

Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Grand Jury Room, Town Hall
12 February 2013 at 6.00pm

The Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel look at policies and strategies from a borough-wide perspective and ensure the actions of the Cabinet accord with the policies and budget of the Council. The Panel reviews corporate strategies within the Council's Strategic Plan, overviews Council partnerships, considers the Council's budgetary guidelines for the forthcoming year, and scrutinises 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 refer to Attending Meetings and "Have Your Say" 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 or switched to silent 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 ground floor.

Evacuation Procedures

Evacuate the building using the nearest available exit. Make your way to the assembly area in the car park in St Runwald Street behind the Town Hall. Do not re-enter the building until the Town Hall staff advise you that it is safe to do so.

Colchester Borough Council, Angel Court, High Street, Colchester
telephone (01206) 282222 or textphone 18001 followed by the full number you wish
to call

e-mail: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk

www.colchester.gov.uk

Terms of Reference (but not limited to)

To review corporate strategies and strategic partnerships to ensure the actions of the Cabinet and Portfolio Holders 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 or a Cabinet Member, the Colchester and Ipswich Joint Museums Committee and the North Essex Parking Partnership (decisions relating to off-street parking only) 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 and Performance Indicators, and the Cabinet's performance in relation to the Forward Plan.

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, without going through the Council's executive decision making process.

Members may not call for debate matters relating to a planning or licensing decision, an individual complaint or where a right of recourse to a review or right of appeal is already provided for in law. Examples of where a member can bring an action to the panel's attention are poor service performance or increased anti-social behaviour.

The panel may reject a request as not within the guidance or where they consider 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 and a report with recommendations will be compiled and brought to the Council or partners attention, with the Council 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 requesting the action.

COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL
STRATEGIC OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
12 February 2013 at 6:00pm

Members

Chairman : Councillor Kevin Bentley.
Deputy Chairman : Councillor Beverly Davies.
Councillors Kim Naish, Nigel Offen, Gerard Oxford,
Helen Chuah, Bill Frame, Pauline Hazell, Peter Higgins and
Terry Sutton.

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 interests they may have in the items on the agenda. Councillors should consult Meetings General Procedure Rule 7 for full guidance on the registration and declaration of interests. However Councillors may wish to note the following:-

- Where a Councillor has a disclosable pecuniary interest, other pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary interest in any business of the authority and he/she is present at a meeting of the authority at which the business is considered, the Councillor must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest, whether or not such interest is registered on his/her register of Interests or if he/she has made a pending notification.
- If a Councillor has a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at a meeting, he/she must not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter at the meeting. The Councillor must withdraw from the room where the meeting is being held unless he/she has received a dispensation from the Monitoring Officer.
- Where a Councillor has another pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at a meeting and where the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgment of the public interest, the Councillor must disclose the existence and nature of the interest and withdraw from the room where the meeting is being held unless he/she has received a dispensation from the Monitoring Officer.
- Failure to comply with the arrangements regarding disclosable pecuniary interests without reasonable excuse is a criminal offence, with a penalty of up to £5,000 and disqualification from office for up to 5 years.

5. Minutes

1 - 5

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 15 January 2013.

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 decisions taken under the Call in Procedure.

9. Decisions taken under special urgency provisions

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

10. Councillor Locality Budgets 6 - 33

See report from the Head of Corporate Management.

11. Sickness Absence 34 - 40

See report from the Head of Corporate Management.

12. Welfare Reform 41 - 44

See report from Mrs. Ann Hedges, Executive Director.

13. Universal Customer Contact FSR - Communication and Engagement Plan, and Risk Register 45 - 62

See report from Mrs. Pam Donnelly, Executive Director.

14. Work Programme 63 - 65

See report from the Head of Corporate Management.

15. 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

15 JANUARY 2013

Present :- Councillor Kevin Bentley (Chairman)
Councillors Helen Chuah, Beverly Davies, Bill Frame,
Pauline Hazell, Peter Higgins, Kim Naish, Nigel Offen,
Gerard Oxford and Terry Sutton

Also in Attendance :- Councillor Tina Bourne
Councillor Martin Hunt
Councillor Paul Smith

20. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on **30 October 2012** was confirmed as a correct record.

21. Half Yearly Performance Report Including progress on the Strategic Plan Action Plan

The following Councillors declared non-pecuniary interests in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5);

**Councillor Bentley in respect of being an Essex County Councillor
Councillor Frame in respect of being a Board Member of Colne Housing
Councillor Naish in respect of being a Director of the Anglian Trust**

Half Yearly Performance Report including progress on the Strategic Plan Action Plan

Councillors Paul Smith, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, Councillor Martin Hunt, Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services, Councillor Tina Bourne, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Ms. Lucie Breadman, Head of Life Opportunities attended the meeting for this item.

The Half Yearly Performance Report was to be presented to Cabinet on 23 January 2013, and provided a performance update for the period up to the end of September 2012, including an update of progress of the Strategic Plan Action Plan.

The Chairman invited questions from Members of the Panel.

In response to Councillor Chuah's enquiry about KSI H2 "The Number of Affordable Homes delivered", Councillor Bourne said the garage sites to be redeveloped for future affordable housing are not included in the 49 homes so far delivered in 2012-13. There was no certainty of these sites being developed in 2012-13, although they would be included in future monitoring once the developments are completed.

Councillor Bourne said the 49 homes delivered included 21 social rents, 5 intermediate rents and 23 (shared equity) Home buying Scheme properties. Councillor Bourne was hopeful that the indicator will achieve its target by year-end but the amber rating highlights some risks.

Councillor Bourne responded to Councillor Bentley by confirming the performance of the indicator KSI H5 “Average Number of Days to re-let Council Houses”, 16.81 days against a target of 19 days was exceptional, and bringing void properties back into use at a faster rate provided more rental income that in turn provided a greater Housing Revenue Account surplus.

Councillor Bentley requested that the target and performance descriptions should all accurately reflect the indicator and unit of measure, to provide clarity when communicating to Councillors and Members of the Public.

In response to Councillor Naish in respect of indicator KSI H4 “Rent Collected”, Councillor Bourne said the performance was again exceptional and she did not expect the performance to drop in 2012-13, though changes to welfare reform will provide new issues. Councillor Bourne said officers are addressing the impact of welfare reform and actions are being put in place to mitigate against the potential issues.

Councillor Smith responded to Councillor Oxford in respect of indicator KI R1 “% Council Tax Collected”, saying there had been a change to the method of monitoring this indicator, now standardised to a nominal month rather than a complete calendar month. Councillor Smith said whilst the current performance was an improvement on previous years it was anticipated that the target will remain challenging due to welfare reform. These potential issues are being addressed and it was important that those who could not pay are identified as soon as possible, and those not paying are pursued vigorously.

Councillor Smith confirmed to Councillor Bentley that up to 8,000 households will in some way or another be affected by the council tax changes which are part of the welfare reforms.

Ms. Breadman responded to Councillor Offen in respect of indicator KI R3 “Sickness rate”, reminding the panel that there had been much debate and discussion by the scrutiny panel last year on the target being set and if it was indeed too challenging. In respect of benchmarking against performance in both the public and private sector Ms. Breadman explained that this is difficult. In the past there was a set methodology for reporting and monitoring sickness for all Local Authorities, thus you knew comparisons were fair. This had changed, and its now harder to access comparisons and be sure that they are measured in the same way, including all long and short term absence. Whilst the current annual sickness rate of 8.15 days per FTE is higher than we want it to be, it is similar to the same time last year (8.49 days) and continues to be an improvement on historical performance which has been as high as 12-13 days in past years.

In relation to use of the Bradford Factor measurement tool and the suggestion by Cllr Offen that this is often not actioned effectively, Ms. Breadman explained that this was

taken into consideration with the review of the sickness policy. The new policy and procedure guidance has less discretion for managers and a much clearer stepped approach, ensuring managers are more proactive in identifying problems and managing the complete process. Following a number of comments from Panel members around sickness rates and monitoring, Ms. Breadman confirmed that the policy includes a return to work interview for all employees following sickness and performance is monitored at a number of different levels monthly. All staff involved in managing sickness have undergone management training and a recent training session on managing stress had been held. In response to specific questions about the Bradford Factor Ms Breadman confirmed that of the 90 cases currently being managed, 9% are not actively on step 1 or 2 of the process which is much fewer than in the past. There are cases of staff being dismissed due to absence, again confirming that the policy is followed through by managers.

Ms. Breadman confirmed that sickness absence was higher than we would want and indeed the challenging target set reflects the importance of continuous improvement in this area, whilst it had improved over the years every effort was being made to reduce the current levels further. Ms. Breadman confirmed that the Council does look to share information and benchmark with other similar organisations..

Councillor Offen whilst acknowledging the current policy and procedures said he remained uncomfortable with the current high level of sickness target and performance.

Responding to Councillor Bentley and Frame in relation to specific reasons for absence, Ms. Breadman acknowledged organisation change and pressure of work are contributory factors in stress related illness. Support is in place to minimise this and Fundamental Service Reviews (FSR) are individually supported by an HR Business Partner to provide guidance and help with the potential sickness issues. Engagement with staff takes place throughout the process but inevitably this level of change does increase workloads and anxiety for some which may result in stress related illness at all levels in the organisation.

Mrs. Pam Donnelly, Executive Director confirmed that the management of sickness absence was supported by a nurse-led Occupational Health Service.

The Panel agreed with Councillor Bentley's suggestion that a more detailed review of sickness procedures and levels was undertaken before the end of the year, given the persistently high sickness levels.

In response to Councillor Oxford in respect of indicator KSI W2 "Residual Household Waste per Household", Councillor Hunt said a DEFRA Grant was being used to provide research about the Food Waste Trial to determine how residents will recycle following the trial, useful information in shaping the future service. Councillor Hunt said officers in the Zone Teams are visiting residents from where large numbers of black sacks are collected on a regular basis, to provide help and advice in changing their waste recycling habits.

Mr. Matthew Young, Head of Street Services said the service was looking to take action to meet the target of 440kg for 2012-13. Mr. Young said during the years 2006-07 and

2011-12 the performance had improved from 635kg per household to 449kg per household and it was hoped this continuing trend will continue. Mr. Young said in 2006-07 45,000 tonnes of waste was collected from 71,000 households improving to a current situation where 81,000 households produce 36,000 – 37,000 tonnes of waste. It was the Council's intention to reduce the number of black sacks of waste sent to landfill and officers will be working during the next month to find ways to ensure the target is met by the end of the year.

Members acknowledged the problems associated with collecting recycled waste from blocks of flats and the problems faced by householders living in tiny houses, maisonettes and flats with limited space to store recycling waste in multiple containers. A common solution was needed and this issue was being considered at County level.

Councillor Peter Higgins said he had observed refuse collectors sorting cans and glass from single containers and believed supplying two containers to store tins and glass separately would save 100s of man hours and could be self financing.

Councillor Offen suggested that all Planning Committee Members should be briefed on the Council's Planning Guidance in respect of the provision of waste and recycling storage areas.

Councillor Bentley agreed to talk to Councillor Louis, Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transportation at Essex County Council to find out what progress is being made in respect of the Borough's Air Quality Management Areas and the introduction of Low Emission Zones.

Councillor Offen said he felt the details within the "Delivery of an efficient benefits service" within the Strategic Plan Action Plan should reflect the vast improvements in the performance of the service. Councillor Smith confirmed that benefit changes are now processed in 14 days, down from 22 days a year ago. Councillor Smith said that despite an increase in benefit claims due to the economic downturn, the success of on-line benefit claim processing had enabled performance to improve.

Councillor Offen also asked for the list of initiatives listed within Appendix 2 of the Action Plan to capture some of the major initiatives happening within the Garrison Area of Colchester.

Councillor Naish said he would like to see "Providing Sport and Leisure for all" include Angling for the disabled at the High Woods Country Park (HWCP) and Castle Park, something that is very much beneficial to health and wellbeing. Councillor Naish said disabled access and signage to these sites needed improving. Councillor Oxford said platforms to provide areas for the disabled anglers to fish is provided at the HWCP but there remained difficulty for these people getting to these specific areas.

Ms. Breadman understood members wishing to add more information about good things that were happening and activities that demonstrated that we are working to meet the Strategic Priorities, and apologised for not capturing everything in the half yearly update but explained that it would be impossible to balance a short and concise update (which had been called for) with a complete record of everything that had been

delivered, thus the aim was to update on “Key” activities or agreed specific outcomes through the period.

Given the level of detail within the performance report and the inevitable high number of questions asked, the Panel agreed to Councillor Bentley’s suggestion that to try to reduce the time spent reviewing performance at the Panel meeting, members would be invited to attend the Chairman’s briefing for future performance reviews to obtain clarity and iron out queries in advance of the meeting.

In response to Councillor Frame, Councillor Smith said in respect of “Improving opportunities for local business”, and the strategic aspiration to enable an increase in job creation, new businesses are being created. Councillor Smith also said that the Council’s new procurement rules meant the impact on the local economy was a consideration when determining the supplier.

Councillor Bentley acknowledged Councillor Oxford’s comments about the loss of the Network Colchester bus route(s) to High Woods and suggested this should be considered as part of an overall review of bus transportation in the Borough, and would be discussed in the following work programme item.

RESOLVED that the Panel:

- i) Considered and noted the Performance Report for the period up to the end of September 2012 that included a progress update on Strategic Plan Action Plan.
- ii) Requested that the target and performance descriptions should all accurately reflect the indicator and unit of measure, to provide clarity when communicating to Councillors and Members of the Public.
- iii) Agreed to a more detailed review of sickness procedures and levels at the meeting to be held on 12 February 2013.
- iv) Requested the Cabinet to consider for inclusion in the Strategic Plan Action Plan, angling for the disabled at the High Woods Country Park (HWCP) and Castle Park, an initiative that is beneficial to participant’s health and wellbeing.

22. Work Programme

Following discussions:

RESOLVED that the Panel;

- i) Commented on and noted the Work Programme 2012/13.
- ii) Agreed to review Bus Transportation in the Borough, at an extra March meeting (date to be confirmed), to discuss all aspects of bus transportation, reliability and the new Bus Station, with the Managing Directors from all the leading bus operators invited to attend the meeting.



Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Item
10

12 February 2013

Report of	Head of Corporate Management	Author	Amanda Chidgey ☎ 282227
Title	Councillor Locality Budgets		
Wards affected	All wards		

The Panel is invited to review the Councillor Locality Budget initiative in the light of the activity undertaken by Councillors during the year to date.

1. Action required

- 1.1 The panel is asked to consider and comment on the operation of the Councillor Locality Budget in the light of the information set out in the report.

2. Reason for scrutiny

- 2.1 At its meeting in June 2012, the Panel accepted an invitation to include a review of the Councillor Locality Budgets in the work programme.

3. Background information

- 3.1 The Councillor Locality Budgets were approved by Cabinet in March 2012 under the umbrella of a number of Jubilee Projects which were intended to support a diverse range of projects and opportunities for local groups and Councillors to receive funding that could make a difference to their local area, as well as potentially addressing council priorities and strategic objectives.
- 3.2 The Locality Budgets provided an allocation of £2,000 per councillor to be used on new initiatives or additional funding to be allocated by councillors individually or jointly, within and across wards subject to a maximum allocation of £12,000 per project.
- 3.3 The agreed guidelines specified the following restrictions which were not permitted for funding:
- Activities for which the Authority has no clear legal powers to fund a particular project;
 - To supplement gaps in funding where the responsibility for that funding clearly lies with another agency or public body;
 - Projects where there is an ongoing revenue commitment.
- 3.4 A copy of the agreed Locality Budget Guidelines are attached at Appendix 1, together with a schedule setting out the details of the applications which have so far been approved for payment at Appendix 2.

4. Locality Budget Guidelines

- 4.1 A number of areas of learning have emerged from within the information set out in the agreed guidelines for the Budgets which may warrant consideration by the Panel.
- 4.2 The option to pool resources between Councillors has proved to be very popular and has enabled the administrative and accounting procedures to be rationalised to a degree. However, this has proved less advantageous where the practice of combining budgets within wards has included the allocation relatively small amounts of funds to numerous recipients. This has tended to have a negative impact on the speed by which applications have been processed simply due to the volume of applications submitted.
- 4.3 Despite the provision of guidance on how funds may be allocated, there has been differences in the way this advice has been interpreted by councillors. Some councillors have felt uneasy about interpreting what constitutes appropriate funding, especially in respect of projects involving this Council and Parish Council. Whilst other Councillors have been particularly enthusiastic about working with Borough officers or Parish Councils in order to identify projects for funding. A statement on what actually constitutes 'funding which is the responsibility of another body' may have been helpful for some councillors at the outset of the process.
- 4.4 The guidelines stipulate that all requests for funds to be allocated must be submitted by the end of February 2013 and that no carry forwards will be permitted. When the initiative commenced in May 2012, arrangements were made for information to be published on the Council's website for the benefit of residents and community groups as well as the Councillors themselves. The website included copies of the guidance and the application form and these details were emailed to councillors on a number of occasions. In the event, the vast majority of the spending activity has taken place towards the end of the year which has led to certain administrative and accounting capacity issues.
- 4.5 In terms of resources, the guidelines also intended that Councillors would be able to utilise the knowledge and support of officers as well that from elsewhere. In reality this has, at times, proved to be resource intensive for some officer teams such as Parks and Recreation and Street Services. Councillors have needed to be encouraged to consider projects as early as possible as seasonal issues could mean that services may not have the capacity to undertake the work within timescales allowed or in the light of other priorities and workloads.
- 4.6 The potential to use the support of officers, especially at pre-application submission stage and in relation to applications potentially involving ongoing revenue commitments. Detailed discussions to find appropriate ways to facilitate projects to be supported has proved beneficial in finding generally suitable solutions, such as securing ongoing maintenance solutions from residents or Parish Councils and this has enabled any rejection of applications to be avoided.
- 4.7 The volume of email correspondence generated from the process had not been predicted prior to the commencement of the initiative. Lessons have been learnt in order to address this (such as requiring the submission of completed application forms rather than email instructions) but it remains to be seen whether the number of applications submitted in the final weeks of the 'window' for spending will be processed without significant capacity issues.
- 4.8 The introduction of measures to reduce the overly bureaucratic approach to the submission and processing of applications could be considered but it has been difficult to identify appropriate alternatives given the need for an accurate audit trail to be available in respect of the budget expenditure.

5. Locality Budget Expenditure

5.1 At the time of writing the report, with less than four weeks to go until the deadline for receipt of applications for funding, the schedule of projects supported so far by Councillors has identified some issues for consideration by the panel.

- Nearly £45,000 of the total Locality Budget funds remain unallocated;
- Eleven councillors have yet to submit any form of application;
- 124 separate transactions have been processed;
- 21 applications are to Parish / Town Councils;
- 10 applications are being funded via the Parks and Recreation Team;
- 17 applications are being funded via the Street Services Zone Teams.

6. Strategic Plan references

6.1 When Cabinet approved the Councillor Locality Budget initiative it had been envisaged that the allocation of funds may provide an opportunity to address some of the council's priorities and strategic objectives, for example, in respect of community cohesion and community safety.

7. Standard References

7.1 Having considered the consultation and publicity considerations and the financial, equality, diversity and human rights, community safety, health and safety and risk management implications, there are none, other than those already identified in the report, which are significant to the matters in this report.

Guide to Colchester Councillor Locality Budgets

This document provides a guide to how Locality Budgets can and can't be spent.

1. What Projects Can Be Funded?

Locality Budgets can be used:

- To initiate new projects

OR

- To provide additional funding to match against already committed resources. In the case of matching, this could either be matching internal or external resources.

Locality Budgets can be used for projects within a Councillor's ward, or for projects outside of the ward where it can be demonstrated that people from within the ward can participate in the project.

Examples

- Provision of a new community garden.
- Providing a contribution towards a local Community Centre (outside ward but potentially used by constituents).
- Support with a new community safety initiative.

Locality Budget Pooling

As some Borough Council wards have more than one Councillor elected to it, it is quite possible – and acceptable – that more than one Councillor might want to contribute to a specific project or group. In addition, some projects may cover several wards, or be for the benefit of people from many wards (as in the Community Centre example above). In this case it is possible for two or more Councillors to make contributions from their Locality Budgets to a single project.

However, a maximum of £12,000 can be allocated to any individual project or group within any one municipal year.

2. What Projects Can't Be Funded

Locality Budgets cannot be used:

- For activities for which the Authority has no clear legal powers to fund a particular project.
- To supplement gaps in funding where the responsibility for that funding clearly lies with another agency or public body.
- For projects where there is an ongoing revenue commitment these cannot be funded from Locality budgets, as there will be an expectation that this money will be provided every year.

3. Carry Forward

Where any part of a Councillor's annual Locality Budget has not been spent within the year for which it was allocated, a request for carry forward will be considered (including any committed but not yet paid amounts).

Any monies left in a Councillors budget at the end of the financial year will be lost to them unless the exception above applies. In addition, any carried-forward money (i.e. committed but not yet spent) not spent by the end of the next financial year will be lost to the individual Councillor.

For the avoidance of doubt, carry forward's cannot pass from one Councillor to another. In the event that money has been committed to a scheme (but not paid at the end of a municipal year) and the commitment is carried forward but thereafter the individual is not a Councillor after the next election, the expectation is that the commitment will be honoured.

4. Donations to Individuals

Payments directly to individuals should be avoided

5. Election Periods

Elections are scheduled to take place in Colchester every May for three years in each four. As a consequence there is invariably a pre-election period affecting some or all of Colchester's councillors. As a consequence, proposals to spend the locality money can only be made by Councillors (i.e. the completed form(s) must be received during the period from the Annual Council meeting (i.e. mid May) to the last working day of February in each municipal year.

6. Consultation

Good practice would be for Councillors to consult as widely as possible with appropriate groups and individuals. These could include:

- Residents' Associations
- Tenants' Associations
- County Councillors
- Other Ward Councillors
- Zone Teams
- Parish Councils
- Voluntary Groups

Obviously it will be easier to collaborate with fellow political group Councillors in most matters. But Councillors are advised to seek to co-operate with Councillors from other political groups wherever practicable. In addition Councillors will be obliged to provide a brief background of the project that is to be funded within the Locality Budget application form.

7. Procedure

Councillors should complete the Locality Budget application form (attached) and pass it to the Democratic Services Manager who will assess the application for compliance with the Locality Budgets criteria and record it before payments can be committed or made. Application forms have also been supplied to Councillors and can be downloaded from the Council's website.

Once a payment has been approved for compliance with the Locality Budgets criteria, the Democratic Services Manager will write to the intended recipient to advise that the "grant" has been approved, subject to confirmation by the recipient of the proposed use and their agreement that they will appropriately acknowledge the Council's role in terms of funding any project.

When this confirmation is received the Democratic Services Manager will forward the details to the relevant Finance Business Partner who will issue a cheque or transfer budget provision.

The cheques will be:

- Posted directly to the beneficiary by the Accountancy Team, or
- Carry out an electronic transfer to an approved bank account, or
- If the Councillor requests it, passed by the Democratic Services Manager to the Councillor for onward transmission.

8. Resources

Councillors will be able to draw upon the knowledge and support of officers to provide assistance whenever needed. This knowledge extends into the 3rd

sector and what other funding streams exist that could further benefit the project objectives.

9. Use of Colchester procurement section

The use of Colchester procurement methods is to be encouraged and promoted as:

- It may be possible to obtain equipment etc at advantageous prices and reduce VAT liability ;
- Expert advice and assistance will be available on the choice of supplier and type of product to best meet the needs of the beneficiary.

10. Repeat Applications

It will be important that organisations do not become dependant on this money as a source of funding and that Councillors do not get into a position where they can be accused of favouritism. It must be stated that organisations should not expect funding for the same project for more than one year, or within 2 years of a successful application. Organisations can put in bids to Councillors for several projects and these could be funded – subject to the maximum annual limit per organisation (or project).

11. Transparency

Full details of proposals, commitments and actual expenditure by each Councillor will be made available on the Council's web-site along with the amount of money still available to be spent / committed.

12. Contacts

For further information on the scheme please contact Amanda Chidgey, Democratic Services Manager on 01206 282227 or email amanda.chidgey@colchester.gov.uk

Colchester Locality Budget Application Form

This form is for completion by Councillors

Completed forms should be returned to Amanda Chidgey, the Democratic Services Manager.

Forms must be received during the period from the Annual Council meeting (i.e. mid May) to the last working day of February in any municipal year.

Councillor's Name	
Ward	
Date	
Name of group requiring funding	
Description of application <i>Please attach supporting evidence</i>	
Total cost of the project	£
Is there any matched funding available? <i>If yes, please state source</i>	
How much is required from your Locality Budget	£

Where appropriate, the Democratic Services Manager will pass a copy of this form to the Council's Procurement Control Manager who will source the goods or equipment at the best available price.

<p>Name and Address of the organisation to which payment is to be made</p> <p><i>PLEASE NOTE that payments will only be made to the organisation applying for the funding</i></p>	<p>Payee:.....</p> <p><u>Account details</u></p> <p>Account name.....</p> <p>Account number _ _ _ _ _</p> <p>Sort Code _ _ _ _ _</p> <p>Address:.....</p> <p>Contact Name:</p> <p>Telephone Number:.....</p> <p>e-mail address:</p>
---	---

Declaration of Interest

<p>Do you have a non pecuniary interest in this organisation? (If yes, please give a brief description of the nature of that interest).</p>	
<p>Do you have a disclosable pecuniary interest or other pecuniary interest in this organisation? (If yes, please give a brief description of the nature of that interest).</p>	
<p>Signature: Date:.....</p>	

Colchester Councillor Locality Budgets

Set out below are full details of proposals, commitments and actual expenditure by each Councillor along with the amount of money still available to be spent / committed.

Councillor	Details of Proposal(s)	Payment method	Committed (£)	Spent (£)	Available (£)
Arnold, Christopher	Funds to Great Horkesley Parish Council to furnish and equip the new village hall	BACS transfer to Great Horkesley Parish Council		915	1085
Barlow, Nick	Dog waste bins for Fordham Parish Council – awaiting confirmation from Cas Clements Interpretation boards for the Castle Walls – (proposal awaiting further details)			915	
Barton, Lyn	Seating on Abbey Fields project managed by Colchester Garrison	BACS transfer to Colchester Garrison (£2000 in total awaiting bank details from Garrison)	2000		0
Bentley, Kevin	Funding for football posts, net and making pitches for local youth community in Birch	BACS transfer to Birch Parish Council		1000	1,000
Blandon, Mary	Funds to Old Heath Task Group for various ward activities	BACS transfer to Old Heath Community Centre		1000	1,000

Blundell, Elizabeth	To provide and install two seats on Ley Field Play Area in MarksTey. Funds provided by means of a virement to Leisure Services who will arrange the works to be undertaken Installation costs to be included in Leisure Services costs Funds for St Andrews Church, Marks Tey to refurbish old church hall - a tea urn, tables and chairs, carpet and repainting of room for Mother and Toddler Group – details to be confirmed	Internal transfer to Parks and Recreation	909	1,091
Bourne, Tina	To hold a Greenstead Village Diamond Jubilee Event. The event is in a festival style, ie local bands, car boot sale, fun fair, held on Greenstead open space of Magnolia Field. The residents' organisation, Voices for Greenstead, liaised with the appropriate authorities regarding marshals, health & safety, insurance, programmes, tie in to other local orgs like the community cafe and church. Voices for Greenstead is an organisation for all residents of Greenstead whether they are private owners or socially housed. Contribution towards cost of sweets for a Halloween event for children at Ghost Woods on the 1 st November starting at 4pm. Organised by Community Street Wardens assisted by students from the university drama group. A payment to St Andrews Infant and Nursery	BACS transfer (£750 total) Internal transfer to Street Services (£25 total) BACS transfer	909 250 8.33	166.67

	School to support a family learning initiative through gardening. This will pay for a polytunnel for the project. The cost of a recycled plastic wood effect bench with a concrete plinth and installation on Magnolia Field. Provision of five salt bins at a unit cost of £73.50 each	to the school (£500 total) Internal transfer to Parks and Recreation (£500 in total) Internal transfer to Street Services (£367.50 in total) BACS transfer to the school (£595 total) BACS transfer to the school (£500 total) Internal transfer to street services (£400 in total)	(awaiting bank details)	166.67 122.50	
	Payment towards provision of pantomime 31 January 2013 at St Andrews Junior School Equipment for Greenstead Community Centre Graffiti Project in St Andrew's delivered by junior street wardens to inform young people about graffiti			198.33 500.00 133.33	
				1379.16	454.17
Cable, Mark	Dedham Parish Council – funds for tree and commemorative jubilee plaque – awaiting bank details from parish council Rustic bin for Dedham Parish Council	Purchase order placed direct with Earth Anchors		485.69 417.95	1096.36

	Funds to Langham Parish Council for a projector and notice board – details awaited				903.64	
Chapman, Nigel	Funds to Great Horkesley Parish Council to furnish and equip the new village hall	BACS transfer to Great Horkesley Parish Council			915	1085
	Dog waste bins for Fordham Parish Council – awaiting confirmation from Cas Clements				915	
Chillingworth, Peter	Funds to Great Tey Parish Council to refurbish bus shelter, replace allotment gatepost and repair playground seat Funds to Aldham Parish Council for notice board at Fordstreet	BACS transfer to Great Tey Parish Council BACS transfer to parish Council			355.00	0
	Funds to Chappel Parish Council for best allotment competition trophy and shields	BACS transfer to parish Council			576.92	
	Funds to Mount Bures Parish Council for village signs	BACS transfer to parish Council			280.40	
	Funds for notice board for Wakes Colne Parish Council	BACS transfer to parish council BACS transfer to parish council			375.00	
Chuah, Helen	Landscaping, tree work and installation of bench at Woodside Close Colchester project managed by Parks and Recreation (Bob Penny)	Internal transfer to Parks and Recreation			2000	0
Cook, Barrie					2000	2,000
Cope, Nick	Replacement trees in Christchurch ward To be supplied by and sites agreed with Leisure Services. Funding by means of a virement to Leisure				2,000	0

	Services							
Cory, Mark								2,000
Davies, Beverly								2,000
Elliott, John	Funding contribution towards a building for a Tiptree Pre School Playgroup on Mildene Primary School site (£5000 in total between three councillors)	BACS transfer to Playgroup				1000		1,000
Ellis, Andrew								2,000
Fairley-Crowe, Mrs Margaret	Funding contribution towards a building for a Tiptree Pre School Playgroup on Mildene Primary School site (£5000 in total between three councillors)	BACS transfer to Playgroup				2000		0
Feltham, Annie	New Town Clean up day – (proposal awaiting further details)							2,000
Ford, Stephen	Provision of funding towards Wivenhoe in Bloom	BACS transfer to Wivenhoe in Bloom (£250 in total)				125		1361
	Funding to purchase items to enhance and expand several of Transition Town Wivenhoe 's main project activities.	BACS transfer to Transition Town Wivenhoe (£498 in total)				249		
	Funding for a telephone and wireless hub for internet use in the Scout & Guide Hall plus purchase of screen and ceiling mounted projection equipment	BACS transfer to Wivenhoe Scout and Guide Association (£530 in total)				265		
Frame, Bill	Interpretation boards for the Castle Walls at	BACS transfer						0
						639		
						1500		0

	Balkerne, Duncan's and East Gates						
	Interpretation board for Jumbo			to Friends of Colchester Roman Walls BACS transfer to Balkerne Tower Trust		500 2000	1,875
Gamble, Ray	The installation of four bollards in an area of open space in St Monance Way, Colchester.			Internal transfer to Parks and Recreation		125 125	
Goss, Martin	Funding of the reinstatement of the path from Boxted Road to the Community Stadium Project managed by Street Services (Simon High)			Internal transfer to Street Services		1994.66 1994.66	5.34
Granger, Glenn	Funding to Mersea Island Club 74 for wheelchairs to help transport members of West Mersea Island Club			BACS transfer to Mersea Island Club 74 (£339.98 in total)		113.33	
	Funding to West Mersea Town Council for 6 dog waste bins and picnic benches in West Mersea parks			BACS transfer to Town Council (£3000 in total)		1000	
	Funding to Mersea Island Community Association for roof repair and carpet bowls mat at MICA Centre			BACS transfer to MICA (£1879.98 in total)		626.66	
	Funding for 'The Way' group for various items including internet dongle, day trips for Drop In visitors, donation to Lions for use of mini bus/petrol/entertainment, volunteers training and advertising			BACS transfer to The Way (£780 in total)		260	
						2000	0

Greenhill, Scott	Funding of the reinstatement of the path from Boxted Road to the Community Stadium Project managed by Street Services (Simon High)	Internal transfer to Street Services	1994.66	5.34
Harrington, Marcus	Part funding of a football net project in West Bergholt Total cost £3095 Matched funding from West Bergholt Parish Council of £1,595 and Essex Community Fund Contribution towards three information boards at entrances to Hillhouse Wood Cycle stands at West Bergholt Parish Council Village Hall	BACS transfer to parish council BACS transfer to Friends of Hillhouse Wood BACS transfer to Parish Council	1000 500 500 2000	0
Harris, Dave	(Jointly with Councillor Naish): 3 x salt bins to be maintained by Monkwick Residents Association Provision of three dog waste bins – Monkwick Ave, William Harris Way and Berechurch Road Monkwick Christmas Event Crocus Bulbs for Monkwick	Internal transfer to Street Services (£220.50 total) Internal transfer to Street Services Peter Ferguson (£861 in total) BACS transfer to ECC (£50 in total) BACS transfer to Monkwick	110.25 430.50 25.00 40.00	

	Monkwick Community Building Fun Day Spring 2013	Residents Association (£80 in total) BACS transfer to Monkwick Residents Association (£500 in total) BACS transfer to CCVS Transport Scheme (£1935 in total)		250.00	
	CCVS Transport Scheme - Bus service for patients to attend the new location of Mersea Rd Surgery			967.50	
				1823.25	176.75
Havis, Julia	Funding towards Old Heath Friendship Group pantomime outing to the Mercury Theatre Contribution to Old Heath Primary School gardening project for Colchester in Bloom Contribution to St Barnabas Church gardening project for Colchester in Bloom Contribution to Colchester in Bloom for project along King Edward Quay	BACS transfer to Mercury Theatre BACS transfer to Old Heath CP School BACS transfer to St Barnabas Church BACS transfer to Colchester in Bloom		492.50 500.00 200.00 250	
				1442.50	557.50
Hayes, Josephine	Interpretation boards for the Castle Walls – (proposal awaiting further details)				2,000
Hazell, Pauline					2,000

Higgins, Prof. Peter	A payment of £250 to cover the cost of liability insurance for the Moors Movement, a local group of volunteers who keep the Moors area clean and generally assist CBC in stewardship of this open area New Town Clean up day – (proposal awaiting further details)			250	1,750
Higgins, Theresa	A contribution towards the cost of a special seating project for Stepping Stones Play and Learn Group, Wilson Marriage Centre Barrack Street Colchester New Town Clean up day – (proposal awaiting further details)			500 500	1,500
Hogg, Mike	Landscaping work and fencing Bridgefield Close Colchester – project managed by Parks and Recreation (Bob Penny)	Internal transfer to Parks and Recreation		2000 2000	0
Hunt, Martin	Replacement trees in Christchurch ward To be supplied by and sites agreed with Leisure Services. Funding by means of a virement to Leisure Services			2,000 2000	0
Jarvis Brian	Funds for a sculpture on Lexden Park			1900 1900	100
Jowers, John	Funding to Mersea Island Club 74 for wheelchairs to help transport members of West Mersea Island Club Funding to West Mersea Town Council for 6 dog waste bins and picnic benches in West Mersea	BACS transfer to Mersea Island Club 74 (£339.98 in total) BACS transfer to Town Council		113.33 1000	

	<p>parks</p> <p>Funding to Mersea Island Community Association for roof repair and carpet bowls mat at MICA Centre</p> <p>Funding for 'The Way' group for various items including internet dongle, day trips for Drop In visitors, donation to Lions for use of mini bus/petrol/entertainment, volunteers training and advertising</p>	<p>(£3000 in total) BACS transfer to MICA (£1879.98 in total) BACS transfer to The Way (£780 in total)</p>	<p>626.66</p> <p>260</p> <p>2000</p>	<p>0</p>
Kimberley, Mrs Margaret	<p>Funding to Mersea Island Club 74 for wheelchairs to help transport members of West Mersea Island Club</p> <p>Funding to West Mersea Town Council for 6 dog waste bins and picnic benches in West Mersea parks</p> <p>Funding to Mersea Island Community Association for roof repair and carpet bowls mat at MICA Centre</p> <p>Funding for 'The Way' group for various items including internet dongle, day trips for Drop In visitors, donation to Lions for use of mini bus/petrol/entertainment, volunteers training and advertising</p>	<p>BACS transfer to Mersea Island Club 74 (£339.98 in total) BACS transfer to Town Council (£3000 in total) BACS transfer to MICA (£1879.98 in total) BACS transfer to The Way (£780 in total)</p>	<p>113.33</p> <p>1000</p> <p>626.66</p> <p>260</p> <p>2000</p>	<p>0</p> <p>100</p> <p>1900</p>
Lewis, Mrs Sonia	<p>Funds for a sculpture on Lexden Park – details to be confirmed</p>			

Liddy, Cyril	Provision of funding towards Wivenhoe in Bloom Funding to purchase items to enhance and expand several of Transition Town Wivenhoe 's main project activities. Funding for a telephone and wireless hub for internet use in the Scout & Guide Hall plus purchase of screen and ceiling mounted projection equipment	BACS transfer to Wivenhoe in Bloom (£250 in total) BACS transfer to Transition Town Wivenhoe (£498 in total) BACS transfer to Wivenhoe Scout and Guide Association (£530 in total)	125 249 265 639	1361
Lilley, Michael	Rowhedge Film Society is a non profit making community society. To ensure the continuation and development of this community service the society requires a projection screen, sound system, DVD player and projector. This request for funding is in respect of the sound system for use of screening films to members. Sound PA system for St Lawrence Church	BACS transfer	845.00 155.95 1000.95	999.05
Lissimore, Sue	Provision of recycled resin bench seat at Baden Powell Park, circular resin seat at the shops in the Commons and a bench seat for Endsleigh Meadow project to be managed by Parks and Recreation (Bob Penny)	Internal transfer to Parks and Recreation	520.00 970.00 510.00 2000	0

Maclean, Jackie	Playground Project Queensbury Avenue, including facilities for children with disabilities	BACS transfer to Copford Parish Council	2000	0
Manning, Jon			2000	2,000
Martin, Richard	Funding contribution towards a building for a Tiptree Pre School Playgroup on Mildene Primary School site (£5000 in total between three councillors)	BACS transfer to Playgroup	2000	0
Mudie, Colin			2000	2,000
Naish, Kim	(Jointly with Councillor Naish): 3 x salt bins to be maintained by Monkwick Residents Association	Internal transfer to Street Services (£220.50 total)	110.25	
	Provision of three dog waste bins – Monkwick Ave, William Harris Way and Berechurch Road	Internal transfer to Street Services Peter Ferguson (£861 in total)	430.50	
	Monkwick Christmas Event	BACS transfer to ECC (£50 in total)	25.00	
	Crocus Bulbs for Monkwick	BACS transfer to Monkwick Residents Association (£80 in total)	40.00	
	Monkwick Community Building Fun Day Spring 2013	BACS transfer to Monkwick	250.00	

		CCVS Transport Scheme - Bus service for patients to attend the new location of Mersea Rd Surgery	Residents Association (£500 in total) BACS transfer to CCVS Transport Scheme (£1935 in total)		967.50	176.75
Offen, Nigel		Landscaping at Rainsborowe Road and rose borders in Walnut Tree Way project managed by parks and Recreation.	Internal transfer to parks and recreation (awaiting confirmation from Bob Penny / Neil Long)		2000	0
Oxford, Beverley		They are a not for profit group who own and run the Highwoods Community Centre and have lease for a Community Room in the Bluebell Resource Centre. The funding is towards the cost of three community events for the under 12s taking place on 31 July, 14 and 21 August 2012.. They would have an Olympics theme, be run by Footprints Theatre Company with a number of volunteers and be held in three areas – Pencil Park, Chinook and Pampas Close. Funding part of a free community event to take place on 23 September 2012 organised by the			2000	245.00
					313.33	
					1,441.67	

	volunteer rangers.							
Oxford, Gerard	As above							1755.00 313.33 1,441.67 1755.00
Oxford, Philip	As above							313.33 1,441.67 1755.00
Quince, Will	Provision of funds for rose bushes to replace bed installed to prevent anti social behaviour in Prettygate				BACS transfer to Cants of Colchester			255.46 255.46
Scott-Boutell, Lesley								1744.54 2,000
Smith, Paul	Funding for the provision of two Prunus (cherry trees) to act as an obstruction / deterrent for football on the open space in the direction of 5 St Neots Close Colchester				Internal transfer to Parks and Recreation			150 150
Sutton, Terry	Part funding to renew the basketball pad on Moss Field playing field at Peldon funding to be made to Winstred Hundred Parish Council				BACS transfer to Parish Council			500 0
	Funds towards the cost of replacement floor covering to entrance hall, kitchen and committee room of East Mersea Village Hall				BACS transfer to East Mersea Parish Council			500
	Abberton and Langenhoe Parish Council - a new notice board to be situated near Abberton & Langenhoe Village Hall, near Langenhoe Green				BACS transfer to Parish Council			500
	Replacement safety notices on recreation ground –Fingringhoe (payment made of £189.60)				BACS transfer to Fingringhoe			158

	Parish Notice Board Fingringhoe Parish Council (payment made of £310.40)	Parish Council BACS transfer to Fingringhoe Parish Council		342	
Sykes, Colin	Funding towards Stanway School Garden Project, involving students in years 7 to 11 Funding towards outside shed to store play equipment for Colchester and Tendring Women's Refuge Funding towards a log cabin for learning and development space at Stanway Primary School Funding towards reading journal initiative for each pupil at Stanway Fiveways County Primary School	Parish Council BACS transfer to Stanway School BACS transfer to Women's Refuge (£500 in total) BACS transfer to Stanway Primary School (£1000 in total) BACS transfer to Stanway Primary School (£1000 in total)		2000	250
Sykes, Laura	Funding towards Stanway School Garden Project, involving students in years 7 to 11 Funding towards outside shed to store play equipment for Colchester and Tendring Women's Refuge Funding towards a log cabin for learning and development space at Stanway Primary School Funding towards reading journal initiative for each pupil at Stanway Fiveways County Primary School	BACS transfer to Stanway School BACS transfer to Women's Refuge (£500 in total) BACS transfer to Stanway Primary School		1750	250
				500	250
				250	
				500	

			(£1000 in total) BACS transfer to Stanway Primary School (£1000 in total)		500	
Turrell, Anne	Funding of the reinstatement of the path from Boxted Road to the Community Stadium Project managed by Street Services (Simon High)		Internal transfer to Street Services		1750	5.34
Willetts, Dennis	Cycle stands at Eight Ash Green Parish Council Eight Ash Green Village Well Notice Board Contribution towards Holy Trinity CE Primary School Jubilee Woodland Copse and Wildlife Area Project		BACS transfer to Parish Council BACS transfer to Parish Council BACS transfer to School		500 174 1326	0
Young, Julie	To hold a Greenstead Village Diamond Jubilee Event. The event is in a festival style, ie local bands, car boot sale, fun fair, held on Greenstead open space of Magnolia Field. The residents' organisation, Voices for Greenstead, liaised with the appropriate authorities regarding marshals, health & safety, insurance, programmes, tie in to other local orgs like the community cafe and church. Voices for Greenstead is an organisation for all residents of Greenstead whether they are private		BACS transfer (£750 total)		250	

	<p>owners or socially housed. Contribution towards cost of sweets for a Halloween event for children at Ghost Woods on the 1st November starting at 4pm. Organised by Community Street Wardens assisted by students from the university drama group. A payment to St Andrews Infant and Nursery School to support a family learning initiative through gardening. This will pay for a polytunnel for the project. The cost of a recycled plastic wood effect bench with a concrete plinth and installation on Magnolia Field. Provision of five salt bins at a unit cost of £73.50 each Payment towards provision of pantomime 31 January 2013 at St Andrews Junior School Blinds for Forest Road Meeting Room Tables for Forest Road Meeting Room Graffiti Project in St Andrew's delivered by junior street wardens to inform young people about</p>	<p>Internal transfer to Street Services (£25 total) BACS transfer to the school (£500 total) Internal transfer to Parks and Recreation (£500 in total) Internal transfer to Street Services (£367.50 in total) BACS transfer to the school (£595 in total) BACS transfer to Colne Housing BACS transfer to Colne Housing Internal transfer to street</p>	<p>166.67 (awaiting bank details)</p>	<p>8.33 166.67 122.50 198.33 444 432 133.33</p>	
--	---	---	--	---	--

Young, Tim	<p>graffiti</p> <p>To hold a Greenstead Village Diamond Jubilee Event. The event is in a festival style, ie local bands, car boot sale, fun fair, held on Greenstead open space of Magnolia Field. The residents' organisation, Voices for Greenstead, liaised with the appropriate authorities regarding marshals, health & safety, insurance, programmes, tie in to other local orgs like the community cafe and church. Voices for Greenstead is an organisation for all residents of Greenstead whether they are private owners or socially housed. Contribution towards cost of sweets for a Halloween event for children at Ghost Woods on the 1st November starting at 4pm. Organised by Community Street Wardens assisted by students from the university drama group. A payment to St Andrews Infant and Nursery School to support a family learning initiative through gardening. This will pay for a polytunnel for the project. The cost of a recycled plastic wood effect bench with a concrete plinth and installation on Magnolia Field. Provision of five salt bins at a unit cost of £73.50 each</p>	<p>services (£400 in total)</p> <p>BACS transfer (£750 total)</p> <p>Internal transfer to Street Services (£25 total)</p> <p>BACS transfer to the school (£500 in total)</p> <p>Internal transfer to Parks and Recreation (£500 in total)</p> <p>Internal transfer</p>	<p>1755.16</p> <p>250</p> <p>8.33</p> <p>166.67 (awaiting bank details)</p> <p>166.67</p> <p>122.50</p>	78.17
------------	--	--	---	-------

	<p>Payment towards provision of pantomime 31 January 2013 at St Andrews Junior School</p> <p>Colchester Academy funding for actors workshop and cheerleading equipment</p> <p>Graffiti Project in St Andrew's delivered by junior street wardens to inform young people about graffiti</p> <p>Funding towards "Greenstead is Glorious" an alternative version of the 'in bloom' idea -to plant troughs and pots to give colour to public areas. Local Groups, assisted by Street Wardens, will be involved in planting including, Voices for Greenstead, The Evergreens, Junior Wardens and Colchester Borough Homes Sheltered Tenants</p>	<p>to Street Services (£367.50 in total)</p> <p>BACS transfer to the school (£595 in total)</p> <p>BACS transfer to the school (£500 in total)</p> <p>Internal transfer to street services (£400)</p> <p>Internal transfer to Street Services (Sam Lancaster £350 in total)</p>	<p>198.33</p> <p>500</p> <p>133.33</p> <p>350</p>			<p>104.17</p> <p>44796.48</p>
Total				2500	1729.16	72703.51



Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Item
11

12 February 2013

Report of	Senior Manager of Corporate Management	Author	Jessica Douglas ☎ 282239
Title	Sickness Absence in the Council		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

The Panel is invited to review sickness absence in the Council, including how sickness absence is measured and managed corporately and within services.

1. Action required

- 1.1 The Panel is asked to consider and comment on an overview of sickness absence in the Council, including how sickness absence is measured and managed corporately and within services.

2. Reason for scrutiny

- 2.1 At the last Panel meeting on 15 January 2013, it was agreed that a more detailed review of sickness procedures and levels was undertaken.

3. Background information

- 3.1 This report also contains a number of sources of data including historical sickness absence and benchmarking data to provide the Panel with some context. The report also seeks to provide the Panel with an explanation of how the Council manages sickness absence to meet its aims of reducing absence rates and achieving the performance target.

4. Measurement, methodology and management

- 4.1. Employee sickness absence is reported by managers to the HR Team and recorded on the HR and Payroll system. A monthly management report is produced from this system for the Senior Management Team (SMT), providing a breakdown of year-to-date working days lost per employee by team and service.
- 4.2 Sickness absence is calculated by the method used in the former national performance indicator BVPI 12, ie total sickness in working days, divided by the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff figure, divided by the number of months and multiplied by 12 which gives the projected year figure for 'sick days per FTE'.
- 4.3 In addition to the monthly management report, a quarterly People performance report which incorporates sickness absence, is considered by SMT at the quarterly WWWPeople meeting. Heads of Service and General Management Teams also discuss and monitor sickness at the monthly management meetings and the HR Partner will offer support and guidance on how to manage individuals with high sickness absence rates.

- 4.4 The Short Term Sickness policy was reviewed and revised in 2011 with the aim of aligning the Council's short term sickness management process with the Disciplinary Policy. Using the Bradford Factor trigger, the policy introduced a more formal procedure of escalating warnings ie oral warning, first written warning, final warning, and dismissal.

The aim of the new policy is to ensure that sickness was managed more consistently across the Council, by removing some management discretion and to ensure sickness absence is addressed quickly before it becomes a recurrent pattern. Staff are automatically referred to Occupational Health at first written warning stage. Additional training for managers was rolled out across the Council.

- 4.5 All managers have a SMART objective to manage sickness effectively, and HR Business Partners have an objective to train and support managers to manage sickness effectively. Achievement against these objectives is monitored through the annual appraisal system.

5. Absence data

- 5.1 Table 1 provides a breakdown of average sickness days per employee for the Council annually since 2005/06. The Panel will note that the trend was downwards from 2005/06 until 2009/10 when there was a small increase, and then further reductions in 2010/11 and 2011/12.

Table 1: Average working days sickness per employee

Year	Number of sickness days per employee	Average FTE
2005/06	11.34	*843.1
2006/07	11.23	*858.8
2007/08	10.27	*909.5
2008/09	8.28	907.1
2009/10	8.75	925.3
2010/11	8.37	896.7
2011/12	8.04	852.7
2012/13 projection	8.51 (as at December 2012)	829.6

* As at 31 March

- 5.2 To provide some context for the Panel, the number of staff who had one or more periods of sickness in 2011/12 was 615 staff, compared to a head count of 959. The number of occasions of sickness was 1,224.

Table 2 provides a breakdown of the top 5 reasons for sickness in 2011/12 based on the total number of working days lost.

Reason	Total days lost	Percentage of total sickness cases
Mental Health	1,589.8	23%
Musculo Skeletal	1,225.8	17.7%
Viral Infections	795.0	11.5%
Stomach Liver Kidney	661.8	9.6%
Operations / Treatment	640.6	9.3%

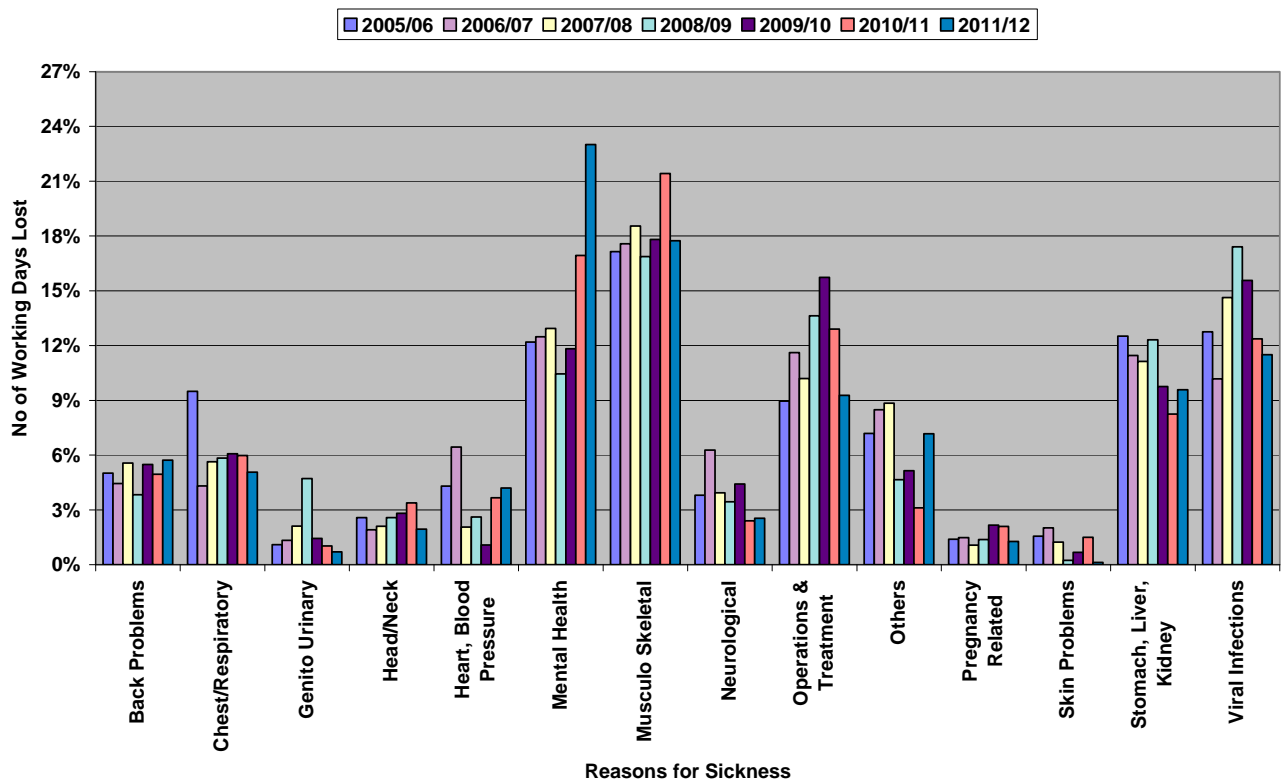
Mental health overtook musculo skeletal absence as the largest percentage of total sickness cases for the first time in 2011/12.

The mental health category encompasses anxiety; bereavement; depression; shock and stress. In 2011/12 depression and stress were the two main reasons cited for mental health absence (12% and 6% of total sickness absence for the year).

5.3 The next chart on this page provides a breakdown of the reasons for absence from 2005/6 to 2011/12, and illustrates trends against the sickness categories. This chart illustrates that incidences of absence due to musculo skeletal issues have remained consistently high, and that mental health issues have increased. These types of absence also tended to lead to a lengthier period of absence, as the nature of the conditions means that they cannot be quickly treated and therefore can become longer term.

5.4 It is very hard to identify whether stress and depression is work-related or not. Despite national campaigns to raise awareness of mental health issues, staff are reluctant to report work-related stress and depression for fear that it might be assumed that they cannot cope in a changing and challenging environment. Broadly the rise in mental health absence has coincided with the reduction in local government finances and the hard decisions we have had to make around capacity and services, a programme of Fundamental Service Reviews (FSR), and redundancies. A number of initiatives to address the increase in mental health issues are detailed in section 7 of this report.

Sickness data analysis by Reasons – annual summary for 2005/16 to 2011/12



5.5 The following table provides a comparison of short/long term sickness as at December 2011 and 2012 against days lost and percentage of days lost. The percentage of long term absence against shorter term absence has increased, although the incidences of both short term and long term sickness has decreased. This decrease has not resulted in a decrease of working days lost per staff, as headcount has reduced over the year.

	Short Term sickness	Long Term sickness
December 2011	2,359.5 days (41.3%)	3,347.7 days (58.7%)
December 2012	2,083.3 days (38.9%)	3,266.7 days (61.1%)

6. Benchmarking Data

- 6.1 Benchmarking data, comparing the Council's absence data with other sources of data is provided for additional context.
- 6.2 The Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) Absence Management Survey 2012 reports the average level of public sector absence to be 7.9 days. This is 2 days more than the private sector. Colchester is broadly in line with the public sector, although it is recognised that we need to reduce sickness absence further.
- 6.3 The Municipal Journal (MJ) for local authorities published its national research in the January 2013 edition of the Municipal Year Book. This revealed that nationally 8.27 days were missed through sickness by each local government employee in 2011/12. That figure is higher than Colchester's days lost per FTE for 2011/12 at 8.04 days.
- 6.4 In the private sector, 4.16 days per person were lost over the same 2011/12 period. The MJ report states that figures are not easily comparable between the public and private sector.
- 6.5 An Office of National Statistics (ONS) survey in 2011 reveals that the larger the organisation, the more days will be lost to sickness. For example:

1. Organisations with 500 or more employees had the highest percentage of working hours lost in 2011/12 at 2.3% (ie 2.3 working hours lost per hundred hours).

2. Organisations with up to 499 employees had a lower percentage of working hours lost in 2011/12 at 2.0%.

3. Sickness absence in small organisations is less prevalent. This could be for a number of reasons, including fewer resources to cover absent colleagues, less access to paid sickness, or different recording methodology used in smaller organisations.

Almost 300 of the UK's 432 local authorities fall into this bracket. Colchester has approximately 960 employees, and is therefore in the highest bracket for absence compared to other local authorities with fewer than 500 employees.

- 6.6 In addition, in the ONS survey, average sickness is highest among those who work in care and leisure; customer services; and plant and process roles - services which local authorities and Colchester deliver. The sickness data for Colchester supports the ONS survey findings. The current year to December sickness days per FTE for customer services is 11.33 days; Recycling and Fleet is 12 days, and Leisure World is 11.11 days.
- 6.7 Generally staff employed in front-facing roles, out in all weathers and fulfilling physically demanding roles tend to have higher rates of sickness compared to office-based staff, who also have the opportunity to work at home if slightly under the weather.

- 6.8 The table below provides a breakdown by service of days lost per FTE for 2011/12. This table supports the view that most office-based services have lower levels of sickness than services in the front line.

Working days lost to sickness in 2011/12 - by Council service

Service	Working Days Lost	Long Term Sick Days Lost	Short Term Sick Days Lost	Average FTE	Projected This Year
Corporate Management	209.02	40.22	168.80	71.66	2.92
Customer Services	404.54	190.80	213.75	39.41	10.26
Environmental and Protective Services	767.18	328.84	438.34	161.40	4.75
Executive Management	26.07	18.57	7.50	8.86	2.94
Life Opportunities	1,071.24	434.24	637.00	174.21	6.15
Resource Management	420.99	211.44	209.56	80.38	5.24
Strategic Policy and Regeneration	275.00	189.00	86.00	42.77	6.43
Street Services	3,683.54	2511.57	1171.96	273.97	13.44
Totals	6,857.58	3,924.68	2,932.91	852.67	8.04 days

- 6.7 A high area of sickness is Parking Services. The Panel will be aware that staff transferred from Braintree, Uttlesford, Harlow, Tendring and Epping into the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP). In a sense, the other authorities' gain was the Council's loss. With Colchester as the lead authority, this meant that we inherited staff whose absence had not been previously managed. However, a HR Business Partner has been focusing on working with the NEPP to reduce sickness, and this has had a significant impact. In December 2012, 9.52 days were lost and this is a significant reduction when compared to December 2011's 21.65 days.

- 6.8 The next table provides some benchmarking data of local authorities in Essex. This data was gathered through telephone conversations with HR contacts and data was not forthcoming from all authorities. This data suggests that sickness absence is likely to rise in 2012/13 across the Essex authorities compared to 2011/12. The trend appears to be upwards.

Council	2011/12	2012/13 projection
Colchester	8.04 days	8.51 days
Rochford	8.016 days	9.2 days
Tendring	7.76 days	8.67 days
Braintree	6.72 days	Expect to be over 8 day target this year.
Chelmsford	6.61 days	6.70 days

7. Policy and Initiative Changes

7.1 A number of policy and initiatives have recently been introduced or are being planned in order to address and reduce sickness levels in the Council. These are:

1. Stress policy introduced September 2007 and updated in 2012 which emphasises the importance of good management practice and where employees can get help. We are also hoping to further improve this policy by using some good practice from Ipswich Borough Council.
2. Additionally, 51 people from Services with high sickness levels (eg Parking) piloted the stress management training last summer. It is hoped that further sessions will be run this year.
3. Emotional resilience awareness training due to be rolled out in 2013, as part of the Customer Contact FSR's Learning and Development programme with the aim of improving staff's emotional resilience in a changing and challenging environment.
4. A Communications and Engagement Plan has been developed for the FSR. The objective is to support and engage with staff throughout the change programme, with the intention of keeping them motivated and at work. Engagement activities include roadshows, staff surveys and focus groups, and these will help the Implementation Group to understand how staff are feeling and to take action to address issues quickly.
5. Research project exploring sickness absence and organisational change has been undertaken in partnership with Anglia Ruskin University.
6. In July 2012 a Crisis Support Policy was introduced which signposts staff and managers to agencies and approaches which can assist staff in a crisis and avoid absence where possible.
7. Since 2009, ongoing work with our occupational health advisers with regular meetings which consider initiatives, approaches, best practice. We also undertake case conferences for difficult sickness cases.
8. In response to the rise in stress and depression cases, staff are now immediately referred to the Occupational Health Service in order to support staff back to work more quickly.
9. In February/March 2013, an accelerated referral to Occupational Health advisors will also be introduced for staff absent due to mental health issues such as stress. An Occupational Health nurse will now make contact with the employee within 48 hours of reporting in sick, as an early intervention to get the member of staff back to work as soon as possible by assessing the cause of the stressor.
10. Home working offers a level of flexibility for some staff enabling them to continue working at home with minor ailments.
11. The Wellbeing in the Workplace Strategy was introduced in 2008 and has been continually reviewed (most recently in 2012). A number of Wellbeing Champions from across services have helped to promote a wide range of practical initiatives designed to help employees look after their own wellbeing. In 2013 the Wellbeing Champions will be working with services to identify specific wellbeing actions that will help to improve employee wellbeing and morale as well as sickness levels. We are receiving support from Anglian Community Enterprise (ACE) to achieve this.

8. Strategic Plan references

- 8.1 The Council's Strategic Plan looks to deliver high quality and accessible services and our staff are key to that delivery.

9. Publicity considerations

- 9.1 The sickness rate is one of the key indicators used to monitor the performance of our services and as such this may be of public interest.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1 Sickness absence represents a cost to the Council in terms of days lost for sickness and the requirement for some services to cover sickness absence through overtime and temporary staff.

11. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out, and is available by [clicking the link here](#) or following this pathway from the homepage of www.colchester.gov.uk: Council and Democracy>Policies, Strategies and Performance>Equality and Diversity>Equality Impact Assessments>Corporate Management>short - term frequent absence

12. Risk Management implications

- 12.1 Sickness absence will continue to be monitored and managed to ensure the performance target for sickness absence is achieved.

13. Other Standard References

- 13.1 There are no specific consultation, Human Rights, Community Safety or Health and Safety implications



Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Item
12

12 February 2013

Report of	Executive Director	Author	Ann Hedges
Title	Welfare reform update		☎ 282212
Wards affected	Not applicable		

This report outlines the key changes to welfare benefits, what Colchester Borough Council is doing to mitigate a range of risks and the number of people affected by each change.

1. Action Required

- 1.1 To note and comment on the work being undertaken to support the implementation of welfare reform.

2. Outline of the changes

- 2.1 A range of changes to the way welfare works are being introduced and represent the biggest change to the welfare system for over 60 years. The aim is to make the benefits and tax credit systems fairer and simpler. Most changes will be implemented from April 1st 2013. The changes have a number of objectives:

- Creating the right incentives to get more people back into work
- Protecting the most vulnerable in our society
- Delivering fairness to those claiming benefit and to the taxpayer

- 2.2 A range of changes are being introduced to deliver these objectives. The key changes are described below. We recognised that we needed to support a number of our residents to ensure that the financial impact of the changes is minimised for the households and to ensure a proactive approach to the changes. We have established a cross service team in our Customer Service Centre who are identifying households and individuals who will be affected. A range of support is then being offered:

- Proactive communication with those we believe will be affected by one or more of the changes
- A check that the information held is accurate and to establish how they will be affected
- Money management advice
- Housing advice
- Job search advice supported by a secondment from Job Centre Plus

We are seeing very positive results from this work, including people returning to work.

2.3 Benefit Cap

2.4 The introduction of the Benefit Cap has now been delayed to the end of the summer. Four London Boroughs will trial the system before it is rolled out across the country. The Benefit Cap will limit the total amount of benefit that working age residents can receive:

- £500 per week for families
- £350 per week for single people

Income above the cap levels will be deducted from housing benefit.

2.5 We know that around 180 households in Colchester will be affected. This number has reduced from the original estimates. We have written to those that it was thought would be affected and through conversations with them have now excluded around 100 households from the cap. This is for a range of reasons; the cap will not apply to households where the claimant, partner or any dependant child receives or is entitled to the following:

- Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments
- Attendance Allowance;
- Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment;
- Employment and Support Allowance (Support Component);
- Industrial Injuries Benefits;
- War Widows, War Widowers or War Disablement pension;
- Working Tax Credits;

2.6 We have identified 30 households that may be at higher risk of homelessness because the high level of reduction in their housing benefit. Households that will lose the larger proportion of Housing Benefits tend to be larger households with 3 or more children.

2.7 Under Occupation

2.8 This change affects residents renting from the Council or a Housing Association. If a resident has one or more spare bedroom their housing benefit will be reduced. It only applies to customers of working age. Those considered to be under-occupying (as defined through a set of rules) will see a reduction in their housing benefit:

- 14% of total rent for under-occupying by one bedroom
- 25% of total rent for under-occupying by two bedrooms or more

2.9 In Colchester our information suggest that 1097 households could be affected, 520 Colchester Borough Homes residents and 577 residents in Housing association properties. 172 of these household are under-occupying by 2 or more bedrooms. Based on these numbers we estimate that this will represent a reduction of nearly £850k of housing benefits paid out per year.

2.10 We have written to all the households we believe will be impacted to explain the changes and to verify the information we hold. This has already reduced the number affected by around 100 households as they have provided more up to date information.

2.11 Colchester Borough Homes are being very proactive in contacting households and have also held a mutual exchange event to encourage those under-occupying to move to smaller properties.

2.12 Local Council Tax Support (LCTS)

- 2.13 LCTS replaces Council Tax Benefit and is a locally agreed scheme. Our scheme was agreed at full Council in December. The liability also passes to the local authority, with funding based on 90% of last years payments being handed to us. The principle adopted in Colchester was to deliver a cost neutral scheme so our scheme requires some groups currently in receipt of Council Tax Benefit to pay more. Typically anyone of working age will have to pay 20% of their Council Tax. Pensioners are protected which represents around 5,000 households.
- 2.14 The scheme will be means tested with a number of criteria including:
- A lower capital savings limit than previously of £6,000
 - Second adult rebate abolished
 - Income from maintenance and child benefit included in the assessment
- 2.15 We estimate that around 8,000 households in Colchester will be affected. Letters and a leaflet have just been sent to all those we think will be affected and we are about to start a campaign to get people to sign up to direct debits for payment. Because of the number of people affected and for many the small amounts that will be due (20% of Council tax for someone in a Band D property is £260 a year) we anticipate that there may be some issues with collection. Essex County Council has given us a grant and together with Colchester Borough Council resource we will be taking a proactive approach to collection to mitigate the risk.
- 2.16 There is a small amount of money allocated to support those in extreme hardship where it is judged they will not be able to pay.

2.17 Universal Credit

- 2.18 Universal Credit will be implemented on an incremental basis from October 2013. Details are still emerging about how it will work and how the roll out will happen.
- 2.19 The principle is that Universal Credit will be paid monthly to people who are in or out of work encouraging them to take charge of their finances. As the name implies it will be a single payment made up of what would have been Jobseekers Allowance and Housing Benefit. We estimate that around 1900 working age people in Colchester will be affected between October 2013 and April 2014. The majority will then be responsible for paying their rent rather than the payment being made direct to the landlord.
- 2.10 The plan is that from spring 2014 to 2017 all Housing Benefit recipients will be transferred to Universal Credit. The aim is that the majority of claims will be made electronically. It has been indicated that the Council will continue to administer complicated cases such as self employed people and those in supported accommodation.

3. Ongoing work

- 3.1 The funding from Essex County Council and the allocation in the 2013/14 budget will enable us to sustain the team in the Customer Service Centre. This team will continue to work with households and individuals affected by the changes and work to ensure maximum collection rates for Council Tax.

4. Strategic Plan References

4.1 The work being undertaken impacts on two key strategic plan priorities:

- Delivering an efficient benefits service
- Supporting the more vulnerable groups

5. Consultation

5.1 Consultation was carried out over the summer of 2012 on the proposals for the LCTS.

6. Publicity Considerations

6.1 The changes need to be clearly communicated to affected residents. There is a communications group across Essex that is supporting this. We are being proactive in sending letters, leaflets and even using you tube video to try and get the key messages to residents.

6.2 There is growing national coverage of the changes. The work in Colchester is aimed at addressing specific needs and supporting residents.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 There are a range of financial implications:

- Essex County Council has provided £106k of funding to support the implementation of the LCTS on the condition that we make a contribution of £16k. This is in recognition that how effective our collection rate is will also impact on them. There will also be a small pot of around £20k to support residents in exceptional hardship.
- The budget for 2013/14 includes a further £30k to support residents through the wider welfare reforms.
- The welfare reform present a financial risk to the Council in terms of collection rates for Council Tax and this will be monitored closely as implementation starts. There will also be a risk around collection rates for rent for Colchester Borough Homes.

8. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications

8.1 The changes are likely to affect some of the most vulnerable groups of residents, although pensioners are excluded from reductions in benefits and the under occupation changes.

9. Community Safety Implications

9.1 None.

10. Health and Safety Implications

10.1 None.

11. Risk Management Implications

11.1 None.

12 February 2013

Report of	Executive Director Pamela Donnelly	Author	Gareth Mitchell Georgina Blakemore ☎ 282212
Title	Fundamental Service Review of Customer Contact – an update on the draft Communications and Engagement Plan and Risk Register		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

**The Panel is invited to review progress in two areas as requested --
Communications and Engagement Plan and Risk Register.**

1. Action required

- 1.1 The Panel is asked to consider / comment on the draft Risk Register and Communications and Engagement Plan in relation to this Fundamental Service Review. These are attached as Appendix A and Appendix B.

2. Reason for scrutiny

- 2.1 The Panel considered the Business Case for the Fundamental Service Review of Customer Contact at its meeting on 30 October 2012. This Business Case was then agreed by the Cabinet on 28 November, and approved by Full Council on 6 December.
- 2.2 The Panel requested that updates on two aspects were added to its work programme - the Communications and Engagement Plan, and the Risk Register. Both items come to the Panel in draft form. Finance and Audit Scrutiny Panel (FASP) has the overall responsibility for “risk management arrangements”, and the Panel may wish to consider that further reviews of the Risk Register take place as part of FASP’s monitoring role.

3. Background information

- 3.1 Members may find it useful to refer to the Business Case for this review for helpful background information (see background papers at the end of this report, [or click here](#)).

4. Strategic Plan references

- 4.1 The proposals outlined in the Business Case contribute to the vision and broad aims set out in the Strategic Plan 2012-15, and the priority areas of enabling local communities to help themselves, and supporting vulnerable groups.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Customers, staff, external groups and Unison played an important part in the development of this Business Case. The Communications and Engagement Plan at Appendix A sets this out in more detail, with separate sections for the work carried out in 2012 in the lead-up to the adoption of the Business Case, and for the current work plan for 2013.

6. Publicity considerations

6.1 This review has been shaped and based on what our customers have told us about their experience of doing business with us. This will help to ensure the review will lead to services that offer a better customer experience at every level. The overall aim is make it quicker and easier for customers to access Council services and deliver efficiencies for the Council during difficult financial circumstances.

6.2 A news release was issued to the local media and put on the Council's website to coincide with the publication of the Business Case. Media comments/coverage included:

"Colchester Council has made a persuasive case for change. More and more people feel comfortable getting the support they need via the internet – a much cheaper method. In addition, plans to set up a trading company to make the most of Colchester's assets should also be welcomed".

7. Financial implications

7.1 The Business Case set out the financial implications of proposals within section 3, and in more detail within the financial summary at Appendix I.

7.2 The financial picture includes implications for both the revenue budget and capital programme. This includes a need for an initial capital investment and associated revenue costs in ICT, of which a significant element is unavoidable if the Council is to simply maintain existing operating systems.

7.3 In terms of the revenue budget, an initial cost in Year 1 (2013/14) is shown with net recurring savings of £1.4 million in year 4, and a further anticipated net income from more commercial activities of £0.9 million by the same stage.

8. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

8.1 The screening stage for an Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out, and is available [by clicking this link](#), or following this pathway from the homepage of www.colchester.gov.uk: Council and Democracy>Policies, Strategies and Performance>Equality and Diversity>Equality Impact Assessments>Corporate Management>Customer Contact – Business Case.

9. Other Standard References

9.1 There are no specific Human Rights, Community Safety or Health and Safety implications at this point. As with Equality and Diversity above, the implications for these areas will be considered at the various stages of implementation.

10. Risk Management implications

10.1 The high-level risks associated with this review were identified in section 5 of the Business Case.

In addition to the four cross-cutting strategic risks set out in that section - ICT, cultural change, financial and external factors - commercial proposals would be the subject of an individual business case and risk assessment. A Trading Board is proposed to ensure all future planning and decision making is properly supported and challenged.

- 10.2 Initial work following the Business Case has focused around formal governance structures being put in place, with the management of risk being embedded across all levels:
- The Implementation Board has all-party representation and will hold the Implementation Group to account for risk management across the FSR programme.
 - The Implementation Group consists of Senior Management and is the forum for formal governance reporting and risk and issue resolution.
 - The Enterprise Programme Management Office will compile and present the risk register for the programme to Implementation Group on a monthly basis.
 - Each of the theme leads will hold project risk registers, from which programme level risks will be identified and reported into Implementation Group. This is a programme risk approach to a varied and complex set of change projects.
- 10.3 The four areas of strategic risk remain ICT, culture, finance and external factors. The initial work has begun on more detailed descriptions of the risks, identifying mitigation, and implementing measures where possible at this stage. All areas where control, co-ordination, management and reporting have been identified as risks will be addressed by the introduction of Enterprise Programme Management Office disciplines where a formal approach to cross-council programme management will be implemented.
- 10.4 The draft FSR strategic risk register in Appendix B presents the initial view around risk, scores and describes actions taken or planned to mitigate. These plans are outline and each theme is working up greater definition and accuracy as the implementation progress.

Background Papers

Fundamental Service Review of Customer Contact – Full Business Case. This can be found by [clicking this link](#) or in the Cabinet agenda of 28 November 2012 (item 7 for the report, business case and appendices).

Fundamental Service Review for Customer Contact

Communications and Engagement Plan

January 2013 – December 2013

Project overview:

To co-ordinate and communicate key milestones throughout the Universal Customer Contact Fundamental Service Review (UCC FSR) to ensure consistent messaging to our target audiences; to deliver findings and results using a range of channels and techniques in order to raise awareness and measure impact.

A proactive communications and engagement programme has been developed to deliver the key messages detailed overleaf, to internal and external audiences. This plan is designed to achieve maximum engagement.

Key elements:

- Promote the significance of the changes to be made
- Enable Councillors and staff to understand the potential impact and timings of any changes
- Engagement with staff, Councillors and members of the public
- Develop an awareness of the key themes and what stage has been reached to ensure staff have a level of awareness
- Promote and maintain engagement and involvement
- Reduce the feeling of exclusion
- Encourage discussions around involvement.

This Plan identifies communication and engagement requirements for specific target audiences, via a number of channels with key messages:

<p>Target Audience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents • Local community groups • General public 	<p>Channels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face to face meetings • Press release and media interviews • Social media updates • e-Courier – the e-magazine for residents • Advertising with local press • SNAP survey • Website updates 	<p>Key messages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-serve – online access to Council services 24/7 • Location change of front line service from Angel Court to library
<p>Target Audience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet • Councillors 	<p>Channels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Board meetings • Quarterly Members’ Information Bulletin • Group meetings • Members’ development sessions 	<p>Key messages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour change to encourage residents and general public to move online • Act as advocates with residents to highlight service changes at the Council

<p>Target Audience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council staff 	<p>Channels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “all staff” emails • The Hub - Intranet • Spotlight – staff e-magazine with a shorter supplement of Spotlight Bulletin • Staff cascades - face to face briefings by manager with teams • Presentations by Executive Management Team (EMT) • Staff workshops to view and use new technology giving the opportunity to ask questions • SNAP survey 	<p>Key messages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-serve online access to Council services 24/7 • Putting the customer needs at the heart of the organisation by increasing customer focus • Identify income generation opportunities by raising the profile of commercialisation • Demonstrating organisational change • Creating the opportunity for training and skills development
---	---	---

<p>Target Audience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unison • Third Party Suppliers • Business Partners 	<p>Channels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular face to face meetings • EMT presentations • Email updates 	<p>Key messages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrating organisational change • Creating the opportunity for training and skills development
--	--	--

Communications and Engagement Timetable

January 2013 Activity	Channel	Date/Deadline	Responsibility	Notes
Corporate Management Service Survey	Online and paper	21 January	Research and Engagement Manager, and HR Manager	'Internal' customer satisfaction survey to gather evidence for next Customer Excellence Standard assessment
Staff focus groups looking at FSR implementation (tbc)		January	Research and Engagement Manager	Focus groups give staff an open forum for exchange of their ideas and concerns
Residents' Survey	Online and Postal plus PR	January	Research and Engagement Manager	A tracker survey which replaces Place Survey to gauge residents' opinions year on year in the whole borough
Spotlight bulletin – e-staff bulletin	Online	January	Communications and Marketing Manager	To focus on HR processes

February 2013 Activity	Channel	Date/Deadline	Responsibility	Notes
Refurbishment of the Customer Service Centre (CSC)	PR, Poster, Display screens	February	Communications and Marketing Manager	Consider new branding of CSC for the library
Spotlight – staff e-magazine	Online	February	Communications and Marketing Manager	30 printed copies for Shrub End and Leisure World
Members' Bulletin	Online	6 February	Executive Management Team (EMT)	Emailed to Councillors
SOSP Communication and Engagement strategy	Face to face	12 February	Executive Director	
Unison Meeting	Face to face	13 February	Senior Management Team (SMT)	
4 th Staff Cascade	Face to Face	February	Communications and Marketing Manager	Focus on Corporate Management and Housing
Employee survey	Online and paper	End of February	Research and Engagement Manager, and HR Team	Employee satisfaction survey (devised in-house) to gather the views of staff on range of topics, replacing the annual 'Best Companies' survey

March 2013 Activity	Channel	Date/Deadline	Responsibility	Notes
Are you being served? survey	Postal	1 March	Research and Engagement Manager	Resident satisfaction survey
Self-Serve staff workshop	Staff training	Mid-March	ICT and Customer Journey Teams	
Members' Bulletin	Online	6 March	EMT	Emailed to Councillors
e-Courier – Spring issue	Online	8 March	Communications and Marketing Manager	Self-serve and CSC changes
Spotlight bulletin – e-staff bulletin	Online	March	Communications and Marketing Manager	
Unison meeting	Face to face meeting	12 March	SMT	

April 2013 Activity	Channel	Date/Deadline	Responsibility	Notes
Employee survey	Focus groups	Apr - July	Research and Engagement Manager	
Unison meeting	Face to face	16 April	SMT	
iConnect launch	Full Communication Plan	Late April	Communication, ICT and CSC	iConnect enables all transactions from residents and businesses to be captured automatically online within a single 'customer record'
5 th Staff Cascade	Face to face	April	Communications and Marketing Manager	

May 2013 Activity	Channel	Date/Deadline	Responsibility	Notes
Spotlight – staff e-magazine	Online	May	Communications and Marketing Manager	30 printed copies for Shrub End and Leisure World
Members' Bulletin	Online	8 May	EMT	Emailed to Councillors
Unison meeting	Face to face	15 May	SMT	
Research and Engagement Team Survey	Online	May (tbc)	Research and Engagement Manager	To gauge satisfaction levels of staff with team's service and gather ideas for service improvements

June 2013 Activity	Channel	Date/Deadline	Responsibility	Notes
Spotlight – staff e-magazine	Online	June	Communications and Marketing Manager	30 printed copies for Shrub End and Leisure World
e-Courier – Summer issue	Online	8 June	Communications and Marketing Manager	
Unison meeting	Face to face	11 June	SMT	

July 2013 Activity	Channel	Date/Deadline	Responsibility	Notes
Spotlight – staff e-magazine	Online	July	Communications and Marketing Manager	30 printed copies for Shrub End and Leisure World
Members' Bulletin	Online	3 July	EMT	Emailed to Councillors
Unison meeting	Face to face	9 July	SMT	

August 2013 Activity	Channel	Date/Deadline	Responsibility	Notes
Unison meeting	Face to face	6 August	SMT	

September 2013 Activity	Channel	Date/Deadline	Responsibility	Notes
e-Courier – Autumn issue	Online	8 September	Communications and Marketing Manager	
Spotlight – staff e-magazine	Online and printed	September	Communications and Marketing Manager	30 printed copies for Shrub End and Leisure World
Unison meeting	Face to face	11 September	SMT	

October 2013 Activity	Channel	Date/Deadline	Responsibility	Notes
Members' Bulletin	Online	2 October	EMT	Emailed to Councillors
Unison meeting	Face to face	9 October	SMT	
Customer Service Centre (CSC) move to library	Full Communication Plan	Oct/Nov	Communications and Marketing Manager	

November 2013 Activity	Channel	Date/Deadline	Responsibility	Notes
Unison meeting	Face to face	6 November	EMT	
Members' Bulletin	Online	21 November	EMT	Emailed to Councillors

December 2013 Activity	Channel	Date/Deadline	Responsibility	Notes
Unison meeting	Face to face	3 December	EMT	
e-Courier – Winter issue	Online	6 December	Communications and Marketing Manager	
Spotlight – staff e-magazine	Online and printed	December	Communications and Marketing Manager	30 printed copies for Shrub End and Leisure World

Evaluation:

Monitoring will take place throughout the project to assess the effectiveness of the communications and engagement plan with regular updates to the Implementation Group to be included in reports to the Implementation Board.

Amongst the data that will be monitored are:

- Results from resident and staff surveys
- Website traffic
- Attendance figures from engagement events
- Instant Chat activity
- Feedback from face to face sessions.

Monitoring can be reviewed alongside other areas of the organisation including HR and the UCC FSR Project team.

This will assist with the overall project evaluation including the success of engagement, understanding and relevance.

		1. ICT						
Specific Risks		SCORE						Consequence
		Current			Previous			
		P	I	O	P	I	O	
1a	The risk that ICT is seen as distinct from business transformation, and is therefore run as a separate programme.	3	4	12				Difficult to align the timing and implementation of ICT projects. Business not properly engaged in strategic ICT decision making or implementation of fit for purpose technology.
1b	The technology transformation to support the Fundamental Service Review (FSR) is large and complex.	3	3	9				Difficult to get to an overall plan. Failure to implement a coherent and well-led ICT programme with limited elimination, sharing, transfer or management of risk.
1c	The outcomes of the FSR will lead to an increased reliance on ICT. There is a risk around Corporate ICT not being sufficiently resourced to meet the increasing and changing demands from the Council, customers and communities.	4	4	16				Failure to secure the competencies and skills and then retain sufficient capacity in Corporate ICT to lead and support business as usual.
1d	The FSR requires a step change in integration and co-ordination across the Council, which must define and implement mandatory corporate requirements, covering aspects such as security, integration, data and technologies, to enable the integration and co ordination.	3	3	9				Improved control and governance across the Council, and an overall solution design prior to procurement of any new application systems.
1e	Involvement of multiple third parties.	3	4	12				Challenge of communication, shared goals, contract management and ultimately delivery of fit-for-purpose ICT.

1. ICT								
Specific Risks		SCORE						Consequence
		Current			Previous			
		P	I	O	P	I	O	
1f	Unilateral ICT decisions by services undermining applications and data integration.	4	4	16				Potential challenge to the 'one customer' view / self-service environment for customers. Data not able to join up if systems are not integrated.

ACTION PLAN – ICT		
Action	Owner	Review
Identify key skills and competencies of Corporate ICT, and include ongoing resource requirements as part of the FSR outputs and the upcoming Corporate and Financial Management FSR.	ICT Theme Lead	March 2013
Review security arrangements and policies. Implement a security design that handles new threats. Implement governance arrangements so that policies, practices and their underpinning ICT are fit-for-purpose.	Head of ICT	March 2013
Programme control and governance including risk and issue management with ownership of resolution at Implementation Group.	Implementation Group	March 2013

2. CULTURAL CHANGE								
Specific Risks		SCORE						Consequence
		Current			Previous			
		P	I	o	P	I	o	
2a	The scale of change is significant and touches everybody.	2	3	6				Reliance on good communications and overall change management. Skills and capacity in the management of change across the Council is key.
2b	New skills and knowledge will be required. Knowledge management is low priority currently.	5	3	15				Focus on identifying new skills as a starting point. Help may be required in areas such as commercial. Knowledge needs to be free flowing to change the way of working.
2c	Lack of organisational capacity to move forward from business case to implementation.	3	3	9				Change slow and momentum lost. Vision difficult to describe over the longer term and people lost in the challenges of the day job.
2d	Maintenance of service delivery during a period of major change across the organisation.	4	3	12				Business as usual difficult to deliver due to staff and managers focus on new structures, jobs and building the new service delivery.

ACTION PLAN – CULTURAL CHANGE		
Action	Owner	Timing
Enterprise Programme Office to co-ordinate communications and manage the overall programme to ensure leadership and overall aspirations are clear and well communicated.	FSR Implementation Group	March 2013
Cultural Change theme to produce action plans for cultural change and change management techniques for managers.	Cultural Change theme of FSR	March 2013
Learning and development plan produced and an early start on skills and behaviours required for implementation so people are ready.	Cultural Change theme of FSR	March 2013
Create a leadership group around implementation with the remit to secure resources and start implementation work. Make decisions and communicate what can stop.	FSR Implementation Group	March 2013

3. FINANCIAL								
Specific Risks		SCORE						Consequence
		Current			Previous			
		P	I	o	P	I	O	
3a	Financial assumptions are incorrect.	3	4	12				Large number of assumptions at the business case stage to be proven as implementation progresses. Consequences for budget / Medium Term Financial Forecast (MTFF) once FSR savings are included. Viability of proposals especially around income need proving. Budget / MTFF impact. Affect the viability of proposals.
3b	Savings/income are not delivered to assumed timescales.	3	4	12				
3c	Savings/income are not sustainable.	3	3	9				
3d	Potential costs not yet identified.	2	3	6				

ACTION PLAN –Financial		
Action	Owner	Timing
Continue to review all financial assumptions throughout the review.	Implementation Group	March 2013
FSR integration with MTFF.	Normal governance structure (Performance Management Board, Finance and Audit Scrutiny Panel)	From March 2013

4. External Factors								
Specific Risks		SCORE						Consequence
		Current			Previous			
		P	I	O	P	I	O	
4a	Risk around the external changing environment and the implications this has on the services we provide. The risks could arise from any or a combination of political, economic, social, technology, legal or environmental.	3	3	9				Any serious change across this wide range of factors could impact the financial and delivery aspects of the review. This is especially relevant to the trading /commercial proposals.

ACTION PLAN – External Factors		
Action	Owner	Timing
Monitor changes via the Corporate Risk process and feed into the FSR Risk process.	Implementation Group	March 2013
Ensure the Trading Board reviews all risk for the commercial proposals, via business case controls.	Governance Theme FSR	March 2013

DEFINITIONS	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Medium	4 High	5 Very High
Impact	Insignificant effect on delivery of services or achievement of Strategic Vision and Corporate Objectives.	Minor interruption to service delivery or minimal effect on Corporate Objectives.	Moderate interruption to overall service delivery/effect on Corporate Objectives or failure of an individual service.	Major interruption to overall service delivery or severe effect on Corporate Objectives.	Inability to provide services or failure to meet Corporate Objectives.
Probability	10% May happen – unlikely	10 -25% Possible	26 – 50% Could easily happen	51 – 75% Very likely to happen	Over 75% Consider as certain



Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Item
14

12 February 2013

Report of	Head of Corporate Management	Author	Robert Judd Tel. 282274
Title	Work Programme 2012-13		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

**This report sets out the 2012-13 Work Programme for the
Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

1. Action Required

1.1 The Panel is asked to consider and note the work programme for 2012-13.

2. Reason for Action

2.1 This function forms part of the Panel's Terms of Reference in the Constitution.

3. Setting the Work Programme

3.1 Overview and scrutiny needs to be member-led, with Members proactive in determining the work programme and ensuring its relevance to the future needs of the Council. Members need to take a lead on the work to be undertaken, focusing on strategic and significant issues, and the programme needs to be flexible to allow for relevant other items to be included.

4. Changes / Amendments

4.1 Following the Chairman's briefing on 9 January 2013, it was agreed to present the Communications and Engagement Plan, and Risk Register, all related to the UCC FSR to this meeting (12 February 2013).

4.2 A review of Sickness Absence was agreed by the Panel on the 15 January 2013 and will also be considered at this meeting.

4.3 As agreed by the Panel at the January meeting, an extra meeting will be arranged for late March – early April 2013 to review Bus Transportation in the Borough, to discuss all aspects of bus transportation, reliability and the new Bus Station, with the Managing Directors from all the leading bus operators invited to attend the meeting. The Panel will be informed of the date at the meeting.

5. Standard and Strategic Plan References

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

- 5.2 Scrutiny is a key function to ensure decisions have been subject to full appraisal and that they are in line with the Council's strategic aims. The role of scrutiny is also an important part of the Council's risk management and audit process, helping to check that risks are identified and challenged.
- 5.3 There is no publicity, equality and diversity, human rights, community safety, health and safety, risk management or financial implications in this matter.

Meeting date / reviews	Portfolio
12 June 2012 1. Annual Scrutiny Report 2. 2011-12 Year-end Performance Report and Strategic Plan Action Plan	Leader / Communities & Leisure Deputy Leader / Street and Waste Services
11 July 2012 1. Call in hearing – Decision STR-001-12 Hythe Forward funding contribution	Communities and Leisure Leader / Business & Resources
17 July 2012 1. ECC Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy – ECC presentation on proposals (submissions to ECC by 31-July-12. Strategy presented to September's ECC HWB. Clare Hardy, Senior Manager ECC HWB to give a presentation. 2. Budget Strategy, Timetable and MTFF	Communities and Leisure Leader / Business & Resources
29 August 2012 1. HWB – Local arrangements, including the work and progress of Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Cllr Ann Naylor, ECC PH HWB and Clare Hardy to attend. Dr Gordon and Dr Sweeney (CCG) to attend. A 2013 meeting to be arranged to review the outcomes from the new Strategy	Communities and Leisure
18 September 2012 1. Safer Colchester Partnership (Crime and Disorder Committee)	Planning, Community Safety (CS) and Culture
30 October 2012 1. Pre Cabinet review of Fundamental Service Review of Customer Contact 2. Localising Council Tax Support	Cabinet Business and Resources
11 December 2012 – cancelled	
15 January 2013 1. 2012-13 6-monthly Performance report and Strategic Plan Action Plan	Leader / Communities & Leisure
28 January 2013 (extra) 1. Call-in – Environmental Protection Act 1990 – Enforcement Powers	Street and Waste Services
12 February 2013 1. Welfare Reform (Lead Officer Ann Hedges, Executive Director) 2. Member's Locality Budgets 3. Communications and Engagement Plan, and Risk Register, all related to the UCC FSR 4. Sickness absence (Head of Corporate Management)	Business and Resources / Communities and Leisure Leader / Business and Resources Business and Resources
19 March 2013 1. Investment in Colchester's Arts and Culture – Venue "The Auditorium, firstsite"	Planning, Community Safety and Culture
Late March / early April 2013 (extra) Bus Transportation review, including working with the new Bus Station – Invitation to Bus Operators	Street and Waste Services (Public Transport Infrastructure)

Outstanding - HRA Reform – Local Housing Review

