and related industries focused on Harwich and Essex University**

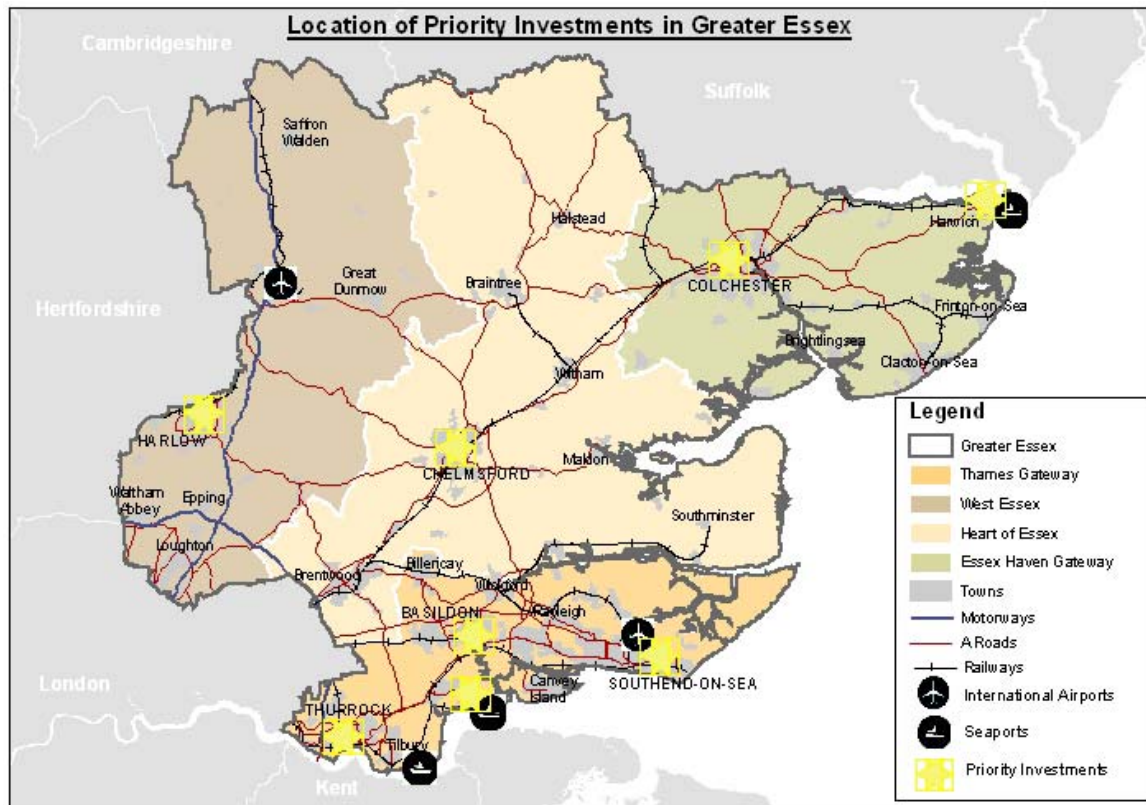
- Develop the excellent opportunities to grow local businesses to service off-shore renewable energy providers (such as for maritime survey work, the manufacturing of components, construction, and ongoing service and maintenance requirements)
- Enable Greater Essex companies to take advantage of market growth in green technologies and low carbon energy generation

#### **Support the development and improvement of the Haven Gateway ports and make the best use of the economic opportunities created by growth**

- Promote Greater Essex ports as hubs to serve the fast growth of UK off-shore renewable energy generation

#### **Maximise the job opportunities arising from the low carbon economy through up skilling the local workforce**

- Link the development of both these business sectors with the expertise provided by the University of Essex
- Provide skills training so that local people can take advantage of the increased demand for skilled workers



## 6.0 Next Steps

6.1 The next stage of the ICS will review in greater detail our agreed priority investments, and consider how they will be developed into more detailed proposals that could be resourced and delivered.

6.2 The ICS takes a broad and long term perspective looking between 10-20 years ahead. We now need to consider the following questions:

- How to organise the delivery of the priority investments in terms of their timing and phasing? For example, they could be grouped into different time bands (e.g., 1-3 years, 3-5 years, and 6+ years).
- Which stakeholders will be involved in delivery?
- What are our resourcing options; what is available and how will the ICS interface with the Local Enterprise Partnership's preparation of Regional Growth Fund bids?

- What could be achieved using existing resources?
- Which interventions could provide the greatest overall benefit? (e.g., more detailed sustainability appraisal, costing and viability studies, and cost/benefit analyses could be undertaken)

The main ICS document that accompanies this summary provides background to the ICS process, and further information on the transformative change that a focus on TGSE, key towns and low carbon energy will sustain for our economy

# 7.0 The ICS Priorities

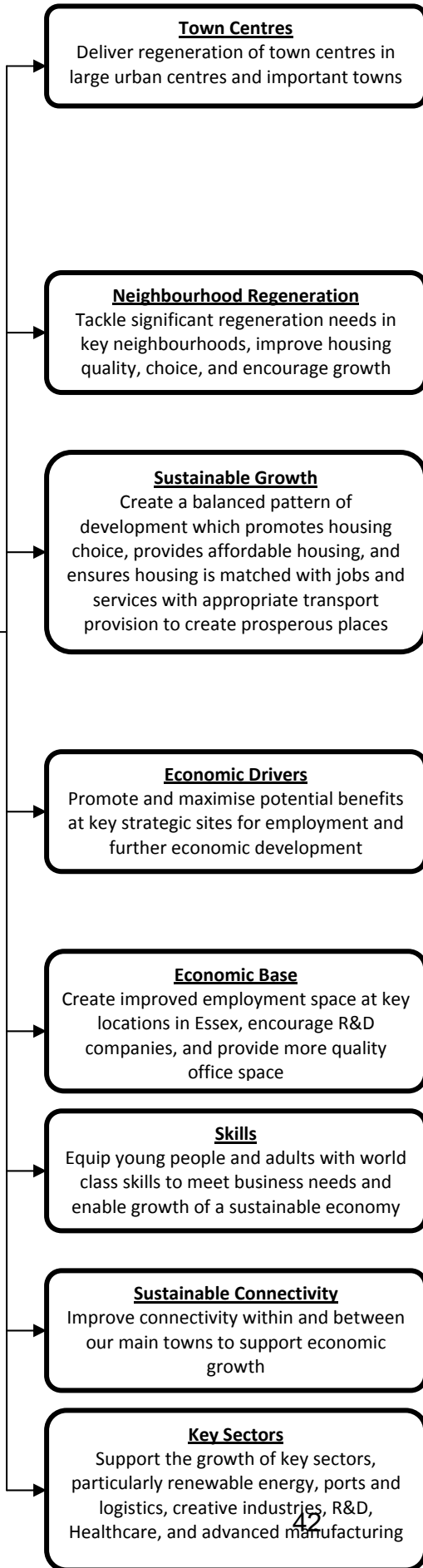
## Our Strategic Focus

**Thames Gateway South Essex (TGSE)**  
 Achieve transformational development and change throughout TGSE to significantly improve the local economy, quality of life of residents, and natural and built environment

**Key Towns**  
 Promote opportunities for economic growth, redevelopment, and regeneration in the key urban centres of Southend, Thurrock, Basildon, Harlow, Chelmsford, and Colchester

**Low Carbon Energy**  
 Support the growth of renewable energy as a key sector and promote the growth and location of associated industries in Essex

## Priority Themes



## Priority Investments



Note: 'Our strategic focus' identifies the key overarching priorities where resources should be directed. The 'priority themes' identify broad priorities that should be considered within the key priorities. The 'priority investments' are specific priorities identified throughout the ICS consultation process which relate to the key overarching priorities in 'our strategic focus'.



# Policy Review and Development Panel

Item  
**9**

10 January 2011

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Head of Corporate Management</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Amanda Chidgey</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Work Programme 2010/11</b>		<b>☎ 282227</b>
<b>Wards affected</b>	Not applicable		

This report sets out the current Work Programme 2010/2011 for the Policy Review and Development Panel.

## 1. Decision Required

- 1.1 The Policy Review and Development Panel is asked to note the current situation regarding the Panel's work programme for 2010/11.
- 1.2 The political groups be invited to review their representations on the Waste Prevention and Recycling Options Appraisal Task and Finish Group for confirmation at the meeting of this Panel in February 2011.

## 2. Alternative options

- 2.1 This function forms part of the Panel's Terms of Reference and, as such, no alternative options are presented.

## 3. Introduction

- 3.1 At each meeting of the Panel, the opportunity is taken for the work programme to be reviewed and, if necessary, amended according to current circumstances.

## 4. Current Situation

- 4.1 The Work Programme has been updated since the meeting of the Panel held on 8 November 2010 to reflect the current circumstances as follows:
  - **Cycle Paths and Cycle Town Initiative** has now been scheduled for the meeting in February 2011 following recent confirmation regarding resources and availability from the Transportation Policy Manager
  - **Waste Prevention and Recycling Options Appraisal // Update** has been provisionally scheduled for the meeting in February 2011 although this is subject to progress in respect of the Street Services Fundamental Service Review. As a consequence of the Review and the period of time since the Task and Finish Group last met, there may be potential additions proposed for the scope of the Task and Finish Group. The political groups are also asked to review their representations on the Task and Finish Group with a view to confirming their nominations at the meeting of the Panel in February 2011.
  - **Energy Savings Trust** this is still awaiting scheduling pending more information on future arrangements following the Cabinet Office's announcement of the abolition and reshuffling of a number of environmental quangos.

## **5. Standard References**

- 5.1 There are no particular references to the Strategic Plan; publicity or consultation considerations; or financial; equality, diversity and human rights; community safety; health and safety or risk management implications.

Policy Review and Development Panel  
**WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11**

	<u>14 June 2010</u>	<u>1 September 2010</u>	<u>20 September 2010</u>
<b>Policy Initiatives</b>			
<b>Review of Corporate Policies</b>		Economic Development Strategy 2010 - 2015	
<b>Task and Finish Groups</b>		20 mph speed limit // Engagement Plan Night Time Economy // Final report	Town Centre Improvements // Joint Presentation with Essex County Council

	<u>8 November 2010</u>	<u>10 January 2011</u>	<u>28 February 2011</u>
<b>Policy Initiatives</b>			
<b>Review of Corporate Policies</b>	Accommodation for Older People Single Equality Scheme	Integrated County Strategy / The State of Essex  Allotments Strategy	Cycle Paths and the Cycle Town Initiative
<b>Task and Finish Groups</b>			Town Centre Improvements // Final Report  Waste Prevention and Recycling Options Appraisal // Update

Items to be scheduled:

- Energy Savings Trust;

<b>Task and Finish Groups</b>	<b>Membership 2010-11</b>
Night Time Economy	Councillors Barlow, Davies, Naish and B. Oxford
20 mph speed limit	Councillors Ford, Hardy and Offen, G. Oxford and Parish Councillor Gili-Ross
Waste Prevention and Recycling Options Appraisal	Councillors Arnold, Barlow, Chillingworth, P. Oxford, Smith and J. Young

