

Scrutiny Panel

**Grand Jury Room, Town Hall
12 November 2013 at 6.00pm**

The Scrutiny Panel examine the policies and strategies from a borough-wide perspective and ensure the actions of the Cabinet accord with the Council's policies and budget. The Panel reviews corporate strategies that form the Council's Strategic Plan, Council partnerships and the Council's budgetary guidelines, and scrutinises Cabinet or Portfolio Holder decisions 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.

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www.colchester.gov.uk

Scrutiny Panel – Terms of Reference

1. To fulfil all the functions of an overview and scrutiny committee under section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and in particular (but not limited to):
 - (a) To review corporate strategies;
 - (b) To ensure that actions of the Cabinet accord with the policies and budget of the Council;
 - (c) To monitor and scrutinise the financial performance of the Council, performance reporting and to make recommendations to the Cabinet particularly in relation to annual revenue and capital guidelines, bids and submissions;
 - (d) To review the Council's spending proposals to the policy priorities and review progress towards achieving those priorities against the Strategic and Implementation Plans;
 - (e) To review the financial performance of the Council and to make recommendations to the Cabinet in relation to financial outturns, revenue and capital expenditure monitors;
 - (f) To review or scrutinise executive decisions made by Cabinet, the North Essex Parking Partnership Joint Committee (in relation to decisions relating to off-street matters only) and the Colchester and Ipswich Joint Museums Committee which have been made but not implemented referred to the Panel pursuant to the Call-In Procedure;
 - (g) To review or scrutinise executive decisions made by Portfolio Holders and officers taking key decisions which have been made but not implemented referred to the Panel pursuant to the Call-In Procedure;
 - (h) To monitor the effectiveness and application of the Call-In Procedure, to report on the number and reasons for Call-In and to make recommendations to the Council on any changes required to ensure the efficient and effective operation of the process;
 - (i) To review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of functions which are not the responsibility of the Cabinet;
 - (j) At the request of the Cabinet, to make decisions about the priority of referrals made in the event of the volume of reports to the Cabinet or creating difficulty for the management of Cabinet business or jeopardising the efficient running of Council business;
2. To fulfil all the functions of the Council's designated Crime and Disorder Committee ("the Committee") under the Police and Justice Act 2006 and in particular (but not limited to):
 - (a) To review and scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions;
 - (b) To make reports and recommendations to the Council or the Cabinet with respect to the discharge of those functions.

**COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL
SCRUTINY PANEL
12 November 2013 at 6:00pm**

Members

Chairman : Councillor Beverly Davies.
Deputy Chairman : Councillor Marcus Harrington.
Councillors Dave Harris, Jo Hayes, Gerard Oxford,
Kevin Bentley, Nick Cope, Peter Higgins and Mike Hogg.

Substitute Members : All members of the Council who are not Cabinet members
of 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 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 to silent;
- the audio-recording of meetings;
- 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. Have Your Say!

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

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

6. Decisions taken under special urgency provisions

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

See report by the Assistant Chief Executive

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 3 - 15

To review the decision relating to Allotment charges and review of tenancy agreements.

See report by the Assistant Chief Executive.

9. Local Council Tax Support 2014/15 16 - 47

See report by the Head of Customer Services

10. Capital Expenditure Monitor 2013/14 – Quarter 2 48 - 55

See report by the Assistant Chief Executive

11. Financial Monitoring Report – April to September 2013 56 - 71

See report by the Assistant Chief Executive

12. Work Programme 72 - 74

See report from the Assistant Chief Executive.

13. Exclusion of the public

In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in accordance with The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended) to exclude the public, including the press, from the

meeting so that any items containing exempt information (for example confidential personal, financial or legal advice), in Part B of this agenda (printed on yellow paper) can be decided. (Exempt information is defined in Section 100I and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).



Scrutiny Panel

Item

6

12 November 2013

Report of	Assistant Chief Executive	Author	Amanda Chidgey
Title	Decision Taken Under Special Urgency Provisions		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

This report gives details of a portfolio holder report which was taken in accordance with the special urgency provisions.

1. Decisions Required

- 1.1 The Panel is requested to note the details of a report taken by a portfolio holder in accordance with the Special Urgency Provisions.

2. Alternative options

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

3. Background

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules provide for the arrangement whereby decisions taken by the Cabinet or by individual portfolio holders are subject to call-in and an opportunity for scrutiny prior to implementation.
- 3.2 The Rules do, however, provide for circumstances whereby the call-in procedure will not apply where the decision being taken is deemed to be urgent (that is if any delay likely to be caused by the Call-In procedure would seriously prejudice the legal or financial position of the Council or the decision relates to the commencement of a statutory consultation process). This is known as the Special Urgency Provision.
- 3.3 In these circumstances the Monitoring Officer and the Chairman or Deputy Chairman of the Scrutiny Panel are required to certify the immediate implementation of the decision and that the call-in procedure shall not apply. In addition details of the decision are required to be reported to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Panel for information.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The following decision was recently taken in accordance with the Special Urgency Provision outlined above:

Report Title: Essex Business Rates Pool

Decision Taken: It is recommended that the Council agrees to join the Essex pool for business rates. The Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business

and Resources are authorised to finalise the specific pooling arrangements together with any necessary documentation.

Reason for Urgency:

Proposals for new pools need to be made to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) by 31 October 2013 and must be signed off by the Council's Section 151 Officer.

Link to decision: [Essex Business Rates Pool](#)

5. Standard References

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



Scrutiny Panel

Item

8

12 November 2013

Report of	Assistant Chief Executive	Author	Amanda Chidgey ☎ 282227
Title	Call-in of Executive Decision – Allotment charges and review of tenancy agreements		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

This reports sets out the protocol for the review of the decision relating to Allotment charges and review of tenancy agreements (Reference No COM-005-13).

1. Action required

- 1.1 The Panel is asked to consider the decision relating to Allotment charges and review of tenancy agreements (Reference No COM-005-13).

2. Reason for action(s).

- 2.1 The Constitution states the Scrutiny Panel will consider decisions taken by a Cabinet Member with delegated authority for taking a decision that are subject to a call-in review.

3. Purpose of the review

- 3.1 The decision has been called-in because Councillors have evidence which suggests that the Decision Taker, in this case, Councillor Annie Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure Services, did not take the decision in accordance with the Principles of decision making set out in Article 12.02 of the Constitution.

4. Protocol

- 4.1 The decision has been called-in by Councillor Lissimore, supported by four other councillors. The notice of the decision, the report, together with the completed request for call-in form are attached to this report.

Have Your Say – Members of the Public

- 4.2 Members of the public may address the Panel on the matter of the call-in for a period not exceeding three minutes.

The speaker may respond to one question asked by a Member of the Panel

With absolute discretion, the Chairman may disallow or terminate any public participation which is considered scurrilous, vexatious, improper, irrelevant or otherwise objectionable.

Have Your Say – Councillors

- 4.3 Councillors may address the Panel on the matter of the call-in. There is not a limit on the time each Councillor can address the Panel, but Councillors are asked not to deviate from the reasons why the decision was called-in, and in the case of more than one speaker, not to repeat statements already made.

Presenting the Case

- 4.4 **The Chairman of the Panel shall remind speakers that the debate is confined to the reasons stated on the call-in form.**
- 4.5 Councillor Lissimore will attend the meeting and present the case, expanding on the reasons for the call-in, but not deviating from the reasons given on the call-in form.
- 4.6 Councillor Annie Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure Services will respond to the points made by Councillor Lissimore.
- 4.7 The Chairman shall afford Councillors Lissimore and Feltham the opportunity to confer with the Panel before inviting them to make closing remarks prior to the Panel formally voting on the matter.

Resolution

- 4.8 The Panel may:
- confirm the decision, which may then be implemented immediately, or
 - refer the decision back to the Decision Taker for further consideration setting out in writing the nature of its concerns, or
 - refer the decision to full Council in the event that the panel considers the decision to be contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council or contrary to, or not wholly in accordance with the Budget.
- 4.9 If the decision is referred back to the Portfolio Holder to reconsider the decision and he/she agrees with the views of the Panel then the decision may be implemented immediately.
- 4.10 If the Portfolio Holder does not agree with the views expressed then the matter will be referred to the Cabinet who will determine the matter.
- 4.11 The decision will not be called-in where the decision taker has previously referred a decision to the Scrutiny Panel for pre-decision scrutiny and the Panel has already made recommendations to the Decision Taker and those recommendations have been accepted by the Decision Taker either in whole or without significant addition or modification.

5. Standard and Strategic Plan References

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

COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

Explanatory Note

The Leader of the Council has established Delegation Schemes by which certain decisions may be made by the relevant cabinet member or specific officers.

Cabinet member decisions are subject to review under the Call-in Procedure.

From the date the notice of the decision made is published there are five working days during which any five Councillors may sign a request for the decision to be reviewed (called in) and deliver it to the Proper Officer.

If, at the end of the period, no request has been made, the decision may be implemented. If a valid call- in request has been made, the matter will be referred to the Scrutiny Panel

Part A – To be completed by the appropriate Cabinet Member/Officer

Title of Report

Allotment charges and review of tenancy agreements

Delegated Power

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

Sports and leisure facilities, parks and gardens, allotments, playing fields, beach facilities, public open spaces, amenity areas and country parks

Decision Taken

To approve the next tranche of allotment plot rental effective from October 2014.

To approve amendments to the Allotment Strategy regarding household ownership of multiple plots

To approve and introduce a Site Stewards agreement to set out the expectations and requirements of the Council and Allotment Site Stewards in a more formal and binding process as set out in Appendix 1 attached to this report.

Key Decision

Yes

Forward Plan

Details have been included in the Forward Plan

Reasons for the Decision

Allotment rents were last reviewed by the Portfolio Holder in August 2008 and identified the annual charges applicable for a 5 year period commencing October 2009. Allotment holders are required to be given a minimum of one year's notice of any changes to charges. This is to enable plot holders to consider future arrangements and to plan their cultivation and growing if they are expecting to give up their allotment plots. For this reason the charges effective from October 2014 need to be confirmed.

The Allotment Strategy was approved in February 2011 and sets out the principles for management of allotments. Recent experience has indicated that one aspect of the strategy regarding multiple plot ownership remains unclear and this is to be clarified.

Each allotment site has a point of contact between the Council and the plot holders. The Site Steward is appointed by the Council and although their roles and responsibilities are discussed and agreed there is no written agreement regarding expectation and requirements and action in the event that the Site Steward does not fulfil their role. A Site Steward agreement is proposed to address this area for possible uncertainty and to help all parties understand their roles.

Alternative Options

There is an option not to review allotment rental. If rentals were to remain unchanged there remains an obligation to provide plot holders with 12 months notice.

Conflict of Interest

None

Dispensation by Head of Paid Service

None

Dispensation by Monitoring Officer

None

Approved by Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure Services

Signature Councillor Annie Feltham

Date 19 September 2013

(**NB** For Key Decisions the report must be made available to the public for five clear days prior to the period for call-in commencing)

Part B – To be completed by the Proper Officer (Democratic Services)

Portfolio Holder Decision Reference Number

COM-005-13.

Implementation Date

This decision can be implemented if no request for the decision to be reviewed (call-in) has been made **after 5pm on 4 October 2013.**

Call-in Procedure

The Decision Notice for this decision was published on the internet and placed in the Members' Room and the Customer Service Centre on 27 September 2013.

A request for reference to the Scrutiny Panel must be made by **5pm on 4 October 2013.**

Signature of Proper Officer Diane Harrison



CONSULTATION WITH PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITIES AND LEISURE SERVICES

Item

September 2013

Report of	Head of Community Services	Author	Bob Penny ☎ 282903 Claire Pick ☎ 282907
Title	Allotment charges and review of tenancy agreements		
Wards affected	All Wards		

This report concerns the next tranche of charges for allotment rental and a review of the Allotment Strategy

1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To approve the next tranche of allotment plot rental effective from October 2014.
- 1.2 To approve amendments to the Allotment Strategy regarding household ownership of multiple plots
- 1.3 To approve and introduce a Site Stewards agreement to set out the expectations and requirements of the Council and Allotment Site Stewards in a more formal and binding process as set out in Appendix 1 attached to this report.

2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 Allotment rents were last reviewed by the Portfolio Holder in August 2008 and identified the annual charges applicable for a 5 year period commencing October 2009.

Allotment holders are required to be given a minimum of one year's notice of any changes to charges. This is to enable plot holders to consider future arrangements and to plan their cultivation and growing if they are expecting to give up their allotment plots. For this reason the charges effective from October 2014 need to be confirmed.

- 2.2 The Allotment Strategy was approved in February 2011 and sets out the principles for management of allotments. Recent experience has indicated that one aspect of the strategy regarding multiple plot ownership remains unclear and this is to be clarified.
- 2.3 Each allotment site has a point of contact between the Council and the plot holders. The Site Steward is appointed by the Council and although their roles and responsibilities are discussed and agreed there is no written agreement regarding expectation and requirements and action in the event that the Site Steward does not fulfil their role. A Site Steward agreement is proposed to address this area for possible uncertainty and to help all parties understand their roles.

3. Alternative Options

3.1 There is an option not to review allotment rental. If rentals were to remain unchanged there remains an obligation to provide plot holders with 12 months notice.

4. Supporting Information

4.1 There are over 1100 plots managed by the Council spread over 19 sites. Allotment rental generates income to the Council to offset the cost of providing and maintaining allotments. Income forms part of the service budget and contributes to the Repairs and Renewals Fund to enable allotment improvement projects to be delivered. The 2013/14 revenue budget direct expenditure of £55,900 is offset by direct income of £55,400 and therefore an almost breakeven position is achieved for direct costs. When indirect expenditure such as overheads are taken in to account there is an income shortfall of £36,100.

4.2 In line with other Portfolio Holder decisions, reviews of charges are being made on a basis of moving towards a cost neutral position.

4.3 Whilst the service currently covers its direct costs it is a long way from being cost neutral. To remove the income shortfall would require rental increases in the range of 60%. Such increases would be unrealistic and contrary to the Allotment Act 1950 and case law.

4.4 When carrying out consultation of plot holders and those on the allotment waiting list to help inform the content and actions arising from the Allotment Strategy and subsequent consultations there was strong recognition (92%) that allotments represented value for money. Allotment holders derive a range of benefits from participating in allotment gardening including social, physical and health advantages.

4.5 The length of the allotment waiting list is reducing due in part to large vacant plots being halved and made available to 2 persons on the waiting list. Comparative figures for May 2012 and 2013 show that the number of individuals on the waiting list has dropped from 318 to 223 and the total number of plots being requested (individuals can be on more than one site waiting list) has reduced from 646 to 362.

4.6 Allotment charges are very variable across the range of providers. Colchester participates in the East of England Allotment Officers Forum and rental charges are a frequent topic of discussion. Many providers are at a low level of rental and are prepared to see the facilities subsidised. Other authorities are at a comparatively low starting point for plot rental and although they have plans to reduce the subsidy they can only do so by a gradual and continuous rental increases in excess of the increase in cost of service provision.

4.7 Allotment plot rental comparisons (based on 2012/13 rates) full size plots with water

Colchester	£80.00
Braintree	£62.50
Chelmsford	£40.00
Ipswich	£36.65

5. Proposals Allotment Charges

- 5.1 Allotment holders are required to be given a minimum of one year's notice of any changes to charges as this enables plot holders to consider future arrangements and to plan their cultivation and growing if they are expecting to give up their allotment plots.
- 5.2 With over 1100 allotment plots and to avoid the need for excessive communications, allotment rental is considered in tranches of 5 years. Rents within the 5 year period can be reviewed allowing for a minimum of a years notice given to plot holders. Future charges will be effective from Oct 2014 to October 2019.
- 5.3 Allotment charges are based on a rental cost per m2. Concessionary rates are available based on agreed evidence associated with financial hardship which is in line with the corporate approach for concessions. The age concession was removed in 2012/13.
- 5.4 There is an additional water charge for sites which have water supplies (the majority) and this is based on a m2 rate for consistency and fairness to plot holders. Water charges have been increasing steadily over time and a price increase is necessary to keep pace with the unit rate prices from water suppliers. Plot holders are encouraged to be water saving aware and make use of water butts.
- 5.5 In the previous 5 year tranche of charges, allotment rentals have increased per year by 2p per m2 for full and concessionary rates. Water rates have increased 1p per m2 per annum.
- 5.6 The increase in water rates has generally kept income in line with unit rate increases from Anglian Water and water consumption on the sites. The Council's water consumption on allotments is subject to seasonal and annual variations. The rate set for water charges generally meets the overall expenditure including costs associated with maintaining water tanks and supplies. In the event of significant price rises by Anglian Water, the Council would need to review its water charges and give 12 months notice to plot holders of any changes to the proposed water rates.
- 5.7 In order to continue to reduce the subsidy associated with providing allotments whilst keeping increases to reasonable levels it is recommended to adopt a continuation of the current 2p per m2 increase for full rate and concession rate and a 1p increase per m2 per annum on water charges. Water charges will be kept under review to ensure water bills and related expenditure are covered by the water charges element of the rental. This has the added advantage of encouraging plot holders to be water wise and minimise the consumption of mains water by using water butts and mulches..
- 5.8 The impact of these proposals on the annual cost per m2 is as follows;

Year	Rent ex	Water	Rent inc	Rent ex	Water	Rent inc
	Water	charge	Water	Water	charge	Water
	Full			Concession		
2012/13	0.22		0.32	0.18		0.28
2013/14	0.24		0.35	0.20		0.31
2014/15	0.26	0.12	0.38	0.22	0.12	0.34
2015/16	0.28	0.13	0.41	0.24	0.13	0.37
2016/17	0.30	0.14	0.44	0.26	0.14	0.40
2017/18	0.32	0.15	0.47	0.28	0.15	0.43
2018/19	0.34	0.16	0.50	0.30	0.16	0.46

A full size plot is 250m². For many plot holders, a full size plot is too much of a challenge and full size plots are being halved when they become vacant.

5.9 Worked examples

The annual increase from 2013/14 to 2014/15 for a full plot with water would be from £87.50 to £95.00.

The annual increase from 2013/14 to 2014/15 for a full plot with water at the concessionary rate would be from £77.50 to £85.00

The annual increase from 2013/14 to 2014/15 for a half plot with water would be from £43.75 to £47.50.

The annual increase from 2013/14 to 2014/15 for a half plot with water at the concessionary rate would be from £38.75 to £42.50

Review of Allotment Strategy

5.10 The Allotment Strategy was approved and adopted in February 2011.

5.11 New plot allocations are limited to one per plot holder. Those currently holding more than one plot are permitted to retain those plots subject to the normal cultivation requirements and inspections.

5.12 It has been identified that there is scope for households to accumulate multiple allotments by having each member of the household holding plots or being on the waiting list. To be fair and open to all those on the waiting lists we seek to close the loophole where plot allocation could be subject to abuse and lead to ownership of multiple plots. A single minor change is required to the approved Strategy to prevent situations where separate plots are held in the names of a variety of family members residing in the same property. It is proposed that the policy to limit one allotment plot to a household at a single address is formally adopted.

5.13 Allotment Site Stewards

To provide a point of contact and to carry out site inspections the Council appoints Site Stewards for each of its 19 sites. Site Stewards carry out an important role in carrying out site inspections during the growing season, assisting the Parks and Recreation team in gathering information and taking on a coordinating role between plot holders and the Council. Site Stewards are volunteers but receive free plot rental inclusive of water.

Their duties and responsibilities are not confirmed in any formal agreement and this needs to be resolved so their appointments can be managed and the action that can be taken is set out if their performance fails to meet the required standards.

Appendix 1 provides the proposed Site Stewards agreement which will be signed by both parties.

6. Strategic Plan References

6.1 Under the category “Delivering high quality, accessible services” the following priority areas are recognised which benefit from the provision of allotments and the engagement of residents in allotment gardening

- Enabling local communities to help themselves by encouraging a healthy lifestyle and wellbeing
- Supporting more vulnerable groups by letting plots to charities and community groups

- Providing sport and leisure for all, alongside good quality green spaces and play areas

7. Consultation

- 7.1 2 yearly consultation has been carried out of plot holders who have been charged a 2p per m2 per annum plot rental increase. 92% of plot holders and 85% of those on the waiting lists consider plot rental to be good value for money.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 It is expected that plot holders would prefer there to be no increases but costs for maintenance works are increasing and any surplus income is allocated for infrastructure improvements on allotments such as more water tanks, improved car parking, access and improved security. The proposal is for a continuation in rent increases at levels previously experienced by plot holders.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 In accordance with the adopted Allotment Strategy and charging policy allotments should be self funding and deliver a budget for reinvestment in to site improvements.
- 9.2 In the 2013/14 revenue budget direct expenditure of £55,900 is offset by direct income of £55,400 which has been a previous financial target. When including indirect expenditure such as overheads, the income shortfall increases to £36,100. In line with other Portfolio Holder decisions, reviews of charges are being made on a basis of moving towards a cost neutral position.
- 9.3 The Council is unable to achieve full recovery of costs without significant rental increases. A progressive approach is being proposed to reduce the overall subsidy and to work towards full cost recovery in future years. In line with recent case law it is not acceptable to consider allotments as an opportunity for excessive income generation

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 10.1 There is no change to an existing policy and the availability of a concession on the full rate based on financial circumstances still applies. There are no other changes which impact on the promotion of equality and overcome discrimination in relation to gender, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age and race/ethnicity.

11. Standard references

- 11.1 There are no particular community safety; health and safety or risk management implications.

Background Papers

None

Site Stewards agreement

SITE STEWARD AGREEMENT

An agreement made **DATE** between Colchester Borough Council (“the Council”)

And

NAME

ADDRESS

(“the site steward”)

Whereby

A) The site steward agrees to take on the responsibilities detailed below for **XXXXXX** allotment site until with the site steward or the Council terminate this agreement. In return for undertaking the below duties the site steward will receive one allotment plot (of their choice if they have more than one allotment) for the duration of their tenure of the site steward role.

- 1) To carry out monthly site inspections and report the condition to CBC
- 2) Liaise with CBC on empty plots and new plot holders
- 3) Attend meetings with CBC and other site stewards
- 4) To report water leaks, broken fences and gates
- 5) Report any problems or unsociable behaviour on their site
- 6) Not to get involved in neighbouring plot holders disputes
- 7) Liaise and assist new tenants
- 8) With the agreement of CBC, appoint a deputy site steward for your own site (optional)
- 9) To report debris/long grass on vacated plots
- 10) Anything else that the CBC may from time to time require

B) The Site Steward role shall cease under the following conditions:

- 1) Following the termination of the Site Steward’s allotment tenancy agreement for their site

- 2) By the Site Steward giving the Council one month notice in writing
 - 3) By the Council giving the Site Steward one month notice in writing
 - 4) By the Council giving immediate notice:
 - a. At any point during the initial six month period of the Site Steward role
 - b. Where the Council deems that the Site Steward has acted inappropriately
 - c. Where there is a continued breach in the duties listed under section A)
- C) Any notice required to be given by the Council to the Site Steward may be signed on behalf of the Council by an officer delegated by the Head of Community Services and may be served on the Site Steward either
- 1) Personally; or
 - 2) By pre-paid post letter; or
 - 3) By posting it to the last known address; or
 - 4) By fixing it in a conspicuous manner on the allotment plot.

As witness this document has been signed on behalf of the Council and signed by the Site Steward.

SIGNED
for and on behalf of
the Council by
R Penny

Parks and Recreation
Manager

SIGNED
by the said
NAME
Site Steward for
XXXXXXXX

COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL

REQUEST FOR CALL IN OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE CABINET OR UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

Explanatory Note

This form may be used to request a call in of any decision (except urgent decisions) taken by the Cabinet or by a Cabinet Member acting under delegated powers or a Key Decision taken by an Officer under delegated powers.

This form must be signed by at least five Councillors (or by one Councillor and supported by four other Councillors via e-mail) and must be delivered to the Proper Officer within five working days of publication of the decision.

We, the undersigned, request that the following decision be scrutinised by the Scrutiny Panel for the reasons as set out below:-

The decision contained in the Record of Decisions Taken Under Delegated Powers, Reference No. **COM-005-13. Allotment charges and review of tenancy agreements**

Reason(s) for call in:

1. In regard to the action proposed must be proportionate to the desired outcome;

Para 4.4 of the decision Report extols the benefits from participating in allotment gardening, including social, physical and health advantages. The strategy proposed in this decision maintains the cost of allotment plots in Colchester at the top of the local benchmarked authorities, being roughly twice the cost of the same service in Chelmsford and Ipswich. This has the opposite effect of driving all but the well-off ultra-keen from participating in these social, physical and health advantages.

2. Having respect and regard for human rights;

In para 5.12 of the Decision Report, it is proposed to permit only one member of any household at a single address to be an allotment holder. This breaches the human rights of all other members of the household at that address, in that they are unfairly debarred from becoming an allotment holder merely because they share an address. This is arbitrary discrimination of the worst ilk, contrary to the agreed policy of the Council.

3. Presumption for openness;

The Decision Report states in para 4.1 that £55,400 of income is garnered from Allotment holders, but does not explain the composition of the £55,900 direct expenditure, nor whether any of the FSR activity aims to reduce the direct costs, as is the objective with all other services. The Decision Report refers to £36,100 in indirect costs and overheads, which are not itemized, and have no dialogue as to how they are being mitigated.

Signatures

Names in Capital Letters

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Cllr Sue Lissimore | (SEE EMAIL...14:14 04 OCTOBER 2013 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Cllr Will Quince..... | (SEE EMAIL...15:28 04 OCTOBER 2013 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Cllr Dennis Willetts... | (SEE EMAIL...15:25 04 OCTOBER 2013) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Cllr Jackie Maclean.... | (SEE EMAIL...14:59 04 OCTOBER 2013) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Cllr Brian Jarvis..... | (SEE EMAIL...16:11 04 OCTOBER 2013 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

NB Please tick representative to attend and present case at the Panel meeting.

For Office Use:

Date and time of Receipt: 4 OCTOBER 2013 Action: _____

4.15 pm



Scrutiny Panel

12 November 2013

Item

9

Report of	Head of Customer Services	Author	Sara Wilcock & Leonie Rathbone ☎ 508807
Title	Local Council Tax Support 2014/15		
Wards affected	All wards		

The Panel is invited to review and comment on the draft Cabinet report, which recommends maintaining the current Local Council Tax Support scheme in respect of 2014/15.

The Local Council Tax Support scheme for Colchester was implemented on 1st April 2013. Every billing Council was required to have a local support scheme in place from 1st April 2013 to replace Council Tax Benefit (CTB). Colchester's local scheme was agreed by Full Council on the 6th December 2012.

The attached report includes a summary of the current scheme, a review of the impact to date on Council Tax Collection rates, and a summary of a public consultation seeking views on the current scheme and the impact of any changes.

The attached report recommends the continuation of the current Local Council Tax Support scheme into 2014/15.

Scrutiny Panel is asked to review and comment on this report, ahead of the Cabinet meeting on 27th November 2013.



Cabinet

Item

27 November 2013

Report of	Head of Customer Services	Author	Sara Wilcock & Leonie Rathbone ☎ 508807
Title	Local Council Tax Support		
Wards affected	All wards		

This report requests Cabinet to recommend to Council the continuation of the current Local Council Tax Support scheme into 2014/15

1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To agree and recommend to Council the continuation of the existing Local Council Tax Support scheme, without fundamental amendment, into the second year 2014/15.

2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 Colchester Borough Council implemented a Local Council Tax Support scheme (effective from 1st April 2013) which was agreed by Full Council on the 6th December 2012.

Legislation requires that amendments to the scheme for 2014/15 need to be agreed by Full Council before 31st January 2014.

Agreement and recommendation is needed to limit the changes to the Local Council Tax Support scheme for 2014/15 to bring the scheme in line with national legislative amendments and to agree and recommend the scheme remain otherwise unaltered.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 To alter the scheme for 2014/15 by increasing the minimum Council Tax contribution from 20% to 35% for working age claimants.

- 3.2 The alternative option of increasing the minimum contribution would not be recommended, taking account of the following considerations:

- There is no requirement to reduce further the level of Local Council Tax Support spend.
- Public consultation asked for specific comments on increasing the minimum Council Tax contribution from 20% to 35% for working age claimants. Responders to this question indicated they would be 'dissatisfied' (17%) or 'very dissatisfied' (67%) if such a change was introduced. Further information is detailed in section 7.
- By maintaining the current scheme this allows for a period of stability for customers, many of whom are affected by other Welfare Reforms.
- Maintaining the current scheme also allows us to consider effectively the impact Local Council Tax Support has on the Collection Fund. Based on data April 13 to

30th September 13 our collection rate is 57.4%, against 57.8% for the same period last year. Whilst acknowledging that this is a decrease, it is an improvement on predicted collection rates and within accepted tolerances.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 Local Council Tax Support currently helps 12,000 residents reduce their Council Tax bill - 5,000 pension age and 7,000 working age residents. The value of Local Council Tax Support granted currently is around £9.3 million.
- 4.2 All working age recipients of Local Council Tax Support have to pay a minimum contribution of 20% towards their Council Tax bill. This means we are collecting Council Tax from around 7,000 residents whom previously have not made payment, or are required to make an increased payment, in respect of their Council Tax bill. National regulations still require local schemes to 'protect' those residents of pension age from any reduction to their level of support as a result of the localisation of the scheme.

A summary of the key scheme points are outlined below:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Back to Work Bonus – additional 4 weeks support for those who find work
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Award based on 80% of Council Tax liability
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• £6000 capital /savings limit
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Second adult rebate claims ended on 1 April 13
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flat rate £10 non-dependent deduction
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include child maintenance as income (child & spousal)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include Child Benefit as income
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• £25 flat rate earnings disregard

5. Proposals

- 5.1 It is proposed that:-

- Cabinet recommend to Council that the Local Council Tax Support Scheme as set out within this report and detailed within the Policy document is agreed for 2014/15 (see Appendix A).

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 The Council's Strategic Plan sets out several priorities including an efficient benefits service and supporting more vulnerable groups.
- 6.2 Precepting authorities contributed an additional £122,000 to assist with the collection of Council Tax, recognising the additional number of residents we had to collect from and the potential difficulties we would experience collecting from residents who have either not previously paid Council Tax or who are paying an increased amount.

This additional money has helped fund the creation of the Customer Support Team, who work proactively providing a range of services including flexible payment plans, debt and back to work advice as well as administering the Exceptional Hardship fund. The work of this team helps to protect the interests of our more vulnerable residents whilst focusing on the maintenance of collection.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 The Local Government Finance Act 2012 sets out that Billing Authorities have to hold a public consultation on any potential changes to their existing Local Council Tax Support scheme. To comply with this and to understand the impact on residents of the existing scheme a 6 week consultation period commenced on the 19th August 13 and ended on the 30th September 2013.
- 7.2 A range of initiatives were undertaken to promote the consultation across Colchester. This included writing to 7000 current working age recipients of Local Council Tax Support, and publicity by way of Press Releases and information highlighted on our website.
- 7.3 At the time of consultation it was anticipated that potential funding pressures could be imposed on the Local Council Tax Support scheme for 2014/15 therefore the consultation addressed specific issues of reduced entitlement together with inviting feedback on the wider scheme.
- 7.4 Responses to the consultation are set out in Appendix A
- 7.5 The single parent charity Gingerbread has written to the Colchester Borough Council Chief Executive, Leaders of elected members, and a local MP, requesting we reconsider our decision to include Child Maintenance as an income in respect of single parents within our LCTS calculation. Any change to the LCTS scheme criteria would need to be subject to specific consultation, as such we did not consult on this particular subject, and therefore we are unable to amend the scheme to take account of this view. A further consultation is not feasible within the current timescales allowed, however we will ensure that next year we consult specifically on this issue.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 A co-ordinated communications approach was adopted by Essex authorities for the implementation of Local Council Tax Support. We continue to provide information on our website and will publicise information with our annual Council Tax bills.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1 The proposals set out within this report are intended to deliver a scheme for 14/15 which is in line with the cost neutral ethos adopted and agreed by precepting authorities last year.
- 9.2 The LCTS scheme is based on a Council Tax discount, which results in a reduction in the amount of Council Tax due. The methodology for reflecting the cost of this is to show it as a reduction in the Council Tax base (the number of equivalent Band D properties). This means that the amount of Council Tax due is reduced by the amount of Council Tax Support provided. On the basis of a cost neutral scheme this reduction should equal the level of Government grant provided.
- 9.3 In 2013/14 the Government gave us specific funding for LCTS. This will no longer be separately identified from 2014/15, but will be part of our overall settlement figure. This

overall figure, termed the 'Start Up Funding Assessment' is expected to reduce by 14% based on initial figures provided. Therefore, although the Government has said previously that LCTS funding will be unchanged, as the overall funding is reducing by 14% we have to assume the same level of reduction for LCTS. This has been taken account of in the 2014/15 budget.

- 9.4 According to collection rates as at quarter 2, collection is better than anticipated, and the total cost of the scheme is below that originally estimated. This is therefore likely to provide some mitigation to the cost pressure resulting from reduced funding and means that at this stage we believe an unchanged scheme could remain broadly cost neutral.

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 10.1 An updated draft Equality Impact assessment (EQIA) has been carried out, and is available on the Council's website, or click [here](#).

11. Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 The proposals contain provision for dealing with welfare concerns of residents, particularly vulnerable people. It is intended to limit hardship to avoid giving rise to crime and disorder.

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 There are no health and safety implications.

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 Fundamental changes to the current criteria could potentially affect the collection fund position. Quarter two collection data is providing encouraging analysis on the impacts of Local Council Tax Support on the collection fund but at this stage it remains indicative. Keeping the scheme broadly the same for 2014/15 will allow for further impact analysis on the collection fund over the course of a financial year and mitigate potential risk.
- 13.2 Alternative scheme options wider than the original consultation framework would need a further period of consultation. Changing the scheme criteria without further consultation would render the scheme invalid and leave us open to challenge regarding the legality of the scheme.

Background Papers

Draft 14/15 Local Council Tax Support policy document

Appendix A– Consultation responses

Annexe A

Local Council Tax Support Consultation 2013

	Total number of respondents who accessed the consultation survey 300 Maximum total of responses 164								
Q1	Are you currently claiming Local Council Tax Support?	Yes 147 (90%)	No 13 (8%)	Not sure 4 (2%)					
		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied			
Q2	How satisfied were you with the new rules that were put in place for Council Tax Support this year, whereby at least 20% of council tax is due to be paid by all working age people?	13 (8%)	27 (17%)	21 (13%)	44 (28%)	53 (34%)			
		Total responses							
Q3	What impact has this year's increase to 20% had on you or your family?	132							
		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied			
Q4	If the threshold for payment was increased to an amount up to 35%, whereby all working age people had to contribute up to at least 35% of their council tax, how satisfied would you be?	4 (3%)	7 (4%)	15 (10%)	26 (17%)	105 (67%)			
		Total responses							
Q5	What would the impact be to you if the contribution was to increase above 20%?	130							

		Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree
Q6	If the contribution did increase above 20% for those able to work, to what extent do you agree those who are unable to work should still pay 20%	56 (36%)	20 (13%)	26 (17%)	13 (8%)	41 (26%)
		Total responses				
Q7	Please give any other relevant comments below	89				

Responses to Q3

What impact has this year's increase to 20% had on you or your family?

1. tough but you just get on with it
2. alot finding it hard to pay it. and i was £7 in debt and u lot send letters saying bout taking me to court. i think its unfair.... might not sound alot £3.50 a week but it is..
3. bills keep going up but benefits do not go up
4. I have had to pay more money but I have managed. Any more to pay will be a struggle.
5. Less money
6. we had a reduction of over 60% of LCTS already. I didn't understand why there was such a big drop in the amount of money from the old scheme to the new one. reducing it more will mean a real struggle for my family.
7. about £20 a month less to live on. I understand the need to reduce costs but I am single, unable to work as I am disabled & on very limited income made up of only benefits. To lose £5 a week just like that is not good, especially with food, gas & electric prices rising so fast.
8. i am on E S A which means i am on a low income and is finding it very hard to pay the council tax. which means i have to miss other bills or go without food.
9. because i'm on benefits i am losing £26 per week to council tax and rent. that is enough to pay my gas, electricity and water bills.

10. During a recession at the bottom end of the financial ladder it's another expense piled on top of the others that is already a struggle to pay. When you have a below the poverty line budget to live on it seems like a punishment.
11. I am struggling to survive on benefit as it is already and under alot of stress but council tax has put alot of pressure on me further and depressed as I feel unable to provide for my child even more now than before
12. Having been previously exempted from Council Tax due to being on middle-rate care DLA, this has had a huge impact on the amount of care I can afford.
13. I already had trouble making ends meet due to low income and high living costs, the change to making me pay 20% WHICH NOT ALL COUNCILS ARE DOING, is making it even harder and I am often having to use credit cards to pay my bills which is not sustainable.
14. More to pay out of benefit received
15. it will decrease money which I could spend on food. right know there isn't enough, then it will be more complicated
16. Suddenly, me and my family have had to scrimp a relatively large amount of money that would, instead, be spent on other essentials - let alone improving our day to day living. It means, for example, choosing between 'value' food items and those that are healthier. Or being able to afford public transport, fuel a car, or even maintain a working bicycle.
17. Financial it is now VERY hard.
An obvious increase in money going out when you are a single parent through no fault of your own on benefits is not appealing but I feel morally better knowing that I am contributing towards services that I use and may well need to use. A small amount of money every month can be easily accounted for than paying huge sums that I used to pay previously. So I commend you trying to keep the percentage paid down. I do hope that this scheme does continue as it is. Thank you also for the opportunity to voice our opinions. Just they are as positive as mine!
18. Having to suddenly find this extra money was very hard, we had not expected to have to pay so it was difficult to find other areas to cut back on. Our daughter is autistic and DLA is paid to help with the everyday living expenses,so we have to use some of this money to pay the council tax.
19. It has made an impact but I have managed to readjust my budgeting to cover it.
20. I have to budget more carefully.
22. It has driven me further below the poverty line
23. Put me into debt with energy suppliers
24. It's making me ill trying to find the money and depressed

25. I was finding it hard be for now finding even harder. With food, water, tv lice Gas and electric all going up on top off rent and council tax. I damaged my spine though working and out of my ESA I have to buy stuff to help with pain. I don't get DLA. people on DLA get all the help
26. it hasn't had a major impact to me or my children
27. finances tight less money to spare
28. I have less money too live on.
29. I have had to cut back on needed items.But agree that all people should pay if only a small ammount.
30. as a single mum its hit us hard .
31. I don't work and am too sick to work, but thanks to all the pressure put on me by the new changes to incapacity benefit I had a breakdown and am now supported by my parents as I could not cope with having constant assessments, so I cannot afford to pay extra council tax.
32. A LOT
33. more financial stress
34. Had to be able to find the additional 14£ a month - when already on a tight budget whilst claiming ESA benefit
35. I have been severely disabled and suffering from several serious life threatening chronic illnesses since 2005, and as a result I am unable to work to earn a living.
36. I have many additional repetitive costs to bear due to my disabilities and chronic illnesses, and have found it very difficult to manage financially, especially over the last year where I have been in the position of having no choice but to either go without eating or heating during the cold months.
37. I have had to decrease my outgoings for household energy and water consumption. The greatest impact will be felt throughout the winter months as I am severely disabled.
38. I think £18 a month which I pay is a reasonable amount to be asked to contribute towards council tax it hasn't really affected us
39. The increase has had a bad impact on me as I now have to find money from my other benefits to pay it leaving me struggling to pay my rent and to pay my other bills.
40. New Claimant.
41. Extra money that we have had to find

41. not applicable but will increase when I/if return to and It is likely to cause me problems as my debts incurred whilts off work due to injury will increase as i WILL BE IN A POOR POSITION TO REPAY DEBTS
42. there was no increase in my family
43. i have had great difficulty paying my assessment for Council Tax this year, although this has been ameliorated by subsequent concessions. I am liable although a Housing Benefit claimant to pay a proportion of my rent and it was causing us hardship to pay this and Council tax. I have received a Discretionary Housing Payment until January. I am still paying more than 20% of my Council Tax bill as unamended.
44. I'm not directly affected.
45. it is more than we paid last year but agree we should pay 20% even though we struggle on our benefits
46. All my benefits were cut by one third and I cannot manage on the amount I receive. I have gained weight because I have to eat cheaper high calorie foods so any other cut would mean I would have further problems. Most of my clothes come from charity shops too.
47. My 120% Council Tax increase has had a big impact on my standard of living.
48. I am disabled and unable to work more hours to make up for the increase.
49. This is having an extremely adverse effect on my financial situation, because I am unemployed, and as a result it is effecting all other debts.
50. a little tighter on budget especially as all shopping and general bills have increased
51. I am on ESA and live alone but have four children living in Ashford Kent with their mother but when they want to visit me I don't have the money to feed them so paying this proportion to the rates I accept I have to contribute but it takes money away from me that would feed them when they visit. so visits are restricted now which I'm not happy with.
52. We now need to find extra money that we do not have. Together with the extra mortgage money we now have to find as well it puts an enormous amount of pressure on my wife and myself.
53. I understand why this has been done, however, I have had to resort to buying mostly reduced price short dated or poor quality food to make ends meet. I already have to choose between eating and heating in winter
54. It has a significant impact on my disposable income and I feel it is a benefit reduction by the back door. My ESA is set at a level that was supposed to be what I need in order to live, and it has been significantly reduced due to the Council Tax change. It is particularly unfair that pensioners, many of whom have far more disposable income than I have, do not have to pay any council tax, and yet I do.
55. I have had to go literally to the last resort in cost cutting by going without meals. The £17 I pay now used to feed me for 2 weeks.

55. It is yet another "cut" to benefits/entitlements for those who are most vulnerable and means that there is less money available for essential necessities like food.
56. this is a new bill with no extra money coming in to pay it so food or other less important bills (no government that do not have the power to send a person to prison) have to go unpaid for people on jobseekers /esa or disability it is criminal! and can /is causing great suffering totally unfair and unjust a further simple of how WICKED the country has become back under Tory Rule!!....
57. As I am on JSA & therefore have a very limited income the £15 a month is a big problem for me, it is hard enough to live on such low money without an extra bill
58. I am able to afford it at the moment.
59. I am longterm sick and on benefits, it has been extremely hard to cover this additional cost this year, especially with prices of food, electricity going through the roof over the last few years, I don't know how I will manage once the winter kicks in and the majority of my cash goes towards keeping warm.. If a local Council cannot find a way to find the cash to cover its expenses, by re-budgeting or re-allocation, then how on earth is somebody on benefits supposed to do it? I ask this not only as a benefit recipient, but as somebody who worked in Accountancy for over 20 years, so finance & budgeting is an area I am very familiar with. It is a national disgrace that this legislation was allowed to pass in the first place.
60. My council tax more than doubled so it has a big impact and I am struggling to keep up with it.
61. I am a single mother of four children aged 8 months, 3 and 6 and 9. The extra council tax I now have to pay means I can't afford to buy school uniform and other essentials for them.
62. I am on JSA and the government says I need £71 a week to live on now out of this I have to pay £15 a month council tax this may not seem a lot but it has made quite a difference.
63. Less to spend on food. Unable to follow medical diet.
64. I have very little disposable income. This year's increase has meant less money for food when my budget is already very tight. It has not helped that the cost of food has risen well above the official inflation figure. I cannot afford to eat healthily now.
65. Don't know if I'll be able to heat my house this winter shall probably suffer. More ill health both mentally & obviously physically. Terrified can't make all payments end up paying extortionate court costs & jumped up charges which YOUR BAILIFFS Jacobs tried to inflict on me last time - only changed when told them vulnerable & I wanted a breakdown of their charges, when they probably realised I knew they were ILLEGAL (have documentary proof of this)

- I am the partner of a student, but I do not have income of my own, so whereby normally students would be exempt from paying council tax, my student partner now actually has to use her loan to pay my council tax bill, which seems really unfair to me. She has had to sacrifice buying her student books to pay for the bill. I could understand me having to pay the bill if I had income of my own, but we are having to share her student loans which are only meant to be for her and her studies really. She is not entitled to any extra money for me so we are really having to stretch this money only meant for one.
66. my income is now 71.01 per week and i still have to pay 20 per cent, when it first came in I was getting 98.00 and could just manage it but I dont know how it will be if it goes up any more.
67. Living on ESA & DLA, can't understand why I'm having to pay???
68. I struggled to get through each month when I paid nothing. I pay the £27.00 each month but it's hard to juggle as money coming in has not increased by that much. I think it's a good idea that everyone pays, but 20% for someone unable to work due to illness/disability is very high.
69. It is a challenge to fit the extra payment into a benefits based budget, especially with finances being squeezed in all directions from shopping budgets to electricity costs. If I was working I would be happy to pay the full amount but benefits are simply not sufficient for this. It is also stupid that I am given money with one hand while the other hand is held out to take some of it back. The whole system is inefficient and makes little sense. Creative budgeting is needed by government and local authorities rather than taking more from the people who can ill afford it. If services get cut even more then so be it.
70. Can no longer afford any luxuries also been hit by bedroom tax, 30th March the law stated I needed all my ESA to live on but in April I apparently can manage on £20 less a week. The second bedroom is tiny, I'm already in fuel poverty and shall have a cold house this winter, a situation which will exacerbate my depression and osteo-arthritis. So ultimately the introduction of this new law has detrimentally affected my pre-existing conditions. When working full time last decade I was paying more Council Tax as a single person on less than £13,000 pa than a couple on £48,000 pa in Lewisham, why such a disparity?
71. It has cost us a further £5 per week (10% of my current self employed income), thus £20 - £25 per month more hence approx £260 per annum more and makes things even more difficult for us week to week
72. As I have no income , either via benefits or other means, I solely rely on my retired mother to pay the current 20% that LCTS dictates I must pay! I am unable to work due to illness but am not considered for other benefits within the DWP schemes.
73. I am satisfied as in it is not a huge percentage to pay and at the same time it is only fair that something is paid by each household.
74. We have less money to pay our other bills including food
75. I have less money to live on as I receive ESA and DLA. I have had to cut back on spending and have a tighter budget
76. With the general increase in the total cost of living the extra I now have to pay in council tax, it really hurt my finances and if it hadn't been for family assistance this year I would not have been able to pay the £146+ tax bill
- 77.

- I have to find £15 extra a month now on an already very tight budget of £143 a fortnight.i rely totally on benefits as due to numerous health conditions have not worked since 2006. I am most annoyed with the govt not the local council as i realise that funding has been cut and you have no choice, but i will struggle horribly to find any extra money whatsoever!!
78. I have long term heart problems and have had a double by-pass, and been told i will never work again, because i'm only 60 years of age iv'e had to pay 20% of my council tax which has made a lot harder
79. Recently disabled and having to rely on benefits finding running home and food , getting tighter .
80. When only on £71p.w jsa any extra going out makes an impact.
81. well finding the money for one, strain on family life as if as I've limited money as it is, and when my ex partner deliberate loses his job so not to pay C.S.A money so finding my community charge money.
82. As a householder who is a full time carer for an adult son with special needs this has negatively impacted our household budget.
83. I had to stop taking my children swimming to budget for it
84. I am disabled living on sickness benefit and DLA. Until recently I received FULL council tax refund. I now have to pay £11.50 per month towards this AND £58.00 per month with the new "bedroom tax" out of my benefits with no increase in benefit. The government say I need X amount of pounds to live on, yet I am now having to find an extra £68.50 to find every month. This is causing me severe difficulty
85. I could not afford the 20% and the support team were able to reduce it for me thankfully.
86. Nil
87. I'm single mother and I'm in working age, so this year I need to pay some Council Tax. To do that I need to work more hours and as result finishing with paying more for childcare. It is very hard for me to plan my finance this year.
88. It has considerably reduced the amount of nutritional food that I can buy as this is the only area that I can economise in. As a family, after all the bills are paid (& we dont have things like sky movies or Gym memberships)we have the grand total of £20 a week now for food, birthdays, clothes, bus fares, school uniforms.... It has been humiliating having to turn to others to get food just so that I can get my daughter kitted out for high school & the threatening letters of court action really are unhelpful...most people dont pay because they wont, its simply that they cant.
89. The amount I currently have to pay is £30 per month. Although I have noticed the difference I appreciate the reasons for starting the scheme and feel this is a fair way to save some much needed money.
- 90.

- Whilst £15 a month appears a small amount as a lone parent with a disabled minor it has financially impacted on my child's provision even in receipt of DLA for him. My son needs a lot of one to one support and in the holidays needs a constructive/active and safe routine it has been an expensive time funding special need activities on top of school uniform which there is no support for. I have also had to cutback on essentials food and could only pay my water bill once this month (usually fortnightly) to accommodate this bill, this has created a problem with my supplier. I am concerned that any increase would be detrimental to my sons care provision and despite pre conceived ideas of parents on benefits I don't drink,smoke or go out.
91. It's meant that i have had to cut down on the things that i would normally buy to pay the bill.
92. obviously, as I am on benefits, it has taken away much needed funds from my already meagre income.
93. It's an added expense I'd prefer not to have, but I know it's imposed by central government. I don't like the 20% minimum though. It'll mean my remaining savings run out sooner, but it's also being imposed on people who have no savings left already; what are they supposed to do?
94. a lot I now get something silly like 69p a week help.im a single mum working only 16hrs a week how is this fair?!we are lot worse now afterw each month
95. alot as my partner was taken ill and has not been able to claim any benefits to help him . so this has affected us badly, as it is only me working
96. I rent privately and have to top up what I don't get from housing benefit. £100 pcm is a lot of money to find for someone on ESA. So having to pay concil tax aswell is vry difficult. It is very hard to find somewhere affordable to live and moving is traumatic when you have a long-term illness. My rent is going up by £25 pcm in September, so a further increase in council tax would be extremely difficult to manage.
97. Being a full time carer it has impacted on me.
98. although the amount in itself seems small when you are on benefits because of ill health the amount is quite significant. It is the cost of a bus fare to get to doctors, dentist, into town to get shopping and to visit family. If this is increased in any way it will have a significant impact on the income of people receiving benefits.
99. It has made it much more difficult to find money to live on. Also being penalized because my son who lives at home, with mental health issues, and is working part-time on minimum hourly salary seems grossly unfair. He is trying to stay off benefits, yet if he wasn't working there would be no penalty.
100. As my wife is disabled and I am her full time career, the increase has put a strain on our finances as we are unable to earn more as we have to rely on the benefit that we recieve and any extra money we have to find is very hard and unfair in our situation.
101. Have found it very difficult cannot pay when it I due have to take out of weekly food budget and it is not nice receiving letters about not paying on time my council tax is paid in the month it is due just not on the 1st and I cannot tell you when it can be paid as I must decide on the best week to not buy certain foods or another bill needs to be paid.
- 102.

103. I am able to currently pay the percentage of council tax but would struggle if this increased.
104. I totally understand the reasons and agree that working age people should pay their bits towards council tax. I am a single parent of 2 children and in receipt of income support. I pay £17 a month and although this isn't a huge amount i have definitely felt the impact. I do struggle often to get to each pay day and have had to resort to using my credit card.
105. I only work part-time and i'm now also a single parent. This years increase to 20% has had a big impact on the money i have left to entertain my Son with additional needs. I also worry alot about money and the lack off it available at the end of each week/month.
106. I think was fair to pay a small amount towards the full amount.
During financial times it is important that we all take responsibility;
107. I AM 1 OF THOUSANDS ON THE BREAD LINE. IN ORDER TO PAY MY CURRENT COUNCIL TAX I AM HAVING TO BORROW MONEY AND PUT MYSELF IN DEBT. I HAVE ALSO STARTED MISSING MEALS WHERE I CAN TO HELP COMPENSATE FOR THIS. I TRULY BELIEVE THAT THIS IS AN AWFULL SITUATION FOR PEOPLE LIKE MYSELF. THE GOVERNMENT SAYS YOU NEED ??? TO LIVE ON AND THAT IS WHAT THEY GIVE YOU, SO HOW CAN THE COUNCIL EXPECT PEOPLE ON BENEFITS TO PAY ANYTHING OUT OF THEIR BENIFITS? THIS EFFECTIVLY PUTS ALL OF US ON LESS INCOME THAN WHAT THE GOVERNMENT SAYS WE NEED TO LIVE ON (AND I'DE LIKE TO SEE THEM LIVE ON IT!).
108. It depends how this hits the most genuine and vulnerable in society. There are genuine cases who may not be able to afford to pay this.
109. This year I had to stop working due to a disability, yet our bills continued to go up considerably. While you may say one bill doesn't mean a lot - when it's every bill rising, while income vastle reduces it's difficult.
110. no impact
111. I am now worse off as my other benefits have not increased to cover the cost. I am severely disabled with MS, I cannot work, I have 2 children to support (when I had them I didn't have MS and I had a husband to support us). Thru no fault of my own I have to survive on benefits which are being cut, while the cost of living increases. The impact is only going to grow.
112. As a disabled person on a fixed income, I have found it difficult to pay the contribution.
The negative effects include a warning from Electricity, Gas, and water companies regarding the payment of bills due to shortage of money. some weeks we go with little food and drink for me and my children but thank God we are never without, however if that 20% was put towards shopping every month it would be much preferred for my family and their well being. I am a single mum to three students and currently looking for work, this is why 20% is needed to come in rather than out. As much I would love to help the local Council Tax support scheme, it is much of a struggle and I would rather get support from this scheme rather than it being another none affordable expense.
114. My son has to go without some activities, rebudget on household food and fuel

115. More difficult to manage finances
116. I am still looking for a job so obviously I am now worse off as I have to pay a set monthly sum, but saying that I feel like I am contributing too.
117. None but it has had a tremendous impact on people with 'restricted' incomes i.e those claiming both out of work and in work benefits who have little or no increase in their actual income but have had to find £3 or £4 extra per week to pay for C Tax.
118. A huge implication. realising that a mere £200 a year is a small amount to some to others is it a huge impact.
119. As a single mum of a 3 yr old on income support, I had already been struggling to meet our needs, and this increase month on month has put me in debt which continues to spiral.
120. Making it difficult to make ends meet & I dont have luxuries like Sky TV, phone line/broadband, car, etc. So increasing it again will probably mean I will not be able to pay it as just have trouble doing so now.
121. have to borrow money to pay because I was waiting a year for tribunal for ESA and therefore my total income was £3700 for the year.
122. A huge impact. Now child benefit is taken into account, I can no longer use that to support my children and a huge chunk of that now has to go to CBC. I earn £128.00 by way of salary and am on my knees now !!!!
123. Was able to afford the amount.
- This year has been very difficult for me financially, as for others in my situation. I have tried really hard to pay my monthly Council Tax payments this year, and will make every effort to continue, but if this were to increase next year, I would be unable to meet the payments. Leading to further stress of possibly being taken to court. I do not smoke, drink, or drive a car, so there is nothing further I can cut back on. My clothes are from charity shops, which is not a problem for me, but if something goes wrong in my flat I cannot afford to have it fixed, fearing a further bill, which is a big problem, and very stressful.
124. I am really sorry to have to admit this, but I now have to shop for the food items that are reduced at the end of the day, as a necessity. Everything costs so much more and will continue to rise. I have no way of changing my situation, and feel that without help, my situation will only get worse.
- This years payments have been difficult to find, but I know that Christmas time is going to be very hard for me, and people in my situation. There is always the worry of affording gifts for family. I buy what I can afford throughout the year when I can afford it, but there has been so little funds left over, after paying my bills, that it will be near impossible to budget for it, this year.
125. Making the poor poorer
126. Less food
127. It is obvious - I have so much less money to use.

128. Devastating because it was not 20% but much more. My payments went from £50 to £113 a month. That is truly an unacceptable rise when there has been no other changes in circumstance
129. Decreased our income on which we were until March 31st 2013 the minimum the law said we needed to live on.
130. Although the cost has been spread throughout the year, it has taken money that we could use for food and other essentials for our family of 4.
131. I am just able to pay the £15 I pay now it would be a hardship to have to pay more on benefits get disability
132. It doesn't help when you are a single parent and struggling to make ends meet.

Responses to Q5

What would the impact be to you if the contribution was to increase above 20%?

1. I can't afford 20% let alone 35% are you having a laugh???
2. I would struggle to pay it as well as my other bills
3. Nil as benefits
4. I am already contributing by over 20% I think. The impact could mean that you need to cover the increase from other sources of income such as child tax credit, especially with the private tenants who saw huge increases in the amount of rent they pay every month.
5. Very much decreased quality of life, wouldn't be able to afford more than the very basics
6. I am on E S A which means I am on a low income and is finding it very hard to pay the council tax. Which means I have to miss other bills or go without food.
7. It was the difference between having £100 and £80. Now you're saying that it will be the difference between having £100 or £65. It makes a huge difference because I'm already having to reduce my outgoings to cover the 20% plus bedroom tax. An increase in council tax plus the expected announcement by the government that all tenants will be required to pay a minimum of 20% of their rent, in line with VAT will leave me with a huge loss in my weekly spending but I will go without food, heating, lighting and whatever else I have to.
8. I would end up on the streets of Colchester, slowly starving to death while the council would have to pay overtime to the Police in order to move homeless people into less visible areas. And where exactly would that be? No hyperbole.
9. The amount of care I could afford would decrease further, leaving me further isolated and in difficulty.

10. As per my last answer but even worse - I cannot even believe you are seriously considering this, it will cause real hardship for many people.
11. Would struggle
12. it will decrease money which I could spend on food. right know there isn't enough, then it will be more complicated
13. Increased CT next year may mean I just can't afford to live where I am and will have to move out - to where, I don't know. With few family to fall back on, I constantly worry of being made homeless.
14. Thousands of people are going through the courts who cannot pay already. There is a huge cost to this, plus it is causing great resentment in people with risk of civil unrest. With the increases in JSA far lower than inflation, and Benefits increasing being disconnected from the Consumer Price Index, it is mathematically impossibility that people will be able to pay. The more people default, the more defaulting becomes acceptable.
15. again more money going out is less money for my childrens' needs which is not ideal but 35% is preferable than more than that.
16. This would be very hard for us as a family, we have our own business which like many others is struggling in the present climate, and we have been down on jobs for over a year now. With the added stress of a child with a disability to look after, it will only increase the burden on our already overstretched finances.
- 33 17. All my money is currently accounted for and used but if it increases it would be a case of re-budgeting again.
18. It would make it more difficult to manage
19. It would accelerate my likely homelessness
20. Put me further into debt elsewhere.
21. have to cut out eating , wont be able to afford gas in winter which will not help my arthritis in the spine. I will get even more ill. Which I really done need with problems I got with health.
22. this would have an impact because it would mean finding extra money to be able to make this payment. I believe if your in the position to go to work for example all your children are in full time education and you are able to work then you should have to pay it
23. I would not be able too afford too live in my home.
24. it would cause me great hardship.
25. it would b a huge impact as we only just survive as is .

- Like I say, I am not on benefit but am too sick to work so cannot afford the 20% which I would be expected to pay, let alone 35% it is WAY too high. Rather than it being a set amount you should look at individual incomes and judge it that way rather than a blanket rule which will leave people like me even harder up and with more health issues as I cannot take the stress of it all.
26. It is bad enough as it is and any more would mean us to be in extreme financial difficulties!!
 27. even more financial stress
 28. I would struggle to pay the monthly amount
 29. Currently I have had to cut back on food, missing 3 to 4 meals per week.
 30. When the cold months arrive I will have to cut back further on food, so that I can have some heating, probably on alternate days.
My life is very difficult at the best of times, but over the last year financially it is a nightmare.
Any further increase in Council Tax would be extremely hard for me to bear.
An increase above 20% would have a devastating effect on my life and bring the prospects of being unable to pay for essential foods and non prescribed medicines.
 31. I don't feel it would make a huge amount of difference from 20%
 32. I don't think I would be able to pay it as im already struggling to pay what I have to pay now.
 33. Very hard, as just get by with every day living expenses already.
 34. Worse than it is now!
 35. SEE ABOVE
 36. do not know how to answer this question
 37. Please see above comment
 38. None personally
 39. if it was increased to 35% it would have a significant impact on our benefits
 40. As above

42. I would probably either starve to death or die of hypothermia.
43. This is having an extremely adverse effect on my financial situation, because I am unemployed, and as a result it is effecting all other debts.
44. would have to work longer to earn more money just to make ends meet
45. as above things are hard as it is and I do understand the situation but most fortnights im borrowing off family so this would be a nightmare in short.
46. Please see answer above and increase. We were also very dismayed to discover that until recently when we advised you of the fact you had no record of my wife and I being married, she was down as being another person registered at our address in her maiden name.
47. my health would suffer
48. I would probably become homeless. I would certainly have to use food banks.
49. I wouldn't know what else to cut to be able to eat.
50. Where would it end? 50% next time? 75% after that?
51. Choosing between food Heating in winter or extreme threats and persecution from the council where do you expect the extra money to come from ????
many of us barely survive on the pittance of so called benefits! do I eat stay warm in winter or pay my council tax and eat less have no heating in winter?? or perhaps commit suicide out of despair and desperation???
52. It would impact massively
53. Not good as I am on Employment and Support Allowance. I am in the Support group and not able to work.
54. It is hard to make ends meet with the current situation, added to that the fact that Disability Living Allowance for lower rate mobility is due to be phased out over the next couple of years (at a cost to me of around £85 per month), I will be forced to find the money from somewhere, the only available place for me is my food budget. I imagine a situation where I am unable to afford to eat regular meals due to this change, especially during winter when a huge chunk of my money will have to go towards the extortionate electricity costs for heating my home.
55. I dont think it matters here what my opinion is as you will raise it anyhow, so i might as well finish this questionnaire now !
56. My children would go hungry and the gas and electric wouldn't get paid
57. even less to live on.

58. Introduce a fasting day, depending on effects of my Heart Medication.
59. My budget is very tight. I have just heard from EDF that since the government has made them reduce the amount of tariffs they can have, my Energy Assist tariff ends on 30.9.13. My electricity could go up by 36.8%. If I have to pay more towards my Council Tax, I may not be able to afford any heating this winter and will have to stay in bed to keep warm.
60. Struggle to feed myself & I would personally join any protest going as I did when WE got rid of council tax oh & Thatcher. Probably wish great grandad was still alive to imprison those making these decisions. Wish I was Welsh not Colchesterian only pay 10% there
61. Possibly even risk jail although ability to pay may not give me a choice become a bag lady
62. This would cripple us. My partner would have to quit university because it just wouldn't be worth it.
63. it would be a great hardship
64. I'm living on the basics already.
65. I'm not a benefit scrounger, I'm medically retired & can't see how I could possibly afford to pay more!
66. My disabled cousin in Birmingham, pays no council tax.
67. I would have to cut back on my food bill to find the money. I can't work as much as I would love to, so I have no way of getting extra income to pay for this. It is a very big jump from 20%. I think it's wrong. I hope I wouldn't get behind but unless I cut food how else do I magic the money?
68. I would very likely be unable to afford all the things I need. I already do not heat my home in winter because of the cost, other things would no doubt be sacrificed as well. Stop pinching pennies from the poorest people is the simple message that governments and local authorities need to understand and act upon. My only hope if this happens is by that time I have found work and it is not an issue for me.
69. My health would get worse and could ultimately cost the country far more in hospital costs as life would be very difficult, the implication of how this country sees it's disabled due to such policies has already seen an increase in suicide amongst the mentally ill this will just get worse.
70. To have to find a further £8 or £9 or so per week when comparing to pre April 2013, ie approx £470 per annum would put extreme pressure on us
71. This would be ridiculous in my situation and we would not be able to contribute this amount, and as a result there would be ramifications of us not being able to contribute this amount/percentage.
72. This would affect our household severely due to a very limited income.
73. As I am a disabled man on ESA support group I would find this would have a devastating effect on our household income. I find the current amount I am required to pay is hard enough.

71. I would probably have to start paying with my DLA, which is only meant for my health and mobility needs, so my health could be at risk if I had to pay more council tax
72. I would have to eat less food or cut back on my winter heating, £78 benefits a week don't go very far
73. Already explained in above
74. life will be a lot tougher
75. no jobs how are people supposed to survive ?
76. Less money for food,rent top up,electric .£71 p.w doesn,t go far.
77. see above, also i'm on the new E.S.A(incapacity benefit) and that finishes about June time so I don't know what's going to happen.
78. Very negatively indeed. I am already on a very tight financial budget.
79. As all other bills e.g utility bills are increasing the impact would be significant in my household
80. I have NO idea how I would ever manage to make these payments. I don't claim benefits out of CHOICE. I'm NOT able to work
81. I could not pay it.
82. NA
83. I will struggle to pay my bills.
84. we no longer can afford fresh fruit & veg,or heat our homes adequately in the winter. if this happened we wouldnt be able to put our heating on at all...it is simply a choice between food or heat....why do you think obesity is rising & malnutrition in Britain...poor food or lack of food... I never thought that in my 50's such calous behaviour would be going on to the poorest in our societies. & that the most vulnerable would be made to be the scapegoat for many of the governments poor choices...all governments, not just this one... It is grossly unfair that its a postcode lottery as to the amount of help you receive/or don't.
85. I currently feed my children a very healthy diet to ensure they are active and learn well so a 15% increase would make a significant difference as over £50 is close to the cost a weeks shopping.
86. Necessity bills, water gas, electric would suffer as gas is the most expensive I wouldn't use it, I would have to buy a little electric heater and just heat one room and allow my son to sleep in there.In order to pay everything and not be in arrears I would have to account for the increase from my sons DLA which would impact on his level of care.
87. I think that as an unemployed person i would struggle to pay it.

88. I would be usable to simply live
we would not be able to live on what was left, which would mean that some bills would not be paid, starting with the rent, which means, not only us, but many hundreds of people would end up being evicted and made homeless, not may I add, your fault, but the governments fault for, AGAIN, not thinking things through properly.
- 89.
90. I'd get that much more worried about running out of money before I can get a job or another pension lump sum.
91. even worse off as I am now.think they should look at other areas around the uk that don't use rthis scheme
92. it would be hard as I am only on job seekers allowance
93. i couldnt afford to
94. I would have to find ways of cutting back. I don't know how.I dread to think about the impact of my increase in rent and in council tax.
95. I think I would have to reconsider being a full time carer.
96. the impact would be as described above and would make life even more difficult for people on benefits because of ill health or simply unable to get a job. It would restrict the ability to afford a simple bus fare. The increase at present represents the price of one bus ticket.
97. Create hardship, after all it is not only this benefit that is being reduced.
98. It would be a disaster full stop.
99. would not be able to pay I do not get job seekers as I am single parent need a job in school time and all holidays off have no immediate family have paid to do a course have passed and now have a diploma but still unable to find anything do not take any other handouts just need some help .
100. I would struggle to pay other bills and my child would probably suffer as i would have to look at cutting the cost where I can and this would be in the food costs. Fresh vegetables and fruit are very expensive and these are a treat as it is.
101. I am struggling now, so any more would be horrendous!
102. I doubt if i would be able to afford 35% as i find it very hard to afford 20%. I'm unable to increase my working hours otherwise i would lose certain other benefits. It's a very vicious circle.
103. I would have less money to spend on my family for essentials and this put pressure on relationships and children welfare.
104. IF MY COUCIL TAX IS INCREASED YOU WOULD HAVE TO TAKE ME TO COURT AS I, LIKE OTHERS WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO PAY IT.

- Again it depends on individual cases - there are genuine cases where people cannot afford the 20% so could they realistically afford up to 35%. Will they be means tested or a one size fits all approach.
- I am all for people paying their own way, but each case is different.
- I would be paying that increase out of my £85 weekly Employment and Support Allowance and DLA. That money already doesn't come anywhere near to covering all the the bills, medication and treatment not covered by the NHS, wheelchair maintenance, petrol, etc.
105. Increasing the council tax to 35% would have a massive impact on me.
106. I would struggle to pay my bills and continue to keep a warm home. See above.
107. It would be very serious.
108. It will mean more shortage of money, more stress for me and my family in order to find ways to be able to afford the increase in the contribution amount.
109. I wouldn't be able to afford food and fuel enough to keep my son and I healthy
110. Extremely difficult
111. Struggle more
112. Until I get a job which I am desparately trying to achieve, I will be a lot worse off and worry how I will manage bringing up 3 children on my own.
113. People cannot afford it CBC would be taking more people to Court for unpaid C Tax and so spending my money on perscuting people who cannot pay in the first place
114. Financially crippling. The price rise of gas and electric, water rates and household bills increasing this will implicate hugely and keep me on the poverty line.
115. As I am already in debt and considering not heating my home this winter (as I am struggling with my current electricity bills) it would have considerable impact on my ability to pay my bills and possibly keep my home.
116. Simply put, if my benefits dont increase, you sure wont get paid.
117. very difficult
118. I am already in the poverty bracket and try to do my best by working and setting right example to my young children but struggle more now than ever !!!!
- 119.

120. Unsure at present time

The impact would be that I would not be able to budget further to be able to pay any extra, so would likely be threatened with court action, and also lose my right to pay by installments,(as has happened in the past, causing further distress.)and making it impossible to pay anything at all.

The very worst that may happen is me getting behind with all my bills and the threat of losing my home if I were to get into debt. The cost of everything is increasing and there comes a point where there is not enough funds to meet the increases. I am already at that point, so 121. my situation is steadily getting worse.

I am coming up to the age of sixty in February of next year, and would have been able to receive my pension, making things a little less stressful. But now, sadly, I have to wait until I am sixty six, with the recent changes. I cannot imagine living with this stress and worry for another six years. I have longstanding health problems, so am unlikely to find work and better my situation.

I would also like to add that the stress of these financial problems impacts on my health issues, and state of mind, causing further problems, so as much as I try, everything deteriorates further, in a cycle I cannot get out of.

122. Have less food to eat, get into debt owe money.

123. Even less food

124. I feel that life would be even more difficult.

terrifying. This is already 20% than you have EVER deemed that a person with no income should pay. Bearing in mind that those on income support - or equiv - would only have been expected to pay £2.70 a week if they had arrears because you had judged them to be that poor.

125. This is about ability to pay not the Daily Mail statistics on ability to work!!

126. I am disabled so money is very tight.

127. Although of working age, I am disabled and thus cannot work. A rise to 35% would mean the difference between heating my trousers or not (something I need due to disabilities) or even have a hot meal each day.

128. I currently don't earn enough to take care of my family so it would be a struggle.

129. But i am not able to work need a lot of help and support from my daughter and family

130. It would make a huge impact as I am struggling as it is what with energy prices trying to heat my home, food costs - fuel increases so food prices keep going up - having to find money for parking permit - it is endless.

Q7. Please give any other relevant comments below

1. think the whole this is outta order.
2. my wife is of state pension credit age and I am 60 but we still have to pay, yet it states in your paperwork if you are of state pension credit age you do not have to pay this
3. I believe in a system that is fair and takes into consideration the personal circumstances of every individual. Link the JSA and Job search to the amount you pay to people out of work. if they are not actively seeking work, then you can increase their tax to over 20%.
4. as long as they are genuinely unable to work.
5. I believe that disabled people who are unable to work should have the same protection as pension age people.
6. how can people afford 20% when you do not get enough money cover the council tax there fore other bills want get payed and people want be able to afford to eat.
7. it should be proportionate. those that can afford to pay more, do so. those who can't, don't. the majority of workers are on minimum wages and claiming benefits to top up those wages, they should not have to pay more than someone on benefits. those who's income is high enough that they can afford to contribute more toward societies costs, should be asked to do so.
Please remember that every penny is important to those struggling. For those on minimum wage and/or benefits it is a vicious slice into an already negative personal budget. Considering court costs if a citizen reneges on the new cuts to their income: how can this possibly benefit any one? A few less annual Oyster-related jolly times might cover any shortfall by those with the lowest income. How much does "town twinning" cost and is there a financial benefit? What about your own constituents?
8. The worst off suffer from the LCTS which is patently ridiculous.
9. I feel if people working should pay a small contribution and people on benefits i.e income support or dla and unable to work should get full council tax benefit as before and not pay any contribution except for people that are just on jsa (job seekers allowance) and not look for work and have been on that benefit for longer than a year are just playing the system they should have to pay a small contribution
10. Those who receive a certain rate of DLA should not be forced to pay a contribution to Council Tax. It severely reduces the amount of support we are able to have, putting further pressure on us to have to cut down on other essential expenditure, e.g. food and heat. It is leaving the most vulnerable in society even more vulnerable.
11. It shouldn't even be 20% for those unable to work. Other councils have proven that it doesn't need to be, you could make it 0%.
12. I don't think what I say will make any difference, but it should be said. Just because you change Disability into something else doesn't change the fact when people are disabled. I don't agree with charging the disabled, people who are disabled should be exempt, I don't like claiming benefits but unfortunately I am unable to work.

13. I think whether you can work or you cannot work is not relevant to the argument. If you are happy to live on benefits or unhappy to live on benefits, that is more the point, however you could never reach a conclusion on that. I am against economic discrimination.
14. I think a jump from paying 20% to 35 % is a big change in one year. If it was gradually moved to 35% over a few years this would be more achievable for people.
15. Those unable to work should be treated in the same way as those too old to work, namely the pensioners. There should be no discrimination on the basis of age or disability.
16. I'm living on the edge with NO spare income. If increases like this take effect I would seriously consider ending my life.
17. when I am able to return to work when my 3children are in full time education i would be more than happy to pay the same as people who work as I think people should all be treated equally.
18. As above, all people should pay even if it is a small ammount, but must not be forced into more hardship.
19. As mentioned above as I am too ill to work 20% is the maximum I believe affordable.
20. not all benefit claimants are scroungers,individual circumstances should be taken in account,eg people caring for family members.
21. People who are unable to work due to disabilities or chronic illnesses, such as myself, need MORE help NOT LESS, as they struggle to survive financially at the best of times, and it is very unfair to place any further financial burdens on the disabled and sick members of society.
22. If the current burden of 20% that the disabled and sick now have to pay is increased any further, many disabled and sick people will either have to starve or freeze, or both, during the cold months.
23. I do not agree that those unable to work should have to make any contribution. For those unable to work the current contribution has already ensured they are living below minimum income. An increase would be devastating and cause loss of health and early death.
24. Providing either have a disability or elderly I think this would be fair
25. Even 20% is very difficult for me to pay, I am slowly getting more and more into to debt and failing to pay my rent.
26. If people are in a position where it is proven that their health prevents them from working, even 20% is being harsh. When pensioners are excluded
27. i HAVE FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN ADVICE ON WHAT I CAN CLAIM AND WOULD WELCOME EASIER ACCESS TO INFORMATION
28. no comments

28. I am concerned about my ability to pay what I am asked after January/next year

29. I think raising the threshold will cause more hardship - leaving people to seek help from elsewhere, probably not saving much money in the first place. At least leave it until Universal Credit has settled down before changing the threshold; phase it in.

30. I am very afraid that I will not manage at all!

31. In my opinion, disabled people should be protected, like pensioners.

32. This is having an extremely adverse effect on my financial situation, because I am unemployed, and as a result it is affecting all other debts. And there is a big difference between working age people, and people able to work.

33. should be tested per individual or household rather than 'one rule fits all!'

34. I find it hard to pay this amount now

35. payments should be income related

36. With several cutbacks already taking place and more to follow, any increases to outgoings are having severe impacts on those most vulnerable. Being "able" to work and actually having sustainable employment do not always go together.

37. This is a new tax for out of work people etc... so how does the government and council really expect people on very low incomes to find the extra money??? at what cost to their health and well being ??? perhaps people will be forced to turn to crime or prostitution??? does any one REALLY CARE ??? will this survey make one iota of difference ???

Cruel wicked and not thought out properly!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

38. People on low wages or benefits shouldn't have to pay anything. It is all part of the present Governments destruction of the poor. The unemployed, disabled & those millions working in jobs so poorly paid that they can hardly afford any type of life are being forced to pay for the greed on the city of London. The bankers who stole all the money should be squeezed until the bleed before the poor are taxed anymore

39. This is a direct tax on the poor and vulnerable, those who have no real way to fight the decision. As a benefit recipient, I am totally reliant on the benefits I receive, I do not have a choice of 'seeking alternative employment' or 'making a bit of extra cash on the side' due to the nature of my illness. Like many, it will be at the least very difficult and at the worst impossible to keep my head above water financially. It is a disgraceful decision.

40. I think people with babies and preschoolers shouldn't have to pay towards rent and council tax

41. Given the far greater number of people on a Benefit other than JSA I would consider this unfair.

42. For those on benefits like Income Support it is unrealistic to expect them to be able to find more money when benefits are only going up by 1% and everything else is going up much faster.
43. In February 2012 the amount law stated I needed to live on yet on 1st April expected to manage on £20 less a week. Don't know how I'll manage nor how government managed to get legislation through oh well POLITICAL CAREERS ARE TRANSIENT
44. Some people may be able to work yes, but that doesn't mean people will hire me, because I am lacking in qualifications and lacking in experience. I do not think it is fair to say just because people can work, means that they have money coming in from a job. I can work, but I am virtually unemployable, I apply for hundreds of jobs without success. If people like me are going to be discriminated against, then so should those who cannot work.
45. I think it's wrong that I pay council tax!
46. If you can't work due to illness then there is no way you can afford such a huge increase. 20% is hard enough on benefits. I think it should stay the same for people unable to work as opposed to people that don't want to work. How you police who does or doesn't want to work, I don't know
47. Those who can't work for whatever reason should not be penalised, it is as simple as that. Take more money from the people who have it, i.e. those in work and not considered to be in poverty. Council tax should be increased overall if the money can not be found elsewhere, this new 20% rule needs to go, and especially not increased.
48. Myself and many others feel we are bearing the greatest burden and yet many did not contribute to the "financial crisis", the idea of all in this together does not ring true when people have to decide to heat or eat, whilst others can claim help with childcare when on incomes up to £300,000 pa. If CBC thinks they can get away with this please let me remind you of the poll tax and the demise of Thatcher!
49. Isn't it pretty much the same for those unable to work as it is for those able to work but on such a low income? therefore IMO both should be on a lower contribution than someone on a better income
50. It would seem logical that those able to work should pay a slightly higher percentage but this would need to be based on their individual income and circumstances respectively! How you would police this system is not something I can add constructive feedback on.
51. To this I agree, as it is so easy these days to fall on bad times or to even have an accident that leaves people unable to work. We should not punish people due to illness or bad luck like being made unemployed.
52. If I could work I could increase my income to cover an increase in council tax, however I cannot work due to my health so have to make do on the benefits I receive, so I agree people who are unable to work should still pay 20% only
53. dependant on the reason they are unable to work, being drug dependant or an alcoholic does not make you unable to work
54. Benefits system needs total overhaul - look after "OUR OWN PEOPLE!)to much money wasted on things that dont concern our county - money need to be spent on the right things not wasted -
55. Feel in depends on circumstance. I do not work as I am my daughters carer not because I opt to stay at home

56. Every one SHOULD pay what they can afford. I have worked all my life until I was disabled and never objected paying my "dues" when I was earning. I think every one has an obligation to pay their way IF they can
57. I think not only working age should be taken in attention. There are single parents who are working age, but they can't earn enough because they are not able to work many hours.
58. why is it only working age? Everyone uses the same services, pensioners benefit already from heating grants, bus passes, & often reduced payments in other areas like tv etc. Its families that are suffering.
59. I have no garden so am really restricted to how I can suplliment our food,I cant afford the bus so am tied to more expensive shops, I have a child so have 2 lots of fares if she is with me...in every area families are penalised... If its been ok to make the poorest families pay this year, then make those who dont pay anything now pay 20% next year...that would be fair...spread the load!
60. I honestly feel there are many people who choose not to work because it has been made to easy with little or no financial responsibilities. However this has spoilt the help available to those who do try to find work and dislike relying on the help currently available. Im not sure how much income the unemployed recieve in benefits but i do think 20% is fair. However, a further 15% increase could make life very difficult for some people and you may see an increase in the number of people who become reliant on anti depressants or an increase in crime.
61. I don't work because I am my sons carer due to his disability, I have no family and his father has rejected him. It is a round the clock job. Hid DLA provision highlights he needs someone with him at all times due to his lack of awareness of danger. I have no provision for childcare and can't work. Paying 20 percent has already impacted of the minimal amount I receive any more would leave me incurring arrears on essential bills. There are sadly a lot of people who can work and choose not to. I didn't choose my situation and shouldn't be persecuted for it either.
62. those unable to work through no fault of their own, should not have to pay any rent or council tax. each case should be investigated properly to weed out those that could work but choose not to, and they should pay the 20%.
63. just a quick word on BEDROOM TAX. the government makes a big show about being all for families and communities, but when you have lived in a community for many years and made friends, and then someone leaves your household, how can the government expect you to upsticks, move to a smaller house and start again? and just how easy do they think it is to find a suitable, smaller property? AGAIN, no thought put into practice.
64. I think it should be less in fact. The government's already attacking the incomes of disabled people in several ways. It'll cost a lot more to put them up in some sort of residential care when they can't afford to live in their own homes.
65. I am not able to work because of my illness.
66. .
67. I think any rise in contribution to council tax should depend on income. It would seriously impact on those people on benefits and the many people who receive only minimal pay. To those already earning the "national average pay" of £25,000 it would not make much difference, however the "national average pay" is a far cry from our local "average pay" which for many people is struggling to get to £15,000.

66. It should be on a sliding scale dependent on how much they earn. Those unable to work shouldn't pay anything.
67. You are only allowed so much if you cannot work and therefore have to budget your home and family with that amount when things go up like this how are you supposed to find the difference as the amount you get does not go up the same, hence putting people in poverty.
68. benefits are given to those who sometimes play on illness and disability when you look healthy and get on with what life throws at you in everyday life you are overlooked I don't want to live of schemes and false hope just want to have a secure home and not panic about everyday bills
69. As you do really have to take into account each persons individual circumstances which is very difficult , I do understand the reasons behind the changes. But in my case I would come in with all the relevant financial information required and would hope that you would see that as a full time mum working part time there is not much scope for change or an increase in my outgoings.
70. Depends why they are unable to work.
71. Their financial position should be assessed base on their financial means and reasons for not working.
72. I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT PEOPLE ON BENEFITS SHOULD HAVE TO PAY COUNCIL TAX BECAUSE OF THE AMOUNT THE GOVERNMENT GIVES YOU, UNLESS THE BENEFITS ARE INCREASED TO ALLOW FOR IT.
73. If people are able to work, but cannot get a job due to the economy does that not hit the genuine people who are trying to get themselves back on their feet?
74. People who are not working - either claiming JSA, ESA or are carers should not be impacted any further. The amount paid already doesn't cover the cost of living, so the council should protect these groups above others.
75. see above
76. The working family's on low income that probably amounts to what a person who doesn't work (not disabled) should be the same payment increase or not and treated the same
77. People not in work should and on low incomes should not have to pay as they do not have the flexibility in their income to meet such a charge
78. If someone is on a low wage or benefits with the cost of other bills ie utilities and household shopping (I do not mean shopping in M & S) clothes, and upkeep of a house etc how can one afford this?
79. I am aware that times are hard economically, but careful consideration should be equally given to more vulnerable groups, i.e single parents on income support, pensioners and disabled people
80. Its not if able to work, it should be based on ability to pay. Able to work doesn't mean being able to as too many out of work & not enough jobs.

81. Salary should be taken into account not child benefit which be used for what it was intended, ie supporting children not more tax
82. This is being filled in by the parent of an autistic man who doesn't work due to his disability and high anxieties, ocd, etc. I am his appointee and deal with his finances on his behalf.
83. I would like to add that I am sorry for having to explain my life situation in such personal detail. I do not want to be thought of as someone who is complaining. Life is difficult for most people just now, but I am trying to express myself with honesty in a format that is rather impersonal. (I would be happy to speak to someone about my situation.) I hope there is enough information here to be of use in your assessment. Thank you for taking the time to consider my opinion.
84. The poor need as much help as they can get in life
85. Help the poor
86. If they are unable to work why would they be able to afford any contribution. What has changed in their circumstances that makes it okay to make them pay?
87. People such as myself are being pushed to the limit and now on poverty lines. I am unable to find funds from anywhere else and will never be able to work again to increase my fixed income.
- 47 88. I understand the need for payments and the need for facilities but asking those who are unemployed to still contribute a small sum may be difficult. In my case, it felt like with one hand I was given help to take care of myself and family but then the other was asking back for what was given to me.
89. It depends why they are unable to work



Scrutiny Panel

Item

10

12 November 2013

Report of	Assistant Chief Executive	Author	Graham Coleman ☎ 282741
Title	Capital Expenditure Monitor 2013/14 – Quarter 2		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

The Panel is invited to review the progress against all capital schemes in the first six months of 2013/14

1. Action required

1.1 To note the level of capital spending during 2013/14, and forecasts for future years.

2. Reason for scrutiny

2.1 Monitoring capital spending is important to ensure:

- Spending on projects is within agreed scheme budgets.
- The overall programme is delivered within budget.

2.2 This report also gives the Panel the opportunity to hold Service Managers and Portfolio Holders accountable for their budgets.

3. Background

3.1 This report sets out details of spending for the financial year 2013/14 (April to September) and revised forecasts for future years.

3.2 The report includes new capital funding and changes to the capital programme.

3.3 The report includes capital expenditure in respect of the Housing Investment Programme, including expenditure on the Council's housing stock.

4. 2013/14 Review

4.1 **Appendix A** sets out details of spending on all schemes along with existing expenditure forecasts provided by budget managers to provide an indication of progress against schemes in monetary terms. It should be pointed out that expenditure is unlikely to be incurred evenly throughout the year, so any apparent variances from the forecast position for the year are unlikely to indicate any over or under spending against projects as a whole, but tend to relate to timing differences between anticipated payments and actual payments to contractors. Any significant divergences from planned activity will be brought to the Panel's attention in the following paragraphs.

4.2 Accrued capital spending in the first six months of the year totalled £6.8 million. This expenditure represents 27% of the projected spend for 2013/14.

- 4.3 It should be noted that the programme includes a number of major schemes where spending is planned across more than one year. Budget managers have profiled their forecasts for expenditure in line with expectations for 2014/15 and beyond. The table below provides a summary of the capital programme by service area:

	Total Prog.	2013/14 Spend	2013/14 Forecast	Future Years Forecast	(Surplus) / Shortfall
Service / Scheme	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Corporate & Financial Mgmt	3,401.6	257.7	1,866.6	1,532.6	(2.4)
Operational Services	1,053.2	600.7	1,035.2	18.0	0.0
Professional Services	2,573.5	714.0	2,225.1	348.4	0.0
Commercial Services	3,560.4	978.2	2,931.6	652.0	23.2
Community Services	6,938.0	1,951.0	5,154.4	1,783.6	0.0
Completed Schemes	156.4	78.5	80.3	0.0	(76.1)
Housing Revenue Account	11,603.3	2,220.4	11,513.3	90.0	0.0
Total Capital Programme	29,286.4	6,800.5	24,806.5	4,424.6	(55.3)

- 4.4 The Capital Programme has increased by £0.3m since the previous report. New funding has been added to the capital programme including £254k from Section 106 and external contributions and £53k from revenue. The Capital Programme now stands at £29.3 million.

- 4.5 The most significant areas of planned expenditure in the year are summarised in the following table:

Scheme	Forecast £'000	Actual Q2 £'000
Decent Homes & Upgrades	7,775.0	1,511.9
Castle Museum Redevelopment	2,727.8	884.0
Sheltered Accommodation Review	2,023.0	531.8
Universal Customer Contact FSR – ICT	1,510.7	216.7
Council House New Build	1,000.0	63.1
Disabled Facilities Grants	1,000.0	210.1
Garrison ex-Medical Centre	700.0	700.0
Sport & Leisure FSR – Building Works	578.7	377.0
Private Sector Renewals – Loans & Grants	625.1	103.9
Temporary Accommodation Review	600.0	400.0

- 4.6 Other significant expenditure in the first two quarters of the financial year included £550k paid to Colne Housing to secure new affordable housing units at Brook Street in Colchester.

- 4.7 The Scrutiny Panel on 20 August requested that a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) status is added to the quarterly capital monitoring report to provide a clear indicator of overall project performance. The RAG status of capital schemes is summarised in **Appendix A**. Although there are no 'Red' schemes, a total of 11 schemes were classed as 'Amber' by the budget manager. The current position against these schemes is detailed in **Appendix B** to this report.

- 4.8 There is currently a projected net underspend on the capital programme of £55k. This is detailed below:

Scheme	Over/ (Under) £'000
Town Hall DDA Sensory Project (forecast)	3.5
Carbon Management Programme (forecast)	(5.9)
Site Disposal Costs	23.2
North Colchester BIC	(71.2)
King Edward Quay	(4.9)
Total Net Underspend	(55.3)

- 4.9 Costs of Site Disposals are over budget as a result of the legal costs incurred in the recent sale of land at North Colchester, which has generated a capital receipt of over £2m. It is will be proposed that underspends shown against the North Colchester BIC and King Edward Quay schemes are reallocated to related schemes within the Capital Programme. These items will be referred to Cabinet for consideration on 27 November alongside an updated forecast of capital receipts.

5. Strategic Plan references

- 5.1 The Council's Capital Programme is aligned to the Strategic Plan.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 As set out above.

7. Risk management implications

- 7.1 Risk management issues are considered as part of all capital projects.

8. Other standard references

- 8.1 Having considered consultation, publicity, equality, diversity and human rights, community safety, and health and safety implications, there are none that are significant to the matters in this report.

Background papers

None

Service / Scheme	Total Programme £'000	Accrued spend to Q2 £'000	Forecast Expenditure			(Surplus) / Shortfall £'000	RAG Status Current Previous
			2013/14 £'000	2014/15 £'000	2015/16 £'000		
SUMMARY							
Corporate & Financial Management	3,401.6	257.7	1,866.6	1,302.9	229.7	(2.4)	
Operational Services	1,053.2	600.7	1,035.2	18.0	0.0	0.0	
Professional Services	2,573.5	714.0	2,225.1	348.4	0.0	0.0	
Commercial Services	3,560.4	978.2	2,931.6	652.0	0.0	23.2	
Community Services	6,938.0	1,951.0	5,154.4	1,783.6	0.0	0.0	
Completed Schemes	156.4	78.5	80.3	0.0	0.0	(76.1)	
Total (General Fund)	17,683.1	4,580.1	13,293.2	4,104.9	229.7	(55.3)	
Housing Revenue Account	11,603.3	2,220.4	11,513.3	90.0	0.0	0.0	
Total Capital Programme	29,286.4	6,800.5	24,806.5	4,194.9	229.7	(55.3)	
CORPORATE & FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT							
Town Hall DDA Sensory Project	7.7	7.6	7.9	3.3	0.0	3.5	G
Carbon Management Programme phase 2	86.9	(2.3)	80.0	1.0	0.0	(5.9)	A
Moot Hall Organ	444.1	1.7	40.8	173.6	229.7	0.0	G
Universal Customer Contact Fundamental Service							
Review - ICT	2,635.7	216.7	1,510.7	1,125.0	0.0	0.0	A
Universal Customer Contact Fundamental Service							
Review - Accommodation	145.0	0.0	145.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	G
ICT Strategy Phase 2	52.0	13.2	52.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	G
Financial Systems Migration	30.2	20.8	30.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	G
TOTAL - Corporate & Financial Management	3,401.6	257.7	1,866.6	1,302.9	229.7	(2.4)	
OPERATIONAL SERVICES							
Flat Recycling Extension	10.3	0.0	10.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	A
Street Services FSR	44.8	1.0	44.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	A
Sport & Leisure FSR - Building works to Colchester							
Leisure World	596.7	377.0	578.7	18.0	0.0	0.0	G
Sport & Leisure FSR - IT works	107.6	102.9	107.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	G
Charter Hall Staging	29.6	29.6	29.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	G
Colchester School of Gymnastics S106	174.0	0.0	174.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	G
Shrub End Sports Ground Car Park & West End Sports							
Ground Car Park S106	90.2	90.2	90.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	G
TOTAL - Operational Services	1,053.2	600.7	1,035.2	18.0	0.0	0.0	

Service / Scheme	Total Programme £'000	Accrued spend to Q2 £'000	Forecast Expenditure			(Surplus) / Shortfall £'000	RAG Status	
			2013/14 £'000	2014/15 £'000	2015/16 £'000		Current	Previous
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES								
Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants	1,348.4	210.1	1,000.0	348.4	0.0	0.0	G	
Private Sector Renewals - Loans and Grants	625.1	103.9	625.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	G	
Temporary Accommodation Review	600.0	400.0	600.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	G	
TOTAL - Professional Services	2,573.5	714.0	2,225.1	348.4	0.0	0.0		
COMMERCIAL SERVICES								
Park & Ride	124.4	0.0	0.0	124.4	0.0	0.0	A	
Community Stadium	22.1	0.0	22.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	G	
North Colchester Development Land	97.6	7.0	60.0	37.6	0.0	0.0	G	
St Botolphs Regeneration	416.9	34.3	300.0	116.9	0.0	0.0	G	
Town Centre Improvements	151.2	6.5	15.0	136.2	0.0	0.0	G	
Town Station Square	251.7	2.1	251.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	G	
Bus Station - CBC Enhancements	215.1	11.8	215.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	G	
Osborne Street Bus Station	130.8	18.0	130.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	G	
A12 Junction Facilitation	162.5	2.8	162.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	A	
Creative Business Hub	120.8	0.0	120.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	A	
Transcoast	685.2	205.6	685.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	G	
Site Disposal Costs	2.8	26.0	26.0	0.0	0.0	23.2	G	
Moler Works Site	41.4	0.0	41.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	G	
Assistance to Registered Housing Providers	746.9	550.0	550.0	196.9	0.0	0.0	G	
Provision of broadband in parishes	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	G	
Abberton Community Fund S106	54.5	54.5	54.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	G	
Pumping Main - Distillery Lane/Haven Road	86.0	0.0	86.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	A	
Upgrade of CCTV Equipment	96.0	41.5	96.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	A	
Cemetery Extension	125.0	0.0	85.0	40.0	0.0	0.0	G	
Replacement of Cremators	29.5	18.1	29.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	G	
TOTAL - Commercial Services	3,560.4	978.2	2,931.6	652.0	0.0	23.2		

Service / Scheme	Total Programme spend to Q2 £'000	Accrued spend to Q2 £'000	Forecast Expenditure				(Surplus) / Shortfall £'000	RAG Status	
			2013/14 £'000	2014/15 £'000	2015/16 £'000	Current		Previous	
COMMUNITY SERVICES									
Improving Life Opportunities	53.3	0.0	0.0	53.3	0.0	0.0			G
Lion Walk Activity Centre Lift	40.0	5.2	40.0	0.0	0.0	0.0			G
Garrison Gymnasium & MRS	700.0	700.0	700.0	0.0	0.0	0.0			A
Shrub End Community Hall S106	68.8	68.8	68.8	0.0	0.0	0.0			G
Castle Park - Playground Refurbishment	30.7	8.5	30.7	0.0	0.0	0.0			G
Repairs to walls of closed churchyards	114.6	13.0	114.6	0.0	0.0	0.0			G
Resource Centre - Highwoods Country Park	68.7	45.0	65.7	3.0	0.0	0.0			G
King George V Pavilion Wivenhoe S106	12.5	10.8	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0			G
Bergholt Road Play Area	83.4	0.0	83.4	0.0	0.0	0.0			G
Holly Trees WCs Castle Park	83.2	0.0	83.2	0.0	0.0	0.0			G
Castle Park Sensory Garden S106	65.0	0.0	65.0	0.0	0.0	0.0			G
Cook's Shipyard Playsite Wivenhoe S106	33.9	28.1	33.9	0.0	0.0	0.0			G
Baden Powell Play Area S106	18.0	18.0	18.0	0.0	0.0	0.0			G
Shelley Road Play Area	20.0	20.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0			G
Castle Park Olympic Legacy Project	125.0	0.0	125.0	0.0	0.0	0.0			G
Old Heath Recreation Ground Improvements	440.5	22.1	150.0	290.5	0.0	0.0			G
Tile House Farn Play Site	51.0	49.5	51.0	0.0	0.0	0.0			G
Royal Square & Pavilion Dedham	20.0	7.7	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0			G
Montgomery School MUGA S106	64.4	0.0	64.4	0.0	0.0	0.0			G
Heritage Fund - incl. Roman Walls	385.0	46.3	200.9	184.1	0.0	0.0			G
Castle Walls	479.5	24.0	479.5	0.0	0.0	0.0			G
Redevelopment of Castle Museum	3,980.5	884.0	2,727.8	1,252.7	0.0	0.0			A
TOTAL - Community Services	6,938.0	1,951.0	5,154.4	1,783.6	0.0	0.0			
HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT									
Decent Homes & Upgrades	7,775.0	1,511.9	7,775.0	0.0	0.0	0.0			G
Adaptations	562.0	99.2	562.0	0.0	0.0	0.0			G
Sheltered Accommodation Review	2,023.0	531.8	2,023.0	0.0	0.0	0.0			G
Council House New Build	1,000.0	63.1	1,000.0	0.0	0.0	0.0			G
Housing ICT Development	243.3	14.4	153.3	90.0	0.0	0.0			G
TOTAL - Housing Revenue Account	11,603.3	2,220.4	11,513.3	90.0	0.0	0.0			

Service / Scheme	Total Programme £'000	Accrued spend to Q2 £'000	Forecast Expenditure			(Surplus) / Shortfall £'000	RAG Status	
			2013/14 £'000	2014/15 £'000	2015/16 £'000		Current	Previous
COMPLETED SCHEMES (OR WHERE RETENTION ONLY OUTSTANDING)								
Electronic Service Delivery	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	G	
Boada Skatebowl	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	G	
Gladiator Way - Play Equipment S106	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	G	
Pondfields/Ripple Way Play Areas S106	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	G	
Colchester Leisure World - Fitness Pool LACM and Modernisation	5.4	5.4	5.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	G	
Mercury Theatre - Roof & Windows	13.3	13.1	13.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	G	
Highwoods CP Drainage S106	1.4	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	G	
New Braiswick Park Cycle Route	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	G	
North Colchester Business Incubation Unit	71.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	(71.2)	G	
King Edward Quay	5.2	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	(4.9)	G	
Firstsite (VAF)	59.7	59.7	59.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	G	
St Botolphs Public Realm	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	G	
TOTAL - Completed Schemes	156.4	78.5	80.3	0.0	0.0	(76.1)		

Scheme	Spend to Q2 £'000	Forecast 2013/14 £'000	Commentary
Carbon Management Programme phase 2	(2.3)	80.0	All projects complete bar MSCP lighting project which has been delayed due to problems with specified light fittings. Works now due to complete in October 2013.
Universal Customer Contact Fundamental Service Review - ICT	216.7	1,510.7	Spend in the first two quarters has been relatively light. However, the ledger shows significant commitments for Microsoft licensing, hardware purchases and consultancy.
Flat Recycling Extension	0.0	10.3	This project has been delayed as flatted properties need to be resurveyed as they now need to accommodate containers to collect food waste. The spend will occur in the last quarter of 2013/14, but may continue into 14/15.
Street Services FSR	1.0	44.8	It has now been decided that the Task Management technology used in Zones is not fit for purpose in regard to what is required in Recycling and Waste. A new system is being tendered for and the spend is now likely to occur in the last quarter of 2013/14 at the earliest. The scheme will then be reviewed including any further spend required to deliver the priorities from the Street Services FSR.
Park & Ride	0.0	0.0	Scheme dependent on ECC delivery in 2014, following completion of NAR3 (Northern Approach Road).
A12 Junction Facilitation	2.8	162.5	Final spend on drainage works - completion Spring 2014.
Creative Business Hub	0.0	120.8	Contribution to Creative Business Centre to be formed in the St Botolphs Quarter (old police station). Revised funding bid to ERDF 24 October for decision early 2014.
Pumping Main - Distillery Lane/Haven Road	0.0	86.0	New issues uncovered which need to be resolved before scheme commences.
Upgrade of CCTV Equipment	41.5	96.0	This scheme forms part of an options appraisal that is being carried out for CCTV along with the review of the current server and equipment provision. Tender specification being prepared. Aiming for completion by March 2014, but some works may slip into 2014/15.
Garrison Gymnasium & MRS	700.0	700.0	Further monies were due to be released to refurbish the Gym so that it can be used as a community centre, however, the building was recently damaged in a serious fire and so this project may take longer than initially planned.
Redevelopment of Castle Museum	884.0	2,727.8	Colchester Castle closed in January 2013 and will re-open in March 2014. Project completion is September 2014. Underspend showing due to works delays and a further £750k has been re-profiled from 2013/14 into 2014/15 to reflect this.

Scrutiny Panel

Item
11

12 November 2013

Report of	Assistant Chief Executive	Author	Sean Plummer ☎ 282347
Title	Financial Monitoring Report – April to September 2013		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

The Panel is invited to review the financial performance of all General Fund services and the Housing Revenue Account for the first six months of 2013/14

1. Action required

- 1.1 The panel is asked to note the financial performance of General Fund Services and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) in the first six months of 2013/14.

2. Reason for scrutiny

- 2.1 Monitoring of financial performance is important to ensure that:
- Service expenditure remains within cash-limited budgets.
 - Potential variances at year-end are identified early so that remedial action can be taken to recover the position or 'recycle' any surplus budgets.
 - Performance targets are being met.
- 2.2 This report also gives the panel the opportunity to hold Service Managers and Portfolio Holders accountable for their budgets.

3. Background and Summary Position

- 3.1 This report reviews the Council's overall position based on profiled income and expenditure for the six months to 30 September 2013, and also shows a projection of the outturn figures for the full year. All the information presented in respect of General Fund Services shows the position based on net 'direct costs'. The review of the Housing Revenue Account is different in that it shows all costs, both direct and indirect.
- 3.2 The projected outturn for the General Fund is currently a net overspend of £338k. The Housing Revenue Account forecast outturn position is currently an underspend of £100k.
- 3.3 The General Fund position is set out in more detail in the following paragraphs and the HRA position explained in section 6.

4. General Fund – Position to 30 September 2013

Service Budgets

- 4.1 Appendix A summarises the Council position by expenditure group and by Service Group. The net position shows a variance against profiled budget for General Fund Services (excluding benefits) of £512k (favourable). This comprises total expenditure being £926k lower than expected and less income than expected totalling £414k.

Appendix B provides a more detailed view, breaking this information down by individual Service Groups.

- 4.2. Both Appendices A & B to the report include traffic light indicators. The thresholds are as follows:

Green – Variance less than £50k and 5% of budget
 Amber – Variance greater than £50k **OR** 5% of budget
 Red – Variance greater than £50k **AND** 5% of budget

- 4.3. Benefits payments are not shown in Appendix A to avoid distorting the reported position for Service Groups. It is currently projected that this area will be on budget at year end, when the final subsidy claim is paid.

5. Outturn Forecast / Risk Areas

- 5.1 This is the second formal review this year of the 13/14 budget position and the current forecast outturn is net overspend of £338k.

	£'000	
Service budgets	588	See paras. 5.2 – 5.3 and Appendix C
Technical Items / corporate Items - Interest	(250)	See paras. 5.5 .- 5.6
Potential net overspend	338	

Service Budgets

- 5.2 The following table sets out the forecast outturn for all service areas with outturn variances. This shows a net forecast overspend of £588k. As the table shows, this is primarily due to less income being received than budgeted for, mainly within Operational Services. However, this has been partially offset by cost savings in other service areas.

Service	Forecast outturn		
	<i>Expenditure</i>	<i>Income</i>	<i>Net</i>
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Corporate & Financial Management incl CDC	(57)	12	(45)
Executive Management Team	(15)	30	15
Community Services	28	24	52
Commercial Services	(136)	102	(34)
Customer Services	(20)	0	(20)
Operational Services	(67)	859	792
Professional Services	(52)	(120)	(172)
Total all services	(319)	907	588

- 5.3 Appendix C sets out details of all forecast variances against service budgets at the year-end totalling £652k. These include a budget shortfall of £64k in respect of Museum expenditure. Under the terms of the joint museum service, if this forecast transpires then this overspend will be carried forward and as such will not impact on balances. Therefore, this has been excluded from the tables in paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2.

- 5.4 In the review of the position at the end of June it was highlighted that other risks, both positive and negative, to the outturn position were not currently shown at the time. As part of the review of Quarter 2, a number of these have now been reflected in the outturn forecast and whilst there remain other variables, a realistic view of current pressures has been shown.

Corporate / Technical Items

- 5.5. The budget includes a number of corporate and technical budget areas such as net interest earnings, the provision to repay debt, pension costs and some non-service specific grants. The forecast remains that there will still be an underspend of £150k in respect of our net interest budget. The main reason for the position is in respect of the interest budget where costs of borrowing are expected to be lower due to timing of capital schemes, funding decisions and the current strategy.
- 5.6. A further saving of c£100k is also predicted against the allowance in the budget for ICT costs in respect of the UCC FSR. This reflects the latest forecast for implementation of a number of ICT projects. Further savings are possible and the position will be updated in the next budget review.

Council Tax and Business Rates

- 5.7. The 2013/14 included some important key changes to the budget with the introduction of the Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) Scheme and local retention of business rates. The final budget report set out the increased risks in respect of these items. The Panel requested a review of the position in respect of retained business rates and this is set out below alongside commentary in respect of Council Tax.

Business Rates

- 5.8. The Cabinet budget report set out the arrangements, issues and risks associated with the introduction of the local retention of business rates. It was outlined that the Council is required to submit a return of estimated business rates income for 2013/14 (the NNDR 1). The budget proposals in the Cabinet paper were based on the initial baseline funding level for 2013/14. In simple terms any growth in business rates above these baseline figures is retained by Colchester subject to a required Government levy (which means that 50% of any growth is paid to Government) and distribution to relevant preceptors.
- 5.9. The table below sets out how the baseline funding figures compare to the estimates set out in the NNDR 1 which was used for the budget and the most recent forecast for this year. This shows a forecast additional income to the Council of £110k. This must be treated with caution at this stage as final figures will not be known until after the year end when Government returns are required. However, this indicates that at this stage we are expecting that our retained income will not be worse than the budget.

	Baseline funding £'000	NNDR 1 Figures (used in budget) £'000	Forecast for year £'000
Retained NNDR income	22,984	23,025	23,300
Less: Tariff payment	(19,204)	(19,204)	(19,204)
	3,780	3,821	4,096
Less: Levy rate / preceptor contribution		(25)	(190)
Net income	3,780	3,796	3,906
Potential additional income in year to CBC compared to NNDR 1			110

Council Tax / LCTS

- 5.10. The separate report on this agenda sets proposals for the second year of the LCTS scheme and also a review of the impact this year. As shown the current cost of the LCTS scheme is within budget estimates and overall collection rates are better than had been assumed. Therefore, it can reasonably be expected that there will be an overall favourable impact on the collection fund which will be shared with the major preceptors and will assist the overall Council budget position.

Summary position and action proposed

- 5.11. The forecast outturn shows a potential net overspend of £338k, with an expectation that further favourable budget changes (including Council Tax income and retained business rates) will result in an outturn position that will be close to a broadly neutral position. Further more detailed work will be undertaken during Quarter 3 to ensure forecast outturn positions are robust; this work will then feed into the 2014/15 budget setting process given the impact it has on balances. It should be noted that as reported to the previous meeting of this Panel balances are currently £242k above the recommended level.
- 5.12. SMT continues to monitor the budget position on a monthly basis. The next report to the Panel will consider the position after 9 months. This will provide a better opportunity to assess progress against budget targets and income levels. In addition an update of the current year's budget forecast will be reported to Cabinet in January as part of the final 2014/15 budget proposals. This report will be submitted prior to this for the Panel to scrutinise.

6. Housing Revenue Account

- 6.1 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a ring-fenced account which is affected by a number of variable factors. At the end of September 2013, the HRA is showing a net underspend of £333k compared to the budget for the same period. This is primarily due to lower expenditure on Premises costs (£173k) and Supplies & Services costs (£73k). Furthermore, we have received £86k more income than anticipated.

Position to date

- 6.2 Premises related costs are showing an underspend of £173k as at the end of September 2013. Overall, there is a net underspend of £40k on Repairs and Maintenance, which primarily relates to the timing of expenditure on repairs and maintenance of pumping stations, Homeless Persons Units and other delegated areas. There are further underspends of £12k on Grounds Maintenance budgets which relate to the timing of expenditure, and £43k on Council Tax on Empty properties. Finally, there is an underspend of £54k on Utility and Water costs.
- 6.3 Supplies & Services costs are underspent by £73k at the end of September. There is a general underspend across most budget headings, however these are partially offset by an overspend on IT costs which relates to the timing of expenditure.
- 6.4 We have received £86k more income at the end of September 2013. This has primarily arisen due to less rental & service charge income being lost from dwellings and garages than assumed within the budget, through a combination of voids and the timing of the garage site redevelopment project.

Forecast Outturn

- 6.5 The current projected outturn for the HRA is that it will be underspent by £100k, taking into account the additional rent & service charge income we have received to date.

7. Strategic Plan references

- 7.1 The priorities within the Strategic Plan are reflected in the Medium Term Financial Forecast. This makes assumptions regarding government grant and Council Tax income, and identifies where necessary savings will be found in order to achieve a balanced budget. The 2013/14 revenue budget was prepared in accordance with the Strategic Plan's priorities, in the context of the Council facing growing financial pressures. Budget monitoring enables the financial performance against these priorities to be assessed.

8. Financial implications

8.1 As set out above.

9. Risk management implications

9.1 Risk management is used throughout the budget cycle, and this is reflected in the strategic risk register. The 2013/14 revenue budget report that was approved by Council in February 2013 detailed a number of potentially significant risk areas that had been identified during the budget process. In addition, Heads of Service identify a number of both positive and negative risk areas during the year.

10. Other Standard References

10.1 Having considered consultation, publicity, equality, diversity and human rights, community safety, and health and safety implications, there are none that are significant to the matters in this report.

Background Papers

None

Budget Monitoring Summary - Period 6 2013/14

Account Description	Budget to		Actual to Period 6	Full Year Position		
	Period 6 £'000	Period 6 £'000		Annual Budget £'000	Projected Outturn £'000	Variance (fav) / adv £'000
By Subjective Group						
Employees	11,986	11,863	(123)	24,283	24,215	(68)
Premises Related	4,309	3,880	(429)	7,748	7,662	(86)
Transport Related	1,157	1,190	33	2,590	2,704	114
Supplies & Services	4,554	4,248	(306)	9,641	9,401	(240)
Third Party Payments	571	481	(90)	1,154	1,115	(39)
Transfer Payments	127	116	(11)	292	292	-
Capital Financing Costs	-	-	-	130	130	-
Subtotal Expenditure	22,704	21,778	(926)	45,838	45,519	(319)
Government Grant	(1,326)	(1,365)	(39)	(1,673)	(1,673)	-
Other Grants & Reimbursements	(1,002)	(930)	72	(2,980)	(2,907)	73
Customer & Client Receipts	(9,534)	(9,154)	380	(18,927)	(18,093)	834
Income-Interest	(1)	-	1	(2)	(2)	-
Inter Account Transfers	-	-	-	-	-	-
Subtotal Income	(11,863)	(11,449)	414	(23,582)	(22,675)	907
Total General Fund Services	10,841	10,329	(512)	22,256	22,844	588
By Service Group						
Corp & Democratic Core	80	85	5	257	267	10
Assistant Chief Executive	4,382	4,053	(329)	8,800	8,745	(55)
Executive Management Team	561	529	(32)	951	966	15
Community Services	3,112	3,186	74	5,971	6,023	52
Commercial Services	(568)	(421)	147	(521)	(555)	(34)
Customer Services	1,483	1,431	(52)	2,829	2,809	(20)
Operational Services	40	172	132	482	1,274	792
Professional Services	1,751	1,294	(457)	3,487	3,315	(172)
Total General Fund Services	10,841	10,329	(512)	22,256	22,844	588

Budget Monitoring Report for All Services - Period 6 2013/14

Account Description	Corp & Democratic Core	Assistant Chief Executive	Executive Management Team	Community Services	Commercial Services	Customer Services	Operational Services	Professional Services	Total
	ACDC £'000	ACEX £'000	CORM £'000	CMTY £'000	COML £'000	CTMR £'000	OPER £'000	PROF £'000	£'000
EXPENDITURE									
EMPLOYEES									
Profiled Budget to Date	-	1,835	442	2,177	1,520	1,479	2,648	1,885	11,986
Actual to Date	-	1,797	436	2,234	1,441	1,460	2,664	1,831	11,863
Variance to Date	-	(38)	(6)	57	(79)	(19)	16	(54)	(123)
	green	green	green	amber	red	green	green	amber	amber
Annual Budget	-	3,686	851	4,453	3,043	2,953	5,541	3,756	24,283
Projected Outturn	-	3,658	851	4,491	2,927	2,933	5,609	3,746	24,215
Variance	-	(28)	-	38	(116)	(20)	68	(10)	(68)
PREMISES									
Profiled Budget to Date	-	1,101	1	1,117	420	-	1,367	303	4,309
Actual to Date	-	948	1	1,105	374	(3)	1,232	223	3,880
Variance to Date	-	(153)	-	(12)	(46)	(3)	(135)	(80)	(429)
	green	red	green	green	amber	amber	red	red	red
Annual Budget	-	1,817	1	2,426	844	-	2,053	607	7,748
Projected Outturn	-	1,824	1	2,421	844	-	2,015	557	7,662
Variance	-	7	-	(5)	-	-	(38)	(50)	(86)
TRANSPORT									
Profiled Budget to Date	-	30	5	61	17	7	1,021	16	1,157
Actual to Date	-	15	4	56	16	7	1,081	11	1,190
Variance to Date	-	(15)	(1)	(5)	(1)	-	60	(5)	33
	green	amber	amber	amber	amber	green	red	amber	green
Annual Budget	-	61	6	145	38	13	2,295	32	2,590
Projected Outturn	-	60	6	145	38	13	2,410	32	2,704
Variance	-	(1)	-	-	-	-	115	-	114

Budget Monitoring Report for All Services - Period 6 2013/14												
Account Description	Corp & Democratic Core	Assistant Chief Executive	Executive Management Team	Community Services	Commercial Services	Customer Services	Operational Services	Professional Services	Total			
	ACDC	ACEX	CORM	CMTY	COML	CTMR	OPER	PROF	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
SUPPLIES & SERVICES												
Profiled Budget to Date	80	1,792	185	763	370	350	725	289	4,554			
Actual to Date	85	1,687	161	726	423	355	530	281	4,248			
Variance to Date	5	(105)	(24)	(37)	53	5	(195)	(8)	(306)			
	amber	red	amber	green	red	green	red	green	red			
Annual Budget	257	3,823	186	1,453	953	515	1,916	538	9,641			
Projected Outturn	267	3,778	171	1,453	933	515	1,738	546	9,401			
Variance	10	(45)	(15)	-	(20)	-	(178)	8	(240)			
	green	amber	green	amber	amber	green	red	amber	red			
THIRD PARTY												
Profiled Budget to Date	-	18	-	144	111	-	202	96	571			
Actual to Date	-	16	-	134	105	-	146	80	481			
Variance to Date	-	(2)	-	(10)	(6)	-	(56)	(16)	(90)			
	green	amber	green	amber	amber	green	red	amber	red			
Annual Budget	-	100	-	185	238	-	441	190	1,154			
Projected Outturn	-	100	-	180	238	-	407	190	1,115			
Variance	-	-	-	(5)	-	-	(34)	-	(39)			
	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green			
TRANSFER PAYMENTS												
Profiled Budget to Date	-	-	-	-	-	55	-	72	127			
Actual to Date	-	-	-	-	-	69	-	47	116			
Variance to Date	-	-	-	-	-	14	-	(25)	(11)			
	green	green	green	green	green	amber	green	amber	amber			
Annual Budget	-	-	-	-	-	148	-	144	292			
Projected Outturn	-	-	-	-	-	148	-	144	292			
Variance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			

Budget Monitoring Report for All Services - Period 6 2013/14												
Account Description	Corp & Democratic Core	Assistant Chief Executive	Executive Management Team	Community Services	Commercial Services	Customer Services	Operational Services	Professional Services	Total	Total	Total	Total
	ACDC	ACEX	CORM	CMTY	COML	CTMR	OPER	PROF				
CAPITAL FINANCING												
Profiled Budget to Date	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Actual to Date	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Variance to Date	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Annual Budget	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green
Projected Outturn	-	130	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	130
Variance	-	130	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	130
Variance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL EXPENDITURE												
Profiled Budget to Date	80	4,776	633	4,262	2,438	1,891	5,963	2,661	22,704	2,661	22,704	22,704
Actual to Date	85	4,463	602	4,255	2,359	1,888	5,653	2,473	21,778	2,473	21,778	21,778
Variance to Date	5	(313)	(31)	(7)	(79)	(3)	(310)	(188)	(926)	(188)	(926)	(926)
Annual Budget	amber	red	green	green	amber	green	red	red	amber	red	amber	amber
Projected Outturn	257	9,617	1,044	8,662	5,116	3,629	12,246	5,267	45,838	5,267	45,838	45,838
Variance	267	9,550	1,029	8,690	4,980	3,609	12,179	5,215	45,519	5,215	45,519	45,519
Variance	10	(67)	(15)	28	(136)	(20)	(67)	(52)	(319)	(52)	(319)	(319)
INCOME												
GOVERNMENT GRANT												
Profiled Budget to Date	-	-	(50)	(126)	-	(190)	(910)	(50)	(1,326)	(50)	(1,326)	(1,326)
Actual to Date	-	-	(50)	(143)	-	(212)	(910)	(50)	(1,365)	(50)	(1,365)	(1,365)
Variance to Date	-	-	-	(17)	-	(22)	-	-	(39)	-	(39)	(39)
Annual Budget	green	green	green	amber	green	amber	green	green	green	green	green	green
Projected Outturn	-	-	(50)	(352)	-	(311)	(910)	(50)	(1,673)	(50)	(1,673)	(1,673)
Variance	-	-	(50)	(352)	-	(311)	(910)	(50)	(1,673)	(50)	(1,673)	(1,673)
Variance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Budget Monitoring Report for All Services - Period 6 2013/14

Account Description	Corp & Democratic Core		Assistant Chief Executive		Executive Management Team		Community Services		Commercial Services		Customer Services		Operational Services		Professional Services		Total £'000
	ACDC £'000		ACEX £'000		CORM £'000		CMTY £'000		COML £'000		CTMR £'000		OPER £'000		PROF £'000		
OTHER GRANTS																	
Profiled Budget to Date	-		-		(7)		(478)		(90)		(46)		(379)		(2)		(1,002)
Actual to Date	-		(4)		(23)		(412)		(88)		(46)		(325)		(32)		(930)
Variance to Date	-	green	(4)	amber	(16)	amber	66	red	2	green	-	green	54	red	(30)	amber	72
Annual Budget	-		(74)		(13)		(1,265)		(199)		(135)		(1,292)		(2)		(2,980)
Projected Outturn	-		(74)		(13)		(1,265)		(181)		(135)		(1,237)		(2)		(2,907)
Variance	-		-		-		-		18		-		55		-		73
CUST & CLIENT RECPTS																	
Profiled Budget to Date	-		(394)		(15)		(546)		(2,915)		(172)		(4,634)		(858)		(9,534)
Actual to Date	-		(406)		-		(514)		(2,692)		(199)		(4,246)		(1,097)		(9,154)
Variance to Date	-	green	(12)	green	15	amber	32	amber	223	red	(27)	amber	388	red	(239)	red	380
Annual Budget	-		(743)		(30)		(1,074)		(5,436)		(354)		(9,562)		(1,728)		(18,927)
Projected Outturn	-		(731)		-		(1,050)		(5,352)		(354)		(8,758)		(1,848)		(18,093)
Variance	-		12		30		24		84		-		804		(120)		834
INCOME-INTEREST																	
Profiled Budget to Date	-		-		-		-		(1)		-		-		-		(1)
Actual to Date	-		-		-		-		-		-		-		-		-
Variance to Date	-	green	-	green	-	green	-	green	1	amber	-	green	-	green	-	green	1
Annual Budget	-		-		-		-		(2)		-		-		-		(2)
Projected Outturn	-		-		-		-		(2)		-		-		-		(2)
Variance	-		-		-		-		-		-		-		-		-

Budget Monitoring Report for All Services - Period 6 2013/14

Account Description	Corp & Democratic Core	Assistant Chief Executive	Executive Management Team	Community Services	Commercial Services	Customer Services	Operational Services	Professional Services	Total
	ACDC	ACEX	CORM	CMTY	COML	CTMR	OPER	PROF	£'000
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
INTER ACCOUNT TRANS									
Profiled Budget to Date	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Actual to Date	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Variance to Date	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green	green
Annual Budget	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Projected Outturn	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Variance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL INCOME									
Profiled Budget to Date	-	(394)	(72)	(1,150)	(3,006)	(408)	(5,923)	(910)	(11,863)
Actual to Date	-	(410)	(73)	(1,069)	(2,780)	(457)	(5,481)	(1,179)	(11,449)
Variance to Date	-	(16)	(1)	81	226	(49)	442	(269)	414
	green	green	green	red	red	amber	red	red	amber
Annual Budget	-	(817)	(93)	(2,691)	(5,637)	(800)	(11,764)	(1,780)	(23,582)
Projected Outturn	-	(805)	(63)	(2,667)	(5,535)	(800)	(10,905)	(1,900)	(22,675)
Variance	-	12	30	24	102	-	859	(120)	907
TOTAL NET									
Profiled Budget to Date	80	4,382	561	3,112	(568)	1,483	40	1,751	10,841
Actual to Date	85	4,053	529	3,186	(421)	1,431	172	1,294	10,329
Variance to Date	5	(329)	(32)	74	147	(52)	132	(457)	(512)
	amber	red	amber	amber	red	amber	red	red	amber
Annual Budget	257	8,800	951	5,971	(521)	2,829	482	3,487	22,256
Projected Outturn	267	8,745	966	6,023	(555)	2,809	1,274	3,315	22,844
Variance	10	(55)	15	52	(34)	(20)	791	(172)	588

Forecast Outturn Variances

Service Area	Variance			Comment
	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	
Corporate and Financial Management (incl. CDC)				
Assistant Chief Executive	(2)	0	(2)	Under on transport and supplies and services at year end.
Democratic Services	(5)	0	(5)	Under across salary spend at year end.
Legal Services	4	0	4	Overspend on books and periodicals.
Human Resources	(8)	0	(8)	Mainly due to under spends across salary costs.
Facilities	5	20	25	Under on salary costs, but over spent on the cleaning contract due to the number of new sites. Under income relating to the loss of the Old Library. There is no forecast currently relating to the Corporate R&M spend, although there is an underspend to date. If an underspend arises at year end it is envisaged this will be subject to a carry forward request at that time.
Communications & MFDs	(3)	(8)	(11)	Unbudgeted income for Roundabout advertising
ICT	(50)	0	(50)	Estimated under spend on the Capita Contract.
Financial Management	(8)	0	(8)	Under across salary spend at year end
Corporate & Democratic Core	10	0	10	Pressure on electronic banking charges
Executive Management Team				
EMT	(15)	30	15	Under on Customer Excellence spend. Customer Excellence income will not be received.

Service Area	Variance			Comment
	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	
Community Services				
Head of Community Services	27	0	27	Vacancy Factor will not be achieved
Zones	1	24	25	Overspend of £11k on overtime costs, savings of £10k offset this. Income from fees less than expected by Quarter 2.
Colchester and Ipswich Museums	64	0	64	Forecast to be £64k over budget at year end due to negative carry forward from 2012/13. Risk areas which may incur further expenditure include Ipswich Front of House staff budget and Income from rent / hire of Ipswich Museum buildings
Commercial Services				
Bereavement Services	0	(20)	(20)	Income is currently £32k below budget at the end of the second quarter, although the £20k extra income is still forecast to be delivered. Some under spends to date within premises although higher number of assisted funerals has created a small pressure.
Property	0	(54)	(54)	The final 12/13 rent reconciliation for Colchester Business Park was £20k higher than expected, plus a £34k gain in 13/14 from the new letting arrangement for the Magistrates Court/Old Library area. All other income appears to be on budget at the end of the first quarter, including a £70k accrual that we are still holding for potential housing wayleaves income.
Policy and Strategy	(110)	18	(92)	This variance reflects the potential saving on the Tour Series, where the 2013 costs are currently £25k lower than budget, and salary savings on all areas including Strategy & Solutions, Strategy & Performance and Policy. Spatial policy income shortfall forecast.
Monitoring and Response	(26)	158	132	Salary saving in Engineering services. Income pressures in Community Alarms £127k and Engineering £31k.
Customer Services				
Customer Services	(20)	0	(20)	Salary savings within service.

Service Area	Variance			Comment
	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	
Operational Services				
Sport and Leisure	(202)	369	167	Areas performing below target include Lifestyles memberships and an exceptionally hot summer has also seen a down-turn in pools income. A time delay for the launch of implementation has meant a delay in income growth and some planned developments. Areas performing above target include Swimming Lessons, Aqua Springs and Beauty Therapy. Key areas have seen growth in participation of around 11% across the business. Some savings identified in reviewing staff rotas and equipment spend.
Recycling and Fleet	135	240	375	Cost pressures on fleet and employee costs due to interim management arrangements, agency costs & salary savings target. Savings on contractors due to review of rates and reduced trade tipping costs as a result of lower customer base. Shortfall in income due to savings targets for partnership working (depot & trade refuse). Additional income pressures on recycling credits due to reduced tonnages reflected elsewhere in the county and on trade refuse.
Car Parking	0	250	250	Income levels from casual car parking are currently at 96% of the same period in 2012. NCP income for 2012/13 lower than anticipated.
Professional Services				
Environmental Services	8	(32)	(24)	Overspend due to Taxi Study. Over-recovery of income mainly due to Licensing (Premises Licenses), offset by £20k under-recovery in Animal Control. Small £2k over-recovery of income forecast from Housing Inspections.
Housing Options	(50)	0	(50)	£50k under-spend on B&B/Homelessness Initiatives forecast at year end.
Land Charges	0	(88)	(88)	Forecast £88k more income than budgeted for Land Charges search fees at year end.
Professional Support Units	(10)	0	(10)	Savings on Training Budget

Housing Revenue Account – Period 6

September 2013	Current Period - September 2013			Forecast Year-End Position		
	Profiled Budget to Period 6 £'000	Actual to Period 6 £'000	Variance (under) / over £'000	Annual Budget £'000	Projected Outturn £'000	Variance (under) / over £'000
Account Description						
HRA - Direct & Non-Direct						
EXPENDITURE						
Employees	70	66	(4)	139	139	- Green
Premises Related	2,763	2,590	(173)	6,793	6,793	- Green
Transport Related	2	1	(1)	5	5	- Green
Supplies & Services	318	245	(73)	982	982	- Green
Third Party Payments	2,199	2,191	(8)	3,302	3,302	- Green
Transfer Payments	37	50	13	141	141	- Green
Support Services	1,299	1,298	(1)	3,309	3,309	- Green
Capital Financing Costs	-	-	-	15,174	15,174	- Green
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	6,688	6,441	(247)	29,845	29,845	Green
INCOME						
Other Grants & Reimbursements	(25)	(25)	-	(133)	(133)	- Green
Customer & Client Receipts	(15,474)	(15,561)	(87)	(29,002)	(29,102)	(100) Amber
Income-Interest	(2)	(1)	1	(23)	(23)	- Green
Inter Account Transfers	-	-	-	(315)	(315)	- Green
TOTAL INCOME	(15,501)	(15,587)	(86)	(29,473)	(29,573)	(100) Amber
TOTAL NET - HRA	(8,813)	(9,146)	(333)	372	272	(100) Red



Scrutiny Panel

Item

12

12 November 2013

Report of	Assistant Chief Executive	Author	Amanda Chidgey
Title	Work Programme 2013-14		☎ 282227
Wards affected	Not applicable		

This report sets out the current Work Programme 2013-2014 for the Scrutiny Panel.

1. Decisions Required

- 1.1 The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the contents Panel's Work Programme for 2013-14.

2. Alternative options

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

3. Supporting Information

- 3.1 The Panel's work programme will evolve as the Municipal Year progresses and items of business are commenced and concluded. At each meeting the opportunity is taken for the work programme to be reviewed and, if necessary, amended according to current circumstances.
- 3.2 At the last meeting of the Panel, following a request from the Chairman, it was confirmed that it would be possible for the report on the Homelessness Strategy to be moved from the meeting on 28 January 2014 to the business of the meeting on 11 February 2014. In addition the Panel asked for arrangements to be made for one or two additional meetings to be scheduled in December 2013 / January 2014 in order to provide sufficient time for business to be conducted adequately. At the time of writing this report it is not possible to address this request but further details will be reported orally at the meeting.

4. Strategic Plan References

- 4.1 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 underpins the implementation and application of all aspects of the Council's work.

5. Standard References

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

WORK PROGRAMME 2013-14

Meeting date / agenda items and relevant portfolio
<p>11 June 2013</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2012-13 Year-end Performance Report and SPAP (Leader / Head of Community Services) 2. 2012-13 Revenue Expenditure Monitoring Report 3. 2012-13 Capital Expenditure Monitoring Report
<p>2 July 2013 (extra)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New Housing Arrangements (Housing / Head of Commercial Services) deferred from 11 June 2013
<p>23 July 2013 (briefing 18 July, 5pm, S11 Rowan House)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre-scrutinise the Portfolio Holder decision 'To Close the Abbots Activity Centre' (Community and Leisure) 2. Budget Strategy, Timetable and MTFE (Leader / Business and Resources) 3. Annual Report on Treasury Management (Business and Resources)
<p>20 August 2013 (briefing 14 August, 5pm, S11 Rowan House)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2013-14 Capital Monitor, period April – June 2. 2013-14 Financial Monitor, period April – June
<p>10 September 2013 (briefing 5 September, 5pm, S11 Rowan House)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safer Colchester Partnership (Crime and Disorder Committee) (Planning and Community Safety) 2. firstsite project: Final Overview (Scrutiny Panel)(I Vipond, Strategic Director)
<p>29 October 2013 (briefing 24 October, 5pm, S11 Rowan House)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Corporate and Financial Management FSR - Pre Cabinet scrutiny of Business Case (Leader) 2. Report of urgent decision where call-in does not apply
<p>12 November 2013 (briefing 7 November, 4.30pm, S11 Rowan House)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Call-in – Allotment Charges and Review of Tenancy Agreements 2. Localising Council Tax Support (follow-up on 2012-13 implementation review) 3. 2013-14 Revenue Monitor, period April – September 4. 2013-14 Capital Monitor, period April – September
<p>10 December 2013 (briefing 5 December, 5pm, S11 Rowan House)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of Parking Services in Colchester (Street and Waste Services) Presentation from Head of Operational Services and North Essex Parking Partnership Group Manager 2. Treasury Management – Half yearly update

3. 2013-14 6-monthly Performance report and SPAP (Leader / Business and Resources)

28 January 2014 (briefing 23 January, 5pm, S11 Rowan House)

1. Review of Colchester Hospital (Dr Coutts and Dr Irvine to attend)
2. 2014/15 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and MTF (Pre-scrutiny of Cabinet Decision (Leader / Business and Resources)
3. Treasury Management Investment Strategy

11 February 2014 (briefing 6 February, 5pm, S11 Rowan House)

1. 2013-14 Capital Monitor, period April – December
2. 2013-14 Revenue Monitor, period April – December
3. Homelessness Strategy (Colchester Borough Homes)

18 March 2014 (briefing 13 March, 5pm, S11 Rowan House)

1. Colchester Community Stadium Limited review (last review 20 March 2012)(Leader)

