

Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Grand Jury Room, Town Hall
22 March 2011 at 6.00pm

Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel deals with reviewing corporate strategies within the Council's Strategic Plan, the Council's budgetary guidelines for the forthcoming year, scrutinising the Forward Plan, the performance of Portfolio Holders and scrutiny of Cabinet decisions or Cabinet Member decisions (with delegated power) which have been called in.

Information for Members of the Public

Access to information and meetings

You have the right to attend all meetings of the Council, its Committees and Cabinet. You also have the right to see the agenda, which is usually published 5 working days before the meeting, and minutes once they are published. Dates of the meetings are available at www.colchester.gov.uk or from Democratic Services.

Have Your Say!

The Council values contributions from members of the public. Under the Council's Have Your Say! policy you can ask questions or express a view to meetings, with the exception of Standards Committee meetings. If you wish to speak at a meeting or wish to find out more, please pick up the leaflet called "Have Your Say" at Council offices and at www.colchester.gov.uk

Private Sessions

Occasionally meetings will need to discuss issues in private. This can only happen on a limited range of issues, which are set by law. When a committee does so, you will be asked to leave the meeting.

Mobile phones, pagers, cameras, audio recorders

Please ensure that all mobile phones and pagers are turned off before the meeting begins and note that photography or audio recording is not permitted.

Access

There is wheelchair access to the Town Hall from St Runwald Street. There is an induction loop in all the meeting rooms. If you need help with reading or understanding this document please take it to Angel Court Council offices, High Street, Colchester or telephone (01206) 282222 or textphone 18001 followed by the full number that you wish to call and we will try to provide a reading service, translation or other formats you may need.

Facilities

Toilets with lift access, if required, are located on each floor of the Town Hall. A vending machine selling hot and cold drinks is located on the first floor and ground floor.

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Terms of Reference

Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel

- To review corporate strategies.
- To ensure the actions of the Cabinet accord with the policies and budget of the Council.
- To monitor and scrutinise the financial performance of the Council, and make recommendations to the Cabinet particularly in relation to annual revenue and capital guidelines, bids and submissions.
- To link the Council's spending proposals to the policy priorities and review progress towards achieving those priorities against the Strategic / Action Plans.
- To scrutinise executive decisions made by Cabinet, the East Essex Area Waste Management Joint Committee, the Colchester and Ipswich Joint Museums Committee and Cabinet Member decisions (with delegated authority taking a corporate / strategic decision) which have been made but not implemented, and referred to the Panel through call-in.
- To monitor the Council's operational performance in relation to the Strategic Plan, Local Area Agreement targets and National Indicators.
- To scrutinise the Cabinet's performance in relation to the Forward Plan and to scrutinise the performance of Portfolio Holders.
- At the request of the Cabinet, make decisions about the priority of referrals made in the event of the volume of reports to the Cabinet or creating difficulty for the running of Cabinet business or jeopardising the efficient running of Council business.
- The panel will be the appropriate route for any member to refer a 'local government matter' in the context of Councillor Call for Action.

Process for Councillor Call for Action

- Councillors have the ability to call for debate and discussion a topic of neighbourhood concern, limited to issues affecting a single ward, in an attempt to bring about specific solutions for local problems. This enables members to get things done without going through the Council's executive decision making process.
- Members may bring an action on any issue they choose, with exceptions, for example, if the issue is vexatious or deals with an individual complaint. Local Government matters specifically excluded from the regime are namely matters relating to a planning decision, a licensing decision or where a right of recourse to a review or right of appeal is already provided for in law.
- Poor service performance or increased anti-social behaviour are examples of where a member will bring an action to the panel's attention.
- The scrutiny panel may reject a request as not within the guidance, or the usual channels have not been exhausted, or accept that an investigation is the appropriate action.
- The panel may conduct an investigation in the usual scrutiny manner, seeking information from the Council and/or partners and inviting them to attend meetings.
- A report with recommendations will be compiled and brought to the Council and/or partners attention, with the Council and/or partners having a duty to respond.
- The panel will consider and publish the responses to their recommendations and feed back this information to the Councillor calling for the action.

**COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL
STRATEGIC OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
22 March 2011 at 6:00pm**

Members

Chairman : Councillor Christopher Arnold.
Deputy Chairman : Councillor Dennis Willetts.
Councillors Nigel Offen, Gerard Oxford, Julie Young,
Nigel Chapman, Mark Cory, Andrew Ellis, Bill Frame and
Theresa Higgins.

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 5 are normally brief and agenda items 6 to 9 are standard items 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. Minutes

1 - 14

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2011.

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2011.

6. 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.

7. Items requested by members of the Panel and other Members

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

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

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

8. Referred items under the Call in Procedure

To consider any Portfolio Holder decisions, taken under the Call in Procedure.

The panel may a) confirm the decision, which may then be implemented immediately, b) confirm the decision back to the decision taker for further consideration setting out in writing the nature of its concerns, or c) refer the matter to full Council in the event that the panel considers the decision to be contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council or contrary to, or not wholly in accordance with the Budget.

9. Decisions taken under special urgency provisions

To consider any Portfolio Holder decisions taken under the special urgency provisions.

10. Transforming Colchester's Housing Services – the Fundamental Service Review of Housing - one year on 15 - 43

See the joint report from the Head of Life Opportunities and Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration.

11. Review of the work of the Portfolio Holder for Customers. 44 - 45

See scoping report from the Scrutiny Officer.

12. Review of the work of the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety

Due to work commitments the Portfolio Holder is unable to attend the meeting for the review and sends his apologies.

13. 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).

STRATEGIC OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

8 FEBRUARY 2011

Present :- Councillor Christopher Arnold (Chairman)
Councillors Nigel Chapman, Mark Cory, Andrew Ellis,
Bill Frame, Theresa Higgins, Gerard Oxford,
Dennis Willetts and Julie Young

Substitute Member :- Councillor Jon Manning for Councillor Nigel Offen

Also in Attendance :- Councillor Nick Barlow
Councillor Lyn Barton
Councillor Beverley Oxford
Councillor Paul Smith

35. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2011 were confirmed as a correct record.

36. Review of the work of the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Sustainability

Councillor Lyn Barton, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Sustainability gave an overview of her work over the last twelve months.

Councillor Barton spoke about the recognised problems within the Planning Service, and that a Development Improvement Plan has been introduced for the service. Council representatives recently met with key players and agents in the planning process who highlighted the problems of feeling isolated, a lack of communication with officers not responding to telephone calls or emails. The problems at that time had been exacerbated by long term sickness of three principle planning officers and the initial drop in planning resources during the implementation of the fundamental service review (FSR).

Improvements are noticeable now that the post FSR structure has bedded-in, and the re-introduction of the Agents Forum, with new website communications link has improved communications, with positive feedback from customers. The re-launch of the Parish Council Planning Workshops, now extended and improved, has also proved successful, fitting in with the new Localism agenda, and these meetings will continue to be monitored for feedback, with issues being considered before the appropriate action is taken.

In response to Councillor Willetts, Councillor Barton said the quality of service is paramount, with customer relationships an important aspect of quality. The views of customers, complainants and Ward Councillors will be sought on specific applications, and consultation to a wider audience, including all Councillors, stakeholders and customers in regards to the overall service. The overall service consultation is expected to be undertaken in February and will be an important exercise in considering issues prior to forming an opinion, before any appropriate action is taken. Councillor

Barton agreed to share with Panel members the draft consultation Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire. In regards to charging for development control advice and guidance, Councillor Barton said the service provided advice and guidance to more than one hundred customers per month, and a disproportionate amount of officer time was spent on this work, given it did not generate any income. Councillor Barton confirmed the new charging policy had not proved to be an issue, with all enquirers prepared to pay and no tailing off of pre-application advice.

In response to Councillor Julie Young, Councillor Barton said the Planning Service understands things need to be done differently, and this has been a learning process, and 'good practice' examples are taken on board, putting right problems and moving forward. Councillor Barton confirmed to Councillor Arnold that in respect of Planning Applications, the tracking was now more rigorous, with more regular officer meetings to address any potential problems and senior officers are now more confident that planning targets will be attained. Councillor Frame said good progress on website access to planning applications had been achieved in the last year, and the ability to put planning applications on-line within one day of receipt had proved a difficult process to introduce and with blips along the way, but the process is now working.

Councillor Barton responded to Councillor Ellis and Chapman, confirming she had initiated the Local Heritage List, a list of town centre buildings either of historic value or of particular affection to local people, but not necessarily listed. The list, put together through volunteered help and some officer time, would help on pre-application advice but did not have any legal standing. Councillor Barton said this listing would be rolled out to other urban or rural areas if there was enough demand and expert officers would be happy to assist in setting up such a list(s).

In regard to Planning Policy and the Core Strategy 2012, Councillor Barton told Councillor Ellis that with the current strategy now having less than two years still to run and with no processes in place since the last core strategy review, the Council needed to remain flexible, and this was an opportune time to undertake a review, no harm could come of this and it could prove very helpful. Councillor Barton accepted the review may probably show Colchester needs to build more houses, that is, the acceleration rate would increase above the current 830 houses per annum to meet demand. Councillor Barton said residents will have the opportunity to express their view and she remained open-minded about the outcomes of such a review, with no pre-conceptions. Councillor Barton said the Council needed to interact with the public on this issue, but how any outcomes are managed may prove difficult.

In respect of the implementation of the Nottingham Declaration objectives, Councillor Barton said phase 1 was complete, and phase 2 was fully funded, with a total CO2 omissions saving of 1,089 tonnes. Councillor Barton agreed with Councillor Arnold that if the 'Feed-in Tariff Scheme' was to be introduced to Wellington House and Rowan House before the 31 March 2011 deadline it needed to be started immediately. Councillor Barton said in respect of the initiative on generating energy through Wind Turbines, the Boxted Parish Council presentation of one year ago had been followed by a further review at Myland Parish Council in November 2010. Progress had been slow but remains on-going.

Councillor Barton said Photo Voltaic Panels (PVP) could prove a very effective way of reducing carbon omissions, and whilst this was an expensive option, it is a good scheme for Colchester, believing the Council had to be seen leading on this initiative. Councillor Barton agreed with Councillor Frame that Council owned buildings should be at the forefront of any development of this initiative. Councillor Gerard Oxford said whilst he understood the effectiveness of PVP the Council needed to get their priorities right, and believed the savings on reducing heating bills through the installation of double or triple glazing far outweighed the benefits of PVP. Councillor Oxford said he had requested costing information on glazing installations at a Finance and Audit Scrutiny meeting in 2010.

In respect of regeneration, Councillor Barton responded to Councillor Manning by explaining the area known as the Cultural Quarter was that area to the east of Queen Street / St Botolphs Street, stretching from the new Magistrates Court Building at St Botolphs Roundabout northwards to those buildings, including the Minorities Building, fronting onto East Hill. The regeneration of St Botolphs Station and development of the Station Square are currently in the design process stage, and the area around the historic Priory site now had wider paths, with access for the disabled, new seating and public open space. The acquisition of the Old Police Station would become a base for the proposed new Creative Business Centre Hub in the town centre, with the redevelopment of a new hotel on the site of the to-be demolished St James House and Roman House properties. Development of a new hotel would commence soon and work would also start soon on the landscaping around the Firstsite building.

Councillor Barton agreed to share with Councillors the design of the St Botolphs Station and Station Square once they are completed and prior to going out to public consultation.

In response to Councillor Ellis, Councillor Barton said the regeneration of the Vineyard Gate area had understandably stalled due to the economic downturn, but the original preferred partner in this redevelopment are in regular contact with the Council and remain committed to the project. There remained no obligation on the Council to remain with the current preferred partner. The future focus will be on what is needed for this area and will to some extent determine the profile of the preferred partner(s).

Councillor Barton understood Councillor Chapman's concern that with the main focus on these regeneration sites, attention to areas such as the Town Centre High Street can slip, and some areas are now starting to look tatty, in need of improvement, with an emphasis needed on reducing poor air quality due to the high level of carbon omissions from poor public transport. Councillor Ellis said stricter monitoring on omission levels on buses is needed. Councillor Barton said traffic orders are due at the end of February for alterations to the North Hill in respect of Bus Lanes, and alterations to the Bus Lay-bys in the High Street. Consideration is also being given to broadening the High Street disabled parking scheme, all part of the start of regenerating this area. Councillor Barton understood this work will disrupt the current road network, but she and officers are working closely with Essex County Council on this initiative.

Councillor Barton agreed with Councillor Willetts that continual lobbying of Essex

County Council in respect of improving the Borough's Transport Strategy was needed, with a need for better quality public transport for the rural areas. Such meetings do take place and she reassured the Panel that the needs of the Borough are fed back to County.

Councillor Arnold thanked Councillor Barton for attending the meeting and responding to questions from the Panel. Councillor Barton agreed to share with Panel members the draft consultation Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire.

Councillor Bill Frame (in respect of being a Board Member of the Colne Housing Group) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)

Councillor Theresa Higgins (in respect of being the Chairman of Colchester's YMCA) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)

37. Revenues and Benefits Fundamental Service Review - Update

Presentation

Mr. Charles Warboys, Head of Resource Management and Mr. Paul McMorris, Finance Manager attended the meeting and Mr. Warboys presented the Revenues and Benefits Fundamental Service Review (FSR) report.

Mr. Warboys said that following the review of the FSR Business Case endorsed by the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel and approved by Cabinet in March 2010, excellent progress has been made in implementing the Business Case.

October to December 2010 saw the Revenue and Benefits Service go through a major redeployment project resulting in all the appointments to the final April 2012 structure being made. Some additional posts have also been filled on an interim basis. The final restructure has resulted in a reduction of twenty five full time equivalent (FTE) posts, with six compulsory redundancies and the remaining losses through natural wastage and voluntary redundancies.

A training programme for generic benefits and taxation work is underway, with new methods of working now in place, and staff are being supported through 1:1s with line management, team meetings and the Human Resources staff.

A new way of working has seen experienced assessors working in the Customer Services Centre on the front line, on a rota basis, enabling staff to solve problems at the first point of contact and avoid delay by being passed to the "back office". E-Claims had not been fully launched, though to date 686 claims have been processed in this way. Although further software improvements are imminent, new claims are still being processed within 5-6 working days, in cases where all the evidence and information is provided with the initial application. Mr. Warboys mentioned the on-line

calculator which allows potential claimants to see for themselves whether they are likely to be entitled to benefit. The Council's major partners in this line of work have been contacted and most are now engaged in this new way of working.

Mr. Warboys concluded by saying the financial savings as anticipated in the Business Case, are on track, and an additional saving of £369,000 per annum has been built into the 2011/12 Budget, with every indication that the anticipated savings from 2012/13 onwards will be around £700,000.

General discussions

Whilst reassured of the progress made with the implementation of the March 2010 Business Case to date, and the high-level risks associated with the review being actively managed, Councillor Willetts was surprised that the update report whilst showing savings far beyond those originally anticipated, did not give any detail on how the savings were linked to the business case actions. Mr. Warboys said he understood the point being made and this could be addressed in any further follow-up report. The assessment of the savings was based on a mechanistic approach, based on the overall FTE staff saved in the process, and not broken down into smaller component parts, though a large proportion of the additional savings have been through the removal of a supervisory / management layer of the original structure.

Councillor Arnold asked how the overpayment recovery actions were progressing and Mr Warboys replied that recovery of £300k had been made to date, against a budget of £260k.

Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Diversity addressed the Panel to thank those officers who had been instrumental in delivering this project within the allocated timeframe and with additional savings. Councillor Smith also paid tribute to all the staff within the Revenues and Benefits Service, commended for their hard work and dedication in ensuring the success of the new operation.

The Chairman thanked Officers for attending the meeting, presenting the report and responding to questions from Members of the Panel.

RESOLVED that the Panel commented on and noted the progress being made in implementing the FSR of Colchester's Revenues and Benefits Service.

Councillor Theresa Higgins (in respect of being a Member of Colchester Town's Share the Space Group) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)

Councillor Nigel Chapman (in respect of being the Chairman of the Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Project) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)

38. Review of the work of the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development,

Culture and Tourism

Councillor Nick Barlow, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Culture and Tourism gave an overview of some of the major work in which he was involved in during the last twelve months.

Councillor Barlow said he was involved in regular meetings with the Colchester Business Group, formed in 2008 to provide a collective voice for the local business community, and represented by the Colchester Chamber of Commerce, The Colchester branches of the Federation of Small Businesses and Institute of Directors, along with destination Colchester, Colchester Business Enterprise Agency, Severalls Business Park, Colchester 2020 and Colchester Borough Council. The Group believe Firstsite will enable Colchester to become an internationally important destination for the visual arts and an important social hub for the town, as well as fulfilling the high-end requirements of the business community.

The Christmas Group was formed in 2010 to coordinate a programme of events and contribute to projects such as the commissioning of a new town centre Christmas lighting project over three years. The Group, with the Council as the major partner meets to co-ordinate and manage such projects that help promotes Colchester to visitors and support business and retailers.

Councillor Barlow was involved in the Digital Strategy, including universal agreement for the need for the next generation of Broadband to Colchester. It is envisaged that the development of Broadband in the Town Centre will enable wireless broadband to be networked across rural areas of the Borough. Councillor Barlow was working alongside Councillor Barton in the provision of the Creative Business Centre Hub in the town centre. Councillor Barlow later confirmed to Councillor Willetts that the high speed broadband initiative was looking to provide this facility across rural areas as well as urban areas. It was intended to provide microwave links, transmitting from the top of high-ground buildings within the town centre to a network of hubs across rural areas and out to other locations. This would provide better opportunities for business and employment in rural areas. This formed part of a collaborative effort with partners with the expertise to deliver.

Councillor Barlow mentioned that the Museums Service and Arts Service are now in the throes of Fundamental Service Reviews (FSR). The separate arts review is a collaboration between the Colchester's arts partners Firstsite, The Mercury Theatre, Colchester Arts Centre and the Council, looking to bring together aspects of work that will enhance the service provided and reduce costs. The future funding to these organisations was been considered, looking to see how best they could align with the organisational needs. Councillor Barlow later said as a result of the review, he would like to see all three arts organisations work in collaboration on arts community development work across the Borough. In response to Councillor Arnold, Ms. Pam Donnelly said the Museum Services FSR had commenced, and whilst questions have been raised in respect of Governance and the Joint Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service, confirmed that there was no reason why the FSR Business Case could not be programmed into the Panel's 2011/12 Work Programme.

In response to Councillor Theresa Higgins, Councillor Barlow said the Cycle Colchester project is working within a strategy designed to encourage cycling in Colchester and forms the rationale behind the town's programme of work in support of Cycling projects and initiatives that will develop the cycling network and improve conditions for cycling, for example, the February 2011 consultation on the proposal to allow cycling on the riverside path within the Lower Castle Park.

In response to Councillor Arnold, Councillor Barlow confirmed that in respect of the Tymperleys building, the Council was now working in partnership with North East Essex Preservation Trust (NEEPT), looking at different ideas for the future of the building and alternative ways of displaying the Colchester Clock Collection and other museum artefacts, for example 'Virtual Museum'. The NEEPT work in partnership with the National Trust and are far better equipped to successfully manage the building that would remain in Council ownership. Meetings with the NEEPT continue.

Councillor Barlow confirmed to Councillor Arnold that the 2012 Tourism Team had been formed to consider ways of capturing the tourism boom from the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics. A major exhibition from China is being organised by the Museum Service for display at the Castle immediately following the summer Olympics. Councillor Barlow said there was little funding for organising events, though there remained a lot of enthusiasm to continue the community led 'Free Festival' into 2011 and 2012. It was also hoped the Roman Circus would be developed further, for greater tourist attraction, though this had been jeopardised by the failed lottery bid. Officers are working with the Archaeological Trust to find ways of enhancing this site, making it something that visitors and local people would want to visit. It is anticipated the Roman Circus will form part of a virtual display at the Castle Museum, to graphically illustrate the history of the Circus.

Councillor Chapman believed the Council remained introspective in respect of tourism, that the rural areas of the Borough offered so much more, that could provide an experience to visitors that encouraged them to stay longer, with the knock-on effect of increasing income to the area. Councillor Barlow recognised that by encouraging visitors to short stays, not just day trips, would dramatically increase spending, and the Business Enterprise team are working with hotel and tourism groups in an effort to get the public to know Colchester better. Councillor Barlow confirmed that Firstsite are collaborating with The Tate to provide a major Constable exhibition to Colchester.

At the conclusion of the discussions, Councillor Barlow expressed his thanks to the officers within the service areas of his portfolio for their continued hard work and dedication.

Councillor Arnold thanked Councillor Barlow for attending the meeting and responding to questions from the Panel.

39. Work Programme

At the recent Group Spokespersons briefing, requests were received from Councillor Cory and Councillor Offen for future reviews to be undertaken by the Panel. The Group

Spokespersons agreed that the Panel would undertake a review of Highways and Transportation in the Borough, more specifically, an Overview of Public Transport in the Borough and Highways Maintenance in the Borough in relation to pot holes and gritting. An invitation to attend this review will go to Councillor Hume, Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transportation at Essex County Council and representatives from the leading public transport companies in Colchester.

RESOLVED that the Panel agreed the current work programme with the above review added as an additional item for future scrutiny.

STRATEGIC OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

15 FEBRUARY 2011

Present :- Councillor Christopher Arnold (Chairman)
Councillors Nigel Chapman, Mark Cory,
Theresa Higgins, Nigel Offen, Gerard Oxford,
Dennis Willetts and Julie Young

Substitute Members :- Councillor Pauline Hazell for Councillor Andrew Ellis
Councillor Nick Cope for Councillor Bill Frame

Also in Attendance :- Councillor Tina Dopson
Councillor Beverley Oxford
Councillor Kevin Bentley

Councillor Pauline Hazell and Councillor Theresa Higgins (in respect of being a Member of the Olympic Partnership Committee) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)

Councillor Theresa Higgins (in respect of her membership of Essex County Council) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)

Councillor Theresa Higgins (in respect of her spouse being an employee of the University of Essex) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)

Councillor Christopher Arnold (in respect of his membership of Great Horkesley Parish Council) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)

40. Colchester Partnership for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

Councillor Tina Dopson, Portfolio Holder for Communities introduced the guests and officers attending the meeting for this review, including Dr Tony Rich, Registrar of the University of Essex and Chair of the Colchester Olympic Partnership, Colonel Tom Fleetwood, Commander of Colchester Garrison, Major Phil Watson, Ms. Linda Gaine, Partnerships Manager, Essex 2012 Legacy Team, Mr. Gareth Mitchell, Head of Life Opportunities, Mr. Ian Duggan, Sports Development Manager and Ms. Karen Turnbull, Enterprise and Tourism Development Officer.

Presentation

Dr. Rich gave a comprehensive presentation on the Colchester Partnership for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Partnership had been in existence for approximately four and a half years, formed from the Colchester2020 Local Strategic Partnership, with the key members of the partnership including NHS North East Essex, University of Essex, Colchester Borough Council, Colchester Garrison, Essex County Council 2012 Legacy Team, Colchester

United Community Sports Trust and Colchester Blackwater Schools Sports Partnership.

The aim of the partnership was to secure the best possible legacy for Colchester from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, with the gross benefits to the East of England from the games potentially exceeding £600,000 in part due to the sub-region's capacity for international visitors. These sub-regions, like Colchester, are within the closest proximity to the games venues and therefore have the greatest potential for benefits.

The Priority Action Plan focuses on increasing physical activity and sports participation, promoting healthy active lifestyles to improve community health, improving sports performance, attracting preparation and training camps, supporting volunteer activity, developing a cultural programme, increasing tourism capacity in the area, improving the quality of the visitor experience and encouraging local business to realise opportunities.

Colchester have received the 2012 Inspire Mark for the following initiatives, the government-funded free swimming programme, Walking your Way to the Games, Urban Games, Cycle and Seek and have applied for the 2012 Inspire Mark for Cycling your Way to the Games. The adiZone sports and leisure facility has been provided at Monkwick, designed as a 2012 logo, it provides an outside gym, basketball court, tennis wall, football goal, open activity area and a climbing wall, is free to use and available 365 days a year. The scheme cost £150,000 with fifty percent funding coming from Adidas and the remaining fifty percent funded by the partnership members.

As part of Improving Sports Performance, round one of the Colchester Sporting Champions scheme saw an athlete sponsorship scheme launched in February 2010, with business invited to contribute. Sarah Claxton was appointed the Ambassador and five athletes received £500 grants in June 2010. Round two has been launched in February 2011. Other deliverables from this theme include (FANS) free access for national sportspeople, to training facilities, the Evolve Gym at the University and Living Like and Athlete, a joint Schools Sports Partnership and University project for gifted and talented young people, with a one week residential summer camp at the University.

Ahead of the games, the Partnership is actively working on attracting participating countries to consider basing themselves in Colchester for pre-games preparation and training camps. A Colchester 'Ahead of the Game' website has been launched. In partnership with the Essex County Council Pre Games Training Camp Consortia, targeted approaches to international countries and sports bodies have been made, with interest already shown culminating in delegation visits to Colchester.

The partnership supports volunteer activity at a local level with the aim of increasing volunteering locally through such schemes as the Essex Volunteers and National Games Makers, with 78% of Schools Sports Partnership pupils already actively involved in sports volunteering or leadership. A Cultural Programme was developing, with events such as the Olympic Handover event in Castle Park, the Chinese Guardians of the King exhibition at Colchester Castle Museum, Journey to the Podium and an Art Baton Relay. The Open Weekend organised in 2010, with over twenty events

organised in Colchester, at sports centres, the University of Essex, Firstsite, adiZone, The Castle Museum and local sports clubs , aims to be repeated in 2011. Details of the Torch Relay and Paralympic Torch Relay were discussed that would culminate in an 70 day long event involving over 8,000 torchbearers. An application to be part of the Torch Relay has been submitted to LOCOG. Details of the Torch Relay route will be announced in the spring of 2011.

Increase in tourism was a knock-on benefit of the games and increasing capacity in the area is vital as was improving the quality of the visitor experience. www.visitcolchester.com was the official tourism website for Colchester, newly improved and updated and including translation in 52 languages. An enquiry had just been received this week for 6,300 bed nights in 2012 in Colchester directly connected to the Games.

Details were given of the future plans including, Towns and Cities Ambassadors Programme, Taxi Drivers and Train Station Staff Training Programme, Mobile information provision on bikes, a new Garrison Clubhouse for community sports and leisure use, consideration on how to dress the town for the biggest party in the world, Go for Gold, that would capture resident's experiences of the Olympics via the 'Ahead of the Game' website and finally, to increase the Colchester schools signed up to the Get Set Network.

Finally, Dr Rich ended the presentation by mentioning the scope and scale of activity being planned/delivered for 2012 can be difficult to communicate and spoke of the Legacy of the Games, raising the profile and improving the image of Colchester, increasing sports participation, instilling a culture of volunteering, improving health and wellbeing, increased sports and leisure facilities, increased capacity for tourism and hospitality and greater engagement with schools.

Visiting Councillor

Councillor Bentley addressed the Panel, expressing thanks for an excellent presentation and disappointment that the press had not been present.

Councillor Bentley thanked former councillor Robert Davidson who as Cabinet Member saw the opportunity for a partnership and in quick time had a number of key individuals around the table and putting into motion the start of what is now the Colchester Partnership for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Councillor Bentley said he was very pleased with the content of the presentation, but without being critical had hoped more work had gone into attracting 'preparation and training holding camps', perhaps with greater promotion in getting international teams to Colchester, as was happening in other areas.

Councillor Bentley said it was vital that a post games legacy on tourism remained on-going, mentioning Barcelona as a great example of the Olympic Games being the catalyst for turning the city into one of the most vibrant large cities in Europe. He hoped that the ongoing plans would see Colchester promoted across Stratford, London like a rash, raising awareness and attracting tourism to Colchester.

Councillor Bentley concluded by thanking Councillor Dopson for fronting the excellent job done by Colchester Borough Council.

Dr Rich said in regards to preparation and Pre – Games Training Camps, the Partnership continue to work closely with Essex County Council Pre Games Training Camp Consortia and are pursuing a number of avenues of opportunity to secure a country to Colchester. Mr. Duggan said The Essex County Council Consortia are responsible for the lengthy research to identify target countries, the sports they participated in at the last Olympic Games and the potential number of athletes they may send to London in 2012. Discussions are on-going with three serious enquiries made recently by smaller countries. Mr. Duggan was hopeful that some announcements would be made in the near future.

General Discussion

In response to Councillor Offen who asked what would not have happened without the Partnership, Mr. Duggan said many of the schemes or events that had been organised with the assistance of Partnership funding would not have happened, including adiZone, Urban Games, Walking Your Way to the Games, Cycling Your Way to the Games, and less funding would have materialised for, as an example, Evolve, the University of Essex Gymnasium. Colonel Fleetwood said the Partnership was the catalyst for triggering meaningful dialogue, seeing how partners could help, and making major partners look at their own facilities with a view to sharing.

Ms. Gaine responded to Councillor J. Young by saying the Colchester Partnership was one of the stronger partners on the Olympic Games within Essex, and have worked closely with the Essex 2012 Legacy Team who provide small pieces of prime funding that collectively could be spent on more meaningful projects and events that attract the attention and participation of tens of thousands of children across the county.

Dr Rich explained to Councillor Young that whilst the current economic climate had meant a substantial cut in teaching funding at the University, this would not mean a reduction in the commitment to the partnership for the forthcoming eighteen months. It was also confirmed that funds are identified for the construction of the Garrison Clubhouse. Councillor Dopson said despite the unfortunate cut backs, the view had been taken that Colchester would not reduce the internal work by officers towards the Partnership, ensuring the Partnership's legacy to the games was upheld. Later in the discussions, Colonel Fleetwood said the new Garrison Clubhouse was to be funded through an application for Section 106 money, and would include changing rooms, refreshment area and visitor/spectator seating area. It was hoped this new facility would be completed at the latest, by the start of the games, though the intention was to continue to work towards a completion by the end of 2011.

Ms. Turnbull confirmed to Councillor Higgins that officers have had contact with local taxi drivers, and will continue to do so. It is hoped there will be positive engagement with the drivers signing up to the Taxi Drivers and Train Station Staff Training Programme if the funding from VisitEssex's INTERREG EU bid is forthcoming (decision due May 2011).

In response to Councillor Higgins, Ms. Turnbull said she would find out what the position is from Licensing in regards to why taxi drivers in Colchester are the only ones in the County not to sign up to the Quality Taxi Partnership.

Ms. Gaine said Essex County Council is working closely with all the county-wide partnerships in the organisation of the Big Event 2012 at Hylands Park in Chelmsford. Essex County Council officers are tapping into the expertise within each partnership team (district and unitary authorities) and along with County's Arts Development Team are creating very large carnival like animated creatures that will visit all towns and villages on a county-wide journey aimed at communities, having an opportunity to help design the creatures at weekend events leading up to the finale . The Colchester Free Festival could be a possible destination in Colchester.

Dr Rich, in response to Councillor Arnold said events linked to participation had made some difference. For the University it was always hoped a new swimming pool would provide the type of facility that have provided a major difference. Whilst it was disappointing not to have come to current fruition, it remained an objective and aspiration, and it was hoped to take advantage of future lottery funding to secure this facility.

Councillor Arnold applauded the opportunity of increasing the participation of local people in sport and leisure but said it was very important that in joining local groups and clubs they are made welcome when they arrive and how can we be sure this will happen. Colonel Fleetwood said facilities at the Garrison are used more by the local public than the soldiers, and the Garrison swimming pool is fully utilised with a full take-up by local schools for their allocated slots, and it is anticipated there will a greater take-up for activities such as gymnastics, hockey and athletics by local adults and children as a result of the new facilities to be provided. Dr Rich said the University aim to continue to invest and enhance sports facilities, and times are changing, with schools taking-up the opportunity to use these facilities. Mr. Duggan explained that the Garrison provided allocated time for community use and use by the Schools Sports Partnership.

Councillor Arnold asked what would happen with the 'bulge of interest' anticipated by the high interest in the Olympic Games, should the capacity at clubs already be taken-up. Councillor Dopson said it was possible that local sports clubs and facilities could be linked through the "Active Colchester" Community Sport Network, which will ascertain demand and capacity and look at pinch points. This was a piece of work to be looked at and will continue after the Games finish as part of the 'Harvesting the Afterglow for Sport' initiative. Major Phil Watson said it was important that any new investment in sports facilities provided the right option, for example, to bring everyone interested in swimming activities to a new swimming pool would require a 50 metre pool with some leisure activities, not a limiting 25 metre pool with diving boards and flumes.

Responding to Councillor Willetts, Dr Rich said at the outset of the Colchester Partnership in 2006 there was no business case developed as the partnership was built more around aspiration, and opportunity driven. The Partnership will bring together the intangibles and opportunities that will raise the aspirations. A certain amount of analysis will be done on a national level but Colchester had not done a directly related analysis.

Colonel Fleetwood said the Garrison had an infrastructure to deal with core business, and the Garrison's Partnership work was considered 'Core Business' provided at little or no cost. The Garrison sports and leisure facilities new and old whilst provided by the Garrison at no cost to the Partnership would help provide huge benefits to the local community. Councillor Offen said whilst business cases have their place in managing business, the Partnership will regardless of a business case contribute to the Council's strategy towards 'live, work and visit'. Councillor Arnold concurred with Councillor Offen. Mr. Duggan confirmed to Councillor G. Oxford that there has been a serious amount of time committed to the partnership by all partners, who at Partnership meetings alone, it was estimated, had given up 600 hours of time since 2006.

Councillor Dopson said whilst other locations with a 50 metre pool facility had not attracted a training holding camp user, having a new local pool would remain an aspiration. In regards to the Partnership, whilst it was difficult to put a cost on the process, what was not in doubt was how the synergy between all the partners had delivered more than was ever anticipated, and delivered this very well. Ms. Turnbull said, local businesses are encouraged to sign up to the "Compete For" business opportunity portal and take advantage of any Games contracts. Mr. Duggan confirmed to Councillor G. Oxford that Southend was currently the only district in Essex with a confirmed take-up on a Pre-Games Training Camp, 'Team GB Diving'.

In response to Councillor G. Oxford, Ms. Gaine said the Partnerships are encouraging all schools to sign up to the 'Get Set Network', but not just registering on the website but joining the network to open up the opportunity for getting games tickets. Councillor Arnold requested that Panel Members receive an active link to the website. Councillor Dopson said there was an opportunity for Members who are school governors to question what their school was doing and ensure the link is made and that she would be writing to all Colchester school Head Teachers to encourage them to join the Get Set Network.

Councillor Arnold concluded the discussions by thanking Dr Rich for the quality of his presentation. This had been a thorough review and those members of the partnership present at the meeting were thanked sincerely for their participation. Councillor Arnold on behalf of the Panel said he wished the Partnership the best of luck in achieving their aspirations.

It was determined that the Panel would consider at a later date whether it would wish to reconsider the progress of the Partnership closer to the commencement of the 2012 Games.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The Panel reviewed and noted the work and progress made by the Colchester Partnership for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- ii) The Panel requested further information on why taxi drivers in Colchester are the only ones in the County not to sign up to the Quality Taxi Partnership.
- iii) The Panel requested an active link to the 'Get Set Network' website.



Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Item
10

22 March 2011

Report of	Head of Life Opportunities and Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration	Author	Gareth Mitchell Lindsay Barker ☎ 506972 ☎ 282253
Title	Transforming Colchester's Housing Services – the Fundamental Service Review of Housing - one year on.		
Wards affected	All		

This report provides the first annual Business Case update on the implementation of the Fundamental Service Review of Housing Services – “Transforming Colchester’s Housing Services”.

1. Action(s) Required

- 1.1 To note the progress made on the implementation of the Business Case for the Fundamental Service Review (FSR) of Housing Services – “Transforming Colchester’s Housing Services”.

2. Reason(s) for Action(s)

- 2.1 The Business Case was developed as part of the Fundamental Service Review of Housing Services. In order to assess the effectiveness of the review, clear monitoring arrangements have been put in place against the 3 year implementation plan. This report contains the first year’s progress against the Business Case.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 The alternative would be not to monitor or evaluate the implementation of the Business Case which would not allow an assessment of progress and any lessons learned for following reviews.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 In December 2008 it was agreed that an FSR of the council’s housing functions would be carried out as part of the council’s improvement programme. The review covered housing functions within Life Opportunities and Strategic Policy and Regeneration. Although it looked at the interface with Colchester Borough Homes as part of identifying opportunities for improvement, it was not a review of Colchester Borough Homes.
- 4.2 The detailed business case was presented to SOSR and Cabinet in December 2009 and was approved.

- 4.3 The initial phase of the implementation was to design and recruit to a new structure for the delivery of Housing Services. This included transferring the adaptations and the allocations functions to Colchester Borough Homes and moving the private sector enforcement and inspection function to Environmental and Protective Services.
- 4.4 The recruitment process, supported by Human Resources, was successfully completed and the new structure implemented in June 2010.
- 4.5 A full report outlining progress against all of the business case opportunities is included with this report. The report also shows some of the key performance information to measure how successful the changes are proving to be for customers and the wider community. As can be seen the new service is already having an impact on key areas such as;
- Faster resolution and more effective signposting of customer enquiries at the first point of contact through the Customer Service Centre
 - A reduction in the number of homelessness applications and acceptances made
 - Achievement of the target for delivery of new affordable homes
 - Significant progress with the review of temporary accommodation, including securing over £4m in grant, a Housing Association partner to deliver and manage the new facilities, and planning permission for the first phase of the project.
 - Successful achievement of the target to reduce by 50% the number of households in temporary accommodation.
- 4.6 Some of the highlights from this report are:
- 25% reduction in staff costs, including a 50% reduction in management costs, have been delivered across the general fund and Housing Revenue Account. Year 3 savings will be delivered one year earlier than planned in 2011/12 (£150K of savings in 2010/11 and a further £300K of savings in 2011/12), bringing the total recurring saving to £450k across the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account.
 - The allocations function has been transferred to Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) with no impact on delivery and as part of their Fundamental Service Review they are already making improvements to how it is delivered in the future. The adaptations service has also been successfully transferred to CBH and the benefits being realised from having the customer contact element of this service located with the delivery of the works. The improved partnership between the Council and CBH in managing property services has led to significant improvements in Void turnaround times.
 - The enforcement and inspection element of private sector housing has been transferred to Environmental and Protective Services and now has clear targets around work priorities
 - A positive effect on staff motivation has been noted during implementation, a flexible workforce created and levels of sickness

absence have dropped significantly from consistently high levels across the service. A new, reduced management structure is in place and a number of opportunities for individuals to develop their skills, knowledge and experience through multi-skilling have been taken.

- In spite of the significant changes experienced from the impact of the recession on demand for services and more recently the range of changes proposed by Government to the policy framework, the strategic ambitions of the business case are on track for delivery within the 3 year business case timeframe.

- 4.7 The focus will remain on delivering the wider benefits identified in the business case over years 2 and 3 while sustaining progress on areas of improvement already outlined in the report.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 To note progress made on the implementation of year 1 of the Transforming Colchester's Housing Services Business Case

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 The Council has a Strategic Plan covering the period from 2009 – 2012. One of the 9 priorities within this plan is:

Homes for All

We will work towards providing safe, secure, decent and affordable homes for all.

Within the context of the Council's Strategic Plan priority above, the overall objective of Transforming Colchester's Housing Services is:-
"To ensure that Colchester has the best possible arrangements for meeting the housing needs of residents".

7. Consultation

- 7.1 The Business Case for the Fundamental Service Review was subject to consultation with key partners and customer satisfaction information was used to inform the review. Customer satisfaction levels will be reviewed and updated annually in April each year for the duration of the implementation to ensure we improve the service we provide to customers.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 There are not expected to be any publicity considerations arising from this report. However, the many changes affecting the provision of housing recently announced by the Government may, once the detail is provided on how and when they will be implemented.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 The Implementation of the Review has resulted in combined savings to the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account of £150K in 2010/11, and further savings of £300k have been included within the budget for 2011/12, bringing the total ongoing saving to £450k across the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account. The financial implications were detailed in the business case and in summary are;
- A reduction in the people resource by around 25% by the end of year 3.
 - The above assumption includes a potential reduction in the management overhead of nearly 50%
 - Any revenue investment signalled in the opportunities, for example either one off costs around IT or prevention and education initiatives, will be covered from in-service efficiencies during implementation.
 - The proposed changes to the customer journey should result in a reduction in the 'cost to serve' of low to medium need customers while improving the quality and speed of the service. "Cost to serve" data will be reviewed and updated annually for the duration of the implementation.
 - One-off staff related costs arising from the implementation phase of the review have been contained within the service, thereby removing the need to seek support from any provision held corporately.
- These have all been achieved as outlined in the report.

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the implementation of the FSR Business Case and can be found here http://www.colchester.gov.uk/servedoc.asp?filename=EqIA_TCHS_template.pdf

11. Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 Housing Services play a significant role in community safety and tackling anti social behaviour in communities. The detailed business case considered through many of the opportunities identified how this can continually be improved.

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 There are no specific Health and Safety Implications

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 Risk Management is carried out within services for operational risks and at a corporate level for strategic risks. All risks identified from the implementation of the Business Case have been incorporated into the operational risk registers for Life Opportunities, Strategic Policy and Regeneration and Environmental and Protective Services. Where services have been transferred to Colchester Borough Homes these have also been picked up within their risk management framework.

Background Papers

Transforming Colchester's Housing Services detailed business case



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Transforming Colchester's Housing Service - Life Opportunities and Strategic Policy and Regeneration

High Level Summary of Progress to 31 January 2011

- 25% reduction in people resource and 50% reduction in management costs have been delivered across the general fund and Housing Revenue Account. Year 3 savings to be delivered in year 2. (£150K of savings in 2010/11 and £450K of savings in 2011/12.
- The recruitment process has been completed and the new structure is in place. Where posts needed to be transferred to other Services this has also been completed.
- The implementation of the Fundamental Service Review has had a positive effect on staff motivation, creating a more flexible workforce with significantly lower levels of staff sickness absence. There have been a number of opportunities for individuals to develop their skills, knowledge and experience through multi-skilling.
- Management development plans are in place to ensure managers have the skills, support and ability to manage their people effectively and improve performance.
- All customer contact is now directed through the Customer Service Centre. Since 'go-live' the Housing Options Team has been working closely with the Customer Service Centre and Professional Support Unit to develop the area of triage. Opportunities for further self-serve have been identified and are being developed for implementation.
- The Fundamental Service Review has created the new Professional Support Unit for Housing and the redesign of customer processes and the development and use of Customer Insight are underway.
- 238 affordable homes delivered up to end of December 2010.
- Almost £5million of grant secured for new affordable housing and the rebuild of Ascott House.
- Planning permission secured for the rebuild of Ascott House as part of the review of Temporary Accommodation. Portfolio Holder report for the transfer of land at Ascott House and Gardens, Bardfield House and Friars Court to Family Mosaic as part of this review

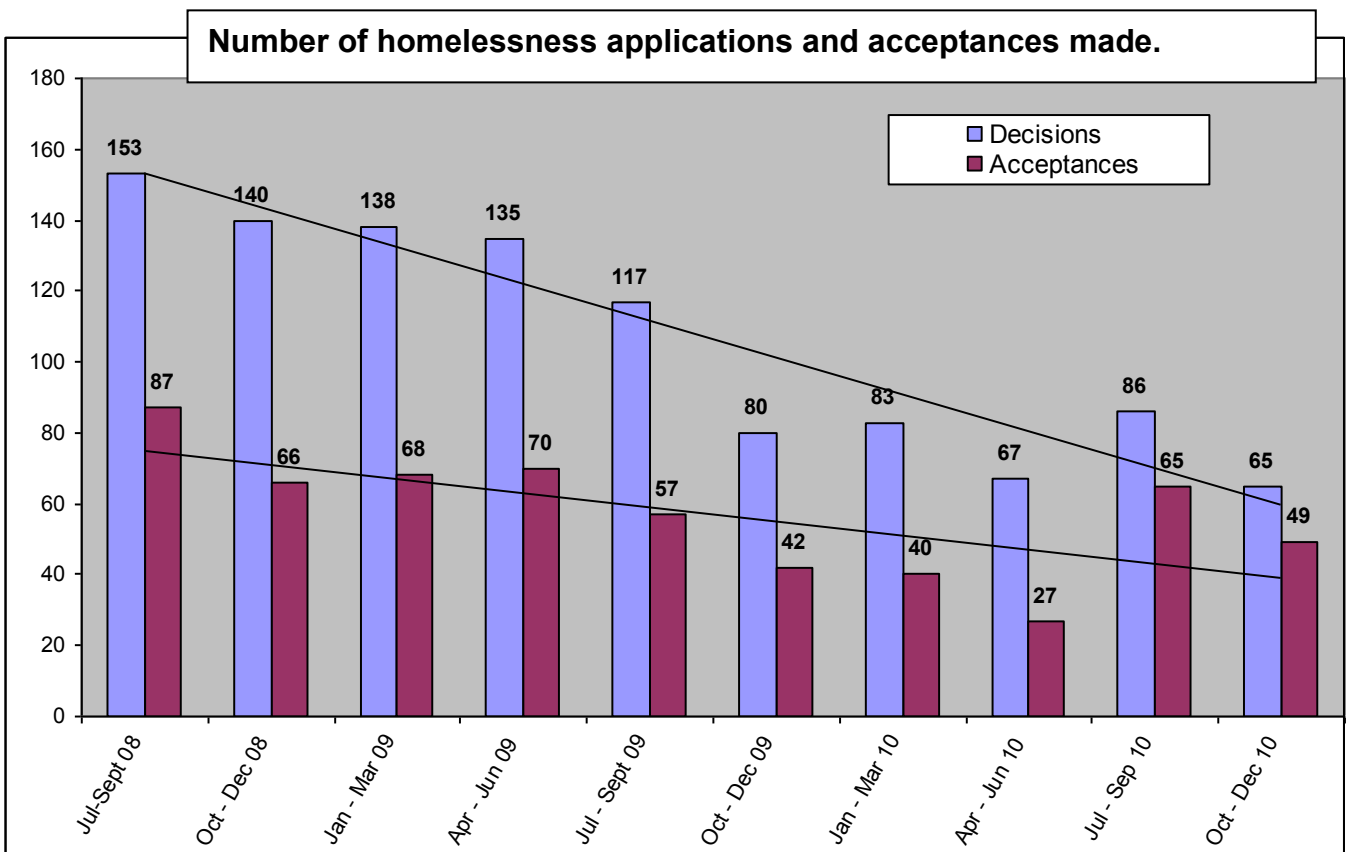
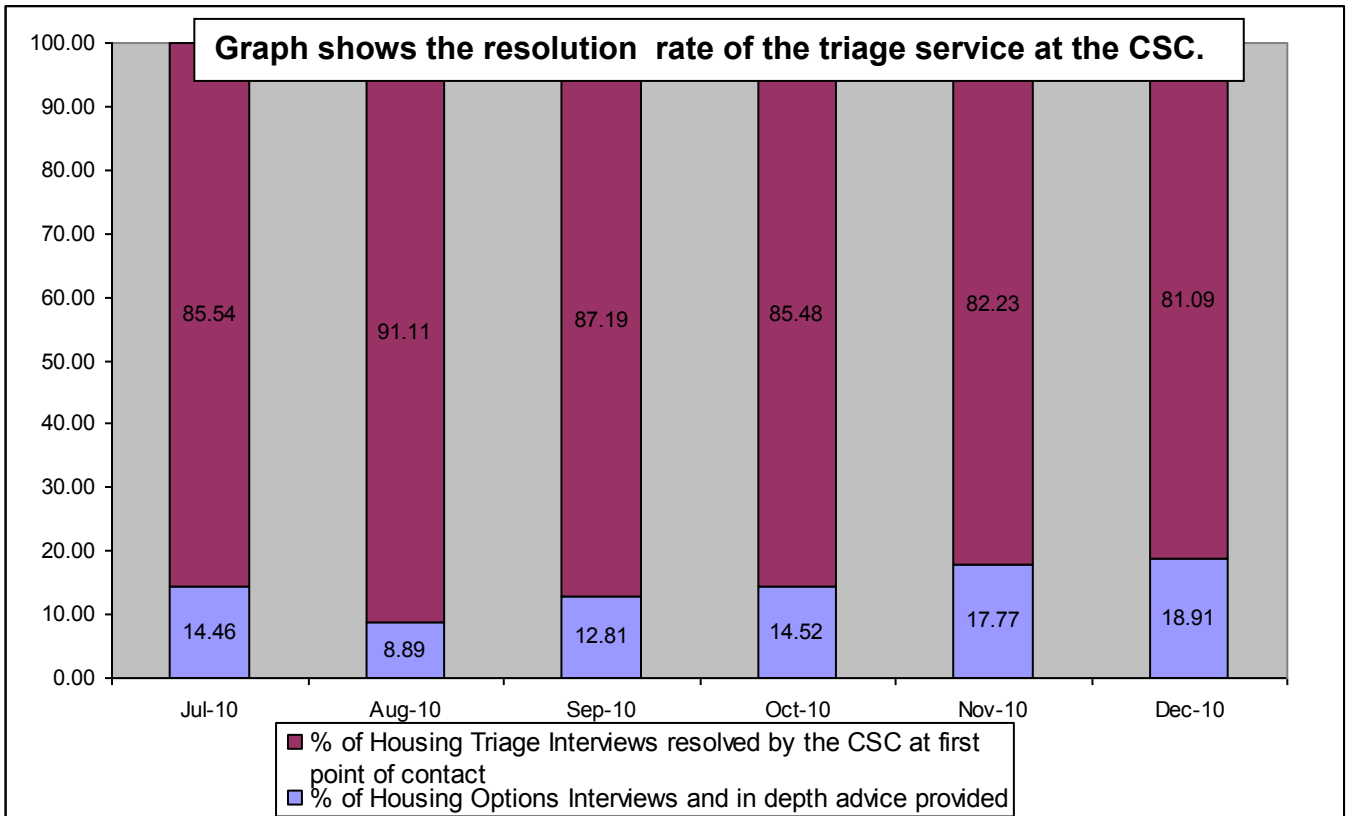


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approved February 2011.

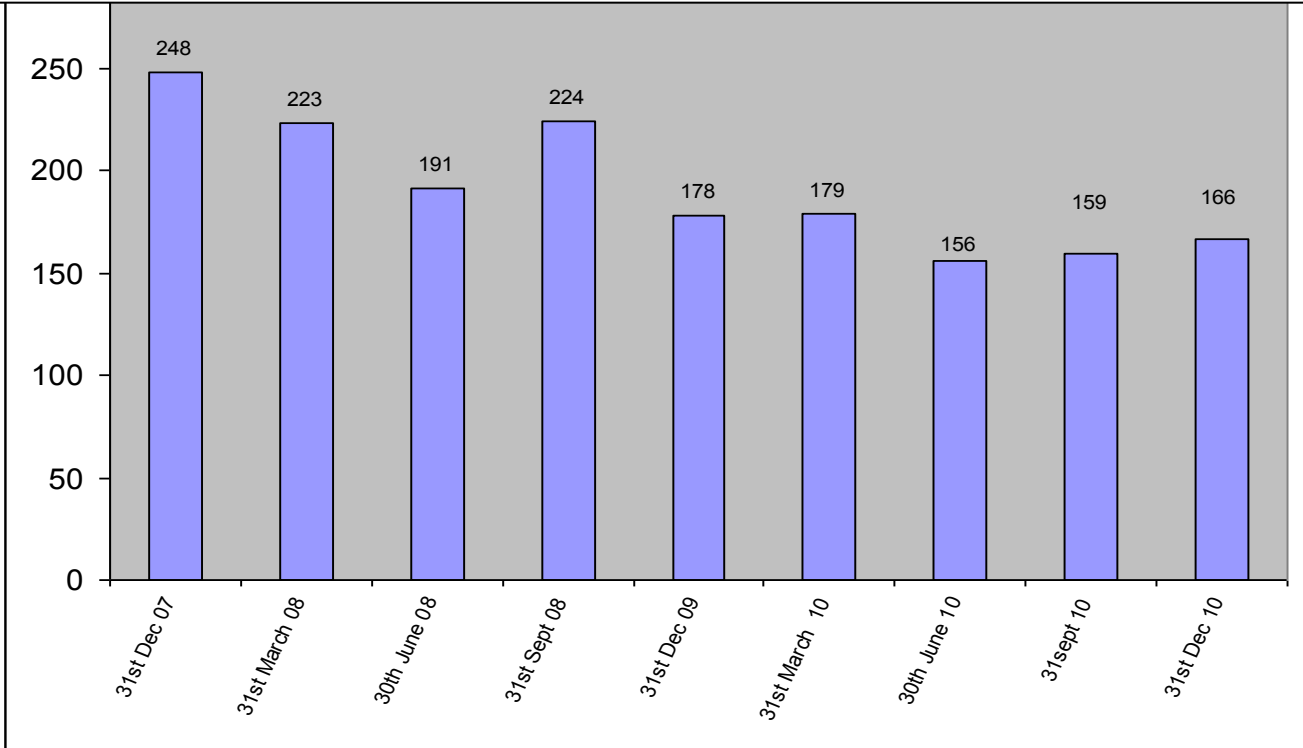
- The allocations function and the aids and adaptation function have been transferred to Colchester Borough Homes. Following on from the Colchester Borough Homes FSR there will be further opportunities for collaborative working.
- The Private Sector Housing functions have moved to Environmental and Protective Services from Life Opportunities.
- iConnect Phase 3 'self-serve', which includes the viewing of a Colchester Borough Council tenant's rent account online, direct debits and change of circumstance will be implemented in March 2011.
- Closer collaboration with Benefits will be pursued as part of the implementation plans of both reviews.
- All information available for customers is currently being reviewed along with new content for the website by April 2011. We are starting to use Customer Insight to evaluate behaviours and preferences, change customer behaviours and encourage self-help.
- Education and cultural change – visits to temporary accommodation units by targeted young people have begun.
- A robust enforcement of legislation in the private sector is taking place and a number of enforcement notices have been served and licences for houses in multiple occupation have been issued. Service Level Agreements are in place for commissioning inspections for financial assistance and inspecting private sector properties
- Planning application has been made to build two affordable houses on an underused garage site at Darwin Close in partnership with Colne Housing.
- A review of the Councils sheltered accommodation is underway (review of seven schemes has been completed, with reviews of the remaining 15 schemes underway)
- Essex and Greater Haven Gateway accreditation scheme for private sector landlords is being prepared.
- Private Sector Project Board has been established to oversee an expo-style landlord's forum, a pilot looking at how to bring empty homes back into use, and the project to set up a lettings agency..

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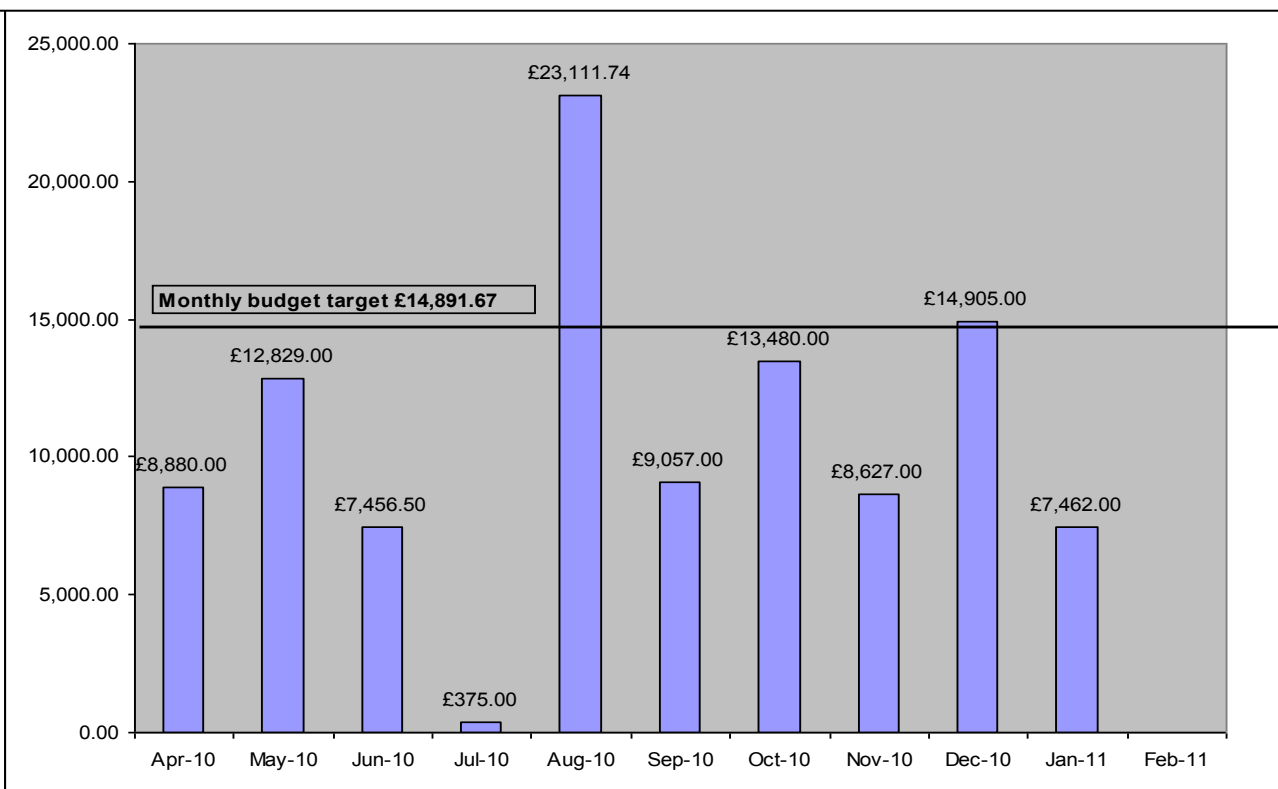


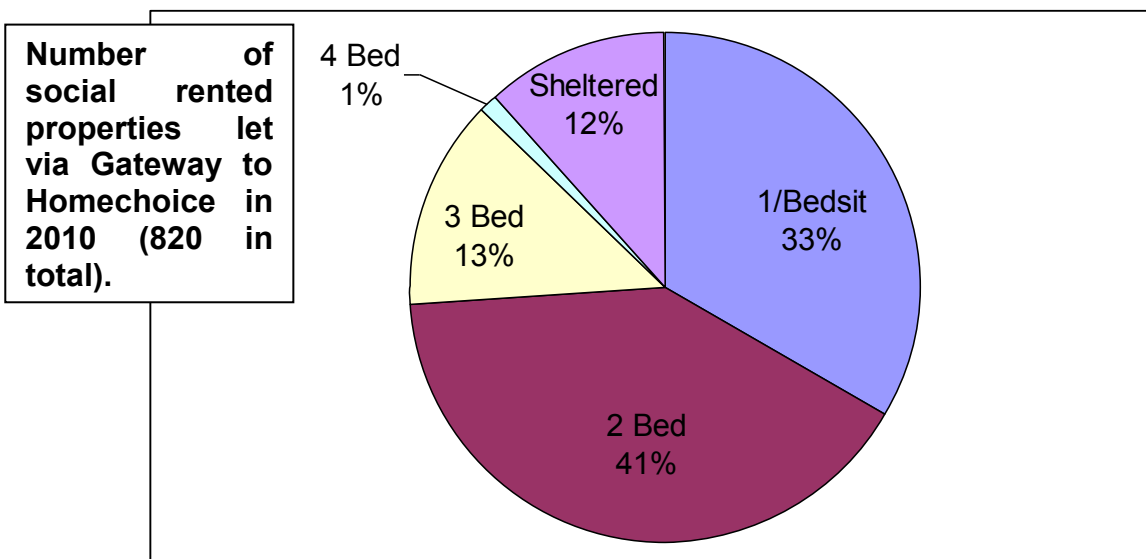
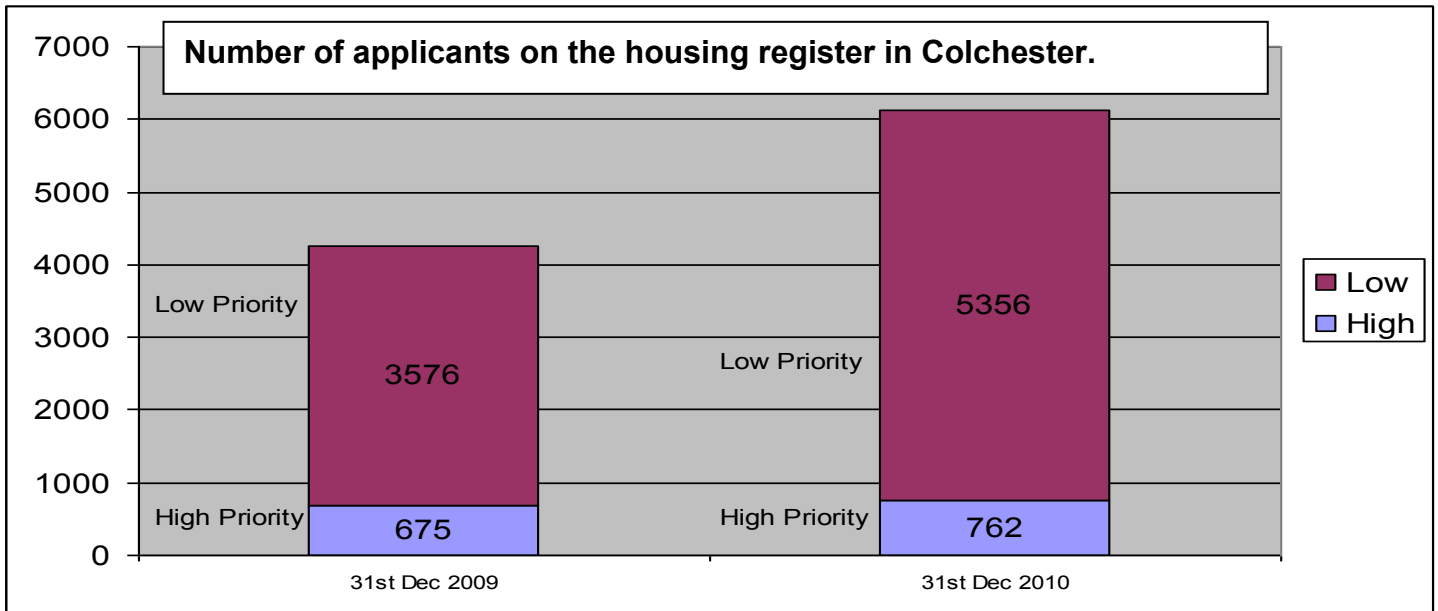
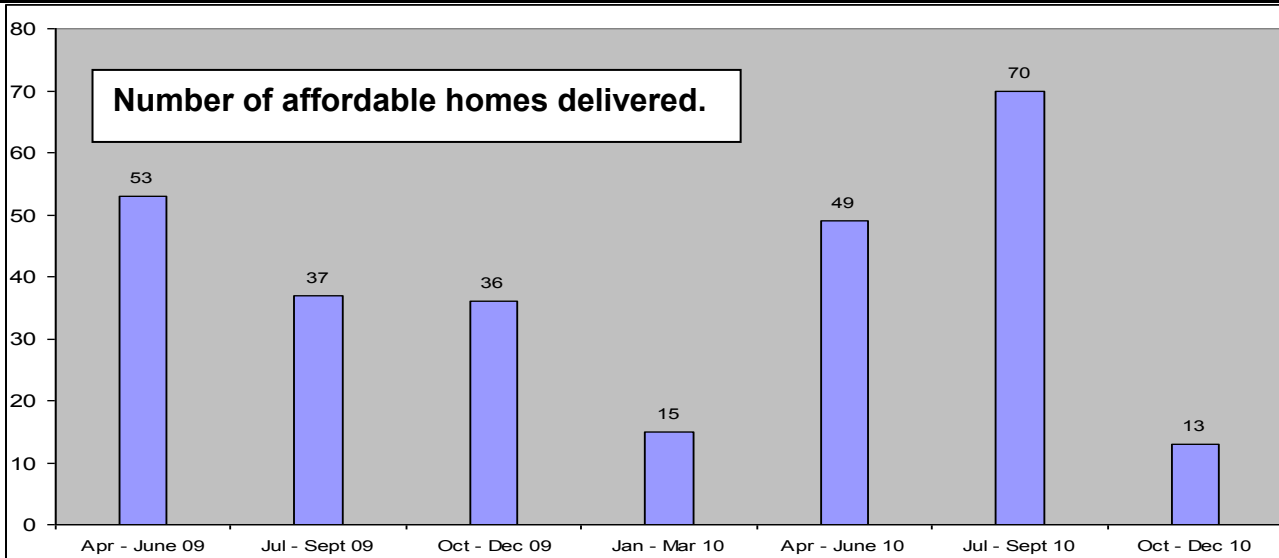
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Diagram shows the total number of accepted homelessness applicants in temporary accommodation. (A target of 170 was set by CLG by December 2010)



Graph shows the monthly spend on bed and breakfast provided by the Council.







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• CUSTOMER EXCELLENCE

Opportunity 1 Effective Self-Serve - Geoff Beales

Action	Outcome	Output	Timescales	Update
All housing customers to be encouraged to 'self-serve' where appropriate.	Helping customers to help themselves and at an earlier stage	Increase self -serve to 30% of all enquiries	December 2012 (15% by December 2011)	New web pages available from April 2011 along with first Achieve forms via iConnect for self-serve and introduction of Govmetric monitoring.
	More effective signposting	All web content, leaflets and information to be reviewed.	June 2011	
	Place Customers at the heart of what we do with clear performance standards driven by the changing needs of our customers to deliver an excellent service.	Options pack to be developed to give to customers. Decrease 'avoidable contact' calls to the CSC.	June 2011	

**Opportunity 2
Effective Triage - Geoff Beales**

Action	Outcome	Output	Timescales	Update
Improved processes, training and information in the Customer Service Centre (CSC).	The customer is channelled to the best solution available at an earlier stage to help prevent them from becoming in urgent need of housing.	‘Get it right first time’. Call resolution rate to CSC to be over 85%.	75% resolution rate by December 2010 80% by December 2011 85% by December 2012	On average since go-live the call resolution rate to the CSC has achieved 75%.
Customer enquiries dealt with in one place.	Drop-in ratio of customers with complex needs put through to Housing Options Team.	All customer queries dealt with via the Customer Service Centre.	April 2011 base line established.	For the first three quarters 1 in 7 face-to-face contacts were referred to the Options Team via the Customer Service Centre.
Improved customer satisfaction and involvement in delivering services – assessed by future Touchstone, Mosaic and GovMetric work, National Customer Service week, and other feedback.	Customer enquiries dealt with in one place.	All customer queries dealt with via the Customer Service Centre.	June 2010	COMPLETED
		Improved customer satisfaction and involvement in delivering services – assessed by future Touchstone, Mosaic and GovMetric work, National Customer Service week, and other feedback.	April 2011 base line established.	During National Customer Service Week survey carried out (Oct 2010) – analysis underway.

**Opportunity 3
Multi-skilled housing customer team - Diane Foley**

Action	Outcome	Output	Timescales	Update
Introduce a single housing customer team for Housing Services.	Each customer would have one adviser handling their case from post-triage in the Customer Service Centre through to resolution Customer enquiries dealt with in one place	Single caseworker for each customer in place. Reduction in time to register applicants to CBL from	June 2010	COMPLETED
		Increase in homelessness prevention from baseline of 300 to target of 400	March 2012	Over 200 housing applications outstanding in June 10 – now no applications outstanding and all assessed within time scale of 28 days. Housing registrations still continue to be up-to-date (Jan 2011)
		Specialist staff resources targeted to high/more complex housing need	June 2010	Currently on track to exceed 300 for 10-11 Successful implementation of triage is allowing specialist Housing Options team to offer appointments for complex cases only.



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		Customer knows what's happening on their case and who else has been informed.	June 2010	COMPLETED
		Team will be multi-skilled in all areas	December 2010	COMPLETED



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- EFFICIENCY

FSR objectives – people resource and revenue investment - Gareth Mitchell / Lindsay Barker

Action	Outcome	Output	Timescales	Update
Implement the new structure.	Reduce people resource by 25% by end of year 3. Reduce management overhead by 50% by end of year 3.	New service structure. Recruitment to new structure. New structure operational. Salary savings achieved. Split of savings between General Fund and HRA – initial assessment was 50:50.	October 2009 April – May 2010 June 2010 Reviewed annually March 2011	COMPLETED. Year 3 revenue savings delivered in year 2. £150K in current year and £450K in 2011/12. COMPLETED COMPLETED COMPLETED
Revenue investment for e.g. information technology, prevention and education.	To be found from in-service efficiencies during implementation.	Cost-neutral	Ongoing	Out of date Access databases moved onto Capita Housing System. The Visio software package was procured and is now delivering efficiencies in the production of floor plans by Enforcement & Inspection Officers.

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<p>Training development</p>	<p>Equip the Housing Service to meet current and future challenges.</p>	<p>Ensure all teams are customer focused with a 'can do' approach to delivering services and projects.</p> <p>Ensure Staff know what they should be doing in delivering services.</p>	<p>Training needs audit for the teams in new structure has identified gaps in technical knowledge and skills.</p> <p>Ensure any learning needs, knowledge and experience required by individual staff are identified through the appraisal process and added to personal development plans (PDP's).</p>	<p>Training plans for service areas completed.</p> <p>SMART objectives set and PDPs completed.</p>
<p>The creation of a sub-regional assessment process for housing applications.</p>	<p>Increased efficiency in the assessment process of housing applications across the sub-region. Reduce costs by working with other partners.</p>	<p>Ensure that Managers are able to effectively manage their Teams, manage change, manage in a flexible environment and plan ahead.</p>	<p>Management Development via Colchester Learning Managers and the Managers Network.</p>	<p>Participation to be planned with Human Resources Business Partners following audit of management competencies.</p>
			<p>Delivery of report and recommendations in March 2011.</p>	<p>£15000 of funding secured from Improvement East to investigate centralising assessment of housing register applications.</p>

Please also see opportunity 14 – Professional Support Unit – efficient and effective service.

• **EFFECTIVENESS**

**Opportunity 4
Homes for all and developing housing solutions,
Co-ordinated support to sustain tenancies and information sharing between agencies - Tina Hinson**

Action	Outcome	Output	Timescales	Update
Develop information sharing policies which effectively serve customer's needs.	Reduction in duplication between agencies.	Develop a single, cohesive, information sharing framework.	Develop information sharing policies effectively which serve customer's needs.	Introductory research under way. Gathered copies of all existing protocols, meetings held with lead agencies. Developing a template for protocols. Investigating a common assessment framework. Further work under way on identifying information gaps.
Map existing support provision across the Colchester Borough.	Improve opportunity for support and tenancy sustainment between agencies.	Monitor number of vulnerable tenancies sustained and examine reasons for tenancy breakdowns identifying solutions to prevent this in the future.	Map existing support provision across the Colchester Borough.	Monitoring set up with Professional Support Unit. This information will be used to identify solutions to prevent this in the future.
Ensure housing-related support services best meet the needs of Colchester's residents. Reduce number of people needing our	Ensure housing-related support services best meet the needs of Colchester's residents. Reduce number of people needing our	Mapping information produced Needs information cross-referenced with current provision. Gaps in provision identified.	Map existing support provision across the Colchester Borough.	Following the Comprehensive Spending Review, Supporting People (SP) budgets have been under extreme pressure for 2011/12 onwards. SP are currently



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<p>Develop a Joint Referral Panel (JRP) for all support services.</p>	<p>Customers in housing need who also have support needs are able to access accommodation and support as quickly as possible.</p>	<p>Ensure current joint referral panel operates effectively.</p> <p>Increase in number suitably housed through JRP.</p> <p>Monitor success of moving clients to permanent housing, identifying any barriers and solutions.</p> <p>Identify unmet need; explore the extension of JRP for other client groups.</p>	<p>2011</p>	<p>working with providers of SP services to make cuts to budgets.</p> <p>In response to SP review, a questionnaire to ascertain impact has been sent to supported housing providers and meetings held with larger providers to build up a picture of impact of review. We will be assessing the implications and will communicate this to the Portfolio Holder and other teams.</p>
				<p>Research under way. Monitoring set up with the Professional Support Unit. Exploring extension of JRP for other client groups', particularly older people and those with mental health issues.</p> <p>Provider group set up to look at options for moving on clients.</p>



		Produce summary of findings for Portfolio Holder.	
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**Opportunity 5
Collaborative approach between the housing and benefits team - Diane Foley**

Action	Outcome	Output	Timescales	Update
Seek to increase availability and sustainability of tenancies.	Increase in the number of landlords willing to rent to tenants. These services offer a joined-up and effective approach in their processes and for the customer.	To be agreed once Revenues and Benefits fundamental service review business case implementation is underway..		

**Opportunity 6
Education and Cultural Change - Bridget Tighe**

Action	Outcome	Output	Timescales	Update
Prevention of young people becoming homeless.	There has been an increase in the number of young people who leave home in an unplanned way or are evicted by parents or guardians. We will reduce this number through a combination of partnership working, improved education and awareness of housing options and more direct support to people who are vulnerably housed.	Deliver education on sustaining tenancies, and realistic expectations about housing options and Council's support to: 50 young people 150 young people 300 young people	March 2011 March 2012 March 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding bid completed to for Youth Enquiry Service to deliver training in schools • Colchester BC, Essex CC and Colchester Youth Enquiry Service worked in partnership to deliver training events at Ascott House Homeless Persons Unit for young people. Three visits have been completed involving 24 young people in total. • A leaflet providing information on young people leaving home has been written and will be distributed throughout the Borough. • Materials for secondary schools are being developed with a view to being rolled out amongst Secondary Schools in Colchester

**Opportunity 7
Effective enforcement of standards in the private sector to prevent homelessness - Jon Ruder**

Action	Outcome	Output	Timescales	Update
<p>Take a firm line on enforcement to ensure compliance with legal responsibilities. Make best use of all stock, while offering support and incentives to match supply with meeting need.</p>	<p>Improved quality and supply of housing stock in private ownership</p>	<p>Increased enforcement activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensed • 30 Enforcement Notices served • Prosecutions and works in default instituted for non-compliance <p>Efficient inspection regime:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200 inspections undertaken in response to enquiries for financial assistance • 50 inspections of Empty Homes • 400 inspections of homes considered for private letting under the homelessness schemes 	<p>March 2011</p>	<p>63 HMOs licensed</p> <p>83 Notices served</p> <p>3 prosecutions</p> <p>100% of commissioned inspections delivered</p>

**Opportunity 8
Short-term housing - Tina Hinson/Matt Sterling**

Action	Outcome	Output	Timescales	Update
Implement recommendations of temporary review of accommodation.	Homeless households housing and support needs are met effectively.	Secure funding from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)	October 2010	Over £2 million of HCA funding secured.
	Homeless household with complex needs are supported to manage a property and a tenancy in the long term.	Secure planning permission for changes.	December 2010	Planning application for refurbishment of Ascott house approved December 2010.
		Rebuild of Ascott House	April 2011	Operational and nominations agreements to be approved by Portfolio Holder February 2011.
		Tenancy management transferred to Family Mosaic	April 2012	Decant strategy has been completed.

**Opportunity 9
Colchester association of social landlords - Tina Hinson**

Action	Outcome	Output	Timescales	Update
Establish an Association of Social Housing Landlords.	Social landlords work co-operatively to deliver excellent housing management standards and share skills, services and resources to deliver efficiencies.	Association of Social Housing Landlords established. Terms of reference agreed. Goals agreed. Performance management arrangements agreed. Work plan agreed.	2011	Initial research underway. Research into best practice completed. Research into any existing structures in the region completed. Launch meeting planned March 2011.

**Opportunity 10
Strong CBC/CBH partnership - Tina Hinson**

Action	Outcome	Output	Timescales	Update
Deliver services in an aligned way.	<p>Improve partnership working with Colchester Borough Homes (CBH).</p> <p>Improved communications with CBH.</p> <p>Reduction in duplication.</p>	Assets, skills and resources are used so that whoever is best placed to deliver does so.	Ongoing	Review of Service Level Agreements underway
Transfer of Aids and Adaptations process to Colchester Borough Homes.	Tenants receive a speedy and effective service through reduced duplication and shortened processes.	Transfer of services to Colchester Borough Homes.	June 2010	Transfer to Colchester Borough Homes completed with continuation of current levels of service.
Transfer of Gateway to Homechoice allocation process to Colchester Borough Homes.	Tenants receive a speedy and effective service through reduced duplication and shortened processes.	Transfer of Allocations to Colchester Borough Homes.	June 2010	Completed in June 2010. Void times have reduced from average (all general needs properties) of 19.09 days in May 2010 to December 2010 average of 16.01 days.



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**Opportunity 11
Delivery of new affordable homes – strategic solutions to provide more housing - Tina Hinson**

Action	Outcome	Output	Timescales	Update
Develop measures to move under-occupied tenants into more suitable homes.	Colchester Borough Council housing stock is used more effectively. The supply of family -sized homes is increased.	Extent of under-occupation is measured. Customer insight information into incentives is gathered Good practice is researched Measured and introduced.	January 2011	Survey planned for Jan 2011. Gathered baseline data of extent of under-occupying in Council properties. Attended good practice launch of National Housing Federation research. Assessing implications of proposed legislative changes.
Contribute to the local Investment Plan (LIP) Process.	Increase supply of affordable housing.	All potential housing developments with an affordable housing element are included into the LIP Feasibility templates are completed for each project.	Complete	LIP contributed to-currently awaiting political approval. All sites with affordable housing potential included.
Undertake a review of Council-owned garage sites to assess their development potential.	Increase supply of affordable housing.	Sites with development potential identified Pilot undertaken and bids for funding submitted to HCA Preparatory work completed on further sites.	2011	Pilot underway with Colne Housing on Darwin Close site. Planning application to committee in January. HCA funding secured. Next ten sites identified and agreed with portfolio holder and being progressed.

**Opportunity 12
Returning more private sector empty homes to use to increase supply – Tina Hinson/Karen Newman**

Action	Outcome	Output	Timescales	Update
Return more private sector homes to use.	Increase supply.	<p>Research nature and scale of problem.</p> <p>Segment homes into 3 categories.</p> <p>Number of enquiries (to be reduced).</p> <p>Conduct pilot.</p> <p>Quantify benefits and costs compared to other methods of supply.</p> <p>Identify learning and good practice.</p>	2011	<p>Pilot being prepared in conjunction with Housing Enforcement and Inspection Team. The pilot will cover a six month period from April 2011.</p> <p>The learning from the report on the outcomes of the Braintree and Maldon empty homes project funded by the Regional Assembly will be included.</p> <p>Attended good practise seminars and worked with other local authorities to see what works.</p>

**Opportunity 13
Supporting landlords to deliver more quality private rented accommodation – Tina Hinson/Jon Ruder**

Action	Outcome	Output	Timescales	Update
Develop a landlord accreditation scheme.	Standards and quality in the private sector improved.	Accreditation established Private landlords are encouraged to join.	Scheme 2011	Work is being carried out to implement a landlord accreditation scheme at the sub-regional and county level and to leverage in some pump priming resource to enable this to happen. Scoping meeting has been attended. Tender specification to be agreed in February, supplier to be appointed by November 2011.
Research the support Colchester Borough Council could give to landlords.	Standards and quality in the private sector improved.	Research completed into what landlords want. Research into best practice completed. A costed paper and options presented to Portfolio Holder.	2012	Attended best practice seminars. Customer insight work being prepared. Agreed terms and timing of landlord's forum.

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<p>Re-launch of Student Accommodation Accreditation Scheme (SAAS) in partnership with University of Essex (UoE)</p>	<p>Improved supply of good quality multiple occupancy accommodation for students</p>	<p>SAAS re-launched incorporating revised amenity standards and a sliding scale of fees to reflect size of property and risk presented.</p> <p>Increased uptake in scheme.</p> <p>Increased number of accredited properties promoted by UoE.</p>	<p>2011</p>	<p>2011 fees agreed. Draft prepared incorporating easy to use, informative floor plans and Essex-wide amenity standards developed.</p>
<p>Set up not-for-profit lettings agency.</p>	<p>Standards and quality in the private sector improved.</p> <p>Long-term tenancies offered.</p>	<p>Research into models/best practice.</p> <p>Feasibility undertaken.</p>	<p>2012</p>	<p>Research underway. Held initial scoping meeting. Shadowing another organisation which is setting up a not-for profit agency. Attended social enterprise model best practise seminar. Business case being developed.</p>

**Opportunity 14
Professional Support Unit - Geoff Beales**

Action	Outcome	Output	Timescales	Update
More efficient and effective service.	To set up a Professional Support Unit	To provide effective support of processes.	June 2010	Completed
	Work with the Customer Service Centre to get the customer to the right person, at the right place, at the right time, in time.	Multi-skilled team.	April 2011	Tasks picked up by the PSU team
	Simplified processes which reduce duplication ease customer access and reduce unnecessary cost.	A single, accurate case record.	December 2012	Removal of out-of-date access databases – replaced by using current IT systems.



Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel Scoping Document

Item
11

22 March 2011

Committee	Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel	
Topic	A review of the work of the Portfolio Holder for Customers	Ref: SCR-10
Objective	The Panel is asked to consider the effectiveness of the work undertaken by the Portfolio Holder during the current municipal year.	
Reasons for undertaking review	One of the functions within the panel's Terms of Reference is to scrutinise the performance of Portfolio Holders.	
Approach	<p>The basis for scrutiny will be dialogue between the panel members and Portfolio Holder to determine the effectiveness of the portfolio holder in respect of;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Delegated responsibilities – these are attached to the scoping report and members have the opportunity to determine the contribution made by the portfolio holder in the effectiveness of this work. 2. The 6-monthly Performance Report, as reported to the Panel on 14 December 2010 giving progress on performance indicators and the Strategic Plan Action Plan is available on-line and in the Members Room. This is an opportunity for Members to understand the contribution made by the portfolio holder to this work. <p>This review is not about the work of those officers working in the service areas within the portfolio holder's Scheme of Delegation.</p>	
Membership	Full Panel	
Governance Officer	Robert Judd, Scrutiny Officer	
Lead Officer(s)	Pam Donnelly, Executive Director	

Scheme of Delegation to Cabinet Members

Delegation to the Portfolio Holder for Customers

CUSTOMERS

To procure and or encourage the procurement of the specified service in the provision, implementation, maintenance and management of:-

1. Customer Service across the Council as a whole
2. Performance of the Customer Service Centre
3. Co-ordination of Infopoint@Colchester
4. Way We Work Programme
5. Development of Customer Connected Initiative

GENERAL

1. Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations.

Portfolio Responsibilities

To monitor, fund and arrange for the continuing delivery of the Council's t-government agenda.

2. To examine and review the Council's customer service culture, processes and performance and to champion the customer point of view.
3. To review, monitor and improve consultation and communication between the Council and its customers.
4. To monitor customer compliments and complaints and referrals to the Local Government Ombudsman
5. To improve communications and access to Council services by urban and rural communities within the Borough.
6. To examine and review the development of all forms of communication and community engagement.

Major Project(s) in Portfolio:

Customer Service Centre, Customer Connect and Infopoint@Colchester
