

Cabinet

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

The Cabinet deals with the implementation of all council services, putting into effect the policies agreed by the council and making recommendations to the council on policy issues and the budget.

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COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL CABINET

27 November 2013 at 6:00pm

Leader (& Chairman): Councillor Anne Turrell (Liberal Democrats)
Deputy Chairman: Councillor Martin Hunt (Liberal Democrats)
Councillor Nick Barlow (Liberal Democrats)
Councillor Tina Bourne (Labour)
Councillor Annie Feltham (Liberal Democrats)
Councillor Beverley Oxford (The Highwoods Group)
Councillor Paul Smith (Liberal Democrats)
Councillor Tim Young (Labour)

AGENDA - Part A

(open to the public including the media)

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. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. Minutes

1 - 7

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2013.

6. Call-in Procedure

To consider any items referred by the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel under the Call-In Procedure.

i. Allotment Charges and Review of Tenancy Agreements (COM-005-13) 8 - 24

Portfolio Holder decision COM 005-13 Allotment Charges and Review of Tenancy Agreement is referred to Cabinet to determine. See minute 33 of the Scrutiny Panel meeting of 12 November 2013.

Portfolio Holder report COM-005-10 and the call in form are also attached for information.

7. Regeneration

i. St Botolph's Quarter - Approval of Draft Heads of Terms for Roman House 25 - 29

See report by the Head of Commercial Services

ii. Breakers Yards The Hythe – Approval of Preferred Bidder Following a Marketing Process 30 - 34

See report by the Head of Commercial Services

8. Business and Resources

i. Fundamental Service Review of Corporate and Financial Management 35 - 68

See report by the Executive Director Customer Operation and Partnerships and minute 31 of the Scrutiny Panel meeting of 29 October 2013.

ii. Local Council Tax Support Scheme 69 - 100

See report by the Head of Customer Services and minute 34 of the Scrutiny Panel meeting of 12 November 2013.

iii. Economic Development Strategy 2010-15 101 - 102

See recommendation in minute 14 of the Policy Review and Development Panel meeting of 16 September 2013.

9. Strategy/Business and Resources

- i. 2014/15 Revenue Budget, Fees and Charges, Capital Programme and Financial Reserves** **103 - 193**

See report by the Assistant Chief Executive.

10. Housing

- i. Colchester Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2013-43** **194 - 242**

See report by the Head of Commercial Services

- ii. Capital Housing Investment Programme: Appointment of a Single Contractor to Provide Adaptations to Council Housing** **243 - 246**

See report by the Head of Commercial Services

- iii. Capital Housing Investment Programme: Appointment of Two Contractors to Deliver Capital Internal Works (Including Kitchen Renewals, Bathroom Renewals, Central Heating Renewals and Rewires)** **247 - 251**

See report by the Head of Commercial Services

11. Street and Waste Services

- i. Waste and Recycling Task and Finish Group** **252 - 253**

See recommendation in minute 15 of the Policy Review and Development Panel meeting of 16 September 2013.

12. Customers/Business and Resources

- i. Award of Contract for ICT Systems Supporting the Universal Customer Contact Fundamental Service Review** **254 - 256**

See report by the Chief Operating Officer Delivery and Performance

13. Customers

- i. Demand Management and Behaviour Change** **257 - 259**

See recommendation in minute 13 of the meeting of the Policy Review and Development Panel meeting of 16 September 2013.

14. Communities and Leisure Services

i. Abbots Activity Centre 260

To consider and determine the Motion from Council on 16 October 2013 - see minute 31 of the Council meeting of 16 October 2013.

15. General

i. Calendar of Meetings 2014-15 261 - 267

See report by the Assistant Chief Executive

ii. Guidance for Councillors and Officers on Outside Bodies 268

See recommendation in minute 23 of the Governance Committee meeting of 15 October 2013.

iii. Progress of Responses to the Public 269 - 270

To note the contents of the Progress Sheet

16. 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) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 to exclude the public, including the press, from the meeting so that any items containing exempt information (for example 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).

COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL CABINET

27 November 2013 at 6:00pm

AGENDA - Part B

(not open to the public or the media)

Pages

17. Regeneration

- i. **St Botolph's Quarter - Approval of Draft Heads of Terms for Roman House**

The following report contains exempt information (financial/business affairs of a particular person, including the authority holding information) as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

See Appendices to the Head of Commercial Services Report

- ii. **Breakers Yards The Hythe - Approval of Preferred Bidder Following a Marketing Process**

The following report contains exempt information (financial/business affairs of a particular person, including the authority holding information) as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

See Appendix to the Head of Commercial Services Report

18. Housing

- i. **Capital Housing Investment Programme: Appointment of a Single Contractor to Provide Adaptations to Council Housing**

The following report contains exempt information (financial/business affairs of a particular person, including the authority holding information) as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

See report by the Head of Commercial Services

- ii. **Capital Housing Investment Programme: Appointment of Two Contractors to Deliver Capital Internal Works (Including Kitchen Renewals, Bathroom Renewals, Central Heating Renewals and Rewires)**

The following report contains exempt information (financial/business affairs of a particular person, including

the authority holding information) as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

See report by the Head of Commercial Services

CABINET

9 OCTOBER 2013

Present :- Councillor Anne Turrell (the Leader of the Council)
(Chairman)
Councillors Nick Barlow, Tina Bourne, Annie Feltham,
Martin Hunt (Deputy Leader) , Beverley Oxford,
Paul Smith and Tim Young

Also in Attendance :- Councillor Mary Blandon
Councillor Nick Cope
Councillor Pauline Hazell
Councillor Jo Hayes
Councillor Gerard Oxford
Councillor Colin Sykes
Councillor Laura Sykes
Councillor Dennis Willetts

38. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2013 were confirmed as a correct record.

39. Have Your Say!

Melva Lingard addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(2) to express concern about the 40% increase in rents for allotments proposed over the next five years. The trend of increased demand for allotments and long waiting lists was now being reversed. The Council was compounding the problem by not letting vacant plots quickly. This imposed a double cost on the Council, who lost income and had to meet the costs of maintaining the allotment. Therefore, if the Council were able to let the vacant plots costs would come down and income would be generated. If the costs of allotments were to increase, then residents, particularly those on fixed incomes, would lose both access to cheap produce and the health benefits of maintaining an allotment.

Councillor Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure Services, invited Melva Lingard to attend the Scrutiny Panel meeting on 17 October 2013 where a recent Portfolio Holder decision relating to allotments was due to be discussed.

Nick Chilvers addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(2) to express his concern about the state of the gardens opposite and around the Minories. This was discouraging him from taking a group of students from Sweden to visit firstsite as it would create a poor impression of Colchester. He urged the Council to use some its resources to improve this area.

Councillor Barlow, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Councillor T. Young, Portfolio

Holder for Planning, Community Safety and Culture, and Councillor Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure Services, responded and indicated that they would look into the situation. If the land belonged to the Council, they would arrange for its improvement and if not, contact the landowner.

Councillor Hazell addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(2) about a recent letter in local media about the impact of the “bedroom tax” subsidy and discretionary housing payments. She was concerned as the views in the letter were contrary to the information that Councillors had been provided with in briefings about the changes to the welfare system which had stressed the pre-emptive work the Council was undertaking to support those residents who were affected.

Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources and Councillor Bourne, Portfolio Holder for Housing, explained the support mechanisms that had been put in place for residents. These had helped a large number of residents and in addition freed up a number of large properties for families to use. The support the Council had put in place had been identified in a Department of Work and Pensions Guide as best practice. The financial support provided by Essex County Council was acknowledged.

40. Policy Review and Development Panel: Delivering Community Benefits from EU Funding in Colchester

Minute 9 of the Policy Review and Development Panel meeting of 5 August was submitted to the Cabinet. Josie Worner, Regeneration Partnerships Officer, made a presentation to the Cabinet covering details of the main schemes in the Borough funded by the European Union, how the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) was looking to secure further EU funding and the projects that may benefit from EU funding in the future.

Councillor G. Oxford attended and with the consent of the Chairman addressed the Cabinet. He welcomed the support provided by the EU to businesses in Colchester and hoped that the support given to research and to business incubation would help retain students studying at Essex University.

Councillor Hayes attended and with the consent of the Chairman addressed the Cabinet to stress the benefits of membership of the EU. The benefits set out in the report and presentation would be lost if Britain were to withdraw. The business community, who had been silent on the issue, and the City were beginning to speak out in favour of EU membership. Regional exports to the EU were worth £16 billion and over half the region’s exports went to EU member states. It was no surprise that the richest parts of the UK were those which traded most with the EU.

Councillor Willetts attended and with the consent of the Chairman addressed the Cabinet. He congratulated the administration on its success in gaining funding for some interesting projects, particularly the redevelopment of the Castle. However, the large regeneration projects in Colchester, such as Vineyard Gate, St Botolphs and the Cultural Quarter had not progressed sufficiently to the stage where EU funding could

be secured. Also no indication was given as to the level of funding the Council hoped to secure from SELEP's bid. He estimated that the average household in the Borough paid approximately £440 per annum in towards the EU for little direct benefit. The Cabinet should prepare a proper plan for EU funding for the next 10 years, setting out what funding it expected to receive and how it may be used so that residents could see what they might get in return for the taxation they paid.

Councillor Turrell, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, indicated that the Council was already doing what was requested. She noted that the recommendations had come from the all party Policy Review and Development Panel and that it had not indentified any issue with the way EU funding was secured.

Councillor Barlow, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources and Councillor T. Young, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Community Safety and Culture, also indicated their support for the recommendation from the Policy Review and Development Panel. It was indicated that a number of large scale developments were underway in Colchester, such as the refurbishment of Williams and Griffin. Colchester was well placed to receive funding from SELEP and in the first round had received 26% of the available funding.

RESOLVED that the following issues be borne in mind when consideration is given to how to maximise the benefits from EU funding for Colchester in the future:

- Acknowledgement be given to the significant work already undertaken by the Council and with very limited resources to secure EU funding streams for the benefit of the community;
- The need for continued support to be given by the Council to the identification of EU funding streams in the future;
- The need for continued support to be available for the local Small and Medium Sized Enterprise sector and the creative industries in Colchester;
- Opportunities be sought to work collectively with the University of Essex and Anglian Water to secure appropriate funding streams and to deliver tangible solutions to local issues of concern such as the odour problem in the area of the Hythe;
- Efforts be concentrated on securing as much support as possible for Colchester from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, bearing in mind the extent of the geographical area that the SELEP covers and the need to align funding opportunities with the 2015-2020 three priority themes;
- The need for greater awareness of the sources of funding from the EU to be generated within local communities;
- The importance of finding projects which include elements of innovation and sustainability such as the domestic sprinkler example for Colchester Borough Homes to consider.

REASONS

There were clear benefits to the Borough from EU funding, as set out in the report and minute of the Policy Review and Development Panel and the presentation to Cabinet.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

It was open to the Cabinet not to accept the recommendations from the Policy Review and Development Panel.

41. To Approve the Delegation of Authority for the Award of the Cash in Transit Contract

The Head of Customer Services submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member. Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, indicated that it was now the intention to let the Cash in Transit contract in lots and that only Lot 1 required authority to be delegated to the Head of Customer Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources.

RESOLVED that authority be delegated to the Head of Customer Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources to approve the award of Lot 1 of the Cash in Transit Contract.

REASONS

The Council is currently engaged in an exercise to procure the cash collection and counting element of Income Management. The planned date for the appointment of the preferred contractor is 1 December 2013. There are timescale constraints due to the implications regarding TUPE transfer due to 30 day consultation and the operational needs of the North Essex Parking Partnership over the Christmas period.

The cost of Lot 1 of the contract, over the course of five years will exceed the financial limit of £500,000 which currently determines who can approve such expenditure.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

To progress the approval through the normal channels and ask the Cabinet to consider the contract award at its 27 November meeting and to extend the current Cash in Transit Contract for a further 8 weeks.

To continue to count cash in house and increase the capacity of the Income team to incorporate the additional cash counting from the North Essex Parking Partnership and to move the existing secure office to another location. Vacation of the current office is due by 1 March 2014.

42. Capital Housing Investment Programme: Appointment of a Single Contractor to Install Windows and Doors in Council Homes

The Head of Commercial Services submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

RESOLVED that:-

(a) Anglian Windows be appointed to deliver the PVCu Windows and Doors contract.

(b) The Council enter into the latest version of the Joint Contracts Tribunal (JCT) Measured Term Form of Contract with Anglian Windows to deliver the works.

REASONS

The contractor previously delivering this service decided to invoke a Break Clause, which existed in the three individual contracts that were in place, and as a result it has been necessary to undertake a procurement exercise.

In order to maintain services to customers, the Portfolio Holder for Housing together with the Proper Officer agreed in February 2013 that Contract Procedure Rule 2(2) should be invoked to allow an exemption from the normal procurement requirements to be followed and Cabinet Procedure Rule 22 was also invoked to deal with the situation under "Matters of Urgency".

As a result during an interim period while a new tender process was being conducted services have continued to be delivered to customers through Colchester Borough Homes using a local supply chain.

The procurement approach agreed by Cabinet on 1st December 2010 as part of the Asset Management Strategy is to let a JCT Form of Contract for this and similar types of work.

The external replacements programme has a direct effect on the individual properties energy efficiency which can be measured on a 1 to 120 scale through the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) score. The SAP score increases by 3 points when replacing single glazed windows with double glazing which represents a carbon saving of 0.377 tonnes per annum. This can be further represented as a financial saving on the tenants heating bill of £69.00 per annum (modelled on a 1950's 3 bed semi-detached house). Due to the advances in technology the SAP score still increases by 1 point when replacing existing double glazed windows and PVCu doors can assist in draft proofing.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Not to accept the tender but this would impede the delivery of previous Cabinet decisions and may not deliver best value which the Council has a duty to seek.

Not to continue with the programme but again this would be at odds with the previous Cabinet decisions.

43. Policy Review and Development Panel: Work Programme 2013/14

Minute 10 of the Policy Review and Development Panel meeting of 5 August 2013 was

referred to the Cabinet.

Councillor T. Young explained that a very good report on fracking had been prepared by officers and circulated to all councillors. The report made it clear that Colchester was not a suitable location for fracking. This could now be made publicly available.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The report on fracking provided to Councillors be noted and made publicly available;
- (b) In view of the provision of the report to Councillors, there was no need for the submission of a report on fracking to a future meeting of the Policy Review and Development Panel.

REASONS

Officers had produced a report on fracking which had been distributed to Councillors. The report had demonstrated that Colchester was not an appropriate location for fracking.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

It was open to Cabinet to request further work on the issue, if it considered this was necessary.

44. Progress of Responses to the Public

The Cabinet/Panel resolved under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended) to exclude the public from the meeting for the following item as it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

45. Capital Housing Investment Programme: Appointment of Single Contractor to Provide PVCu Windows and Doors to Council Homes

The Head of Commercial Services submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The information in the Head of Commercial Services report be noted.
- (b) Anglian Windows be appointed to deliver the PVCu Windows and Doors contract.
- (c) The Council enter into the latest version of the Joint Contracts Tribunal (JCT)

Measured Term Form of Contract with Anglian Windows to deliver the works.

REASONS

As set out in minute 42

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

As set out in minute 42.

**EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 12 NOVEMBER 2013**

33. Referred Items under the Call-In Procedure // Allotment Charges and Review of Tenancy Agreements

Councillor Harris (in respect of his acquaintance with members of the public in attendance at the meeting and his involvement in Colchester in Bloom) declared his non-pecuniary interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).

A report was submitted to the Panel explaining that the decision taken by Councillor Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure, relating to allotment charges and the review of Allotment Tenancy Agreements had been called in for review by the Panel.

The reasons for the call-in by Councillor Lissimore, supported by four other Councillors, , together with the notice of decision and the report were attached to the report.

Councillor Lissimore was invited by the Chairman to present the case, expanding on the reasons for the call-in. She referred to the historical basis of the size of allotments which were intended to provide for the self sufficiency of working families. She had been an allotment holder for ten years and had personal experience of the benefits of the activity in terms of healthy eating, educating young people about food, social interaction and physical activity which mirrored many of the priorities identified in the Council's Strategic Plan. She had undertaken research into allotment costs across the country and had determined that the average cost for a half size plot was £22.60, with many local authorities also offering significant reductions for concessions. According to her research, the proposal to increase the cost of half size plots to £47.50 per year was therefore more than double the national average cost. She considered there were other options available to increase income for the Council, particularly in relation to the number of vacant plots which currently totalled 42 whilst there remained a large number of people on the waiting list for a plot. 40% of allotment holders had indicated their dissatisfaction with the way the Council managed the reallocation of plots. She was also concerned at the proposal to restrict allotment holders to one plot per household as she considered there were many people who would be disadvantaged by this restriction. Councillor Lissimore accepted the principle of the allotment service being cost neutral which had been identified as a priority in 2008. She was of the view that the reduction in size of plots had significantly contributed to the achievement of this target, without the need to consider additional increases in costs for the allotment holders. She pointed out that the original cost neutral target had been based on only the direct costs associated with the allotment service whilst the latest review had also included indirect costs which meant that the service currently had a shortfall in costs of £36,100. She questioned why the most recent costs had been calculated on a different basis, why they had been applied to the review and on what basis they had been calculated.

The following members of the public addressed the Panel pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(2):

Melva Lingard, Committee member from the Colchester Allotment Association, spoke of her concern that allotment holders would be forced to relinquish their plots as they would find the activity unaffordable. She referred to the number of plots that were not being actively cultivated which she considered should be subject to closer monitoring by the allotment inspectors. She was also concerned about the number of plots that were vacant but had yet to be re allocated. She was of the view that there were people sharing households who were unrelated and it would not be fair to prevent more than one person in each from holding an allotment. In her view this was preferable to having large numbers of long standing vacancies. She felt there needed to be closer co-operation between allotment holders and the inspection officers as this would lead to increased rental income. She was aware of allotment holders who were in danger of having to give up their plots on the basis of affordability and she felt this should be avoided.

Sally Young, Secretary of the Colchester Allotment Association, stated her concern that the Allotment Association had not been consulted about the proposed increase in charges. She felt the charges had increased very rapidly over recent years but little improvements had been made in the turn-around of vacant plots. She also mentioned the many benefits of allotment holding, in particular the social interaction and sharing of information between allotment holders, many of whom did not have access to other areas of open space. She was particularly concerned that those who benefitted most from the activity would be the least able to afford the proposed increased charges.

Tom Hall, an allotment holder, had calculated that, since 2009 the costs of allotment holding had increased by 83% and was of the view that this was grossly out of line with the economic trends and the charges in other parts of the country. He was of the view that a proportion of the costs were attributable to the way the council administered the service. In particular, he referred to the inspections of the sites which were undertaken two or three times a year which were intended to identify which sites were not being actively cultivated. He felt that this regime was easy to circumvent and that the inspections were not delivering the required outcomes.

Jackie Briggs, a Committee member from Colchester Allotment Association, recognised the need for the allotments service to be a cost neutral one but she felt that the Council needed to listen to the allotment holders views. Allotments had originally been created for working families but more recently this demographic had changed. She expanded on the benefits of allotment holding previously referred to in terms of the assistance given in schools by allotment holders, the educational benefits for young people, the competitions that the allotment holders participated in, the sharing of knowledge about plants and insects and the fund raising activities which had supported local organisations such as St Helena Hospice. She urged the Council to think again on the charging proposals.

Michael Ellis acknowledged that the service should not be subsidised but he felt it was too easy to simply increase the costs. He considered that measures should be taken first to maximise occupancy of plots and to address the problem of plots being

left uncultivated. He had calculated that a significant proportion of the total allotment holding was allocated for access and he considered that an improvement in the allotment layouts to reduce access routes would lead to a significant increase in revenue. He did not consider it necessary for the Council to invest resources in computer software in order to manage the waiting list and he was of the view that postal costs could be reduced by means of correspondence being sent to allotment holders by email.

Councillor Quince attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Panel. He acknowledged that the numbers of people attending the meeting indicated that this was considered to be an important issue for these people. He referred to the 223 people currently on the allotment waiting list and the 41 vacant plots in the context of his knowledge of people being waiting for plots to be allocated for a number of years. He repeated the acknowledged benefits, in terms of cheap food, education and companionship but felt that the important issue was one of management. He considered that allotments were administered elsewhere by single individuals at little cost and that the current management arrangement at the Council was providing poor value for money. He was particularly concerned about the slow turnover of vacant plots and was of the view that, if this could be undertaken more quickly, the income for the service would be greater.

Councillor Willetts attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Panel. He congratulated Councillor Lissimore in calling in the decision as he considered that the issue was one of significant mismanagement of the service. He was of the view that the prices were escalating ahead of inflation rates, whilst the Council's actions in relation to plot turnover were ensuring that the supply was being curtailed. He stated his concerns about the Human Rights implications of the proposals as he considered that the restriction on one allotment holder per household was not treating people equally and would lead to accusations of discrimination against the Council. He was further concerned that the decision had not been based on sound financial information. He did not feel that the proposed price increase had been fully justified, particularly in view of the levels of allotment charges elsewhere in the country and in particular in relation to the charges associated with Parish Council managed allotment sites. He quoted costs associated with the allotment service which he had obtained from the Council's website, including those for water (£3,600), printing (£1,180), tree surgery (£2,000), Conservation Volunteers and Veolia, grounds maintenance contractors (£23,460). He sought an explanation regarding the basis and purpose of these costs.

Councillor Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure, was invited by the Chairman to respond to the points raised. She thanked the members of Colchester Allotment Association and other allotment holders for attending the meeting and for their comments and she confirmed her commitment to the wellbeing of the people of the Borough, including those who held one of the Council's 1,100 allotments across 19 sites in the Borough. She acknowledged the information that allotments in other parts of the country were cheaper than in Colchester but she was aware of the costs involved in the service and she was committed to reducing the subsidy provided by the Council. She was sympathetic to the many benefits of allotment holding and she reminded the Panel that the proposed increase in cost equated to 15p per week for a full sized plot. She did not accept the view that the restriction on household access to

allotments was an infringement of Human Rights as she was not of the view that allotment holding was considered to be a basic human right. She was of the view that the issue was one of fairness and she did not consider it to be fair for the Council to continue to subsidise the allotment service. She considered that the costs associated with the service were genuine ones, she acknowledged that there were occasions when it did take time to reallocate plots when they became vacant but she believed that the inspecting officers were working to identify inactivity on plots and to ensure that delays in reallocation were reduced to a minimum.

The Panel members were invited to confer with Councillors Feltham and Lissimore and the following issues were raised:

- Councillor Harris – the nature of any consultation with the allotment holders and, if this has not been the case, the possibility of a dialogue being set up as soon as possible in order to build on previous positive relationships and the need for Performance Indicators to be agreed which would assist the site stewards with their responsibilities and potentially contribute to reductions in management costs;
- Councillor Bentley – a breakdown of the Parks and Recreation Management fee of £34,900 and the measures identified to reduce this cost, the potential to make better use of the site stewards in providing up to date information about plots to the Area officers, whether consideration had been given to placing the management of the allotments with a Trust or the possibility of utilising the management model successfully adopted by Parish Councils and whether it was considered likely that the Community Right to Challenge would have any implications for the service in the future;
- Councillor Harrington – a suggestion to reduce the time taken to reallocate plots by the imposition of a time limit for acceptance, the reason for applying both direct and indirect costs to the charging review and whether there were any concerns about the continued affordability of plots for some allotment holders;
- Councillor Oxford – whether any investigation had been undertaken in relation to the levels of subsidy in other Local Authorities and suggesting the reallocation process be speeded up by inviting the top five on the waiting list to jointly attend a pre-determined site visit;
- Councillor Higgins – to reduce the period of time for reallocation of vacant plots all on the waiting list could be invited to ‘bid’ for a vacant plot with the highest placed bidder being successful;
- Councillor Hayes – the potential to reduce grounds maintenance costs by utilising the services of smaller and local contractors or operatives

In response to issues raised, the following information was provided by Councillor Feltham, supported by Bob Penny, Community Development Manager:

- No specific consultation had been undertaken with Colchester Allotment Association, it was understood that the members had been notified of the proposed charges along with other allotment holders;

- The Parks and Recreation Management fee was made up of the proportion of the cost of four Area Parks and Recreation Officers who each had responsibility for the management and inspection of allotments in their area;
- The continued requirement for officers to attend allotment sites to determine potential cultivation disputes and to liaise with the grounds maintenance contractor;
- The current system for reallocation of vacant plots was for individual contact to be made with the person at the top of the waiting list and for that person to be given a period of time to visit the site and to decide whether they wished to accept the offer. If the offer was declined contact was then made with the next person on the list. It was acknowledged that this process could take some weeks before the plot was successfully reallocated;
- Measures to reduce the management costs included a number of online self-help initiatives, including waiting list details and allotment plot maps to identify vacancies;
- A meeting was due to be held within the next two weeks with all site stewards with the principle aim of identifying measures to reduce reallocation times;
- It was considered important to be clear about the real costs of the service to the Borough and, as such, it was therefore considered necessary to apply both direct and indirect costs to cost neutral calculations;
- Results of surveys of allotment holders in 2009 and 2011 had indicated that 95.8% and 92% respectively had considered that allotments were good value for money. It was not known at what point this perception might change, should costs continue to increase incrementally. However, the subsidy of the service was reducing in line with the objectives of a cost neutral service;
- The levels of subsidy for the allotments service at other Local Authorities was not known;
- The Community Right to Challenge had been considered but it was not thought to have a potential implication given the ownership of the allotments was with the Council;

The Chairman invited Councillors Lissimore and Feltham to sum up their cases.

Councillor Lissimore highlighted the costs associated with the grounds maintenance contractor and the potential to reduce them by utilising other options. She acknowledged the problem of the service being subsidised by the Council but she remained puzzled regarding the imposition of the indirect costs and she considered the process for the reallocation of plots needed to be significantly improved to reduce the number of vacancies. She was also of the view that the relationship between the Council and Colchester Allotment Association needed to be built on and used in a more positive way.

Councillor Feltham explained that the true cost of the service needed to be identified clearly and openly. She confirmed that the service was costing the Council over £30,000 per year and was of the view that charges needed to be increased in order to reduce this subsidy. She welcomed the suggestions to improve the reallocation of plots and hoped that it would be possible to utilise one or more of these to improve efficiency in this area.

RESOLVED (SIX voted FOR, TWO voted AGAINST and ONE ABSTAINED) that the decision on the allotment charges and the review of the tenancy agreements be referred back to the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure for reconsideration and she be requested to have regard to the various options and suggestions identified by the Panel regarding alternative service delivery, potential savings and reduction in management costs.

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



Cabinet

Item
7(i)

27 November 2013

Report of	Head of Commercial Services	Author	Howard Davies 507885
Title	St. Botolph's Quarter – Approval of Draft Heads Of Terms for Roman House		
Wards affected	All		

This report seeks approval of draft Heads of Terms for the long leasehold Sale of Roman House to Corinthian Curzon Ltd

1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To agree the long leasehold disposal of Roman House to Corinthian Curzon following a marketing campaign for the wider St Botolph's site. approve the draft Heads of Terms for the long leasehold sale of Roman House to Corinthian Curzon, identified by the area marked in pink on the attached plan
- 1.2 To approve the draft Heads of Terms for a long leasehold sale including the financial offer proposed.
- 1.3 To give delegated authority to the Strategic Director in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration to conclude the Heads of Terms and legal agreements substantially in accordance with the approved draft..

2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 To bring about the total redevelopment of Roman House to create a three screen boutique cinema at the upper level together with ground floor café/restaurants.
- 2.2 To bring forward another stage of regeneration of the St Botolph's Quarter which will create 55 new jobs in the area.
- 2.3 To allow further conversations to be carried out with the three bidders for the wider site.
- 2.4 To provide a significant capital receipt to the Council.

- 2.5 The formal approval of the Heads of Terms signifies a really positive step in bringing forward a development following a period of time that has seen an adverse economic climate.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 The Council could seek to accept one of the alternative offers for the whole site but taking into account the delivery of key non financial objectives for the St. Botolph's Quarter and the financial aspirations, the Curzon development meets all of these objectives but also allows the opportunity for further discussions to be ongoing with the remaining three bidders for the remainder of the site.

4. Supporting information

- 4.1 The St. Botolph's Quarter, formerly referred to as the Cultural Quarter was originally marketed in the autumn of 2006. The Council secured a preferred partner for the delivery of a scheme which failed to deliver a solution. All parties tried their hardest to deliver a scheme despite the chronic financial situation that existed for a number of years.
- 4.2 In 2012 the Council took the decision to start the process afresh. A process of 'soft market testing' took place which generated significant interest in the site further improved by negotiations with First Group which will lead to the Council acquiring its land holding in Queen Street to add to the available site area.
- 4.3 The Council subsequently formally marketed the St Botolph's Quarter site in September 2013 seeking expressions of interest from developers for the whole or part of the site.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 Four bids were received, three for all of the site and one for Roman House only (see attached confidential appendix with scoring mechanism).
- 5.2 Following analysis of the offers received it is proposed that an immediate long leasehold disposal to Corinthian Curzon for Roman House is agreed. The Curzon proposal to deliver a three screen boutique cinema with quality ground floor restaurants, meets the objectives of the Quarter in terms of a quality mix of uses, provides a good level of capital receipt for the sale of the building, and gives a significant profile to Colchester as being one of the few towns across the Country that the Curzon Group wishes to locate within. The Curzon brand in London is already very strong and is regarded as a high quality leisure experience.

- 5.3 Therefore the Council proposes to agree Heads of Terms with Corinthian Curzon for the re-development of Roman House. The Heads of Terms will form the basis of negotiations in respect of the legal agreement, due for completion within three months from the Heads of Terms approval date.
- 5.4 The draft Heads of Terms, which have been negotiated with the Developer, are attached as a confidential appendix to this document and provide for a swift exchange of contracts, conditional upon securing planning consent for conversion of the existing building. We understand that initial conversations with the Council's planning team have already been carried out.
- 5.5 Given the need to deliver a successful disposal across the wider St Botolph's Quarter site it is proposed that the three remaining bidders will be given a short time period to revise their expressions of interest for a site area which excludes Roman House.

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 Colchester's Renaissance is a priority for the Council and the St. Botolph's Quarter is detailed in the Strategic Plan as being a key project which contributes to the "Regeneration of land and buildings within the Borough".

7. Consultation

- 7.1 Substantial consultation was undertaken prior to the approval of the St. Botolph's Quarter Masterplan.
- 7.2 Once the developer submits a scheme for planning consent it will be subject to the normal consultation process.

8. Publicity Considerations.

- 8.1 There has been significant publicity around the empty buildings on the site and the ability to redevelop this area will be considered as a positive step.
- 8.2 The ability to reuse Roman House will remove the Council's rating liability which has been subject to recent press interest.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 The detailed financial proposals are contained within the confidential Heads of Terms but the disposal would provide a capital receipt to the Council.

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

The EQIA can be found via the link below:-

<http://www.colchester.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=3669&p=0>

11. Community Safety Implications

None identified at this stage

12. Health and Safety Implications

There will be no Health and Safety implications at this stage.

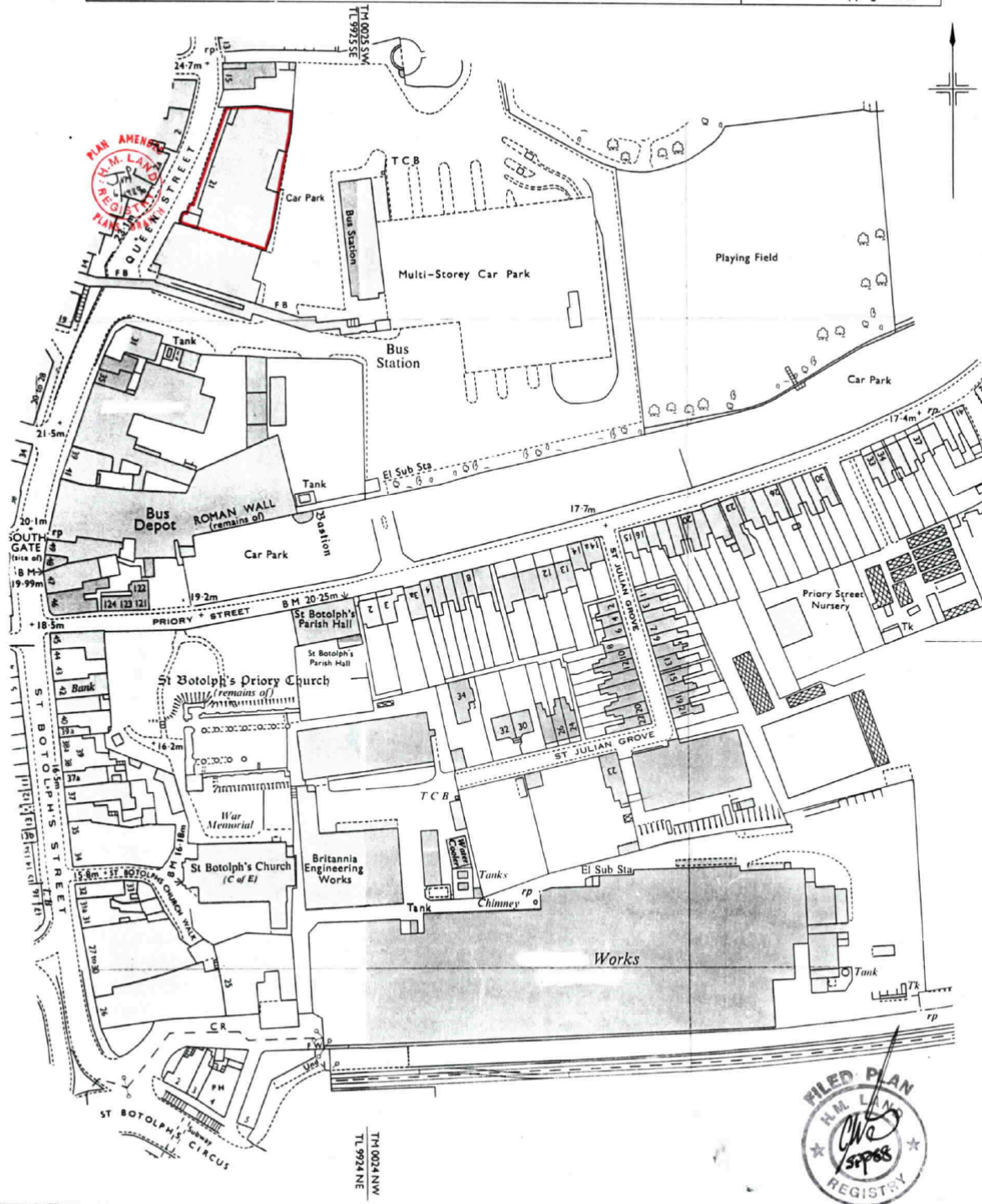
13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 There is a risk that disposal of part of the site may provide a challenge for the sale of the remainder. However, the Curzon use may prove attractive to developers of the rest of the site as an “anchor” draw and footfall generator.

Appendices-

1. Site plan showing area in pink
2. Confidential Draft Heads of Terms including financial offer (published in part B of the agenda)
3. Confidential analysis of offers received (published in part B of the agenda)

H.M. LAND REGISTRY		TITLE NUMBER	
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27th November 2013

Report of	Head of Commercial Services	Author	Patrick O'Sullivan
Title	Breakers Yards The Hythe – Approval of Preferred bidder following a marketing process		282976
Wards affected	New Town		

This report seeks in principle approval of the Council's preferred bidder in respect of the sale of the current Breakers sites at Haven Road The Hythe Colchester

1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To approve the principle of a land disposal to Churchmanor Estates following the marketing of the Breakers Park site
- 1.2 To grant delegated authority to the Executive Director Ian Vipond, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and the Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources to conclude the negotiation of Heads of Terms and legal documentation for the disposal of the Breakers Park site.

2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 The site in Haven Road is currently occupied by a number of car breakers and although it is located in a prominent part of the Hythe, it is run down and in need of regeneration.
- 2.2 Previous plans to develop the site for solely open space are not realistic in today's economic climate so a more commercial approach to redeveloping the site needs to be sought.
- 2.3 The Council is required to also manage the relocation of the two Breakers businesses currently on the site, simultaneously with the search for a viable development option. If the Council does not imminently create circumstances in which a planning application can be submitted for the proposed development, there is a real risk that the Breakers will acquire right to remain on the site for a further period of 5 years.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 The Council could allow the current Breakers leases to be extended for 5 years. This would delay the regeneration of a site that now lies adjacent to the Maltings development where a £40m structure is currently being constructed. It would also fail to capitalise on the opportunity for development, which is the only defence that the Council has to resist the pressure for the lease renewal. A recent survey and costings for the decontamination on the site has been carried out by funding from Haven Gateway. A 5 year delay would mean this extensive survey would need to be carried out again at that time as the current survey information would no longer be valid after 5 years.

3.2 The Council could decide that the terms offered are not sufficiently desirable and decide to allow the existing tenants to remain on site with the associated future income stream. This will involve missing a major opportunity to make a clear statement to the residents and businesses within The Hythe that the Council is committed to backing up its earlier investment in the highly successful Hythe Forward Project, by bringing forward one of its own sites which is notoriously difficult to viably develop. Each successful initiative in The Hythe that the Council is currently orchestrating is helping to change local mindsets to the future possibilities for the area. The early development of the Breakers Yards by the Council will be a hugely significant statement that it is at the forefront of the growing sense of momentum and belief in the area.

4. Supporting Information

4.1 From 1924-1948 the current Breakers Yard site to the west of Haven Road was a municipal tip. In 1948 the tip was closed and the site was let to two separate car breakers. It was let on restricted terms pending remediation and regeneration. As a result, the level of investment in the site has been minimal, thus adding to the levels and types of contamination.

4.2 In 2008, the Council decided to meet the local need for additional open space, by taking measures to understand the nature of the contamination. Various reports were commissioned with the help of funds granted by Haven Gateway. The level of funding required to remediate the land to the required standard was prohibitively high (circa £4m). There was no source from which such funding could be gained and as the economic situation deteriorated it was unlikely that funding for solely public realm would be available.

4.3 In 2008, Essex County Council entered a development agreement with the joint owner of the adjacent land lying between Haven Road and King Edward Quay. Initially it was thought that this was a new opportunity to work together with adjoining land owners, in an effort to find a viable means of delivering a park on the Council's Breakers site. Although The Maltings site, as it is now known, is about to be developed at King Edward Quay, and will include a contribution to public open space, the Council's Breakers Yards did not need to be involved to facilitate this development.

4.4 However, in 2012, the knowledge gained from the preparatory work being carried out on the Maltings site, encouraged the Council to have a final report commissioned on their Breakers sites, (funded from Haven Gateway) in an effort to assess realistic decontamination costs for a mixed use development.

4.5 Throughout this process, the Council has maintained a dialogue with the two Breaker tenants.

4.6 In early 2013, it was decided that with the latest remediation information, the Council should look for an external party with previous experience of developing similar contaminated sites, although given the high levels of contamination on site it was not anticipated that a capital receipt would be generated from the sale of the land. But instead that the Council might meet its regeneration ambitions in the Hythe by gaining open space, a high quality designed scheme and some affordable homes.

4.7 In May 2013 the Council advertised for expressions of interest in the site. Three parties eventually came forward with proposals of differing natures.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 A breakdown of the three proposals received is detailed in a confidential appendix.
- 5.2 Of the three proposals received the Churchmanor offer broadly meets all criteria for the disposal of the site, namely: it delivers a mixed use development, a decontamination programme, provision of open space, a high quality design and an element of affordable housing.
- 5.3 However at this stage further negotiation needs to be carried out to agree draft heads of terms.
- 5.4 It is therefore proposed that Churchmanor are confirmed as the Council preferred purchaser for the site following which the parties will continue to negotiate the heads of terms which will then be signed off by the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration.

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 The disposal of this site meets the objective of regenerating land and buildings within the Borough.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 The land sale has not been subject to consultation but any development on the site will be consulted upon in the usual way by the Planning Department.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 The site has been extensively marketed through the national property press.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1 Due to the high levels of contamination on the site it has always been recognised that a capital receipt would be unlikely, however the Council will seek to gain other value through affordable homes on the site and will be having further discussions with the successful developer regarding any income streams possible.

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 10.1 This land has been marketed to provide anyone with the opportunity to put forward a proposal.
- 10.2 The project does not present a change to existing policy.
- 10.3 This project is not known to affect the Human Rights Act.

11. Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 None

12. Health and Safety Implications

12.1 None

13. Risk Management Implications

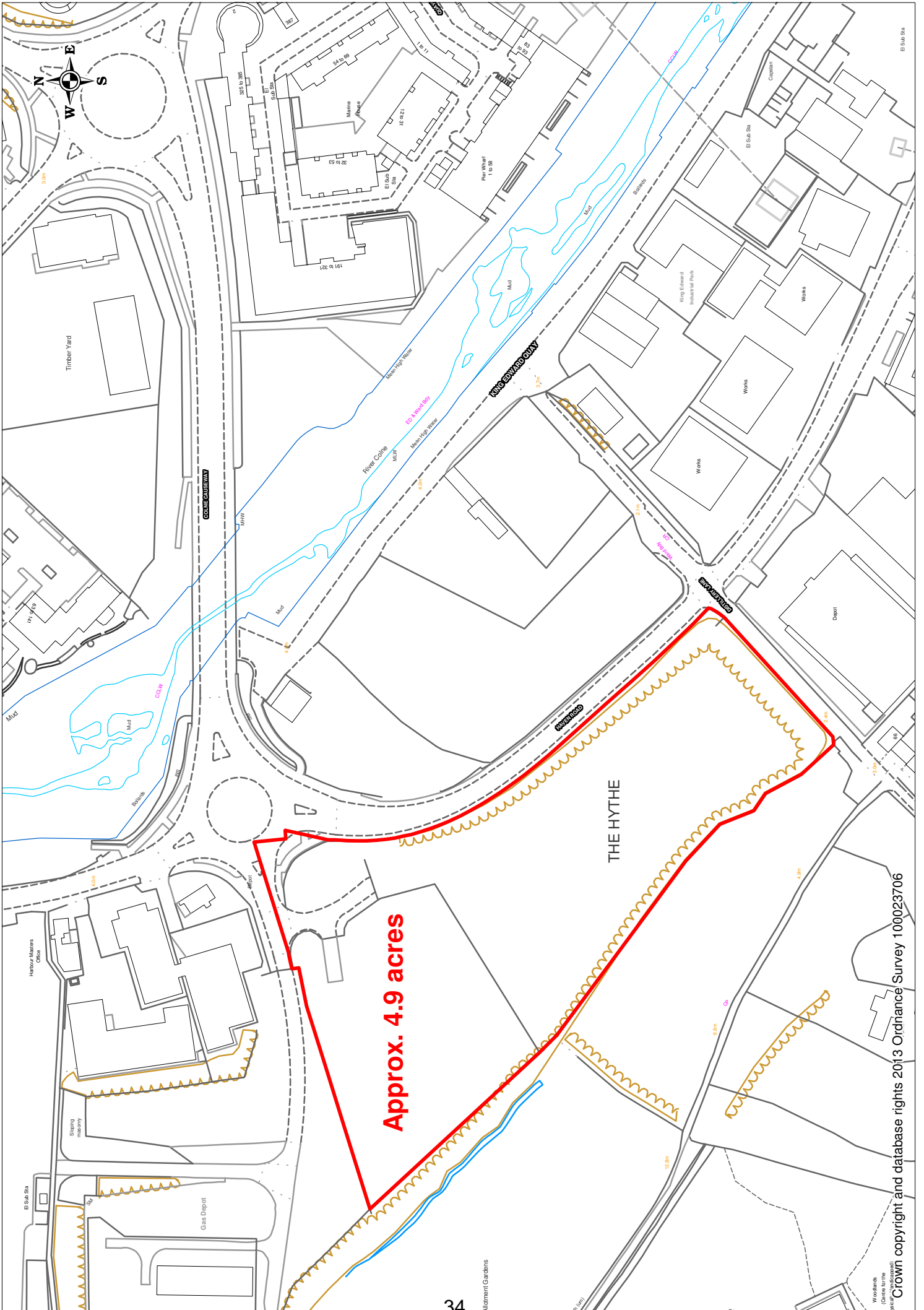
13.1 There is the risk that the decontamination process may be more costly than the developers' expectations which would impact on the scheme viability and upon the level of affordable housing and any other income to the Council to be provided through further negotiations. – The Council will be seeking a completely open book development process from the developer which enables further discussion in the event that costs are higher or lower than anticipated

14. Equality and Diversity Impact assessment

14..1 The EQIA is published on the Council's website and can be found by the following pathway:- Home>Council and Democracy>Policies, strategies and performance>Equality and Diversity>Equality Impact Assessments>Commercial Services>Disposals and Marketing

Appendices

1. Site Plan
2. Confidential outline of bids received (published in Part B of the agenda)
3. Advantages and disadvantages of bids received (published in part B of the agenda)



Approx. 4.9 acres

THE HYTHE



Cabinet

27 November 2013

Item
8(i)

Report of	Executive Director	Author	Pam Donnelly Matt Sterling ☎ 282212/282577
Title	Fundamental Service Review of Corporate and Financial Management		
Wards affected	All		

This report concerns the Fundamental Service Review of Corporate and Financial Management, and the business case arising from this review.

1. Decision Required

- 1.1 To approve the business case resulting from the Fundamental Service Review of Corporate and Financial Management (CFM FSR), and authorise the implementation stage of the review.

2. Reasons for Decision

- 2.1 To allow the implementation of the business case resulting from the CFM FSR, which will deliver improved customer service, greater service resilience and recurring revenue budget savings.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 The alternative option would be not to approve the business case or to ask for changes to be made to the proposals set out in the business case. In either scenario, the delivery of an improved customer experience and greater efficiency and effectiveness could be delayed or not delivered.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The business case outlines the proposals from the CFM FSR. This review started in April 2013, following the FSRs of customer contact and of other council services.
- 4.2 This service is the backbone of the Council's activities, managing its performance and providing specialist support to other service groups to achieve their goals. CFM services currently include legal, financial, audit, procurement, democratic, civic, human resources, ICT, communications and marketing, buildings and facilities.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 The CFM FSR will:
- Introduce a new operating model for the service
 - Improve our efficiency and deliver £300,000 budget savings each year
 - Enable the service to be more customer-focused, resilient and sustainable.
- 5.2 The key features of the proposals are shown on page 3 of the business case.

6. Approach taken

- 6.1 This FSR built on the successful methodology of previous reviews, and involved:
- Considering the Council's changing needs arising from the Universal Customer Contact FSR
 - Considering feedback from the Service's internal customers
 - Analysing the activities performed by each officer within the service
 - Holding three workshops with staff from the service and customers
 - Holding a workshop with the Senior Management Team to test our initial ideas
 - Regular liaison with the Portfolio Holder
 - Developing and testing the ideas for improvement
 - Regular communication with staff via team meetings and a fortnightly e-mail update, and a monthly meeting with Unison.
- 6.2 During this review, CFM customers said they generally appreciated its services and the way it works. However, they also said they wanted the Service to change to make dealing with it easier, and so that it could add more value to their work. The review identified significant common ground between staff and customers on the main issues for improvement.
- 6.3 The most important of these are:
- **Earlier intervention:** a need to get involved with customers' projects earlier to offer better service and to avoid causing any delays
 - **Co-ordination:** a need to better co-ordinate the disciplines within CFM and their support for customers
 - **Resilience:** a need to improve the resilience of CFM processes with a high number of staff currently performing 'single person' roles
 - **Separation of specialist and process work:** to avoid specialists also performing the routine process or administration work of the Service.
- 6.4 This business case would deliver a new operating model with five themes:
- Demand management
 - Better understanding and earlier intervention
 - Re-modelling
 - Capacity for effectiveness
 - Culture change.

These themes are described in more detail in section 4 of business case. Appendix 1 is an illustration of how the improvements and themes fit together in the new operating model.

7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 The proposals contribute to the vision and broad aims set out in the Strategic Plan 2012-15, and the priority area of delivering high quality, accessible services.

8. Consultation and publicity considerations

- 8.1 Customers, staff and Unison have played an important part in the development of this business case. Please see section 9 of the business case for more information.
- 8.2 Employee engagement and involvement is key to the success of the review. A communications and engagement plan has been in place since April 2013, and staff have been encouraged to input their experience and ideas into the proposals. This plan would continue through into the review's implementation stages so people are clear about what is happening when, and how they can keep informed.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1 The financial implications of the proposals are on page 19 of the business case, with illustrative charts at Appendix 2.
- 9.2 No revenue or capital investment is required to achieve the savings shown. The financial improvement generated by this business case is from reduced costs.
- 9.3 There is limited scope to increase income, but there should be some further procurement efficiencies following team mergers.

10. Equality and Diversity Implications

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

11. Other Standard References

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

12. Risk Management Implications

- 12.1 The high-level risks associated with this review have been identified in Appendix 3.

Background Papers

- The business case and appendices are provided with this report.
- Scrutiny Panel report and minutes – 29 October 2013.



Fundamental Service Review of Corporate and Financial Management

Business Case

The over-arching vision for the transformed Corporate and Financial Management service is for the service to be the 'enabler' of all the Council achieves, and to be viewed by its customers as 'adding value'.

For Cabinet –
27 November 2013

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Appendices

1. Operating model
2. Financial savings
3. Risk register
4. Implementation timeline.

1. Executive summary

The over-arching vision for the transformed Corporate and Financial Management service is for the service to be the 'enabler' of all the Council achieves, and to be viewed by its customers as 'adding value'.

Summary of change

This business case includes a new operating model for the Service, as shown in Appendix 1. This new model is for a Service that better manages demand, understands our customers' needs better and gets involved with their work at an earlier stage, separates our routine processes from our more specialist work, and also reduces the number of separate teams within the Service to improve their co-ordination.

The new model is based on five themes:

- Demand management
- Better understanding and earlier intervention
- Re-modelling
- Capacity for effectiveness
- Culture change.

The key features of the change are:

- Merging existing specialist disciplines to achieve greater efficiency and to improve the co-ordination of our work.
- Separating 'judgement-based' work from 'process-based' work, and move the process work to the new corporate Professional Support Unit.
- Merging the Town Hall Events team with the Charter Hall Events team.
- The migration of the Buildings and Facilities team to Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) to achieve greater resilience and efficiencies.
- The integration into the Service of the existing Strategic Change team to maximise the benefit of our strategic change capacity for the organisation as a whole, and to integrate this with our work to manage and improve the performance of our people.
- The addition of 'account manager' responsibilities to some of our existing Business Partner roles to improve the co-ordination of our involvement in customers' work.
- The creation of collaborative teams across disciplines to improve co-ordination and create new standards for customer service.

Financial summary

The new operating model will deliver the following General Fund revenue savings, starting in 2014-15:

To be – by year	Savings
Year 1 (assuming June 2014 'go live')	£250,000
Year 2	£50,000
Full-year recurring saving	£300,000

2. Fundamental Service Review

The Council has conducted a Fundamental Service Review of its Corporate and Financial Management Service (CFM FSR). This review started in April 2013, and has used the successful methodology developed through previous reviews across the range of Council services.

This review has involved:

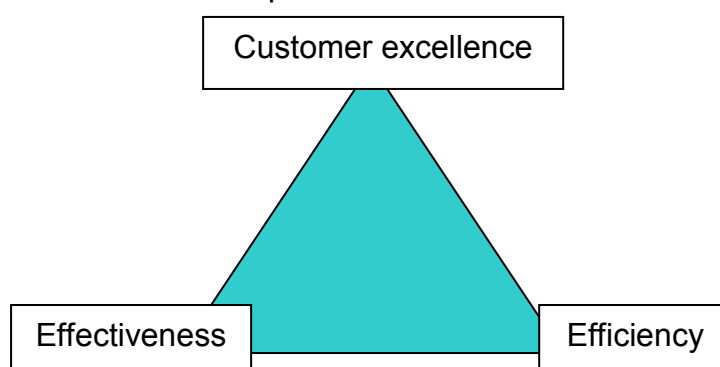
- Considering the changing needs of the Council arising from the Universal Customer Contact FSR (UCC FSR)
- Considering customer feedback that we have received through a Council-wide customer survey as well as from Senior Managers
- Analysing the activities performed by each officer within the service
- Holding three staff and customer workshops to develop ideas for improvement
- Holding a workshop with the Senior Management Team to test our initial ideas
- Regular liaison with our Portfolio Holder
- Developing the ideas arising from the workshops or suggestion boxes
- Regular communication with staff via team meetings, a fortnightly e-mail update, and a monthly meeting with Unison.

Using the experience gained from implementing previous FSRs, the proposals in this business case have also been tested with a small group of key managers within the Service and from the Executive Management Team. This has involved testing the proposed new structures and resource allocations to increase our confidence that the new operating model will deliver the outcomes we want after implementation.

This business case presents an opportunity for the service to change to achieve three goals:

- **Improved Customer service:** to make further improvements following the team reviews implemented over recent years (Human Resources, Communications and Marketing, ICT and Finance)
- **Better 'fit for purpose':** to ensure the service remains so as the Council changes to achieve its UCC FSR goals
- **Efficiency:** to achieve a recurring revenue budget saving.

The outcomes of the opportunities set out in this business case are driven by the same three drivers as our previous FSRs:



The outcomes of the opportunities set out in this business case include:

Customer Excellence

- Earlier intervention with our customers' work to offer a better, more timely service
- Better co-ordination of our teams to ensure a more 'joined-up' service
- Staff with excellent customer skills across the service.

Efficiency

- Use of technology to speed up customer transactions by allowing customers to serve themselves, and to reduce overheads
- Identification of customer trends to direct 'capacity building' training to reduce future demand
- Increased multi-skilling across teams
- Reduced cost base in key service areas.

Effectiveness

- Separation of rule-based processes from judgement-based advice
- Merger of similar small teams in different parts of the Council
- Greater capacity to drive organisational change throughout the Council.

Alternative options explored but rejected include:

'Do nothing'

- The changes introduced by the UCC FSR are resulting in new support needs from our customers. For example, increased trading activity will require us to operate in a more commercial fashion.
- The Council's financial position demands efficiencies of this Service which require change to be delivered.

Outsourcing

Some of the functions that would otherwise be part of the Service have already been outsourced such as ICT support, printing and cleaning. These opportunities were taken where it is judged an activity is better or more efficiently performed by a private sector partner. However:

- Some of the legal, financial, democratic and HR activities within the Service perform statutory or strategic roles which we are very unlikely or unable to outsource.
- The Council benefits from having the advice and support from the Service's specialists integrated throughout its work and available in a highly flexible fashion. To achieve this in a contract with a private supplier would likely result in either higher cost or reduced flexibility.

De-centralise our corporate functions

This option has been rejected as likely to reduce:

- Efficiency as we have found that duplication is reduced when we have centralised activities (such as Communications and Marketing) previously performed by each of the various Service areas
- Resilience as our centralised support services have sufficient size to be more resilient than activities performed by one or two individuals in each Service area.

3. The situation ‘as is’

Corporate and Financial Management is the backbone of the Council’s activities, managing its governance and providing specialist support to the other service groups to achieve their goals. Current services include:

- Legal
- Financial, Audit and Procurement
- Democratic and Civic
- Human Resources
- Information and Communications Technology
- Communications and Marketing
- Building Services and Facilities.

A small number of services are provided to the public, including event hire at the Town Hall.

One particular challenge for Corporate and Financial Management is to balance its twin roles of providing customer service, with ‘policing’ to ensure all services comply with legal requirements and corporate protocols. This is a difficult balance to get right while maintaining the satisfaction of customers.

The Service has an annual net revenue budget of £5.9 million. This includes 108 people amounting to the equivalent of 94 full-time members of staff (FTEs).

The current staff resource allocation, including on-costs, is shown below.

‘As is’	FTEs	FTE cost - £000
Buildings and Facilities	18.8	570
Communications and Marketing	9.2	332
Democratic and Civic Services	7	246
Finance	21.7	862
Human Resources	13.8	495
ICT	13	387
Legal	7.5	374
Management, Support and Projects	2.9	162
Total	93.9	3,428

In recent years, some teams in the Service have held reviews to improve ways of working. These have delivered significant savings. However, the Service as a whole is still divided into a large number of small teams and has 10 Group Management Team (GMT) level managers.

Our analysis of activity in the group shows:

- The staff resources available for the different disciplines within the Service vary considerably
- Specialist and process tasks are mixed within the same teams, and often within the responsibilities of the same individuals
- Despite the large number of GMT managers, many are engaged in fairly routine work that distracts them from strategic leadership

- Many of the Business Partners we currently have spend a good deal of their time on routine process work rather than providing direct customer service to their service groups
- There is significant opportunity for self-serve and process improvement. The costs identified in the UCC FSR business case apply equally to internal customers, so are worth restating here to indicate the potential level of savings from new ways of working: “According to the latest SOCITM research, the difference in the cost of a local authority servicing contacts via different channels are 15p web, £2.83 by phone and £8.62 for face-to-face.”

Performance

The Service is currently managing a £2.7m ICT improvement programme and a £4m buildings maintenance and capital works programme. It serviced 103 public Council meetings last year and around 130 recruitment processes arising from vacancies or reorganisations. The Legal team dealt with more than 300 cases. The service supports seven websites including the Council’s intranet. National accreditations include the Customer Service Excellence Standard, Lexcel for the Legal team, CIPFA’s Employer Accreditation, and Charter Status for Elected Member Development.

The Service shares activities with other councils through its contract for ICT system support (Braintree, Castle Point and Rochford), and with ‘Vine’ which is the Essex-wide online HR Partnership. The joint ICT contract was commended in the 2013 LGC awards: “The collaboration is already on course to deliver savings of £7m over a five-year period, as well as seeing a transformation in business processes”. Vine won the PPMA’s HR initiative of the year in 2012 for transforming the way they deliver HR to build sustainable performance.

Room for improvement

During this review, CFM’s customers told us they generally appreciated our services and the way we work. However, they also said they wanted us to change to make dealing with us easier and so we could add more value to their work. Happily, the review identified lots of common ground between our staff and our customers on the main issues we want to improve.

The most important of these are:

- **Earlier intervention:** a need to get involved with our customers’ projects earlier to offer better service and to avoid causing delays
- **Co-ordination:** a need to better co-ordinate the disciplines within CFM and their support for our customers
- **Resilience:** a need to improve the resilience of our processes with a very high number of our staff performing ‘single person’ roles
- **Separation of specialist and process work:** to avoid our most costly specialists also performing the routine process or administration work of the Service.

4. New operating model

This business case proposes a new operating model for the Service which better manages demand, understands our customers' needs better and gets involved with their work at an earlier stage, separates our routine processes from our more specialist work, and also reduces the number of separate teams within the service to improve their co-ordination.

The business case also proposes work to embed a new culture in the Service to enable the new ways of working that this operating model will require.

Appendix 1 illustrates the new operating model and these themes, and how they fit together. The five themes are summarised in the rest of this section.

1. Demand Management

Self-serve

The Service has launched several forms of 'self-serve' to reduce demand. These include 'My View' for HR processes. We have identified more customer journeys that lend themselves to self-serve to achieve further efficiencies. This relies on the provision of new technology such as the Knowledge Bank.

Behaviour change

Many of the service requests into our Service are frequent and routine in nature. By creating the capacity to spot patterns in these requests, we will provide 'capacity building' or 'behaviour change' training for customers to reduce their need to ask us for help in future.

2. Better understanding and earlier intervention

Account Management

We will use account management techniques to identify the appropriate support for our customers' core businesses and projects earlier. This will allow us to better understand the emerging needs of our customers, to improve the service we give, and avoid the problems that arise from intervening late.

Collaborative teams

The Service has people with similar roles such as Business Partners in different teams. We judge that it is not possible to merge these into single multi-skilled roles as they need to have in-depth specialist knowledge. However, we will bring these people together in 'collaborative teams' to share best practice, create common standards of customer service, and share tasks where appropriate.

Strategists

The Council has a need for the Service to give expert advice at a strategic level. We will create new GMT roles that include this responsibility, and which co-operate in a collaborative team to do so.

3. Remodelling

Efficiency

The Service is divided into 10 GMT areas, and has no Professional Support Unit or Group Support. By merging these GMT areas, and by separating out 'rule-based' processes from 'judgement-based' specialist work, we can achieve efficiencies by reducing the management overhead and through multi-skilling roles.

Resilience

The Service has a high proportion of single-person roles. As well as being inefficient, this reduces the resilience of some key processes. We will bring similar roles together and encourage multi-skilling to improve our resilience.

Taken out of baseline

We will achieve efficiencies and improve effectiveness by merging some of our teams with those of other service groups. We will do this where we have teams doing similar work and where, by merging, we can create economies of scale.

4. Capacity for effectiveness

Increased resource

The Service 'as is' lacks resource in certain key areas. In particular it lacks dedicated resource to manage organisational change and for internal communications. We will address these gaps by creating new responsibilities within the service.

Buying better

The UCC FSR includes a commitment to improve our procurement regime to deliver significant savings. This will involve a new role in Commercial Services to oversee our approach to buying. We will organise ourselves to ensure our procurement responsibilities and activities form part of this new whole-Council approach.

Managing performance

The Council's need to deliver effective services and outcomes at a time of diminishing resources will require us to manage our performance and productivity very actively. We will include the resource to do this for the Council as a whole as well as for the Service.

Commercial accounting

The Council's plans to increase trading activity create a need for new skills in its support services. In particular, they create a need to develop our understanding of commercial accounting to be clearer about profit and loss. We will explore how to resource this need with colleagues in Commercial Services.

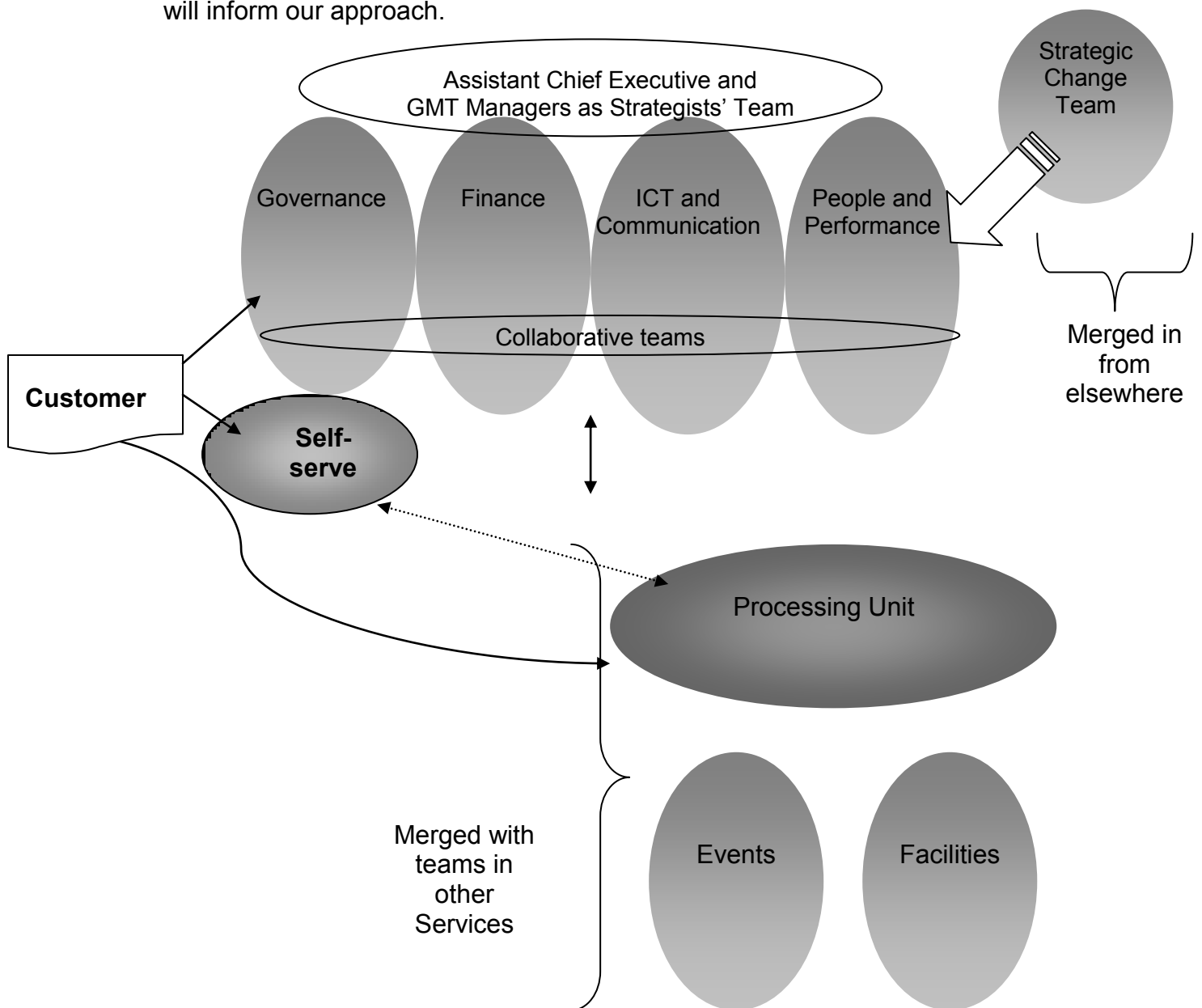
5. Culture Change

The Service lacks a single coherent culture at present, so behaviours and service standards vary considerably.

Taking our inspiration from the Council's corporate goals, we will create and embed a culture that:

- focuses on adding value to our customers
- enables multi-skilled working
- supports the Council's commercial ambitions.

This new operating model is significantly different from the current operation of CFM. It will involve change for officers and will take some time to implement. However, the organisation has now implemented several service-based FSRs, and the lessons from these experiences have been learned and will inform our approach.



Appendix 1 shows how the new operating model and themes fit together.

5. Customers

In January 2013 we surveyed our internal customer about their satisfaction with the service they receive from CFM. This was before the Strategic Finance function was merged into the service.

This survey shows that just 65% of our customers are 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with our services; with satisfaction for individual teams ranging from 50% to 79%. 3% of our customers say they are 'dissatisfied' with our service.

Typical comments from customers include:

- "All colleagues are friendly and willing to help with enquiries"
- "Sometimes feels like the team wishes to dictate to the service how things should be done."
- "The level of satisfaction very much depends upon which person is allocated my case"
- "Responses to e-mails or calls are very slow".

The experience 'as is' for customers

There are currently 10 GMT teams. The Service employs some extremely knowledgeable and experienced people, and so this arrangement works reasonably well for 'business as usual'. However, when customers require support for new or project work, this arrangement creates confusion. It can be difficult to understand the different responsibilities of these teams, and which to involve at which stage.

Currently, some teams include Business Partner roles while some do not. Business Partner roles have tended to be popular with our customers, as they are pro-active in learning the priorities of the services which they support and provide continuity of service. However, Business Partners do not currently cover all of the work of the Service.

Customers are able to self-serve on a limited range of functions at present – chiefly some HR functions through the 'My View' function on the intranet. However, this self-serve is both limited and not extensively promoted.

Several of the teams have divided themselves between their Business Partner roles – taking primary responsibility for pro-active customer service – and 'back-office' support. One particularly good – and popular – example is Human Resources whose back-office is known as the HR Service Centre. The staff in the HR Service Centre have pioneered multi-skilling, and try to serve customers on all topics.

The Service has twin responsibilities to help customers achieve their goals, while ensuring they comply with the law or corporate protocols. Some of our customers tell us we get this balance wrong, appearing to be keen to say 'no'.

What do the changes mean for customers?

The changes proposed in this business case will give customers:

- The ability to self-serve on a much wider range of services
- More training on the issues with which they often need CFM's help
- One key contact in CFM who can ensure they get the service they need from the relevant people
- A more co-ordinated service from the different specialists within CFM
- Faster provision of advice and support.

6. Opportunities

The workshops identified 14 opportunities for change. These were developed and tested by 11 people within the service.

The 14 opportunities were:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Self-serve and process improvement | 7. Facilities Management |
| 2. Training and up-skilling Customers | 8. Professional Processing |
| 3. Early intervention | 9. Account Managers |
| 4. Procurement | 10. Multi-skilling and Flexibility |
| 5. Risk | 11. Specialists |
| 6. Events | 12. Matrix Management |
| | 13. Other Organisational Models |
| | 14. Culture Change. |

Following their development and testing, these opportunities have informed the five themes of the new operating model, which are:

- Demand management
- Better understanding and earlier intervention
- Re-modelling
- Capacity for effectiveness
- Culture change.

Each theme includes specific change proposals. These are shown below:

1. Demand Management

Change Proposals	Details of change	Links to Opportunities
1.1 Introduce self-serve	43 CFM activities have self-serve opportunities and 7 have triage opportunities, including some potential quick wins particularly in HR. We will introduce a Task Management System for requests for non-project support, with the Hub as the customer entry point. We will use the new UCC technology to create a similar service for internal and external customers. We will include a resource to map our customer journeys and undertake process improvement activity – promoting a continuous improvement culture.	1
1.2 Introduce behaviour change training	We will use our understanding of customers' service requests to create an evolving package of regular training, web-based training and internal consultancy advice to encourage people to be able to 'help themselves'.	2

2. Better understanding and earlier intervention

Change Proposals	Details of change	Links to Opportunities
2.1 Assign account management responsibilities	<p>The Business Partner roles within CFM are particularly popular with our customers but they do not cover all of the disciplines within the Service, are not co-ordinated across them, and their value is only realised if Service groups know which Business Partners to involve and when.</p> <p>We will appoint some of our Business Partners to also act as Account Managers for a whole Service group. They will develop an understanding of the whole support needs of that service and ensure the appropriate Business Partners get involved at the right times. They will act as 'team leaders', being the enabler who ensures that different Business Partners within CFM work together to support the customer.</p>	3, 9
2.2 Create collaborative teams	<p>'Multi-skilling' all our Business Partners to cover all the disciplines within CFM is not considered feasible and is not popular with our customers.</p> <p>We will, therefore 'house' the Business Partners in their specialist teams.</p> <p>However, their approach to customers, and the way they operate ought to reach common standards across the Service. We will use collaborative teams across disciplines for training, service standards, and to rationalise meeting attendance.</p> <p>Other collaborative teams will be considered for other similar roles across the disciplines.</p>	11, 12
2.3 Assign 'strategists' responsibilities	<p>Our specialist GMT managers need to provide strategic advice to the Council on their specialist subject. To enable this we will create new structures beneath them that allow for this, and add responsibilities to their roles. We will bring them together in a collaborative team to pool expertise.</p>	11, 12

3. Re-modelling

Change Proposals	Details of change	Links to Opportunities
3.1 Achieve efficiency	<p>We will create Professional Support Unit (PSU) roles with multi-skilled officer roles to achieve efficiencies with the Service's process-based work. These roles will create efficiencies by eradicating duplication and enabling the formation of multi-skilled teams that will be able to provide a more resilient business support service with fewer staff. We will merge these roles into the new Corporate PSU created by the UCC FSR.</p> <p>We will merge many of the disciplines within the specialist part of the Service to achieve efficiencies by reducing the management overhead and through multi-skilling roles.</p>	8, 10, 11, 12
3.2 Improve resilience	<p>A high proportion of the roles within the Service are performed by only one person, and we therefore lack resilience. Within the specialist teams, we will create more generic roles to encourage greater multi-skilling to improve this.</p> <p>As well as this general change, we will make a particular change to our roles relating to managing risk.</p> <p>The Council operates a traditional risk management function, which has grown out of the insurance processes. Currently these functions are provided by four different teams with external support from Essex County Council. We will bring these functions together to create a single 'Risk' team, with multi-skilled roles to provide a robust approach to identifying, controlling and managing all risk issues.</p> <p>Bringing HR investigations into risk services may mean that the use of consultants can be restricted to all but the very complex or delicate cases.</p>	5, 10
3.3 Take out of baseline by merging services	<p>Two of the services provided by CFM are also done elsewhere in the Council. By merging these we can create stronger teams that are more productive, efficient and commercial.</p>	6, 7

3.3 continued	<p>By merging the Town Hall Events team with the Charter Hall Events team, we will achieve greater economies of scale, greater resilience and create the opportunity to cross-sell each venue's specialised service and to introduce some new income revenue streams.</p> <p>By merging CFM's Buildings and Facilities functions with CBH's Property Services, we will deliver an immediate efficiency and create a more resilient approach to managing our buildings.</p> <p>This will allow the sharing of resources and professional expertise, reducing reliance on external consultants and contractors in delivering maintenance and capital works for the Council's corporate building assets.</p> <p>This will also give the Council access to CBH's established repairs reporting and work planning systems, which will improve speed and efficiency when dealing with responsive repairs to corporate building assets and also improve customer service.</p> <p>This merger should also create a vehicle to explore commercial business opportunities, via the delivery of building services and facilities management for other local authorities and partner organisations.</p>	
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4. Capacity for effectiveness

Change Proposals	Details of change	Links to Opportunities
4.1 Increase resources in key areas	<p>The UCC FSR has highlighted two areas of weakness for the Service which we will address to avoid jeopardising outcomes.</p> <p>The UCC FSR culture change will require us to drive organisational change work. We will create the resource to carry out the project work needed for initiatives such as the new approach to Talent Management and to Learning and Development.</p> <p>At a time of rapid change, the Council needs to be able to communicate effectively with its own officers and councillors. We will add new responsibilities to the communication roles to allow us to be more sure-footed when communicating internally.</p>	3, 11, 14

4.2 Buy better	<p>Following the Council-wide ‘procurement health-check’ report, we will work with colleagues in Commercial Services to create a new approach to Procurement.</p> <p>This will bring in commercial buying experience, enhance the leadership on procurement savings and compliance, and improve customer service.</p> <p>We will also ensure that our new approach to procurement is embedded with the Business Partners so that procurement advice can be given earlier in our customers’ work. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the Council easier to do business with by ensuring that procurement processes are not overly bureaucratic and minimise costs to suppliers. • Refocus the Procurement Team to support the organisation under the leadership of the Buyer via matrix management arrangements, in accordance with the organisation’s procurement cultural values. • Review use of the Braintree Hub and the roles / responsibilities expected. • Use multi-disciplinary teams for all major procurement projects to ensure the right skills are available and the right advice is given at the right time. • Providing training to managers on procurement to enable them to understand the process. • Encourage a genuine corporate approach to procurement and end ‘silo procurement’ by services to ensure compliance with the Council’s strategic procurement requirements. 	4
4.3 Better manage performance	<p>The Service currently has a responsibility to manage several programmes of work as well as to monitor and report corporate performance against key indicators and the Strategic Plan Action Plan.</p> <p>The need for effective delivery at a time of diminishing resources requires us to manage performance actively. We will merge in the existing Strategic Change team to ensure a joined-up approach to managing programmes and performance.</p>	

4.3 continued	<p>By merging in this team we are better able to embed the UCC approach to managing organisational change and people management. It also gives managers access to a wider range of resources and avoids duplication.</p> <p>This merger builds a sustainable approach to managing programmes, performance and people at a time of ongoing change. We will also include new responsibilities for the account managers to ensure performance management is embedded early in our customers' work.</p>	
4.4 Enhance our commercial accounting expertise	<p>The UCC FSR envisages an increase in trading activity to generate a £1.98m surplus from new trading income over four years. This will require many of our customers to behave more commercially. Such a change will create a need to develop a greater understanding of commercial accounting in our Finance discipline and among our customers. We will explore how to resource this need with colleagues in the new Commercial Services group but will, in the meantime, leave sufficient resources in our CFM Finance discipline to manage this change.</p>	4

5. Culture Change

Change Proposals	Details of change	Links to Opportunities
5.1 Create and embed a new culture	<p>The Service currently lacks a single coherent culture, so behaviours and service standards vary considerably.</p> <p>Four key factors drive our need to adopt and embed a new culture in the Service:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the scale and pace of change are significant and affect everyone 2. new knowledge and skills are required 3. strong leadership will be required to implement our changes and to 'keep up' with a changing Council 4. our customers want us to add more value to their work. <p>Inspired by the Council's corporate goals, we will create and embed a culture that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focuses on adding value to customers • enables multi-skilled working • supports our commercial ambitions. 	14

7. Financial implications

The budgets for CFM include revenue and capital finance. The table below shows the savings in salary costs for the Service resulting from this review. Please also see Appendix 2 for 'as is' and 'to be' illustrative charts.

	As is	To be - Year 1 (2014/15)	To be - Year 2	Recurring
FTE count	93.9	83*	83*	83*
In-year salary costs	£3,428,000	£3,178,000	£3,128,000	£3,128,000
Saving	-	£250,000**	£50,000	£300,000

* This indicative figure of 83 FTEs includes posts moved out of the Service, but not the Strategic Change Team posts being merged into it, to enable a comparison between 'as is' and 'to be' to be made more easily.

** Assuming 'go-live' of the new structure is June 2014.

The chart above shows the number of full-time members of staff changing from 93.9 FTEs ('as is') to an indicative 83 FTEs in future ('to be'). The full-year recurring savings in salary costs resulting from this reduction is currently estimated as £300,000. This figure has been based on the best estimate of the cost of the new operating model – it is subject to those new posts being formally graded, consulted on and appointed to. The achievement of FSR savings is part of the Council's Corporate Indicator Set (KI R7), with progress reported to Scrutiny and Cabinet every six months.

The Service will be streamlined, with four Group Management Team (GMT) level managers instead of the current 10. By merging these GMT areas, and by separating out 'rule-based' processes from 'judgement-based' specialist work so that the process work can move to the new corporate Professional Support Unit, we can achieve efficiencies by reducing the management overhead and through multi-skilling roles. Further efficiencies will be achieved by merging the Town Hall Events team with the Charter Hall Events team, and by moving the Buildings and Facilities team to CBH.

The financial improvement generated by this business case will be chiefly achieved by reduced costs rather than increased income. However, the merger of the Buildings and Facilities team into CBH is likely to create the potential for more efficient procurement. This would help achieve existing procurement savings targets for 2014-15 and subsequent years.

The Service currently earns a small amount of income, chiefly through the Events team and the Communications and Marketing team. Other functions which have generated income in the past such as Land Charges are no longer housed within this Service. However, as the principal function of the Service is business support for the rest of the Council, there is limited scope to deliver a financial improvement through increasing earned income.

The Council is likely to adopt new savings targets for procurement as part of the implementation of the UCC FSR. As it does this, a share of these savings will be added to the financial improvement for this Service.

8. Risks

A list of key risks has been identified at this stage, and will be reviewed for their implications for the implementation phase.

These key risks are:

- Resource availability for planning, and then for implementation
- Time, skills and capability to deliver the change
- Retention of key skills within the service during the staff restructuring
- The effect on performance, income and customer service during transition
- Effectiveness of communications with staff and customers through the implementation phase
- Potential customer dissatisfaction with service changes
- Dependency on technology to deliver our self-serve objectives
- Our ability to realise the required level of multi-skilling
- Creating and embedding the new customer culture required to deliver review objectives.

Please see Appendix 3 for an initial risk register that has been developed for this business case.

This risk register will be developed to include potential costs and costs of risk reduction as part of the implementation phase. The issues identified above for CFM FSR are similar to those identified in the UCC FSR risk register, as there are clearly common aims and objectives for both reviews.

The CFM FSR risk register will need to be developed in close connection with both the UCC FSR risk register and the co-ordination role of the Strategic Change Team.

These risks will be reviewed regularly by the UCC FSR Implementation Group (the Council's Senior Management Team, chaired by the Chief Executive).

The Implementation Board (a cross-party Board, chaired by the Council Leader) holds the Implementation Group to account for delivery of FSR business cases through the scrutiny and challenge of risk, communication and engagement, programme planning, customer experience and delivery outcomes.

9. Communication

Engagement with CFM staff about this review has followed a set of principles which were shared with them at the start of the process:

These communication principles are to:

- Give people within the service as many opportunities as possible to help shape the ideas
- Communicate as openly as possible with people in the service so they always know what stage we're at and what will happen next
- Treat people fairly throughout.

Accordingly, CFM staff have been involved and informed throughout the development of this business case. This engagement has included:

- Three workshops (attended by 63% of individuals within the service)
- Fortnightly e-mail updates for all CFM staff from the Head of Service to explain the latest developments and encourage their participation
- Staff suggestion boxes in Rowan House and the Town Hall
- Face-to-face presentations by the Head of Service at team meetings
- Regular meetings organised by the trade union – Unison – and monthly meetings between the Head of Service and the appointed Unison rep
- A CFM FSR section on the Hub.

A number of briefing sessions about the business case were arranged for CFM staff in October. These gave staff the opportunity to absorb and understand the proposals, and to ask questions.

In October, there was also an all-councillor briefing session and an item about the FSR in the Members' Information Bulletin, so that all councillors could hear about our changes and think about how these affect them as service users. The business case was also debated at the October Scrutiny Panel.

Customers' perceptions and expectations have been sought using:

- A customer satisfaction survey
- The involvement of 16 customers – 'critical friends' – from the Council's other services and from CBH
- The involvement of the Senior Management Team through a workshop specifically for them, and through individual meetings.

The Forward Plan for September to December 2013 was published on the website, with the CFM FSR listed for a Cabinet decision in November.

A Communications and Engagement Plan was developed early in the review process and updated throughout. It reflects the principles and format being used in the UCC FSR. This Plan will continue to be further developed during the implementation stage.

10. Implementation

Once the formal decision-making is complete, the review will move into the implementation phase and an implementation plan will be finalised to start from January 2014. Please see indicative timescales in the chart below.

The implementation plan will be phased over a two-year period, but with staffing changes and other efficiency savings commencing in 2014. At this stage it is envisaged that a 30-day consultation period with staff will be required, meaning that staffing changes are likely to be implemented early in the financial year 2014-15. Appendix 4 shows the implementation timeline.

Implementation will also include the development, procurement and implementation of new technology, and the training and cultural change necessary to deliver the customer service improvements. In particular, the CFM FSR efficiencies from introducing self-serve are possible only as the Council delivers its new customer self-serve and Knowledge Bank technology.

As the Council implements the UCC FSR, it will require more support from CFM than in a period of 'business as usual'. Accordingly, the implementation of this FSR is staged as are the savings that accrue from its delivery.

The implementation plan will detail how this will be managed effectively to ensure that the benefits to our customers can be delivered and efficiencies and income achieved as soon as possible. This will clearly need to tie in with the UCC FSR implementation plan and its associated projects.

	2013-14			2014-15			2015-16		
UCC FSR									
Merger of separate Professional Support Units into one PSU									
Implementation of ICT changes									
Introduction of Talent Management									
CFM FSR									
Initial 'go-live'					June				
Year 1 journey change work									

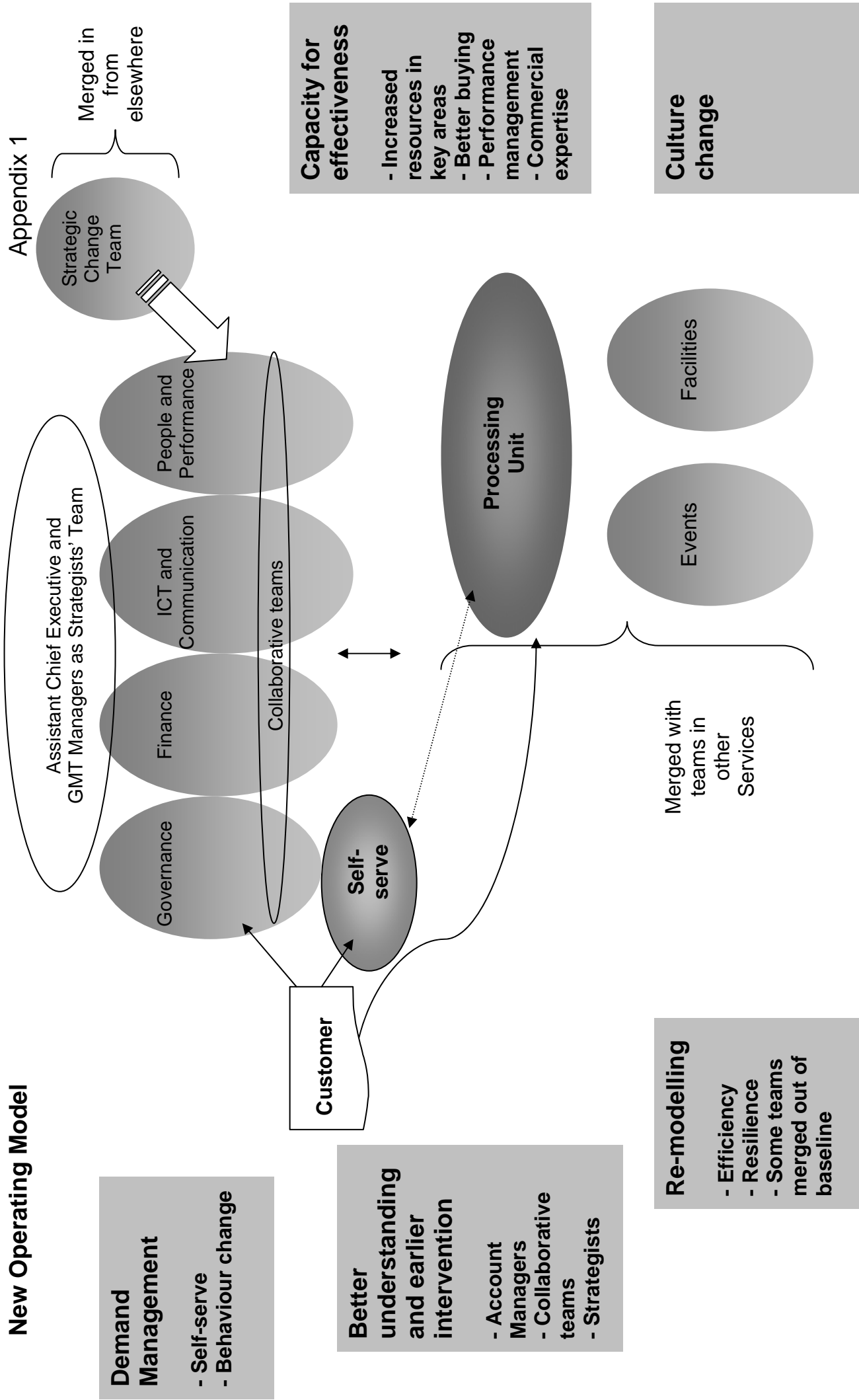
11. Next steps

Subject to Cabinet's decision on 27 November, the business case will move into the implementation phase.

Updates on the business case will continue to be taken to Implementation Group, especially around linkages to UCC FSR and the risk register.

New Operating Model

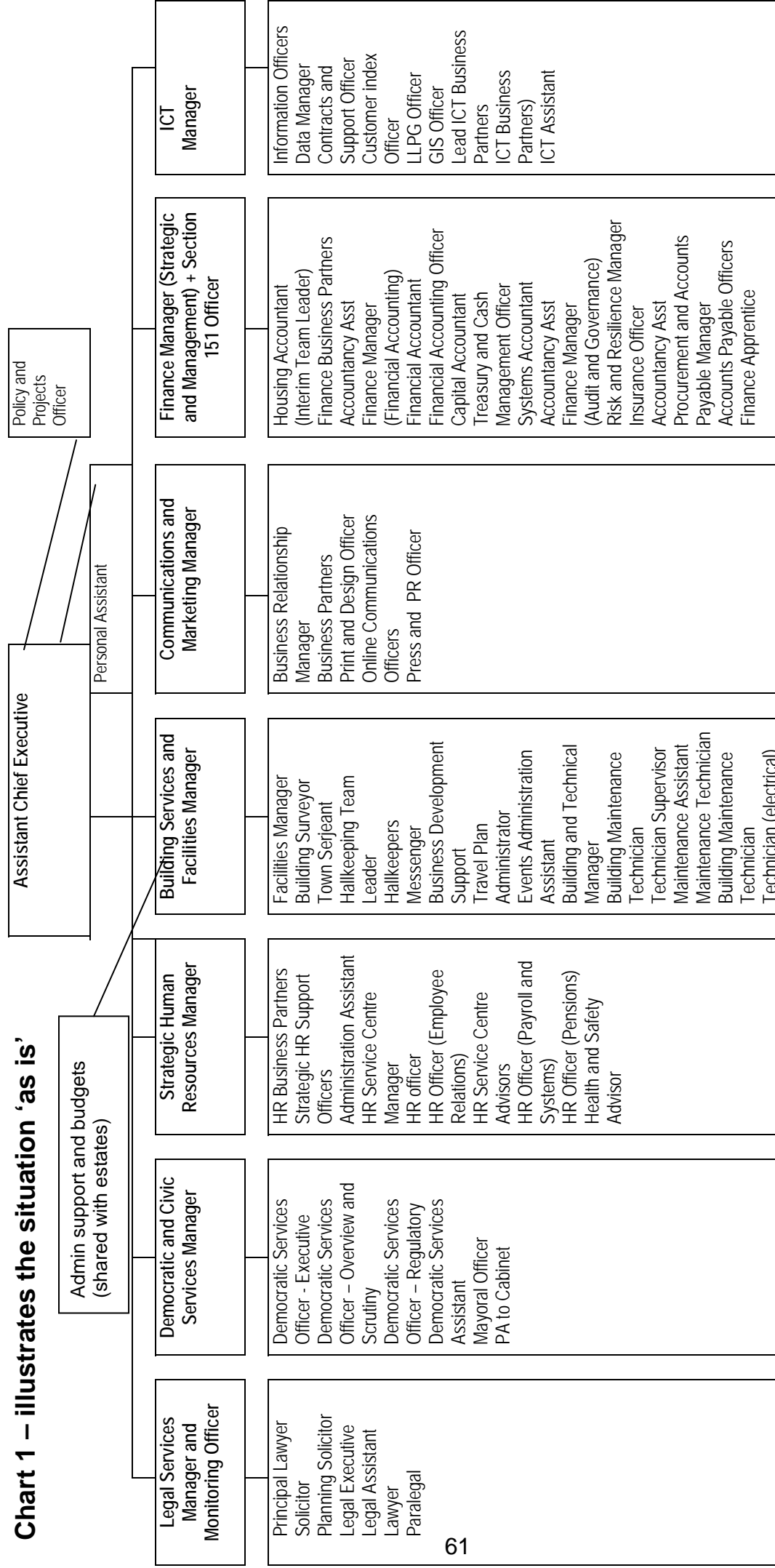
Appendix 1



Financial savings from implementing the new operating model

Appendix 2

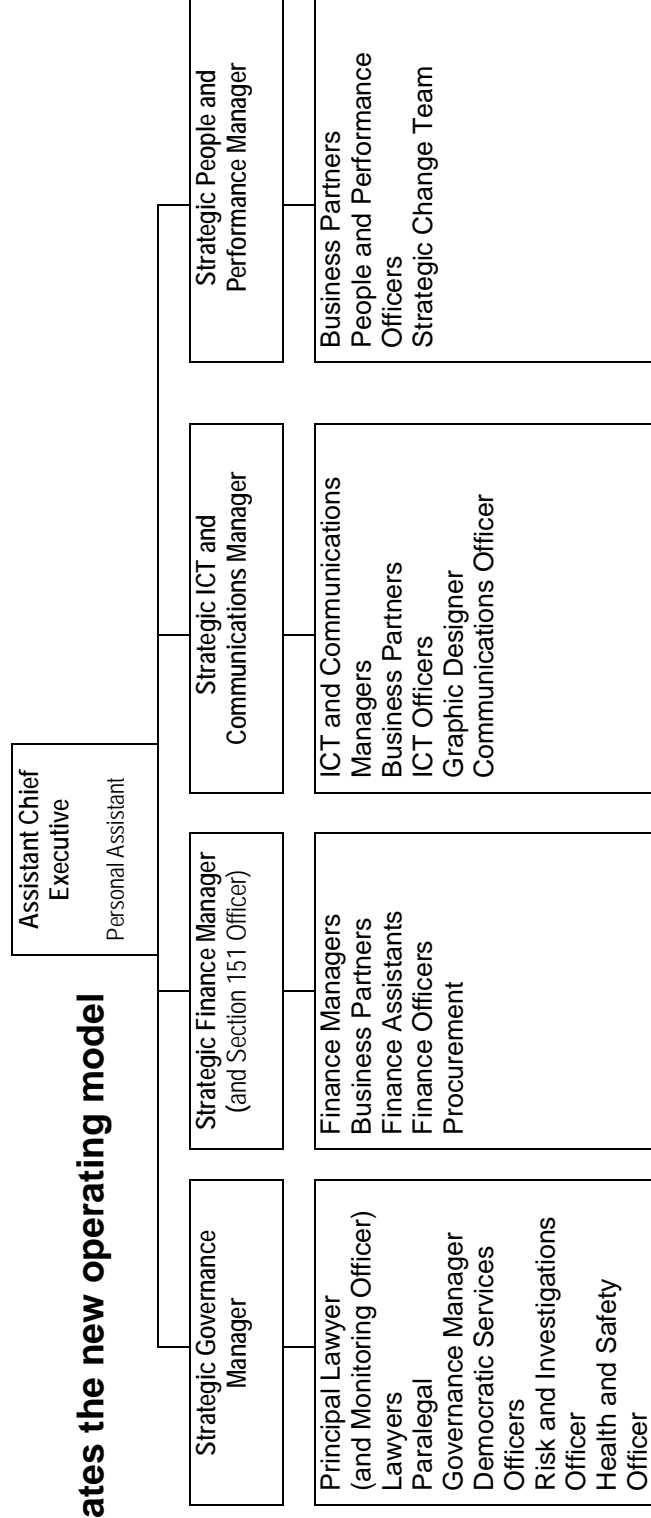
Chart 1 – illustrates the situation ‘as is’



The chart above shows the Service structure ‘as is’ in 2013, with 108 people equating to 94 full-time members of staff (FTEs). The current staff resource allocation, including on-costs, is £3.4 million. The Service as a whole is divided into a large number of small teams and has 10 Group Management Team (GMT) level managers.

CFM FSR business case – for Cabinet 27 November 2013

Chart 2 – illustrates the new operating model



This chart shows the new 'to be' structure for implementation in 2014, with an indicative total of 83 full-time members of staff (FTEs). The full-year recurring savings in salary costs resulting from this review is currently estimated as £300,000. This figure has been based on the best estimate of the cost of the new operating model – it is subject to those new posts being formally graded, consulted on and appointed to. The achievement of FSR savings is part of the Council's Corporate Indicator Set (KI R7), with progress being reported to Scrutiny and Cabinet every six months.

The Service as a whole will be streamlined into the four collaborative teams shown above. There will be four Group Management Team (GMT) level managers instead of the current 10. By merging these GMT areas, and by separating out 'rule-based' processes from 'judgement-based' specialist work, we can achieve efficiencies by reducing the management overhead and through multi-skilling roles.

This initial risk register will be developed to include potential costs and costs of risk reduction as part of the implementation phase. The issues identified for CFM FSR are similar to those identified in the UCC FSR risk register, as there are clearly common aims and objectives for both reviews.

The CFM FSR risk register will be co-ordinated with the UCC FSR risk register and the role of the Strategic Change Team.

	Risk description	Risk mitigation
1.	Resource availability for planning, and then for implementation.	A clear implementation plan which is phased over time to enable the outcomes to be delivered against an agreed timeline and actions.
2.	Time, skills and capability to deliver the change.	UCC FSR Cultural / Behaviour Change streams and projects .Good communications, people management and appropriate leadership. An early start on skills and behaviours required so people are ready.
3.	Retention of key skills within the service during the staff restructuring.	Staff engagement and awareness of the shifting landscape of service delivery, and the opportunities for new ways of working in future model.
4.	The effect on performance, income and customer service during transition.	Focus specific resources on delivery, and manage the changes within the FSR implementation. Offer appropriate levels of support.
5.	Effectiveness of communications with staff and customers through the implementation phase.	Overall aspirations are clear and well communicated. Use of CFM FSR Communications and Engagement Plan
6.	Potential customer dissatisfaction with service changes.	UCC FSR Cultural / Behaviour Change streams and projects. Engage early in the process and have strong project management.
7.	Dependency on technology to deliver our self-serve objectives.	ICT and Journey Management streams of UCC FSR risk register and projects. In-service technology expertise and resources.
8.	Our ability to realise the required level of multi-skilling.	as risk 2. above
9.	Creating and embedding the new customer culture required to deliver review objectives.	UCC FSR Cultural / Behaviour Change streams and projects .Good communications, people management and appropriate leadership. An early start on skills and behaviours required so people are ready.

Implementation timeline

CFM FSR - high-level consultation timeline

	Implementation Plan – Key milestones	By when
1	30-day consultation – meetings and ‘at risk’ letters issued	6 January 2014
2	Consultation Period	7 January to 6 February
3	Consultation Feedback considered	21 February
4	Job Matching	7 March
5	Expressions of interest/job applications process	14 March
6	Expression of interest/applications back	28 March
7	Shortlisting and invitation to interviews	4 April
8	Interviews	mid-April to 30 May*
9	Appointments	April and May
10	Go live	1 June 2014

* length of interview process depends on number of new roles.

The information on this page is draft and subject to approval of the business case by the Cabinet.

**EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
SCRUTINY PANEL
HELD ON 29 OCTOBER 2013**

31. Fundamental Service Review of Corporate and Financial Management

The Committee considered a report from the Executive Director giving details of the Fundamental Service Review of the Council's Corporate and Financial Management Services (CFM FSR) which had commenced in April 2013. The review had reached the business case stage, and included recommendations and decisions for the Cabinet.

The report was presented to the Panel jointly by Pam Donnelly, Executive Director and Matt Sterling, Assistant Chief Executive who requested that the Panel review and comment on the business case, ahead of the Cabinet meeting on 27 November 2013.

It was explained CFM services currently included legal, financial, audit, procurement, democratic, civic, human resources, ICT, communications and marketing, buildings and facilities. The CFM FSR was intended to:

- Introduce a new operating model for the service;
- Improve efficiency across the service and deliver £300,000 budget savings each year;
- Enable the service to be more customer-focused, resilient and sustainable.

During this review CFM customers said they generally appreciated its services and the way it worked. However, they also said they wanted the Service to change to make dealing with it easier, and so that it could add more value to their work. The review identified significant common ground between staff and customers on the main issues for improvement. The most important of these were:

- Earlier intervention - a need to get involved with customers' projects earlier to offer better service and to avoid causing any delays
- Co-ordination - a need to better co-ordinate the disciplines within CFM and their support for customers
- Resilience - a need to improve the resilience of CFM processes with a high number of staff currently performing 'single person' roles
- Separation of specialist and process work - to avoid specialists also performing the routine process or administration work of the Service.

This business case was based on five themes:

- Demand management
- Better understanding and earlier intervention
- Re-modelling
- Capacity for effectiveness
- Culture change.

The Key Features of the change were:

- Merging existing specialist disciplines to achieve greater efficiency and to improve the co-ordination of our work
- Separating 'judgement-based' work from 'process-based' work, and the process work to the new corporate Professional Support Unit
- Merging the Town Hall Events team with the Charter Hall Events team
- The migration of the Buildings and Facilities team to Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) to achieve greater resilience and efficiencies
- The integration into the Service of the existing Strategic Change team to maximise the benefit of our strategic change capacity for the organisation as a whole, and to integrate this with our work to manage and improve the performance of our people
- The addition of 'account manager' responsibilities to some of our existing Business Partner roles to improve the co-ordination of our involvement in customers' work
- The creation of collaborative teams across disciplines to improve co-ordination and create new standards for customer service.

The proposed changes would result in an indicative overall reduction in head count of 11 full time equivalent posts, or around 11-12%, together with a recurring revenue saving of £300k from implementation in June 2014.

Particular discussion from the Panel members was in relation to:

- The need for the Key Performance Indicators for the service to be reviewed to provide for future like for like comparisons to be drawn more easily;
- What was meant by the service 'sometimes appearing to be keen to say no';
- An explanation of the increased trading income of £1.98m quoted as being envisaged from the Universal Customer Contact Fundamental Service Review;
- The reasoning behind the statement in the Business Case about certain activities being unlikely or unable to be outsourced and the need for more information to be provided to justify why these conclusions had been made;
- The absence of market testing results in the Business Case, in particular in relation to the salary costs generally across the service area;
- Any examples of issues where the balance between CFM's policing and customer service roles had gone wrong;
- The need for more detailed background information to have been made available to the Panel members prior to their consideration of the report and Business Case;
- The extent to which CBH were expected to co-operate in the Council's anticipated trading activities;
- The costs associated with procuring private sector partners;
- Whether the CFM FSR included staff who were on zero hours contracts;
- The principle of increasing the online delivery of services and the impact on face to face contact for those customers who needed this support.

In response to questions from the Panel members it was explained that:

- The measurement of performance and the review of Key Performance Indicators would be a responsibility of the Group Management Team members once they were appointed;

- Part of the service area's responsibilities was to ensure that the correct governance arrangements and statutory requirements were adhered to but the communication of these messages sometimes needed to be delivered in a more positive way;
- With the emergence of the new Commercial arm of the organisation, there would be relationships across the organisation which would not have existed before which would require the CFM service area to change and adapt in order to continue to be fit for purpose;
- The detail and extent of the commercial activity which the Council would be considering for the future would be developed in a Business Plan which would be put before the Council's Trading Board once the new Procurement Team was appointed and consolidated;
- The current workloads placed on the services provided by CFM and the need for teams to be flexible in terms of their priorities and commitments, combined with the current statutory and strategic designation of some posts, meant that it was considered unlikely for the outsourcing of these services to be financially viable or sufficiently operationally flexible in the short term. Although it was acknowledged that this did not preclude the consideration of outsourcing of these services at a later date;
- The introduction / extension of Account Manager roles was expected to provide for the earlier involvement of CFM in projects which would go a long way to address the need to get right the joint customer service and policing role across the services;
- As with previous FSRs, the Business Case had been presented to the Panel, not as an Implementation Plan, which would emerge later in the process, but in the form of higher level information for scrutiny prior to its submission to Cabinet;
- The timing of the CFM FSR was deliberately planned so that it would be in a position to reflect the new make-up of the organisation and to meet the needs of a significantly changed structure;
- Various support measures which had been available for others involved in FSRs previously to help with dealing with changed circumstances, such as interview training, psychometric testing and emotional resilience training, were being made available to the members of staff who made up the current CFM service area;
- Initial discussions had taken place with senior managers at CBH which had been very positive and had demonstrated an aspiration for additional trading opportunities with associated savings which would be of benefit to both the Council and CBH;
- Whilst the specific cost of undertaking a market testing exercise was difficult to quantify, it was known from previous examples that the process was very protracted and required the preparation of all the necessary documentation as if the exercise would lead to a genuine procurement exercise;
- There were various options available to staff affected by the CFM FSR, including their ability to apply for up to three roles in the new service and the potential redundancy of some posts;
- CFM staff were all employed on a permanent/fixed term basis and were not on zero hours contracts;

- Although the Council was looking to change the delivery of many of its services to enable customers who wanted to access activities by themselves online, the high quality face to face delivery continued to be required for others in need to this support and the Council was working with Essex County Council to utilise the Central Library in Colchester in order to provide a Community Hub which would also improve online delivery.

A number of Panel members were of the view that they needed to be supplied with the detailed background information which was used to formulate the Business Case and, in particular, the information which demonstrated from where the projected £300k savings would come and the implementation timetable for the FSR. Pam indicated that she was confident that there was additional information that could be made readily available to the individual Panel members which would assist them in their understanding of the Business Case.

RESOLVED that arrangements be made for individual Panel members to be supplied with the detailed background information used to formulate the Business Case together with the information which demonstrated from where the projected £300k savings would come and the implementation timetable for the FSR.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that, following the Panel's review of the Corporate and Financial Management Fundamental Service Review Business Case and draft Cabinet report, the comments set out in Minute No 31 above, be taken into account in its consideration of the matter.

27 November 2013

Report of	Head of Customer Services	Author	Sara Wilcock & Leonie Rathbone
Title	Local Council Tax Support		☎ 508807
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:

• Back to Work Bonus – additional 4 weeks support for those who find work
• Award based on 80% of Council Tax liability
• £6000 capital /savings limit
• Second adult rebate claims ended on 1 April 13
• Flat rate £10 non-dependent deduction
• Include child maintenance as income (child & spousal)
• Include Child Benefit as income
• £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 political groups, 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 scheme changes are required to have undergone a public consultation and we will consult specifically on this issue next year to inform the scheme for 15/16.”
- 7.6 Additional discretionary funds are available for customers who are experiencing ‘exceptional’ difficulty in meeting additional costs arising from the Welfare Reforms. These include Discretionary Housing Payments to help with Housing costs as well as a small Exceptional Hardship Fund to assist Local Council Tax Support recipients who now have to make a contribution towards their Council Tax bill. This support is identified and provided by the Customer Support Team.

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.

Appendix A– Consultation responses

Background Papers

Please click [here](#) to see the draft 14/15 Local Council Tax Support policy document

Appendix 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
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.
35. 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.
36. 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.
37. 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
38. 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.
39. New Claimant.
40. 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. ihave 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 rentand it was causing us hardsship 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.
My 120% Council Tax increase has had a big impact on my standard of living.
47. I am disabled and unable to work more hours to make up for the increase.
48. 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.
49. a little tighter on budget especially as all shopping ad general bills ave increased
50. im 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 im not happy with.
51. 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.
52. 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
53. 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.
54. 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 long term 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 gov't 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 I've 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. any extra going out makes an impact.
81. Well finding the money for one, strain on family life as if I've limited money as it is, and when my ex partner deliberately 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 don't 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 don't pay because they won't, it's simply that they can't.
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 carer, 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 BENEFITS? 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 !!!!
- 83 123. 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.
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
 - 41.

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 granddad 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. I'd get that much more worried about running out of money before I can get a job or another pension lump sum.
90. even worse off as I am now.think they should look at other areas around the uk that don't use rthis scheme
91. it would be hard as I am only on job seekers allowance
92. i couldnt afford to
93. 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.
94. I think I would have to reconsider being a full time carer.
95. 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.
96. Create hardship, after all it is not only this benefit that is being reduced.
97. It would be a disaster full stop.
98. 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 .
99. 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.
100. I am struggling now, so any more would be horrendous!
101. 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.
102. I would have less money to spend on my family for essentials and this put pressure on relationships and children welfare.
103. 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.
- 104.

- 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.
105. I am all for people paying their own way, but each case is different.
106. 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 bills, medication and treatment not covered by the NHS, wheelchair maintenance, petrol, etc.
107. Increasing the council tax to 35% would have a massive impact on me.
108. I would struggle to pay my bills and continue to keep a warm home. See above.
109. It would be very serious.
110. 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.
111. I wouldn't be able to afford food and fuel enough to keep my son and I healthy
112. Extremely difficult
113. Struggle more
114. Until I get a job which I am desperately trying to achieve, I will be a lot worse off and worry how I will manage bringing up 3 children on my own.
115. People cannot afford it CBC would be taking more people to Court for unpaid C Tax and so spending my money on persecuting people who cannot pay in the first place
116. 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.
117. 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.
118. Simply put, if my benefits dont increase, you sure wont get paid.
119. very difficult
120. 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 !!!!!

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.

9

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.
8. 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?

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 spud 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.

9

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. 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.
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

**EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 12 NOVEMBER 2013**

34. Local Council Tax Support 2014/15

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Customer Services proposing the continuation of the existing Local Council Tax Support Scheme without fundamental amendment into the second year 2014/15.

Councillor Paul Smith, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, together with Leonie Rathbone, Head of Customer Services and Sara Wilcock, Project Manager, attended the meeting and explained that the scheme had first been implemented in April 2013 and any amendments to the scheme for 2014/15 would need to be agreed by the Council before 31 January 2014. It was proposed to limit the amendments to the scheme only to bring it in line with national legislative amendments and otherwise for it remain unaltered.

It was explained that Local Council Tax Support currently helped 12,000 residents reduce their outgoings with the value of the support granted totaling £9.3 million. All working age recipients of support had to pay a minimum of 20% towards their bill. However, regulations still required local schemes to protect pensionable age residents from any reduction to their level of support as a result of the localisation of the scheme.

The Key elements of the Local Scheme were summarized as:

- Back to Work Bonus – additional 4 weeks support for those who find work
- Award based on 80% of Council Tax liability
- £6000 capital /savings limit
- Second adult rebate claims ended on 1 April 13
- Flat rate £10 non-dependent deduction
- Include child maintenance as income (child & spousal)
- Include Child Benefit as income
- £25 flat rate earnings disregard

A range of initiatives had been undertaken across Colchester to promote and consult on the changes to the scheme, including writing to 7000 current working age recipients of support, press releases and information highlighted on the council website. The responses received were detailed in the report.

The single parent charity Gingerbread had requested the reconsideration of the inclusion of Child Maintenance as an income in respect of single parents and it was proposed to consult specifically on this issue next year.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that it be recommended to Council that the Local Council Tax Support Scheme, as set out within the report by the Head of Customer Services and detailed within the Policy document, be agreed for 2014/15.

**EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL
HELD ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2013**

14. Economic Development Strategy 2010-2015

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Commercial Services reviewing the Council's Economic Development Strategy 2010 to 2015 and the corresponding Delivery Plan which would help inform and shape the Council's future delivery of the Strategy and the proposed strategic refresh.

Nigel Myers Enterprise and Tourism Manager reminded the Panel that the Council had originally adopted the Economic Development Strategy in 2010, the primary role of which was to set out a framework to steer the activities of the Council and partner organisations to achieve a sustainable and strong local economy, foster the conditions for economic resilience and growth and to capture the economic benefits for residents and businesses in the Borough.

Whilst the lifetime of the strategy extended to 2015 it was recognised that there was now a need to align the Colchester strategy with the Essex County Council Economic Growth Strategy and with the emerging South East Strategic Economic Plan from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership. The latter in particular would be instrumental in securing funding to enable economic growth locally and regionally.

It was explained that Colchester was a diverse and growing Borough with a resilient and buoyant economy and recognised as a successful place with the drive and the tenacity to deliver an ambitious growth programme. The Colchester economy was worth in the order of £17.2 billion. The key employment sectors being manufacturing, construction, retail, IT and business services, tourism and public administration, health and education. One in six businesses in the Borough was a creative company in activities ranging from architecture, software, publishing through to artistic creation and media. In addition, Colchester had over 20,000 businesses the majority of which were micro businesses with less than 10 employees and small to medium enterprise size with less than 200 employees.

The UK CACI 2012 Retail Dimensions Survey classified Colchester as a Primary Retail Centre. It was ranked as one of the top 50 retail centres in the UK with an annual retail expenditure of £440m. Colchester was included as one of the most robust retail destinations in the UK in the 2012 Javelin Group report. Whilst recognising the inherent strengths and resilience of the local economy, the Borough continued to face some significant economic challenges in the lifetime of the current strategy. These included the level of unemployment, the effects of reduction in public sector spending given the relatively high level (31%) of public sector jobs and the relatively high level of young people aged 16 to 19 who are not in education, employment or training (5.0% of the cohort – 272 young people).

Nigel also took the opportunity to update the Panel on the progress with the Town

Centre Broadband initiative which would deliver speeds in excess of 25Mb. The Council was also in contact with County Broadband in order to deliver a wireless solution across the Borough which would mean that, despite delays so far, Colchester would be ahead of most other Boroughs in Essex.

Particular discussion from the Panel members was in relation to:

- The positive contribution made by the Strategy in terms of the delivery of the Colchester Enterprise Hub;
- Concerns about the influence Colchester would be able to exert over the funding from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership and the welcome news regarding the prospect of a Federated Local Enterprise Partnership;
- Concerns regarding the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training, especially since the winding up of the Connexions service;
- The need for apprenticeships to be subject to evaluation and the impact on people's willingness to take up this type of opportunity;
- The need to work with businesses towards the provision of a workable broadband solution;
- Speculation as to whether the predominance of small to medium enterprises and creative industries would work against the use of apprenticeships as a means of securing employment by young people;
- The potential to formulate a case study to capitalise on the marketing of Colchester as a Creative and Digital Hub.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the following issues be borne in mind when considering the proposed refresh of the Council's Economic Development Strategy 2010 to 2015:

- (i) The potential lack of influence that Colchester will be able to exert over the funding priorities of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, given its size and scope;
- (ii) Whether there are sufficient training solutions for older people needing to access digital services in the future;
- (iii) The need for the approach to the Town Centre to be focused;
- (iv) The need to learn from partners in Suffolk in relation to the Visit Anglia Strategy;
- (v) The continuing need for ways to stimulate more investment;
- (vi) Whether the targets for a Borough wide Broadband solution are too ambitious;
- (vii) The need for improvement in the feedback about apprenticeships from education providers to local businesses;
- (viii) To acknowledge the fact that generally investors require a return on their investment within five years;
- (ix) To welcome the news that Colchester has a thriving economy of £17.2billion;
- (x) For support to be given to the creation of a Creative Business Centre in Colchester but to acknowledge the need for more marketing of Colchester as a Creative and Digital Hub.



Cabinet

Item
9(i)

27 November 2013

Report of	Assistant Chief Executive	Author	Sean Plummer ☎ 282347
Title	2014/15 Revenue Budget, Fees and Charges, Capital Programme and Financial Reserves		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

This report provides an update on the 2014/15 Revenue Budget, Fees and Charges, Capital Programme and Financial Reserves

1. Decisions Required

1.1. Cabinet is requested to:

Re: Overall Budget position and changes

- (a) Note the current 2014/15 revenue budget forecast which at this stage shows a budget gap of £255k and the forecast variables and risks.
- (b) Note the action being taken to finalise the budget.
- (c) Agree that the recommended level of revenue balances be set at £1.8m for 2014/15 as set out in the Risk Analysis subject to consideration of outstanding issues as part of the final budget report in January (Appendix F).
- (d) Note the current budget forecast for 2013/14 as set out at paragraph 12.11
- (e) Note that there are no changes are proposed to the Council Tax discounts set out in Appendix J

Re: Specific budget decisions

- (f) Approve the distribution of revenue grant to Parish, Town and Community Councils for 2014/15 as set out at Appendix C.
- (g) Approve the funding for voluntary welfare organisations as set out in Appendix D.
- (h) Agree funding for the arts organisations set out at Appendix E
- (i) Agree all fees and charges as set out in Appendix I

Re: Capital Programme

- (j) Agree to the release of resources £32k for Site Disposal Costs
- (k) Agree to the reallocation of funds already within the capital programme as follows:-
 - a. £71.2k underspend relating to North Colchester BIC to be reallocated to North Colchester Development Land.
 - b. £4.9k underspend relating to King Edward Quay to be reallocated to Transcoast.
 - c. Castle Walls, Town Walls and Walls to Closed Churchyards to be amalgamated into one scheme.
- (l) Recommend to Council that the following new capital schemes are added to the Capital Programme, and agree the release of resources
 - i) £856k for a new baler and shed at Shrub End Depot.
 - ii) £47.2k to relocate the Visitor Information Centre to Hollytrees

(m) Note the Council will no longer be implementing a Local Authority Mortgage Scheme (LAMS) for the reasons set out in paragraph 15.2.

2. Reasons for Decisions

- 2.1 The Council is required to approve a budget strategy and timetable in respect of the year 2014/15.
- 2.2 This report relates to the budget update, a review of balances and the capital programme. This report also includes decisions in respect of fees and charges and certain specific budget changes to ensure that these can be reflected in the final budget.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 There are different options that could be considered and as the budget progresses changes and further proposals will be made and considered by Cabinet and in turn Full Council. The separate appendices showing specific decisions include alternative options where relevant.

4. Background

- 4.1. A timetable for the 2014/15 budget process (see Appendix A) was agreed at Cabinet on 10 July 2013.
- 4.2. An initial 2013/14 budget forecast was presented and agreed at the Cabinet meeting on 4 September 2013. This showed a budget gap of c£1.2m

5. Local Government Finance Settlement and other Government Grants

Formula Grant / Retention of Business Rates

- 5.1. It was reported to Cabinet on 4 September 2013 that the Government had published a consultation paper on the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2014/15 and 2015/16. In respect of 2014/15 the Government had proposed to revise the 2014/15 local government finance settlement to take account of the 1% reduction in the local government Direct Expenditure Limit (DEL). The table below shows that the reduction in the start up funding for 2014/15 is £1.3m (14%) less than that for 2013/14.

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Revenue Support Grant	5,682	4,276	2,911
Business Rates Baseline	3,780	3,903	4,013
Total Start Up Funding	9,462	8,179	6,924
Reduction (yoy) £'000		1,283	1,255
“ “ %		14%	15%

- 5.2. It is expected that the Government will announce details of the 2014/15 Finance Settlement in mid-December. The budget forecast currently uses the above figures and any changes to this in terms of Revenue Support Grant will therefore be reflected in the final budget report.

- 5.3. The arrangements for business rate retention introduced in 2013/14 required the Council to agree an estimate of business rates income for 2014/15. This return (the NNDR 1) must be signed off by the Council's Section 151 Officer by 30 January. This return includes a number of key assumptions in respect of collections rates, growth in business rates and an allowance for the impact of revaluation appeals.
- 5.4. The level of NNDR income retained by the Council will be affected by the decision made for the Council to join the Essex pool for business rates. It has been agreed that 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. The creation of the pool is subject to approval by Government.
- 5.5. Pooling provides the opportunity for Colchester and other pool members to keep a greater share of business rates collected within Essex as whole and to provide additional income for individual authorities. Based on indicative forecasts and the proposed governance arrangements it is estimated that Colchester could gain c£150k and this has been shown in the budget forecast.
- 5.6. Currently the budget assumption is that business rate income will remain at the "baseline level" with an additional bonus of £150k in respect of proposed pooling arrangements. This will be reviewed as part of the final budget report following confirmation of business rate estimates for 14/15 and impact of any pooling arrangements.
- 5.7. The Council receives other Government grants and confirmation has been received that the level of homelessness grant will be unchanged. However, the housing benefit administration grant has reduced by £90k and is therefore shown in the updated list of cost pressures.

New Homes Bonus

- 5.8. Alongside the announcement of the Finance Settlement we expect to receive confirmation of the New Homes Bonus. The main part of the grant is based on a payment for any increase in housing numbers (expressed as Band D equivalents) with a further sum paid for affordable homes delivered. The Council receive 80% of the calculated grant with the remaining 20% paid to Essex County Council. The 2014/15 grant will include payments in respect of growth for 4 years and the bonus paid in respect of affordable homes delivery. Based on current estimates we expect to receive c£3.6m in 2014/15 an increase of £1m.

	£'000	Note
Grant re growth in Oct 09 – Oct 10	724	Payable annually until 16/17
Grant re growth in Oct 10 – Oct 11	749	Payable annually until 17/18
Grant re growth in Oct 11 – Oct 12	986	Payable annually until 18/19
<i>Total Grant re: growth in taxbase</i>	<i>2,459</i>	
Affordable homes bonus (re:10/11)	52	Payable annually until 17/18
Affordable homes bonus (re:11/12)	105	Payable annually until 18/19
<i>Total re: affordable homes</i>	<i>157</i>	
Total grant for 13/14	2,616	
Grant re growth in Oct 12 – Oct 13 (est)	1,000	Payable annually until 19/20
Affordable homes bonus (re: 12/13) (est)	35	Payable annually until 19/20
Total to date re growth	3,459	
Total to date re affordable housing	192	
Total grant for 14/15	3,651	
Increase in 2014/15	1,035	

5.9. It was reported to Cabinet on 4 September that the Government was consulting on the mechanism for transferring nationally £400million from the New Homes Bonus to the Growth Fund from 2015/16. Two options have been proposed which are:-

- (a) Applying a flat rate % (c35%) to the total NHB received by all authorities
- (b) Where there is a two tier of local government (e.g. Essex County Council and Colchester Borough Council) the County Council would be required to pay over 100% of the upper tier authority NHB with the remainder (equating to c18.9%) being made by the district.

5.9. Based on the current forecast NHB for 14/15 and assuming a further notional increase of £500k in CBC's NHB in 15/16. The position for 15/16 under the two proposed options shows that:-

- Under option A the level of NHB retained in **15/16** will be broadly similar to the **13/14** budgeted level
- Under Option B we could see an increase on the 13/14 level of c£0.75m

5.10. It is clear that the future of NHB is becoming less certain. The way the scheme works means whilst we are seeing high levels of income growth at the moment these may reduce in the medium to longer term. The proposals to transfer funding has added a further level of uncertainty and therefore whichever option for 'pooling' is agreed the growth in NHB in 14/15 should only be considered at this stage as a one-off gain. As such this is not currently shown in the 2014/15 budget forecast and proposals for how this one off sum might be used will be included within the final budget report.

6. Summary of 2014/14 Budget Forecast

6.1 The revised 2014/15 revenue budget forecast shows that the current budget gap has now reduced to £255k.

	2014/15 £'000	Comment
Base Budget	22,986	
One off growth / cost pressure / saving adjustments	(667)	
Cost Pressures	1,205	See para 7.1
Growth Items	16	See para 8.1
Savings	(1,383)	See para 9.1
UCC FSR	(825)	“ “ “
Forecast Base Budget	21,332	
Government Grant	(4,276)	Based on the updated figures provided in 2014/15 and 2015/16 settlement consultation paper.
Retained business rates (baseline funding level)	(3,903)	As above, assumes that the level of business rates retained increases by RPI
Council Tax Freeze Grant	(150)	Potential gain from pooling
Council Tax Freeze Grant	(109)	2 nd year of grant in respect of freeze in 13/14
Council Tax Freeze Grant	(109)	<i>Potential</i> grant in respect of freeze in 14/15. Actual figure may be less than last year *.
New Homes Bonus	(2,616)	Assumes no increase in grant at this stage (see para 5.8)
Council Tax	(9,684)	Based on no increase in Council Tax
Use of Reserves	(230)	Ongoing use to fund community stadium and S106 reserve.
Total Funding	(21,077)	
Budget gap	255	
<i>Budget Gap based on an increase in Council Tax of 2%</i>	170	Reflects additional Council Tax Income and no Council Tax Freeze Grant. *Note: reflects Council Tax Freeze grant at 13/14 level. This may be reduced. See comment at 10.2.

6.2 Cabinet is asked to note the above 2014/15 revenue budget forecast and the assumptions set out in this report concerning cost pressures, growth items and risks.

7. Changes in 2014/15 Budget Forecast

Cost pressures

7.1. There have been some changes to the list of cost pressures previously reported. The total list is as follows:-

	Current allowance £'000	Updated allowance £'000	Comment
Inflationary pressure	640	440	Net inflation impact. This allowance includes adjustments to reflect assumptions in respect of pay and energy as well as other general changes.
Incremental pension contributions	250	100	The provisional results of the actuarial review of the pension fund have been received. These reflect an increase in basic employer contributions and changes to the pension deficit contribution. Discussions are taking place with Essex County Council about possible options to spread this cost pressure. Currently an additional cost for 2014/15 of £100k is now assumed.
Elections	85	85	Cost relating to Borough elections in 2014/15
Fleet	110	110	Planned additional costs of fleet in line with changes to vehicles in 2014/15
Housing Benefit Administration grant		90	The Government has recently announced reductions to the administration grant provided in respect of Housing Benefit and the LCTS scheme.
Existing income streams		230	Within the current year there are some shortfalls in estimated income. These include general car parking income (£150k), income within EMT and parking income at Leisure World. It is considered necessary to reduce these budgets to a more appropriate level.
Risk allowance		150	Detailed budgets are currently being prepared. As shown above there are some underlying budget risks where it may be necessary to review certain expenditure and income budgets. An allowance of £150k is included at this stage against these items and will be considered alongside the final budget proposals.
Total	1,085	1,205	

7.2. There are also other potential cost pressures that will be need to be considered in the final budget report. These include issues identified in the review of the 2013/14 budget.

8. Growth Items

8.1. The previous budget update to Cabinet in September included no allowance for any growth. The following table now includes one proposal. It should be noted that recurring items agreed last year such as investment funded through the new homes bonus for affordable homes and also the cost of food waste, are not shown.

	Current allowance £'000	Updated allowance £'000	Comment
A12 / A120 litter picking		16	Allocation of funding to allow the Zone teams to continue to undertake fortnightly litter picking of the A12 and A120 following Essex County Council (ECC) confirming that they would no longer be providing funding to Colchester Borough to continue the service.
Total Growth Items	0	16	

9 Savings/Increased Income

9.1. The following table provides a summary of proposed savings and adjustments totalling £2.208m including items previously reported to Cabinet.

	Current assumption £'000	Updated assumption £'000	Comment
Total Service Items	(210)	(738)	Additional savings proposed following review by Budget Group.
UCC Fundamental Service Review	(815)	(1,025)	Additional savings through implementation of changes to management structures and Professional Support Unit.
Fundamental Service Reviews	(195)	(445)	Savings from third year of Sport and Leisure Review and savings from review of Corporate and Financial Management (see item on agenda)
Total	(1,220)	(2,208)	

9.2. Appendix B sets out all proposed savings. This shows of the total amount proposed 77% are based on efficiency items, additional income or technical items.

9.3. Specific details are also provided in Appendix C - E for decisions in respect of parish grants and community service grants

10. Council Tax

10.1. The budget forecast for Council Tax income is currently based on a planning assumption of a freeze in the level of Council Tax. This still results in a budget gap and there remain a number of variables and therefore any final proposal will need to consider the overall budget position for 2014/15 and also the medium term implications. There are two important issues relating to Council Tax which the Cabinet will need to consider in respect of a grant that has been made available for authorities that do not increase the Council Tax rate and the indicated level at which a referendum could be required.

Council Tax Freeze Grant

10.2. The Government announced this year that there would be a grant available for authorities that do not increase Council Tax. The grant will be equivalent to a 1%

increase in Council Tax and will be paid over 2 years. This is the third Council Tax freeze grant which has been made available to local authorities:-

	Grant £'000	Period paid / payable
<i>Grants Received:-</i>		
• Council Tax Freeze in 2011/12	267	2011/12 to 2015/16 (recently extended to cover 2015/16)
• Council Tax Freeze in 2012/13	269	2012/13 only
• Council Tax Freeze in 2013/14	109 *	2013/14 to 2015/16 (recently extended to cover 2015/16)
<i>Potential Grant available:-</i>		
• Council Tax Freeze in 2014/15	109	2014/15 and 2015/16

** Grant may be lower than last year depending on Government approach to dealing with interpretation of LCTS changes within Council Tax base.*

Council Tax referendum

- 10.4. In 2012/13 changes to Council Tax were set out in the Localism Act provisions for Council Tax referendums. Schedule 5 of the Localism Act introduced a new Chapter into the 1992 Local Government Finance Act making provision for council tax referendums to be held if an authority increases its council tax by an amount exceeding principles determined by the Secretary of State and agreed by the House of Commons. The Localism Act also abolished the capping regime in England.
- 10.5. For 2013-14 the Government set the local authority tax referendum threshold at 2%. For 2014/15 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government will formally set out the detail on this in December.
- 10.7. Where an authority exceeds the relevant limit it will be required to seek the approval of the local electorate in a referendum.
- 10.8. Currently, local precepting authorities (i.e. parish and town councils) are not included in the proposed principles. However, the Government has stated that it will monitor increases in this sector and has not ruled out setting principles that will apply to high spending town and parish councils.
- 10.9 The final budget report will include the recommendation in respect of Council Tax and will show the implications for the 2014/15 budget and also the Medium Term Financial Forecast.
- 10.10 Currently no increase is assumed in the Council Tax base (the equivalent number of Band D properties used for tax setting). The tax base will be calculated and agreed in December and any changes to this forecast will be assessed within the final budget report. The tax base calculation will also reflect the impact of the Localised Council Tax Support Scheme, decisions in respect of Council Tax discounts and assessment of collection rates.

11. Summary and Risk and variables

11.1. As is common at this stage in the budget setting process there remain a number of key budget risks which include areas where information has not yet been released. The following table sets out the key issues and the current assumption used.

Risk / Variable	Current Budget Assumption	Comment / Timing
Grant Settlement / NNDR retention	Cash reduction of 14% (£1,283k)	Announcement expected middle / end of December
Other Government grants e.g.:- Benefit Admin grant Homelessness grant New Homes Bonus	£90k reduction Cash freeze Grant of £2.6m	Some grants have been confirmed. For other grants estimates have been made based on the methodology of the scheme or provisional announced figures.
Confirmation of budget savings	As set out in report	Ongoing risk assessment and detailed consideration of proposed savings.
Consideration of any potential recurring pressures and savings identified in the review of 2013/14 budget to date.	Some issues reflected in existing budget forecast. Other areas subject to review. £150k included as risk factor at this stage.	Work continuing as part of detailed budget setting and critical analysis of budget issues.
Completion of detailed budgets / Housing Revenue Account (HRA) recharges	Assumed all delivered as per budget allocation. No adverse impact on the charge to HRA.	Detailed budgets to be finalised and recharges calculated in December.
Confirmation of potential one off costs arising from budget proposals (incl. FSRs)	Nil included in budget (sum separately held in balances)	Assessment of costs following confirmation of proposed budget savings.
Forecast balances position at 31 March 14	This report forecasts general balances of circa £2m depending on 13/14 outturn	Continue monitoring of current year budget. Review position in December.
Links to capital programme	Budget proposals based on current programme.	Assess revenue impact of any proposed changes to capital programme.
Council Tax Rate	Planning assumption of freeze	Consider implication of final Council Tax proposal, referendum and Council Tax Freeze grant.
Taxbase calculated	Assumed no change.	Taxbase determined in December. Will be impacted by Local Council Tax Support Scheme and changes to discounts and exemptions and collection assumptions. Expected that taxbase will increase.

- 11.2. The above highlights the key risks and variables that may affect the budget forecast. Senior Management Team (SMT) and Leadership Team will continue to review these areas to minimise any potential impact and identify remedial action.
- 11.3. In summary, there is now a reduced budget gap. SMT and Leadership Team are continuing to work through the outstanding areas of work and consideration of options to deliver a balanced budget will be detailed in the final budget report in January. These proposals will include an update of the Medium Term Financial Forecast (MTFF) which will reflect any impact in future years arising from proposals to balance the 2014/15 budget.

12. Revenue Balances

Recommended Level of Balances

- 12.1 The Local Government Act 2003 places a specific duty on the Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) to report on the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves when the budget is being considered. This section on Revenue Balances and the following section on Earmarked Reserves and Provisions, together with the attached appendices, address this requirement.
- 12.2 The Council is required to maintain a prudent level of revenue balances in order to ensure sufficient funding is available to meet cash flow requirements and urgent or emergency issues that may arise during a financial year.
- 12.3 The minimum level of revenue balances is determined through a Risk Management Analysis based on criteria recommended by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and endorsed by the Audit Commission. The approach taken last year has been reviewed and updated.
- 12.4. Attached at Appendix F is a schedule detailing the risk analysis for the financial year 2014/15. The analysis concludes that the minimum revenue balances should remain at £1.8m, however, a number of areas will be considered in more detail within the final budget report.
- 12.5. In 2013/14 it was agreed to increase the recommended level from £1.5m to £1.8m. The reason for the proposed change in the level of balances was the increased risks associated with a number of Government reforms. The key financial risks are:-

Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS)

- 12.6. The separate report on this agenda sets out the proposals relating to the second year of the LCTS scheme. There remain a number of risks to the Council relating to:-
- *Recovery of Council Tax.* There is a risk of a lower level of collection of Council Tax, given that more people will have to pay Council Tax and many for the first time.
 - *Recovery costs and resources.* The number of people paying Council Tax has increased and we will need to consider the impact on resources.
 - *Demand.* Under the previous benefit scheme there was no direct financial impact on the Council of changes in the amount of benefit paid. Under the LCTS scheme the Government grant is a fixed sum and therefore any increase will be borne by all of the major preceptors including Colchester.

Local Retention of Business Rates

- 12.7. Prior to 2013/14 the level of business rates collected had no material financial impact on the Council as all money collected was paid to Government. The arrangements under the retention of business rates scheme means that risk associated with changes in the level of business rates collected need to be considered and these include:-
- Changes in rateable value of properties following appeals, including outstanding appeal issues not dealt with before the start of the new arrangements.
 - Changes to operational businesses in the borough including the impact of the general economic environment.
 - Collection rates of business rates
- 12.8. The business rates scheme includes a 'safety net'. The analysis of the business rates retention scheme and specifically the operation of a safety net shows that there is a risk to the Council's 2013/14 budget of £283k. The level for 2014/15 has not yet been confirmed, however, it is expected to be similar and therefore there will still be a level of financial risk and volatility to the Council.
- 12.9. As this report shows there remain a number of potential risks and variables that need to be considered as part of the final budget report. The proposal on the recommended level of balances will be reviewed in the final budget report when the implications and details of items have been more fully assessed such as:-
- the Finance Settlement,
 - business rate retention scheme
 - Council Tax base (including collection rate assumptions)
 - budget savings and other variables

Forecast Balances Position

- 12.10. Appendix G details the forecast revenue balances position. This includes assumptions regarding the use of balances and the current forecast outturn position against the 2013/14 budget as explained below.
- 12.11. The report to Scrutiny panel on 12 November 2013 set out a number of forecast variances on the 2013/14 budget. In total, a forecast *potential* net budget shortfall of £338k is currently identified. A number of variables remain that could affect this position, both favourably and adversely. As part of the final budget report in January the current year position will be reviewed. The potential impact on balances is shown at Appendix G based on delivering this year's outturn on budget and the position reported to Scrutiny Panel.
- 12.12. The balances position reflects a number of allocations for specific projects or contingency items. As part of the budget process these items are being reviewed to confirm whether it is necessary to continue to hold them at current levels.

13. Earmarked Reserves and Provisions

- 13.1. The Council maintains a number of earmarked reserves and provisions, which allows it to prudently plan for future expenditure requirements. As at 31 March 2014 we are currently forecasting earmarked reserves to total £4.1m and provisions £0.3m.
- 13.2. As part of the budget process a review has been undertaken into the level and appropriateness of earmarked reserves and provisions. The review concludes that the reserves and provisions detailed in Appendix H remain appropriate and at a broadly

adequate level. However, further detailed work is on-going to confirm this assumption and the position will be considered as part of the final budget report.

- 13.3. It is currently assumed that we will use £230k from these reserves to specifically support the budget as set out below:-

(a) Use of the S106 reserve to support costs (£30k)

We continue to use the S106 reserve to support costs of staff involved in monitoring S106 agreements, however, it should be noted that the current balance is reducing and may therefore not be sustainable over the short to medium term

(b) Use of the Capital Expenditure Reserve (CER) to meet the costs of the Minimum Revenue Provision in respect of the Community Stadium. (£200k)

As part of the original financial implications of the Community Stadium it was agreed that we would use the CER to minimise the revenue impact of needing to set aside an annual amount to repay the debt associated with building the stadium. This was done on the basis that capital receipts from associated development in the area would be secured to repay the debt. To use the CER requires the Council to identify capital resources each year in release funds from the CER. As part of the final budget paper this arrangement will be reviewed given the current asset strategy within North Colchester.

14. Fees and Charges

- 14.1. Proposals in respect of fees and charges are set out at Appendix I with relevant supporting information.

15. Capital Programme

- 15.1. Cabinet has so far considered the 2013/14 Capital Programme on three occasions. At the meeting of 28 November 2012 Cabinet agreed the release of £2.465m, with a further £1.176m being agreed on 23 January 2013.
- 15.2. At the meeting of 10 July 2013, Cabinet agreed the release of £1m in respect of the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme, which was to be funded from external borrowing. This scheme was temporarily put on hold by the bank following the Government's decision to bring forward its Help to Buy scheme. LAMS has now been re-opened by the bank for schemes with approval in place by 30 November 2013, with a limitation of tranches of £1m unless a deed for £2m had already been agreed. However, following discussions with the Portfolio Holder for Business & Resources it is proposed that the Council no longer continues with LAMS having considered the scheme again in the light of the national introduction of Help to Buy, and the limitations of the re-opened scheme.
- 15.3. The quarter 2 capital monitoring report that was reported to Scrutiny Panel on 12 November showed a total 'live' Capital Programme of £29.1m, and a projected spend for the year of £24.7m. The remainder of the funds being expected to be spent in 2014/15 and beyond.
- 15.4. The monitoring report highlighted that there is a forecast net underspend on the 'live' Capital Programme of £55k in respect of the following schemes:

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)

15.5. Whilst it is hoped that the small projected overspend against the Town Hall DDA Sensory Project can be mitigated, it is proposed that resources are released to meet the additional site disposal costs that were incurred to secure a capital receipt in respect of land at North Colchester. It is also proposed that underspends shown against the North Colchester BIC and King Edward Quay schemes are reallocated to the North Colchester Development Land scheme and the Transcoast scheme respectively.

15.6. A review of resources available to support the Capital Programme in the medium term has been carried out, and the following table provides a summary of the projected position for 2013/14. This shows a surplus that is available to support potential schemes in subsequent years.

Detail	£'000	Note
Balance of funds brought forward from 2012/13	(987.2)	Surplus
Cabinet 28 November 2012	2,464.5	UCC FSR; Castle Park Olympic Legacy
Cabinet 23 January 2013	1,176.0	Town & castle walls, temp accommodation review, closed churchyards, DFGs, site disposal, MRP, Lion Walk lift
Capital receipts to date 2013/14	(2,570.0)	Angel Court (balance), Axial Way, Northern Gateway
Projected receipts for 2013/14	(1,314.0)	Receipts which are confirmed but not yet received
Balance available	(1,230.7)	
Forecast overspend on programme	32.0	See para 15.7
New releases proposed now	903.2	See para 15.7
Total forecast balance carried forward	(295.5)	Surplus

15.7. It is recommended that part of the balance available for release is used for the following priorities, which require resources during the 2013/14 financial year.

- £32k to cover the costs associated with the generation of a capital receipt from land in North Colchester as detailed in paragraph 3.3.
- £856k for a new baler and baling shed at Shrub End Depot, to replace equipment that is at the end of its useful life.
- £47.2k to enable the Visitor Information Centre to be relocated from its current location to Hollytrees, thus enabling a capital receipt to be generated.

15.8. It is also proposed that the following three ongoing capital projects are amalgamated into one scheme to be managed by the Facilities Manager. This will enable funds to be directed to where there is the greatest priority, and reduce the need for emergency repairs:

- Castle Walls. Balance of £412k as at 30 September 2013.

- Town Walls. Balance of £220k as at 30 September 2013.
- Walls to Closed Churchyards. Balance of £102k as at 30 September 2013.

16. Council Tax Discounts

- 16.1 The Local Government Act 2003 gave local billing authorities the ability to vary the discounts on second and empty homes. Last year local authorities were also given the opportunity to use new powers within the Finance Bill to reduce the level of discounts currently granted in respect of second homes and some classes for empty properties.
- 16.2. No changes are proposed to the existing arrangements which are set out in Appendix J

17. Strategic Plan References

- 17.1. The Council has agreed an over arching vision for the Borough: Colchester, the place to live, learn, work and visit. Alongside this are number of broad aims.
- 17.2. The 2014/15 budget and the Medium Term Financial Forecast will be underpinned by the Strategic Plan priorities and will seek to preserve and shift resources where needed to these priorities.

18. Consultation

- 18.1. The Council is required to consult on its budget proposals. A consultation exercise took place as part of the production of the Strategic Plan agreed by Council in February 2012.
- 18.2. The budget strategy and timetable aims to ensure that information is available for scrutiny and input from all Members on proposals in the process. The aim is that detailed information will be available prior to the final budget report being submitted to Cabinet and approval by Council in February.
- 18.3 As has been the case in previous years the opportunity remains open for the leader of the opposition to meet with officers to assist with consideration of any alternative budget proposals.
- 18.4. Furthermore, we will continue with the statutory consultation with business ratepayers.

18. Financial implications

- 18.1 As set out in the report.

19. Risk Management Implications

- 19.1 The strategic risks of the authority are being considered in developing the 2014/15 budget and all forecast savings/new income options are being risk assessed as part of the budget process.

20. Other Standard References

- 20.1 Having considered publicity, equality, diversity and human rights, community safety and health and safety implications, there are none that are significant to the general matters in this report. Where issues have been considered as part of fees and charges proposals or other budget changes these are detailed in the relevant appendix.

Background Papers

Report to Cabinet 4 September 2013 – 2014/15 Revenue Budget Update

2014/15 Budget Timetable	
Budget Strategy March 13 – July 2013	
March – June (SMT and Budget Group)	Budget Group Meetings Agreed Update MTFF /Budget Strategy Review potential cost pressures, growth and risks Consider approach to budget Initial budget reviews started
Cabinet – 10 July 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on updated budget strategy / MTFF • Timetable approved
Scrutiny Panel – 23 July 13	Review Cabinet report
Detailed Budget preparation and Budget Setting Consultation	
Budget Group / Leadership Team regular sessions on progress / budget options now - December	Review budget tasks Consider delivery of existing and new Fundamental Service Reviews
Cabinet – 4 September 13 and /or 9 October 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Update • Review of capital resources / programme • Consider any impact arising from in year budget monitoring.
Cabinet – 27 November 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget update • Reserves and balances • Government Finance settlement (if available)
Scrutiny Panel – 28 January 14	Review consultation / Budget position (Detailed proposals)
Cabinet – 29 January 14	Revenue and Capital budgets recommended to Council
Council – 19 February 14	Budget agreed / capital programme agreed / Council Tax set

Appendix B

Service	Opportunity	2014/15 £'000	<i>Additional Comments e.g. impact on service / risk to delivery/ description of delivery</i>
Efficiencies and Fundamental Service Review			
Cross Cutting	UCC FSR	1,025	Second year savings of agreed UCC FSR. Savings increased by a further £200k in respect of changes to management structure / support arrangements.
Operational Services	Sport & Leisure FSR	195	Final year savings of review agreed by Cabinet.
Corporate & Financial Management	FSR	250	Based on proposal reported to Cabinet. Saving based on proposed implementation timetable.
Professional Services	Private Sector leasing	20	Full year savings in private sector leasing scheme due to implementation of new scheme arrangements.
Corporate & Financial Management	ICT contract savings	40	Additional third year savings of new ICT contract
Cross cutting	Procurement saving target	100	Increased target to achieve through improved procurement activity.
Community Services	Joint Museum Service	22	'Repayment' of additional funding provided in 2013/14 due to cost pressure arising from loss of income resulting from Castle closure.
	Sub total	1,652 (75% of all savings)	
Budget Reductions			
Community Services	Activity Centres	39	Based on Cabinet decision in respect of Abbots Activity Centre.
Corporate & Financial Management	Ward (locality) budgets	120	Scheme originally started in 2012/13 as a one-off but continued in 2013/14. Now proposed to stop for 2014/15.
Community Services	Grounds Maintenance	200	A total of almost £1.9m is expended on grounds maintenance, £625K of this is CBH and Highways verge related and the remainder (£1.275m) linked to the maintenance of all the Boroughs CBC owned open space, parks, recreation sites cemetery and crematorium and specialist sports grounds.

Service	Opportunity	2014/15 £'000	<i>Additional Comments e.g. impact on service / risk to delivery/ description of delivery</i>
Commercial	Tour Series	80	Remove funding for Tour Series event for 2014/15
Corporate & Financial Management	Parish Grants re: LCTS scheme	17	Reduction in grants as set out in Appendix C
Community Services	Grants	50	Reduction in grants as set out in Appendix D and E
	<i>Sub total</i>	<i>506 (23%)</i>	
<i>Corporate / Technical Items</i>			
Corporate / Technical	Changes in charges to HRA	50 (2%)	Estimated changes in charges between General Fund and Housing Revenue Account.
Total Savings		2,208	

Revenue Grants to Parish, Town and Community Councils 2014/15**1 Decision Required**

- 1.1. To approve the distribution of Revenue grant to Parish, Town and Community Councils for 2014/15 as set out.

2. Reasons for Decision

- 2.1 It is necessary to set the level of Revenue grant to Parish, Town and Community Councils now in order that they may set their precepts for next year.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 The level of revenue grant could remain at the current level.
- 3.2 Alternative methods of distribution were also considered. However, feedback from an earlier consultation with Parish, Town and Community Councils had shown opposition to an element of the grant being subject to a bidding process.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 For 2013/14 allocations of revenue grant were discontinued, other than a base figure of £500 for each Parish, Town and Community Council to provide an equal level of support. No changes are proposed to this allocation for 2014/15.
- 4.2 The Portfolio Holder for Housing wrote to Parish, Town and Community Councils on 14 December 2012 to explain the impact of Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) on the tax base of Local Councils. The Government had advised of an indicative funding of £120k for Parish, Town and Community Councils in our area, and this was allocated based on calculations of what would achieve a 'neutral' impact on each Council.
- 4.3 The Portfolio Holder's letter advised that Colchester Borough Council had no control over the level of the grant in future years, it was unlikely that it would be separately identified in the overall funding figures, and that the allocation to Parish, Town and Community Councils would reduce in line with the overall grant from Government.
- 4.4 Colchester Borough Council's overall start up funding for 2014/15 is being reduced by 14%. It is therefore proposed that this element of the 2013/14 grant to Parish, Town and Community Councils is reduced in accordance with this reduction. It is understood that most Essex authorities are intending to reflect this reduction in overall funding in the amounts they pass on to Local Councils.
- 4.5 The cost of Parish, Town and Community Council revenue grants set out in this report is £117,700. The final approval of this sum is subject to the Council's internal scrutiny process and the approval of the overall budget by full Council in February 2014.
- 4.5 Implications for equality and diversity have been considered in respect of all changes proposed as part of the budget process, including this decision. It is not for the Borough Council to specify what the grants are spent on and for that reason it is not possible to be specific about any impacts, it will be the responsibility of the Parishes themselves to consider equality and diversity requirements when spending or

allocating the funds. As such there is no Equality Impact Assessment associated with this report or link included.

Proposed Grants for 2014/15

Parish	LCTS Grant 13/14 £	14% Reduction £	Revenue Grant £	Total Grant 14/15 £
Abberton & Langenhoe	910	(127)	500	1,283
Aldham	1,040	(146)	500	1,394
Birch	1,580	(221)	500	1,859
Boxted	1,970	(276)	500	2,194
Chappel	1,440	(202)	500	1,738
Copford	1,710	(239)	500	1,971
Dedham	2,770	(388)	500	2,882
East Donyland	7,940	(1,112)	500	7,328
East Mersea	1,040	(146)	500	1,394
Eight Ash Green	2,900	(406)	500	2,994
Fingringhoe	910	(127)	500	1,283
Fordham	3,300	(462)	500	3,338
Great Horkesley	910	(127)	500	1,283
Great Tey	1,180	(165)	500	1,515
Langham	1,180	(165)	500	1,515
Layer Breton	0	0	0	0
Layer de la Haye	1,040	(146)	500	1,394
Layer Marney	0	0	0	0
Little Horkesley	380	(53)	500	827
Marks Tey	3,160	(442)	500	3,218
Messing cum Inworth	910	(127)	500	1,283
Mount Bures	380	(53)	500	827
Myland	6,480	(907)	500	6,073
Stanway	11,910	(1,667)	500	10,743
Tiptree	20,660	(2,892)	500	18,268
Wakes Colne	650	(91)	500	1,059
West Bergholt	3,560	(498)	500	3,562
West Mersea	22,380	(3,133)	500	19,747
Winstred Hundred	1,040	(146)	500	1,394
Wivenhoe	16,020	(2,243)	500	14,277
Wormingford	650	(91)	500	1,059
Total	120,000	(16,800)	14,500	117,700

Funding for voluntary welfare organisations 2014-2015

Decisions required

1. To freeze the revenue grant made to voluntary sector organisations
2. To cease the funding to support additional welfare rights advice to older people

Alternative Options

1. To allow an inflationary increase to grants to voluntary sector organisations
2. To reduce funding
3. To continue to fund the additional welfare rights for older people

Supporting information

Despite reductions in Government grant to the Council over the last few years this is the first year that an inflationary increase for revenue grants is not being made. All organisations supported in 2013/14 will continue to be supported to the same level in 2014/15

The following groups will receive funding:

Organisation	Amount
Age UK	£11,083
Colchester Citizens Advice Bureau	£101,791
Colchester Community Voluntary Service	£45,000
Colchester and Tendring Women's Refuge (accommodation)	£7,738
Colchester and Tendring Women's Refuge (outreach)	£21,528
Emergency Night Shelter	£8,948
Grassroots	£1,366
Rural Community Council of Essex	£685
Shake Trust	£12,419
Total amount	£210,558

Service Level Agreements will be agreed for each grant before issued so the Council is assured of the impact it has.

In terms of the project to offer additional welfare rights advice for older people, this was established for an initial period of one year, The purpose was to increase the levels of income for older people in order to address the needs of as stated in the Strategic Plan (2009-10). The service was to maximise the income of the household in order to promote health and independence.

Age UK Colchester have reported positive results of from the work. The council continued to fund the project for a further four years.

In 2012 the government enacted the Welfare Reform Bill, the implementation of which began in April 2013. This legislation has introduced the biggest change to the social security system since its inception. The delivery of which targets working age people, whilst older people are protected as regards access and amount of income received.

There are other organisations in the Colchester area that offer benefits information and advice. These are the Citizens' Advice Bureau, GP Care Adviser Service and the Macmillan Welfare Benefits Service, all of which are accessible to older people. We have also put additional resource into our Customer Service team supporting people impacted by all the Welfare Benefit changes.

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications

We have fully considered the equality and diversity impacts by undertaking Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) and conclude there are no adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated. To view the EQIAs please use this link to the Council's website:

<http://hub.colchester.gov.uk/article/5447/Completed-Equality-Impact-Assessments>

Revenue Grants to Arts Organisations 2014/15

Decision required

To agree the revenue grants for the three arts organisations as set out below:

<u>2014/15</u> grant allocations	Annual reduction	2014/15
Organisation		
firstsite	(-5%)	142,975
Mercury Theatre	(-3%)	239,105
Arts Centre	(0%)	67,000
		449,080

Further reductions would be made in 2015/16 of:

* <u>2015/16</u> grant allocations *	Annual Reduction	2015/16
Organisation		
firstsite	(-10%)	127,925
Mercury Theatre	(-7%)	221,850
Arts Centre	(-5%)	63,650
		413,425

*NB the percentage cuts for 2015/16 are based against the current 2013/14 grants.

This would mean that over the next two years the revenue grants would be reduced in total as:

- The grant to firstsite reduced by 15%
- The grant to the Mercury Theatre reduced by 10%,
- The grant to the Arts Centre reduced by 5%.

Alternative Options

The level of grants could remain the same

Additional reductions could be made, but there are concerns about the impact of the organisations ability to absorb larger reductions

Supporting information

Colchester Borough Council provides annual grants to three arts organisations in Colchester - firstsite, the Mercury Theatre and Colchester Arts Centre. The grants have remained at the same level for the last two years (2013/14 and 2012/13). Due to 2014/15 and in particular 2015/16 pressures on the Council's budget, it is necessary to revise the size of each grant and positive discussions with the three organisations have taken place in summer / autumn 2013.

It is acknowledged that as CBC funding is one element of a varied funding package for each organisation, the impact of a cut is difficult to ascertain precisely until levels of funding from other organisations including Essex County Council and the Arts Council England are confirmed. However, each organisation understands that reductions are required, and see the reductions in the light of the overall positive continuation of strong financial support and advocacy from CBC, in line with Council's Strategic Plan priorities and the Creative Colchester Strategy.

Each organisation plays an important role in supporting the local creative and leisure economies, providing jobs and training placements, and benefits the wider population through a variety of community outreach work. The reductions are proposed based on the size of each organisation and its ability to absorb the reductions and increase other income streams, without having to make major reductions to learning, outreach and community work. The approach is to include a larger cut in 2015/16, with a smaller reduction to start with in 2014/15. This allows the organisations to plan for the reductions more effectively.

The total budget saving generated would be just over £50,000 by 2015/16 over two years; £14,920 in 2014/15 and £35,655 more in 2015/16

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications

There are no particular Equality, Diversity or Human Rights implications

REVIEW OF REVENUE BALANCES 2014/15

RISK MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

Introduction

A risk assessment has been undertaken to determine the prudent level of general fund balances as part of the 2014/15 budget process.

Background

Historically we have maintained a strong level of balances and these have been used to:-

- Support the annual budget - particularly to fund one off items.
- Fund new initiatives identified during the year.
- Provide cover for cashflow and emergency situations.
- Provide flexibility and a resource for change management.

The following table set out general fund balances over recent years:-

	£'000	
31 March 2007	2,708	(includes £902k to support 07/08 budget)
31 March 2008	3,347	(includes £1,232k to support 08/09 budget)
31 March 2009	2,891	(includes £1.17k to support 09/10 budget)
31 March 2010	3,926	(includes £1.89m to support 10/11 budget)
31 March 2011	3,457	(includes £1.6m to support 11/12 budget)
31 March 2012	4,919	(includes £3.1m to support 12/13 budget and beyond)
31 March 2013	5,893	

A thorough review of the balances position was reported to Cabinet as part of the 2013/14 budget exercise. This included a risk assessment to establish the minimum level, which was agreed at £1.8 million.

Risk Assessment

The risk assessment has been kept under review. The results of the current assessment are summarised below.

Factor	Assessed Risk		
	High £'000	Medium £'000	Low £'000
Cash Flow	950		
Capital (nil given reserves and receipts)			0
Inflation		100	
Investment Income	150		
Trading Activities and fees and charges		200	
Emergencies		50	
Benefits			100
New Spending – legal commitments			100

Litigation		150	
Partnerships			100
VAT Exemption Limit			350
Budget Process		100	
Revenue impact of capital schemes			150
Impact of Local Government Finance reforms (Welfare Reform, including LCTS and retention of business rates scheme)	300		
	1,400	600	800

	Minimum Provision
High Risk – 100%	1,400
Medium Risk – 50%	300
Low Risk – 10%	80
Sub Total	1,780
Unforeseen factors,	20
Recommended level	1,800

This shows the minimum level of balances being maintained at £1.8 million. It is then a matter of judgement whether it would be desirable to hold any further level of balances beyond this, or to seek to rebuild balances above this level to provide for future flexibility.

The main issues to mention concerning the assessment are: -

- The key reason for proposing to increase balances in 2013/14 was the new risks associated with major Local Government reforms such as the creation of a Local Council Tax Support Scheme and the local retention of business rates. The analysis of the business rates retention scheme and specifically the operation of a safety net showed that there is a risk to the Council's budget of £283k in 2013/14. The safety net figure will be notified as part of the Settlement figures but will be at a similar level.
- While the possible requirement to meet capital spending from revenue resources is still recognised as a potential risk the assessment is "nil" because of the current level of funds held in the capital expenditure reserve and the introduction of the Prudential Code.
- Investment income has been identified as a risk area. In last year's risk assessment this was classified as a "high risk" and due to the continuing uncertainty in the world economy this has been maintained.
- The assessment includes the risk that the VAT exemption limit will be exceeded with a consequent loss of recoverable VAT. Regular monitoring and active management of new schemes minimises this risk.

Implications

The risk assessment will be carried out at least annually as part of the budget process. While the current assessment indicates a minimum level it is important to recognise that there are implications of operating at this level. As noted above we have traditionally had a level of balances that have provided flexibility and enabled new initiatives to be considered outside

the annual budget process. Operating at the minimum level requires an approach and a discipline to: -

- Ensure all spending aspirations for the coming year are assessed as part of the annual budget process. The continued development of the Medium Term Financial Forecast will assist in this.
- Recognise that it will not be possible to draw on balances to fund new discretionary initiatives identified in the year, however desirable they may be; an alternative source of funding would need to be identified.
- Realise future assessments could identify a need to rebuild balances
- Accept that the potential for interest earnings on balances will change depending on the level of balances held. (This will be reflected in the budget accordingly).
- Acknowledge that any balances desired for future flexibility/change management will need to be built up over and above the prudent level identified.

In addition it is acknowledged that it may be necessary for balances to fall below the recommended level. Balances are provided to mitigate unbudgeted cost pressures and as such at times they may be used to provide temporary support to the Council's budget.

The risk assessment will be considered alongside the final budget proposals and will be updated to reflect any proposed changes arising from the finance settlement.

**General Fund Balances
Current Position**

The following table sets out the current level of General Fund balances.

General Fund Balances

	£'000
Balance as at 31 March 2013 (As per Statement of Accounts)	(5,893)
Use of balances during 2013/14:	
• Financing carry forwards – Proposed carry forward of 13/14 budgets (Note 1)	594
• Existing items carry forward in balances (see Note 2)	901
• Existing allocations for 13/14 and future years budget (Note 3)	1,185
• Supporting the 13/14 Budget (Note 4)	867
• New releases agreed in 2013/14 (Note 5)	304
Projected Balances as at 31 March 2014	2,042
Proposed minimum balance	1,800
Potential Surplus Balances as at 31 March 2014	242
<i>Potential deficit (based on latest outturn forecast) (Note 6)</i>	(96)

Notes:

1. This reflects items agreed as part of the 12/13 closure of accounts process as reported to Scrutiny Panel on 11 June 13.
2. This includes previous sums allocated from balances which have not yet been spent. For example it includes funding allocated for potential redundancy costs, funds allocated as part of the Jubilee Fund and provisions allocated in respect of certain key risks.
3. This includes funding allocated in balances in respect of a number of key risk areas such as the various Government welfare reforms and proposed changes in respect of NNDR. This also includes a provision for future cost pressure in respect of Community Stadium funding and the risk factor which has been carried forward from the 12/13 budget as reported to Scrutiny Panel on 11 July 13.
4. Agreed use of balances to support the revenue budget including the use of the pensions provision
5. Proposed releases from balances as agreed by Cabinet on 10 July 2013.
6. The latest forecast outturn variance reported to Scrutiny Panel shows a potential budget shortfall of £338k. At this stage it is considered that there remain some items which will reduce this, however, the table highlights the position should this outturn materialise.

Earmarked Reserves and Provisions

A. Earmarked Reserves

Reserve	Amount 31/03/13 £'000	Estimate 31/03/14 £'000	Comment
Renewals and Repairs (including Building Maintenance Programme)	1,689	1,200	Maintained for the replacement of plant and equipment and the maintenance of premises. Annual contributions are based upon the estimated renewal or repair cost, spread over the life of the asset.
Insurance	263	200	The 14/15 budget proposals include the ongoing annual contribution of £150k. To cover the self-insurance of selected properties. The balance of the fund is split with a proportion specifically identified as a provision against the cost of claims (see next section).
Capital Expenditure	943	500	Revenue provision to fund the capital programme. The reserve is fully committed to funding the current capital programme. However actual use of balance is dependent not only on progress of spending on approved capital schemes but also level of other resources, mainly capital receipts, received. This Reserve is also being used to support some financing costs of the Community Stadium and this will be reviewed in the final budget report.
Asset Replacement Reserve	9	0	A reserve for the future replacement of vehicles and plant. The vehicle replacement policy has been reviewed. Revenue contributions to this reserve have now ceased and the funding is now sourced from the Council's Capital Programme.
Gosbecks	342	320	Maintained to provide for the development of the Archaeological Park. The main source of funding was a 'dowry' agreed on the transfer of land.
Heritage Reserve	5	4	This represents balance held of museums donations and as such represents a small element of the Council's support to heritage schemes.
Hollies Bequest	6	4	Provision for the upkeep of open space.
Section 106 monitoring	58	40	Required for future monitoring of Section 106 agreements. From 2013/14

Reserve	Amount 31/03/13 £'000	Estimate 31/03/14 £'000	Comment
Revenue Grants unapplied	1,383	500	this has been set at £30k per year.. Under new accounting rules any grant received where there are no clear conditions that the grant is repayable if not spent now have to be transferred to this reserve. For all these grants proposals for use of the money exist and the funds are held in the reserve until the money is spent.
Regeneration Reserve	71	50	Contribution to reserve in respect of balancing any deficit in funding schemes in particular years.
Parking Reserve	312	200	As part of the existing 'on street' parking arrangements there is requirement to keep any surplus funds separate from the General Fund. With the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) there is also a requirement to hold separately funds provided to support TRO (Traffic Regulation Order) work and also initial funding provided by Essex County Council
Building Control	0	0	The Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations came into force on 1 April 2010. The new charges allow Building Control to more accurately reflect the cost of chargeable services. In any year there is therefore the likelihood of a balance on this account that must be assessed as part of ongoing charges.
Heritage Mersea Mount	13	0	Funding received from English Heritage towards costs relating to Mersea Mount.
HRA retained Right to Buy (RTB) receipts - Debts	344	600	New Reserve following Government changes to the RTB scheme. From 2012/13 the Council can retain a proportion of RTB receipts to offset debt taken on by the HRA Self-Financing settlement. The reserve must be used for HRA purposes.
HRA retained Right to Buy (RTB) receipts - Replacement	280	500	New Reserve following Government changes to the RTB scheme. From 2012/13 the Council can retain a proportion of RTB receipts to fund affordable housing development. Receipts held within the reserve must be used within 3 years for this purpose, otherwise they must be repaid to the Government.
	5,718	4,118	

B. Provisions

Provision	Amount 31/03/13 £'000	Estimate 31/03/14 £'000	Comment
Insurance	501	300	This element of the fund is specifically set aside as a provision to meet the cost of identified claims including subsidence. It also includes a contingency for liable costs if a previous insurer, which has gone into administration, is unable to remain solvent.
	501	300	

FEES AND CHARGES

- (i) Corporate and Financial Management 2014-15
- (ii) Land Charges and Electoral Services from 1 January 2014
- (iii) Sports Grounds, Beach Huts, Countryside Sites and Open Spaces Events – January 2014
- (iv) Lion Walk Activity Centre – 1 April 2014
- (v) Market, Street Trading and Public Baths for 2014/15
- (vi) Street Naming and Numbering
- (vii) Museums 2014/15
- (viii) Visitor Information Centre Fees and Charges from 1 April 2014
- (ix) Private Sector Housing Services from 1 January 2014
- (x) Planning Services and the Building Control Service from 1 January 2014
- (xi) Parking Services
- (xii) Environmental Health and Licensing Services from 1 January 2014
- (xiii) Recycling and Trade Services
- (xiv) Helpline 2014/15
- (xv) Cemetery and Crematorium 2014/15

(i) **Corporate and Financial Management 2014-15**

Proposal

It is proposed that the majority of fees and charges will remain the same with the exception of an increase to high season surcharges.

Pricing Schedule

Town Hall Hire pricing schedule

A schedule of pricing for the Town Hall was agreed last year and it is proposed that for 2014/15 this remains with the only change being to the High Season Surcharge. It is suggested that this increases from 10% to 20%. The schedule is shown below.

Hire of Town Hall Rooms (Summary)		
Schedule of Charges		
Room	Usage	
Mid Week		Day Time £
Moot Hall	Ceremony	325
Council Chamber	Ceremony	200
Grand Jury Room/West	Ceremony	200
Grand Jury/Council Chamber	Ceremony (20 People)	150
Friday and Weekend		
Moot Hall	Ceremony	550
Council Chamber	Ceremony	400
Grand Jury Room/West	Ceremony	400
Grand Jury/Council Chamber	Ceremony (20 People)	320
Mid Week		Evening
Moot Hall	Reception/Party	870
Friday and Weekend		Evening
Moot Hall	Reception/Party	1100
Mid Week		Evening
Moot Hall	Charity	750
Friday and Weekend		Evening
Moot Hall	Charity	990
High Season Surcharge May - September		20% increase on ceremony hire prices
Bank Holiday Surcharge		25% increase on room hire prices

Freedom of Information Requests

Freedom of Information requests are provided free of charge under the legislation, up to an appropriate limit set by the Ministry of Justice. The appropriate limit currently remains unchanged and for local government is £450. Requests that exceed the appropriate limit are charged at the rate of £25 per hour, also set by legislation.

Civic Events

In terms of the fee for the Mayor Making lunch, this was introduced three years ago and has increased each year to the current charge of £30 per person. Guests have continued to attend the event despite recent increases in charges but it is anticipated any further increase may begin to negatively impact on attendance in future.

In respect of the Opening of the Oyster Fishery and the Oyster Feast, although the charges have not increased since 2010-11, there continues to be a noticeable impact on the numbers of guests willing to attend these events in the current economic climate. Although the Opening of the Oyster Fishery was held at Cudmore Grove Country Park rather than using a boat for the event in 2013, the Deputy Mayor has indicated that for 2014 his wish is to revert to the hosting of the Opening on board the Hydrogen.

It is proposed that the fees for 2014-15 for each of the civic events are not increased and are maintained at the existing levels as set out below:

- Mayor Making lunch £30 per person
- Opening of the Oyster Fisheries £85 per person
- Oyster Feast £95 per person

It is further proposed that, should future plans after 2014 involve a hosting of an Opening of the Oyster Fishery without the use of a boat, that an alternative charge for the event be applied and this charge be no more than £60 per person.

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

Equality Impact Assessments are available to view on the Colchester Borough Council website by following this pathway from the homepage: Council and Democracy>Policies, Strategies and Performance>Diversity and Equality>Equality Impact Assessments>Corporate and Financial Management.

(ii) Land Charges and Electoral Services from 1 January 2014

Proposal

It is proposed that the current level of fees and charges are retained.

Reasons for Decision

Local Land Charges

Fees for residential and commercial local searches have remained the same for several years and it is not our intention to change this at this point in time. However, the contract with Northgate, our IT supplier is due to expire in March 2014 and they have indicated their intention to remove their administration fee if we renew. Should this happen we in turn will need to pass on the reduction to our customers and a further report will follow should it become necessary.

Pricing Schedule

Current Fees to remain the same:

Residential (CON 29R + LLC1)	£90.00	
Commercial (CON 29R + LLC1)	£120.00	
L.L.C.I	£15.00	
CON 29 "O" Questions 4-8 10-21	£10.00 each	£15 admin fee will be payable if optional enquiries are requested separately to original search request.
CON 29 'O' Question 9 is available from National Grid Plant Protection Team (01604 815361).		
Con 29 'O' Question 22	£14.00	£15 administrative fee is payable if this question is requested separately to the original search request.
Additional written enquiries per question	£17.00	
Additional Land Parcels per extra assessment	£14.00	

Fees for specific questions and component data for CON29R:

1.1 f – h inclusive	£5.29
3.1	£1.10
3.5	£1.01
3 (excluding e)	£6.00
3.8	£1.46
3.9 (a-n inclusive)	£15.76
3.10	£1.01
3.11	£1.05
3.12	£2.40

An admin fee of £7.04 is payable per property for Con 29 questions requested individually. Cancellation of official search requests and CON 29 R component data requests will be charged at full cost and no refunds given.

Reasons for Decision

Electoral Registration

It is proposed that the fees are not increased and remain at the 2012/13 level. Sales of the Electoral Register are based on a fee set by the Home Office which remains unchanged from previous years. The fee for paper copies of the Register is £10 plus £5 per 1,000 names or part thereof. The fee for Register data is £20 plus £1.50 per 1,000 names or part thereof. It is anticipated that this structure will produce an income of £3,000. Also a fee of £25 for a letter to confirm that an elector has been recorded on the current electoral register is charged.

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

Not applicable as no change to fees and charges.

(iii) Sports Grounds, Beach Huts, Countryside Sites and Open Spaces Events – January 2014

Proposal

It is proposed that there is an increase to fees and charges in line with the retail price index.

Reasons for Decision

The cost of grounds maintenance activities associated with the provision of sports areas and associated facilities continues to rise. The feedback from sports users is that the quality of pitches and facilities is good but this is only achieved by regular maintenance and improvement works such as drainage to avoid cancellation of fixtures during inclement weather. Pavilions are also regularly monitored and inspected for programmed property maintenance. It is considered that an increase in fees and charges comparable with the retail price index is justified if the quality of pitches and associated facilities is to be retained and the current level of subsidy is to be continued. The Council recognises and supports the benefits that are derived by residents being provided with opportunities for recreation. Sports use continues to be heavily subsidised and a balance needs to be made to provide facilities at reasonable cost whilst seeking to reduce the under recovery in cost and the impact that the budget pressure has on those who do not participate in recreational activity.

Pricing Schedule

<i>FEES & CHARGES</i>	<i>2014</i>		<i>Existing Charge</i>	<i>Existing Charge</i>	<i>Proposed Charge</i>	<i>Proposed Charge</i>
			<i>[exc VAT]</i>	<i>[incl VAT]</i>	<i>[exc VAT]</i>	<i>[inc VAT]</i>
PARKS AND RECREATION						
FOOTBALL, RUGBY and HOCKEY						
full size - casual - all days	adult	per match	£52.33	£62.80	£53.92	£64.70
full size - casual - all days	junior / education	per hour	£15.67	£18.80	£16.17	£19.40
9-a-side football			£14.63	£17.55	£15.08	£18.10
7-a-side or mini rugby/hockey - all days		per hour	£13.83	£16.60	£14.25	£17.10
training grid - all days	adult	per hour	£11.50	£13.80	£11.83	£14.20
training grid - all days	junior / education	per hour	£7.58	£9.10	£7.83	£9.40
training pitch (7 a side or half full pitch) - all days		per hour	£9.42	£11.30	£9.67	£11.60
BOWLS						
casual play - per player		per hour	£3.58	£4.30	£3.67	£4.40
casual play - per rink		per hour	£12.50	£15.00	£12.92	£15.50
season ticket		per person	£84.17	£101.00	£86.66	£104.00
season ticket	discounted**	per person	£63.08	£75.70	£65.00	£78.00
hire of woods		per person	£2.58	£3.10	£2.67	£3.20
CRICKET						
Colchester & EECC - exclusive weekend use		per season	£3,361.60	£3,361.60	£3,462.50	£3,462.50
pitch - casual - weekday		all day 11am>	£60.50	£72.60	£62.33	£74.80

<i>FEES & CHARGES</i>	<i>2014</i>		<i>Existing Charge</i>	<i>Existing Charge</i>	<i>Proposed Charge</i>	<i>Proposed Charge</i>
			<i>[exc VAT]</i>	<i>[incl VAT]</i>	<i>[exc VAT]</i>	<i>[inc VAT]</i>
pitch - casual - weekday		half day 5pm>	£52.17	£62.60	£53.75	£64.50
pitch - casual - weekend & B/H		all day 11am>	£67.83	£81.40	£69.83	£83.80
pitch - casual - weekend & B/H		half day 2pm>	£57.50	£69.00	£59.25	£71.10
pitch - casual - weekday	education*	per hour	£15.17	£18.20	£15.67	£18.80
practice nets		per 4 hours	£8.00	£9.60	£8.25	£9.90
CYCLING						
grass track - club use - all days		per 4 hours	£40.33	£48.40	£41.58	£49.90
ROUNDERS						
pitch - all days	adult	per hour	£18.25	£21.90	£18.83	£22.60
pitch - all days	junior / education	per hour	£11.50	£13.80	£11.83	£14.20
ATHLETICS						
Long jump	junior / education	per hour	£11.50	£13.80	£11.83	£14.20
Running track 300m oval	adult	per hour	£20.42	£24.50	£21.00	£25.20
Running track 4 land 100m straight	junior / education	per hour	£13.58	£16.30	£14.00	£16.80
* Education Use - restricted to school day [ie 9.00am to 3.30pm] in term time						
COUNTRY PARK AND COUNTRYSIDE CHARGES						
FISHING [closed 15 March to 15 June inclusive]						
High Woods Country Park	adult	per season	£35.00	£42.00	£35.00	£42.00
High Woods Country Park	junior	per season	£21.67	£26.00	£21.67	£26.00
High Woods Country Park	adult	per day	£7.17	£8.60	£7.17	£8.60
High Woods Country Park	junior	per day	£4.33	£5.20	£4.33	£5.20
Children's Craft / Environmental Activity		2 hours	£4.00	£4.00	£4.10	£4.10
Children's Craft / Environmental Activity		3 hours	£5.00	£5.00	£5.20	£5.20
Family Self Guided Event			£0.50	£0.50	£0.50	£0.50
Natural History Event			£4.00	£4.00	£4.10	£4.10
Guided Walk	adult		£4.00	£4.00	£4.10	£4.10
Young Ranger Club (12 to 15 year olds)		per person for the week	£40.00	£40.00	£41.00	£41.00
Forest Schools (Led by Country Park's Forest Schools Level 3 Leader)		per session	£125.00	£125.00	£130.00	£130.00
Forest Schools (Led by Country Park's Forest Schools Level 3 Leader)		half term (for schools committed to a full year of forest)	£600.00	£600.00	£620.00	£620.00

<i>FEES & CHARGES</i>	<i>2014</i>		<i>Existing Charge</i>	<i>Existing Charge</i>	<i>Proposed Charge</i>	<i>Proposed Charge</i>
			<i>[exc VAT]</i>	<i>[incl VAT]</i>	<i>[exc VAT]</i>	<i>[inc VAT]</i>
		school sessions)				
Forest Schools - Site hire by other groups		academic year	£200.00	£200.00	£200.00	£205.00
Forest Schools - Site hire by other groups		term	£70.00	£70.00	£70.00	£72.00
Forest Schools - Site hire by other groups		term pre-schools	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00	£52.00
Environmental Education session (Led by Country Park's Education Officer)		per child per session	£3.50	£3.50	£3.50	£3.60
Other groups e.g. brownies (Led by Education Officer/Ranger)		per child per session (1½ hours)	£3.50	£3.50	£3.50	£3.60
Hire of High Woods Country Park Visitor Centre		per hour	£15.00	£15.00	£15.50	£15.50
Hire of High Woods Country Park / Countryside Site by health and fitness and recreation businesses (i.e. regular commercial use)		per hour (permit holder)	£5.00	£5.00	£5.15	£5.15
High Woods Country Park and Gosbecks Archaeological Park Car Parking						
Weekdays		Upto 2 hours	£0.50	£0.50	£0.42	£0.50
Weekdays		2 hours - 4 hours	£2.00	£2.00	£1.67	£2.00
Weekdays		Over 4 Hours	£4.00	£4.00	£3.33	£4.00
Weekends and Bank Holidays		Upto 2 hours	£0.50	£0.50	£0.42	£0.50
Weekends and Bank Holidays		Over 2 hours	£2.00	£2.00	£1.67	£2.00
WEST MERSEA						
BEACH HUTS						
beach hut site - front row 2.44m x3.05m	resident	per year	£134.17	£160.00	£139.33	£166.00
beach hut site - front row 3.05m x 3.66m	resident	per year	£196.67	£235.00	£205.83	£245.00
beach hut site -other row 2.44m x3.05m	resident	per year	£117.50	£140.00	£121.67	£145.00
beach hut site -other row 3.05m x 3.66m	resident	per year	£175.83	£210.00	£183.00	£218.00
beach hut site - front row 2.44m x3.05m	non-resident	per year	£226.67	£270.00	£235.00	£280.00
beach hut site - front row 3.05m x 3.66m	non-resident	per year	£335.00	£400.00	£347.33	£414.00
beach hut site -other row 2.44m x3.05m	non-resident	per year	£201.67	£240.00	£210.00	£250.00
beach hut site -other row	non-resident	per year	£297.50	£355.00	£310.83	£370.00

<i>FEES & CHARGES</i>	<i>2014</i>		<i>Existing</i>	<i>Existing</i>	<i>Proposed</i>	<i>Proposed</i>
			<i>Charge</i>	<i>Charge</i>	<i>Charge</i>	<i>Charge</i>
			<i>[exc VAT]</i>	<i>[incl VAT]</i>	<i>[exc VAT]</i>	<i>[inc VAT]</i>
3.05m x 3.66m						
beach hut site - front row 2.44m x3.05m	resident concession	per year	£100.83	£120.00	£105.00	£125.00
beach hut site - front row 3.05m x 3.66m	resident concession	per year	£146.67	£175.00	£151.83	£181.00
beach hut site -other row 2.44m x3.05m	resident concession	per year	£86.33	£103.00	£88.83	£106.00
beach hut site -other row 3.05m x 3.66m	resident concession	per year	£130.00	£155.00	£134.17	£160.00
beach hut site - front row 2.44m x3.05m	non-resident concession	per year	£163.33	£195.00	£169.50	£202.00
beach hut site - front row 3.05m x 3.66m	non-resident concession	per year	£251.67	£300.00	£261.00	£311.00
beach hut site -other row 2.44m x3.05m	non-resident concession	per year	£146.67	£175.00	£151.83	£181.00
beach hut site -other row 3.05m x 3.66m	non-resident concession	per year	£226.67	£270.00	£235.00	£280.00
Board Sailing Club - site rental 4.88m x 4.88m		per season	£300.00	£360.00	£300.00	£370.00
Deck Chair Hire - site rental		per year	£141.67	£175.00	£145.83	£175.00
Transfer Fee		per transfer	£250.00	£250.00	£250.00	£260.00
OUTDOOR EVENTS						
CASTLE PARK						
Hollytrees Meadow	standard	09:00 - 18:00	£86.00	£86.00	£88.00	£88.00
Hollytrees Meadow	standard	18:00 - 23:00	£107.00	£107.00	£110.00	£110.00
Hollytrees Meadow	premium (new item)	09:00 - 18:00	£240.00	£240.00	£247.00	£247.00
Hollytrees Meadow	premium (new item)	18:00 - 23:00	£300.00	£300.00	£310.00	£310.00
Hollytrees Lawn	standard	09:00 - 18:00	£62.00	£62.00	£64.00	£64.00
Hollytrees Lawn	standard	18:00 - 23:00	£78.00	£78.00	£80.00	£80.00
Hollytrees Lawn	premium	09:00 - 18:00	£177.00	£177.00	£182.00	£182.00
Hollytrees Lawn	premium	18:00 - 23:00	£214.00	£214.00	£220.00	£220.00
Castle Bailey	standard	09:00 - 18:00	£62.00	£62.00	£64.00	£64.00
Castle Bailey	standard	18:00 - 23:00	£78.00	£78.00	£80.00	£80.00
Castle Bailey	premium	09:00 - 18:00	£177.00	£177.00	£182.00	£182.00
Castle Bailey	premium	18:00 - 23:00	£214.00	£214.00	£220.00	£220.00
Bandstand	standard	09:00 - 18:00	£62.00	£62.00	£64.00	£64.00
Bandstand	standard	18:00 - 23:00	£78.00	£78.00	£80.00	£80.00
Bandstand	premium	09:00 - 18:00	£177.00	£177.00	£182.00	£182.00
Bandstand	premium	18:00 - 23:00	£214.00	£214.00	£220.00	£220.00
Upper Park Slopes	standard	09:00 -	£125.00	£125.00	£129.00	£129.00

<i>FEES & CHARGES</i>	<i>2014</i>		<i>Existing</i>	<i>Existing</i>	<i>Proposed</i>	<i>Proposed</i>
			<i>Charge</i>	<i>Charge</i>	<i>Charge</i>	<i>Charge</i>
			<i>[exc VAT]</i>	<i>[incl VAT]</i>	<i>[exc VAT]</i>	<i>[inc VAT]</i>
		18:00				
Upper Park Slopes	standard	18:00 - 23:00	£155.00	£155.00	£160.00	£160.00
Upper Park Slopes	premium	09:00 - 18:00	£350.00	£350.00	£360.00	£360.00
Upper Park Slopes	premium	18:00 - 23:00	£434.00	£434.00	£446.00	£446.00
Lower Park	standard	09:00 - 18:00	£125.00	£125.00	£129.00	£129.00
Lower Park	standard	18:00 - 23:00	£155.00	£155.00	£160.00	£160.00
Lower Park	premium	09:00 - 18:00	£350.00	£350.00	£360.00	£360.00
Lower Park	premium	18:00 - 23:00	£434.00	£434.00	£446.00	£446.00
Lower Park	Funfairs and Circuses	Per day	£720.00	£720.00	£740.00	£740.00
Upper Bowls Green	standard	09:00 - 18:00	£20.50	£20.50	£22.00	£22.00
Upper Bowls Green	standard	18:00 - 23:00	£20.50	£20.50	£22.00	£22.00
Upper Bowls Green	premium	09:00 - 18:00	£82.00	£82.00	£84.00	£84.00
Upper Bowls Green	premium	18:00 - 23:00	£82.00	£82.00	£84.00	£84.00
Upper Bowls Green	Pavilion only	09:00 - 18:00	£10.50	£10.50	£10.50	£10.50
Upper Bowls Green	Pavilion only	18:00 - 23:00	£10.50	£10.50	£10.50	£10.50
Kings Meadow	standard	09:00 - 18:00	£125.00	£125.00	£129.00	£129.00
Kings Meadow	standard	18:00 - 23:00	£155.00	£155.00	£160.00	£160.00
Kings Meadow	premium	09:00 - 18:00	£350.00	£350.00	£360.00	£360.00
Kings Meadow	premium	18:00 - 23:00	£434.00	£434.00	£446.00	£446.00
Kings Meadow	Event parking	Per day	£155.00	£155.00	£160.00	£160.00
SET UP / SET DOWN COSTS						
Hollytrees meadow and lawn, Castle Bailey, Bandstand	Standard & Premium	per hour	£30.00	£30.00	£31.00	£31.00
Upper Castle Park Slopes, Lower Castle Park, Old Heath Rec, Lexden KGV, Mill Road Rugby Club, High Woods Country Park	Standard & Premium	per hour	£43.00	£43.00	£44.00	£44.00
EVENT CAMPING						
Hollytrees Meadow, Lower Castle Park, Kings Meadow, Old Heath Recreation Ground, Lexden KGV, Mill Road Rugby Club, High Woods Country Park	Standard & Premium	per hour	£208.33	£250.00	£208.33	£250.00

<i>FEES & CHARGES</i>	<i>2014</i>		<i>Existing</i>	<i>Existing</i>	<i>Proposed</i>	<i>Proposed</i>
			<i>Charge</i>	<i>Charge</i>	<i>Charge</i>	<i>Charge</i>
			<i>[exc VAT]</i>	<i>[incl VAT]</i>	<i>[exc VAT]</i>	<i>[inc VAT]</i>
Kings Meadow	standard	09:00 - 18:00	£125.00	£125.00	£129.00	£129.00
Kings Meadow	standard	18:00 - 23:00	£155.00	£155.00	£160.00	£160.00
Kings Meadow	premium	09:00 - 18:00	£350.00	£350.00	£360.00	£360.00
Kings Meadow	premium	18:00 - 23:00	£434.00	£434.00	£446.00	£446.00
Kings Meadow	event parking	per day	£155.00	£155.00	£160.00	£160.00
All Locations	Commercial photography	Per occasion	£250.00	£250.00	£257.00	£257.00
	Commercial filming	Negotiable			negotiable	negotiable
	Wedding photographs	Free			free	free
Helicopter Landing		£50 + hourly stay	£27.00	£27.00	£28.00	£28.00
Licence for Regular Commercial Use		Per 1 hour session	£5.00	£5.00	£6.00	£6.00
Old Health Recreation Ground	Standard	09:00 - 18:00	£125.00	£125.00	£129.00	£129.00
Old Health Recreation Ground	Standard	18:00 - 23:00	£155.00	£155.00	£160.00	£160.00
Old Health Recreation Ground	Premium	09:00 - 18:00	£350.00	£350.00	£360.00	£360.00
Old Health Recreation Ground	Premium	18:00 - 23:00	£434.00	£434.00	£446.00	£446.00
Old Health Recreation Ground	Funfairs and Circuses	Per day	£720.00	£720.00	£740.00	£740.00
Old Health Recreation Ground	Event Parking	Per day	£155.00	£155.00	£160.00	£160.00
Lexden King George	Standard	09:00 - 18:00	£125.00	£125.00	£129.00	£129.00
Lexden King George	Standard	18:00 - 23:00	£155.00	£155.00	£160.00	£160.00
Lexden King George	Premium	09:00 - 18:00	£350.00	£350.00	£360.00	£360.00
Lexden King George	Premium	18:00 - 23:00	£434.00	£434.00	£446.00	£446.00
Mill Road Rugby Club	Standard	09:00 - 18:00	£125.00	£125.00	£129.00	£129.00
Mill Road Rugby Club	Standard	18:00 - 23:00	£155.00	£155.00	£160.00	£160.00
Mill Road Rugby Club	Premium	09:00 - 18:00	£350.00	£350.00	£360.00	£360.00
Mill Road Rugby Club	Premium	18:00 - 23:00	£434.00	£434.00	£446.00	£446.00
High Woods Country Park	Standard	09:00 - 18:00	£125.00	£125.00	£129.00	£129.00
High Woods Country Park	Standard	18:00 - 23:00	£155.00	£155.00	£160.00	£160.00
High Woods Country Park	Premium	09:00 -	£350.00	£350.00	£360.00	£360.00

<i>FEES & CHARGES</i>	<i>2014</i>		<i>Existing</i>	<i>Existing</i>	<i>Proposed</i>	<i>Proposed</i>
			<i>Charge</i>	<i>Charge</i>	<i>Charge</i>	<i>Charge</i>
			<i>[exc VAT]</i>	<i>[incl VAT]</i>	<i>[exc VAT]</i>	<i>[inc VAT]</i>
		18:00				
High Woods Country Park	Premium	18:00 - 23:00	£434.00	£434.00	£446.00	£446.00
High Woods Country Park	Event Parking	Negotiable			£0.00	negotiable
High Woods Country Park	Commercial Photography	Per occasion	£250.00	£250.00	£250.00	£250.00
High Woods Country Park	Commercial filming	Negotiable			£0.00	negotiable
High Woods Country Park	Wedding Photos	Free			£0.00	free
OUTDOOR EVENTS - Equipment and Facilities for Castle Park						
Electrics	3 phase 63 amp per socket	Per day	£120.00	£144.00	£120.00	£147.60
Electrics	63 amp per socket	Per day	£40.00	£48.00	£40.00	£49.20
Electrics	32 amp per socket	Per day	£20.00	£24.00	£20.00	£24.60
Electrics	16 amp per socket	Per day	£10.00	£12.00	£10.00	£12.30
Water	Standpipes	Per day	£21.50	£25.80	£21.50	£26.40
Wheelie Bins	1100 Litre	Each	£17.50	£21.00	£17.50	£21.60
White Line Marker	Groundsman type	Per day	£5.00	£6.00	£5.00	£7.20
Road Pins		Per 10 units	£2.50	£3.00	£2.50	£3.60
Radios	2-way analogue	Each				£12.00
Tables	Trestle	Each	£6.00	£7.20	£6.00	£7.20
Chairs		Each	£2.00	£2.40	£2.00	£2.40
Temporary Fencing	1m x 2.5m delivered	Per panel	£1.75	£2.10	£1.75	£2.16
Temporary Fencing	1m x 2.5m installed	Per panel	£5.35	£6.42	£5.35	£6.60
Temporary Fencing	2m x 3.5m delivered	Per panel	£2.05	£2.46	£2.05	£2.52
Temporary Fencing	2m x 3.5m installed	Per panel	£6.15	£7.38	£6.15	£7.56
Toilets	5 cubicle, 4 urinal	per day				£594.00
	Disabled	per day + transport				£72.00
	Single	per day + transport				£120.00
Overnight Security	Security Guard	Per night	£250.00	£300.00	£250.00	£312.00
HIGH HEDGES LEGISLATION FEES						
Complaint processing fee	Full rate		£300.00	£300.00	£300.00	£300.00
	Concession rate - those in receipt of approved benefits		£100.00	£100.00	£100.00	£100.00

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

The proposed fees and charges affect all customers equally. Junior charges are available for many of the activities and a reduced concession price is available on some charges.

There are no new charging arrangements being introduced which will have a negative impact on any equality target groups.

A copy of the Community Services EQIA can be found on the Councils Website.

The EQIA can be found here:

<http://www.colchester.gov.uk/article/4959/Community-Services>

(iv) Lion Walk Activity Centre – 1 April 2014

Proposal

It is proposed that fees and charges are increased as set out in the pricing schedule.

Reasons for Decision

The cost of operating the centre continues to rise due to a variety of factors, including building maintenance costs, food costs, service charges etc. Membership data has identified that if the membership fee is increased too high year on year then the membership numbers can suffer greatly so this is most price sensitive. Those using the food service seem happy to pay more for their meal as there is a greater understanding of the increase in food costs generally. An increase equivalent to RPI of 2.6% is recommended (prices rounded)

Pricing Schedule for Lion Walk Activity Centre

LION WALK ACTIVITY CENTRE	Current charge less VAT	Current Charge	Proposed charge less VAT	Proposed Charge
Membership	£25.00	£30.00	£25.83	£31.00
Membership for people on a qualifying means tested benefit	£15.00	£18.00	£15.42	£18.50
One course meal (members)	£2.67	£3.20	£2.75	£3.30
Two Course Meal (members)	£3.33	£4.00	£3.42	£4.10
One Course meal (non-members)	£3.67	£4.40	£3.75	£4.50
Two Course Meal (non-members)	£4.33	£5.20	£4.42	£5.30

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

We have fully considered the equality and diversity impacts of our fees and charges and conclude that as the Activity Centre caters for older people it is inevitable that any change would impact on a protected group.

However this change relates to a £1 increase in annual membership and a 10p increase on a meal which is minimal and is mitigated by the fact that there is a concessionary rate for those on a low income and for meals and snacks this is a town centre venue where there are many alternatives should members wish to seek alternatives

(v) **Market, Street Trading and Public Baths for 2014/15**

Proposal

It is proposed that fees and charges are increased by 1% with the exception of public baths where current prices will be retained.

Reasons for Decision

A review of market and street trading activities took place in 2006/07 and the pricing policy and structure was adjusted. Again in 2012/13 a review took place and a simple inflationary increase of 5.2% was applied on the charges. We are still considerably dearer than our competitors and we are still also the only authority in the examples shown that charge a higher rate for our Saturday market. To this end it would be our recommendation that we do not increase charges for 14/15.

Public Baths – No inflationary increase on these charges has been applied. These are used very rarely and are there primarily for the use of homeless people.

Pricing Schedule

Schedule 1 - Market			
	Price (less VAT) 2013/14	Proposed 1% increase 14/15	Price 14/15 (ex VAT)
1 x 8ft - Friday - per day	£24.40	1.00%	£24.64
2 x 8ft - Friday - per day	£48.54	1.00%	£49.03
3 x 8ft - Friday - per day	£72.69	1.00%	£73.42
4 x 8ft - Friday - per day	£96.78	1.00%	£97.75
1 x 8ft - Saturday - per day	£31.05	1.00%	£31.36
2 x 8ft - Saturday - per day	£61.57	1.00%	£62.19
3 x 8ft - Saturday - per day	£92.34	1.00%	£93.26
4 x 8ft - Saturday - per day	£123.12	1.00%	£124.35

Schedule 2 - Street Trading			
	Price (less VAT) 2013/14	Proposed 1% increase 14/15	Price 14/15 (ex VAT)
S under 8ft	£11.10	1.00%	£11.21
M 8ft - 11ft	£15.55	1.00%	£15.71
L 11ft - 16ft	£17.75	1.00%	£17.93
XL 16ft plus	£19.95	1.00%	£20.15

Discounts:

- 10-15 days 10%
- over 15 days 20%

Public information and Registered Charity - 50% discount where pitches are available within 1 week of trading. Where not available at short notice and booked in advance 25% discount

Schedule 3 – Public Baths				
Public Baths	Price 10/11 (ex VAT)	Price 13/14	Increase - Figures rounded	Price 14/15
Adult	£1.29	£1.40	N/A	£ 1.40
Single homeless	£0.55	£0.60	N/A	£ 0.60
Children	£0.55	£ -	N/A	£ -
Pensioner	£0.55	£0.60	N/A	£ 0.60
Left parcel service	£0.55	£ -	N/A	£ -
Towels	£0.55	£0.60	N/A	£0.60
Radar keys	£3.37	£ -	N/A	£ -

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications

In relation to Public Baths it is recognised that these will be mainly used by people on lower incomes. Prices were rounded up in 11/12 however it believed that would not have a disproportionate impact. Prices have remained the same in the following budget years and will remain the same for 14/15.

There are no particular equality, diversity or human rights implications. This is covered in the original EQIA for the Service. The EQIA can be found here:

<http://www.colchester.gov.uk/article/4959/Community-Services>

(vi) Street Naming and Numbering

Proposal

It is proposed that the fees and charges for rework remain unchanged.

Reasons for Decision

Street Naming and Numbering is a statutory function for the local authority which means the authority should not charge for the service and therefore no charges are applied to applicants for the delivery of the service. It is also in the best interest of the current or future residents affected that charges are not applied as they may deter individuals or developers from following the correct processes for creating or changing property addresses.

Charging for reworking Street Naming and Numbering schedules that had previously been completed and issued acts as an incentive for developers to agree appropriate and complete schedules at the outset and as a deterrent from changing addresses once they have been issued to residents and third parties.

Pricing Schedule

- £100/street name change
- £10/per plot change (with a minimum of £50 charge)

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

Not applicable as no change to fees and charges.

(vii) Museums Fees and Charges 2014/15

Proposal

It is proposed that fees and charges for 2014/15 remain unchanged apart from admissions for Colchester Castle Museum which will be reviewed along with a new pricing policy following the refurbishment.

Reasons for Decision

The offer to schools, in Colchester, has seen disruption in the last year due to the Castle refurbishment. With the increase in transport costs and squeeze in schools budgets the priority for 2014/15 will be retaining customers for the learning programme across the service and ensuring historical customers

Castle admission pricing policy

A major refurbishment of Colchester Castle is underway and due to open in 2014. A new pricing policy is in development to ensure flexibility, membership offers and the possibility of seasonal discounts. The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Community Safety and Culture, has agreed that this approach and a final separate decision will be submitted in the new year.

Charges for schools sessions

Schools pay for learning sessions facilitated by CIMS staff, although the option of free self-guided visits remains. The choice of sessions are currently priced the same across all venues, giving teachers a range of options of equal cost and to encourage them to consider each venue. To promote the use and support of local museums by local schools a discount of 50p per child is offered for 'borough' schools as opposed to 'non-borough' schools. It is also felt that this reduced price acknowledges that local parents have already made a small contribution to the cost of running the museums service via their Council Tax. It is proposed to maintain the same level of discount in 2014 and to hold the cost of school sessions, to encourage bookings at excellent value 2013 prices.

Suggested costs to remain the same for schools sessions

Existing 2013 prices (inc. VAT)		
Session	Borough	Non-borough
Half-day	£3.30	£3.80
Whole day	£3.80	£4.30

Existing 2013 prices (exc. VAT)		
Session	Borough	Non-borough
Half-day	£2.64	£3.04
Whole day	£3.04	£3.44

Venue hire

It is proposed that the hire fees remain as currently advertised, and reviewed as part of a renewed marketing approach in 2014, which will follow from a review of the hire fees for the refurbished Charles Gray Room in Colchester Castle. Venue hire fees are VAT exempt so all hire prices are exc. VAT with the exception of refreshments (tea, coffee and biscuits) at £2.60 per head inc. VAT (£2.08 exc. VAT). See attached schedules.

Filming, photography, and photographic reproduction fees

It is proposed that these fees and charges remain the same as currently advertised, since the market is very variable with a very wide range of incoming requests, and a degree of variation in whether potential customers are willing to pay the fees or not.

The fee schedules would benefit from some benchmarking and review during 2014. See the attached schedules for the current fee levels which are all inclusive of VAT.

Schedule of Charges

VENUE HIRE CHARGES – 1 JANUARY TO 31 DECEMBER 2014

The following are standard charges for hiring rooms in Colchester and Ipswich Museums. Charges below include VAT at current rate of 20% where appropriate.

Colchester Locations		
Charles Gray Room, Colchester Castle, Colchester	Cost	VAT Indicator
Half-day Meeting up to 60 people	£150.00	Exempt
Full day Meeting 10.00 am to 4.30 pm up to 60 people	£300.00	Exempt
Meeting Concessionary Rate (charities/associated bodies, CAG, etc) up to 60 people	£80.00	Exempt
Refreshments per person (tea/coffee and biscuits)	£2.60	VAT able
Full hire Monday to Thursday 6.00 pm to 11.00 pm up to 100 people	£650.00	Exempt
Full hire Monday to Thursday 6.00 pm to 11.00 pm up to 150 people	£1,000.00	Exempt
Full hire Monday to Thursday 6.00 pm to 11.00 pm up to 200 people	£1,500.00	Exempt
Full hire Friday to Sunday 6.00 pm to 11.00 pm up to 100 people	£750.00	Exempt
Full hire Friday to Sunday 6.00 pm to 11.00 pm up to 150 people	£1,100.00	Exempt
Full hire Friday to Sunday 6.00 pm to 11.00 pm up to 200 people	£1,600.00	Exempt
Refreshments per person (tea/coffee and biscuits)	£2.60	VAT able
Old Library, Hollytrees Museum, Colchester and Natural History Museum, Colchester	Cost	VAT Indicator
Half-day Meeting up to 20 people	£110.00	Exempt
Full day Meeting 10.00 am to 4.30 pm up to 20 people	£220.00	Exempt
Meeting Concessionary Rate (charities/associated bodies, CAG, etc) up to 20 people	£80.00	Exempt
Refreshments per person (tea/coffee and biscuits)	£2.60	VAT able
Full hire Monday to Thursday 6.00 pm to 11.00 pm up to 100 people	£650.00	Exempt
Full hire Friday to Sunday 6.00 pm to 11.00 pm up to 100 people	£750.00	Exempt
Refreshments per person (tea/coffee and biscuits)	£2.60	VAT able

Ipswich Locations		
Lower Tudor Room, Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich	Cost	VAT Indicator
Half-day Meeting up to 45 people	£110.00	Exempt
Full day Meeting 10.00 am to 4.30 pm up to 45 people	£220.00	Exempt
Meeting Concessionary Rate (charities/associated bodies, CAG, etc) up to 45 people	£80.00	Exempt
Refreshments per person (tea/coffee and biscuits)	£2.60	VAT able
Wolsey Art Gallery, Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich	Cost	VAT Indicator
Evening Lecture 6.00 pm to 9.00 pm Up to 90 people	£350.00	Exempt
Refreshments per person (tea/coffee and biscuits)	£2.60	VAT able

Ipswich Locations		
Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich (not Weddings)	Cost	VAT Indicator
Evening Receptions and Corporate Hires of Grand Hall, China Room, Victorian Kitchen plus Lower Tudor Room 5.00 pm to 11.00 pm 60 to 150 people	£1,250.00	Exempt
Evening Receptions and Corporate Hires of Grand Hall, China Room, Victorian Kitchen and Lower Tudor Room plus Wolsey Art Gallery 5.00 pm to 11.00 pm 60 to 150 people	£1,450.00	Exempt
Evening Receptions and Corporate Hires of Grand Hall, China Room, Victorian Kitchen and Lower Tudor Room, Wolsey Art Gallery plus First Floor 5.00 pm to 11.00 pm 60 to 150 people	£1,725.00	Exempt
Evening Event – Concessionary/Charitable Rate 5.00 pm to 10.00 pm 60 to 150 people	£550.00	Exempt
Refreshments per person (tea/coffee and biscuits)	£2.60	VAT able
Education Room, High Street Museum, Ipswich	Cost	VAT Indicator
Half-day Meeting up to 45 people	£120.00	Exempt
Full day Meeting 10.00 am to 4.30 pm up to 45 people	£240.00	Exempt
Meeting Concessionary Rate (charities/associated bodies, CAG, etc) up to 45 people	£80.00	Exempt
Refreshments per person (tea/coffee and biscuits)	£2.60	VAT able
Ipswich Art School, Ipswich	Cost	VAT Indicator
Evening Event – 5.00 pm to 10.00 pm Up to 100 people	£120.00 per hour	Exempt
Extras: one member of staff (applicable to all Art School hirings)	£30.00 per hour	VAT able

VENUE HIRE CONDITIONS:

Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service reserves the right to charge a fee for late cancellations. In winter there is an additional cost for park gate security at Christchurch Mansion. Please ask for details.

OVERNIGHT HIRE CHARGES – 1 JANUARY TO 31 DECEMBER 2014

These notes are for guidance only. Each application for overnight hiring, is evaluated on an individual basis and Colchester and Ipswich Museums reserves the right to amend or refuse applications. As a guide, an overnight hire will be subject to the following charges. These charges include VAT at current rate of 20% where applicable.

Overnight Hire	Cost	VAT Indicator
Facility Fee (applicable to all overnight hires), plus appropriate Hire and Specialist Support fees below	£205.00 per hour/part of hour	Exempt
Hire 5.00 pm to 11.00 pm	£45.00 per hour/part of hour	Exempt
Hire 11.00 pm to 8.00 am	£90.00 per hour/part of hour	Exempt
Specialist Support 5.00 pm to 11.00 pm	£70.00 per hour/part of hour	VAT able
Specialist Support 11.00 pm to 8.00 am	£140.00 per hour/part of hour	VAT able

In all cases the facility fee plus appropriate hire and specialist support fees will be applicable and will vary according to each particular hire and its requirements, for example the number of museum staff required, access to objects, etc.

HIRE CHARGES FOR WEDDINGS, CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS, ETC

LOWER TUDOR ROOM, CHRISTCHURCH MANSION

1 JANUARY TO 31 DECEMBER 2014

The following are standard charges for hiring rooms in Christchurch Mansion for wedding/civil partnership ceremonies.

Charges below include VAT at current rate of 20% where appropriate

Weddings, Civil Partnerships		
Lower Tudor Room, Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich	Cost	VAT Indicator
Wedding Ceremony Up to 40 People (chairs arranged theatre style)	£475.00	VAT able
Continuation of Wedding Ceremony for Drinks Reception Afterwards 5.00 pm to 6.00 pm	£125.00 Per hour	VAT able

A 50% deposit (including VAT) is required at the time of booking.

PHOTOGRAPHIC CHARGES – 1 JANUARY TO 31 DECEMBER 2014

The following is intended as a guide to charges. Charges below include VAT at current rate of 20%.

1. Photographs from Existing Negatives

Size of Photograph	Machine Made Prints		
	Glossy Black and White scanned and output to digital printer	Glossy Colour	Glossy Sepia Toned scanned and output to digital printer
5" x 4"	£4.55	£7.80	From Black and white or colour negatives. Please ask for further details.
6" x 4" and 7" x 5"	£5.15	£9.45	
8" x 6"	£5.85	£9.65	
10" x 8"	£7.80	£10.25	
A4 = 11¾" x 8¼"	£10.55	£13.20	
12" x 10"		£13.65	
A3 = 16" x 12"		£16.10	
20" x 16"		£21.65	
20" x 24"		£49.40	
36" x 24"		£101.95	

2. Photographs from Transparencies or Slides

Reversal Prints	Machine Made Prints	
	Glossy Black & White	Glossy Colour
From 35mm and 5" x 4" transparencies – price on application	£3.10 to £7.90 depending on size (6" x 4" to 18" x 12")	£9.35 to £32.05 depending on size (6" x 4" to 18" x 12")
Reversal Prints	Hand Made Prints	
	Glossy Black & White	Glossy Colour
From 35mm and 5" x 4" transparencies – price on application		£20.50 to £48.70 depending on size

		(6" x 4" to 18" x 12")
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3. Where no Negative or Transparency Exists (to obtain new negative or transparency from original photograph)

<i>Size of Negative</i>	Black and White	Colour
35mm new negative/transparency (suitable for small machine prints only)	£9.10	£9.10
5" x 4" new negative/transparency (for better quality)	£22.65	£22.65
Plus additional cost of supplying appropriate size print	at charges given in Section 1. above.	

4. Prints from Glass Plate Negatives

<i>Size of Negative</i>	Black and White	Colour
New 35mm copy negative (suitable for small machine prints only)	£9.10	£9.10
New 5" x 4" copy negative (for better quality)	£22.65	£22.65
Plus additional cost of supplying appropriate size prints	at charges given in Section 1. above.	

5. Duplicate Transparencies

<i>Size of Transparencies</i>	Black and White	Colour
35mm duplicate transparency from original 35mm transparency	£10.75	£10.75
5" x 4" duplicate transparency	£33.80	£33.80
5" x 4" transparency from any size negative	£33.80	£33.80

6. Scanned Images (Inkjet Printing onto Glossy Paper/CD or sent via email)

<i>Size of Scanning</i>	Glossy Black and White	Glossy Colour
One existing image scanned as jpeg – printed onto glossy paper, CD or sent by email	£15.50	£15.50
Each additional image scanned at the same time as the one above	£5.15	£5.15

7. Charge for New Photography

New photographic work charges at cost. Currently £72.00 per hour plus additional cost of supplying appropriate size prints, transparencies, etc at appropriate charges.

All photographic orders are subject to the following:-

Service Charge £8.50
Postage and Packing (minimum charge) £5.00

Minimum invoice charge £10.00

EU customers will be charged VAT unless they supply a valid VAT number.

PLEASE NOTE:

All the above charges **DO NOT include reproduction fees** for which there is a separate charge.

PHOTOGRAPHIC REPRODUCTION FEES – 1 JANUARY TO 31 DECEMBER 2014

The following are standard reproduction fees for English Language rights for works in Colchester and Ipswich Museums collections. Charges below are non-exclusive, one time, reproduction fees and include VAT at current rate of 20%. The charges **do not include** the cost of providing any copy prints, slides, transparencies, cd, etc for which there is a separate charge.

<i>Publications and Merchandise</i>	Single Language Rights		World Rights (one language)	
	<i>B/W</i>	<i>Colour</i>	<i>B/W</i>	<i>Colour</i>
Publications				
Books, Periodicals, Journals, Newspapers (feature articles), Magazines including part works and marketing/promotional material	£53.50	£107.00	£107.00	£214.00
Educational Books, Text Books and other non-profit publications	£26.75	£53.50	£53.50	£107.00
Book Jackets, Magazine Covers, CD/Record, Video or CD-ROM/DVD covers	£130.00	£260.00	£260.00	£520.00
Academic/Educational Book Covers, CD/Record, Video or CD-ROM/DVD covers	£64.50	£129.00	£129.00	£258.00
Merchandise				
Postcards, Greeting/Christmas Cards, Notelets, artists re-drawing and small reproductions up to A5 size, two dimensional (one year rights)	£97.50	£195.00	£195.00	£390.00
Fine Art Prints, Calendars (per plate), Gift Wrap, Posters, artists re-drawing, A4 size and over, two dimensional (one year rights)	£113.00	£226.00	£226.00	£452.00
Games, Jigsaws, T-shirts, three dimensional replicas, Souvenirs and similar items (three year rights)	£169.50	£339.00	£339.00	£678.00
Television/Filming, etc	Regional		National/	
	<i>B/W or Colour</i>		International	
			<i>B/W or Colour</i>	

Television, Film and Video		
Television, Film and Video Flash Fee up to 6 seconds still photography (documentary, drama, etc) – Standard (five year rights)	£97.50	£195.00
Inclusive Cable, Digital, Satellite, Video, WWW Flash Fee up to 6 seconds still photography – Standard (five year rights)	£195.00	£390.00
Educational Flash Fee up to 6 seconds still photography – Standard (five year rights)	£48.75	£97.50
Repeat in same programme/repeat broadcast – Standard five year rights)	£97.50	£195.00
Facility Fee for filming or TV companies filming in the galleries	Minimum fee £225.00 per day, plus additional costs itemised on Still Photography and Filming Fees sheet	
Multimedia: CD-ROM, DVD, WWW	£97.50	£195.00
Educational Multimedia: CD-ROM, DVD, WWW, e books	£48.75	£97.50

STILL PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILMING FEES – 1 JANUARY TO 31 DECEMBER 2014

The following is a guide to current charges. Charges are guidelines and are inclusive of VAT at 20%.

Filming and Cancellation Fees	Regional and National/International
Filming	
Facility Fee for film or TV companies filming in the galleries (applicable to all filming) plus Filming Fee (minimum of one hour) based on two members of staff being present	£225.00 plus £46.00 per hour
Extras: curatorial staff (interviews or assistance)	£65.00 per hour
Extras: specialist staff (display, security, lighting, etc)	£70.00 per hour
Reproduction Charges	
Costs for still photographs used in filming.	Additional costs for still photographs used in filming are as indicated on Photographic Reproduction Fees sheet are payable in addition to the above Filming Charges.
Cancellation Charges	
Non-appearance (no notification)	Charge 50% of quoted fee
Cancellation (minimum of three working days notice required)	Charge 25% of quoted fee if no notice received
Postponement (24 hours notice required)	No charge

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

Not applicable as no change to fees and charges, but the EQIA used for our pricing policy in general is available on the Councils Website.

(viii) Visitor Information Centre Fees and Charges from 1 April 2014

Proposed

It is proposed that the adult charge for tours is increased but the other fees and charges remain the same.

Reasons for Decision

Guided Tours

It is proposed to increase the adult charge for public and private tours by 7%. Although this is an above inflationary rise there has been an increase in the cost of putting on the tours following the application of the Living Wage rate to guiding fees. The charge will remain competitive with comparable regional destination such as Bury St Edmunds, Norwich and St Albans all of which charge the same or in excess of the proposal. It is not proposed to increase Junior prices in recognition of the number of local schools booking tours.

Agency Fees, Telephone & online booking fee & advertising pricing schedule

It is proposed that these remain the same

Pricing Schedule

Visitor Information Centre Fees and Charges	2014/15	Existing Exc VAT	Existing Inc VAT	Proposed Exc VAT	Proposed Inc VAT
GUIDED TOURS					
Rota Tour - public	Adult	£3.13	£3.75	£3.33	£4.00
Rota Tour - public	Junior	£2.08	£2.50	£2.08	£2.50
Rota Tour - public Themed Tour (1 Guide)	Adult	£3.33	£4.00	£3.33	£4.00
Rota Tour - public Themed Tour (1 Guide)	Junior	£2.50	£3.00	£2.50	£3.00
Rota Tour - public Themed Tour (4 Guide)	Adult	£5.83	£7.00	£5.83	£7.00
Rota Tour - public Themed Tour (4 Guide)	Junior	£3.33	£4.00	£3.33	£4.00
Private prebooked	Adult	£3.13	£3.75	£3.33	£4.00
Private prebooked	Junior	£2.08	£2.50	£2.08	£2.50
Private prebooked	Minimum charge applied for adult groups of less than 10	£31.25	£37.50	£33.33	£40.00
AGENCY COMMISSION FEES	Charity	5%	plus VAT	no change	
	Non Charity	10%	plus VAT	no change	
	Minimum handling fee applied if commission falls below £25 plus VAT	£25.00	£30	no change	

Visitor Information Centre Fees and Charges	2014/15	Existing Exc VAT	Existing Inc VAT	Proposed Exc VAT	Proposed Inc VAT
TELEPHONE/ONLINE/POSTAL BOOKING FEE	CBC events/activities	£2.00	£2.00	no change	
	All other events	£2.50	£2.50	no change	
ADVERTISING FEES					
Accommodation web and print line entry package including availability update and on-line booking annual charge	Up to 4 bedspaces or 1 Self Catering Unit	£163.00	£195.60	no change	
	5-9 bedspaces or 2 Self Catering Units	£173.00	£207.60	no change	
	10-14 bedspaces or 3 Self Catering Units	£189.00	£226.80	no change	
	15-19 bedspaces or 4 Self Catering Units	£205.00	£246.00	no change	
	20+ bedspaces* or 5+ Self Catering Units	£220.00	£264.00	no change	
Display ads in Visitor Guide	Quarter Page	£180.00	£216.00	no change	
	Half Page	£330.00	£396.00	no change	
	Full Page	£600.00	£720.00	no change	
	Full Page Advertorial	£800.00	£960.00	no change	
	Back cover	£1,000.00	£1,200.00	no change	
Web extras annual charge	Web button sponsorship	£500.00	£600.00	no change	
	Restaurants and shops web only basic	£35.00	£42.00	no change	
	New image	£10.00	£12.00	no change	

Visitor Information Centre Fees and Charges	2014/15	Existing Exc VAT	Existing Inc VAT	Proposed Exc VAT	Proposed Inc VAT
Web extras monthly charge	Website home page banner ad	£40.00	£48.00	no change	
	Website landing page banner ad	£30.00	£36.00	no change	
	Homepage banner website and mobile site package	£50.00	£60.00	no change	

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

We have fully considered the equality and diversity impacts of our fees and charges and conclude that there are no adverse impacts that cannot be appropriately mitigated. The proposed fees and charges affect all customers equally and provided in relation to commercial activities. Junior charges are available for many of the activities.

(ix) Private Sector Housing Services from 1 January 2014

Proposal

It is proposed that the majority of fees and charges are increased as set out in the pricing schedule.

Reasons for Decisions

Houses in Multiple Occupation

To introduce an increase in respect of the fee payable for licence applications for HMOs, HMO Renewals, additional rooms and change of licence details in relation to actual time taken to carry out the work.

Charges for Enforcement Notices

To maintain this fee at the current level and, as agreed in 2010, to make one single charge rather than multiple charges where the same enforcement notice is served on more than one recipient e.g. joint landlords and joint owners.

Immigration Inspections

To maintain the fee at the current level of £100 (inclusive of VAT).

It is proposed that the fees and charges set out in the pricing schedule to this report are implemented for Private Sector Housing services.

Pricing Schedule

Service PSH	2013 Fee excl. VAT	2013 Fee incl. VAT @ 20%	2014 Fee excl. VAT	2014 Fee incl. VAT @ 20%
House in Multiple Occupation Licence (new applications)	£650.00	N/A	£662.00	N/A
House in Multiple Occupation Licence – price per additional room after 10 units of accommodation	£65.00	N/A	£66.00	N/A
For the Change of Licence holder details, Ownership, management and interested parties where the licence will have to be reissued.	£150.00	N/A	£166.00	N/A
House in Multiple Occupation – Renewal of Licence	£300.00	N/A	£331.00	N/A
Student Accommodation Accreditation Scheme Inspections:				
• Bedsits	£50.00	N/A	£52.00	N/A
• Lodgings (resident	£50.00	N/A	£52.00	N/A

Service PSH	2013 Fee excl. VAT	2013 Fee incl. VAT @ 20%	2014 Fee excl. VAT	2014 Fee incl. VAT @ 20%
landlord with 2 lodger)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2 Bedroom Flats 	£100.00	N/A	£103.00	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-storey dwellings including non-licensable Houses in Multiple Occupation with up to 6 units of accommodation 	£155.00	N/A	£160.00	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dwellings with 3 or more storeys including non-licensable Houses in Multiple Occupation 	£175.00	N/A	£180.00	N/A
Fee per Enforcement Notice issued under Housing Act 2004 and for Demolition Orders served under s.265 Housing Act 1985 NB. Only one single fee is payable where the same notice is served on more than one recipient	£400	N/A	£400.00	N/A
Immigration Inspection and Issue of Report	£83.34	£100.00	£83.34	£100.00

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

We have fully considered the equality and diversity impacts of our fees and charges by undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and conclude that there are no adverse impacts that cannot be appropriately mitigated.

To view the Equality Impact Assessment, please go to the Council's website www.colchester.gov.uk and follow the pathway: Council and Democracy > Policies, Strategies and Performance > Diversity and Equality > Equality Impact Assessments > Environmental and Protective Services.

The decision to implement the proposed fees and charges for Private Sector Housing services will not result in any breach of human rights.

(x) Planning Services and the Building Control Service from 1 January 2014

Proposal

It is proposed that the majority of fees and charges remain unchanged with only a few specific changes as outlined in the pricing schedule.

Reason for the Decision

Building Control Fees

The current national charging regime requires the fees to be set on a “cost recovery” basis for the financial year. It is not intended to increase the Building Control fees at this point in time.

Planning Fees

The planning application fees are currently set by central government. The Government having suspended its previous plans to introduce Local Fee Setting (as opposed to nationally prescribed) for planning applications. The latest information from Government is that national planning application fees will probably continue for the foreseeable future.

Exceptions to this statutory control include unilateral undertakings, Planning Performance Agreements (PPA's), Preliminary Enquiry (PE's) charges, and inspection charges. It is however proposed to introduce a new scale of charges to recover a proportion of the application fee where an application proves to be invalid and subsequently withdrawn (this will be known as the application retention fee). This charge has been introduced to cover the cost of abortive scanning, indexing, data entry and officer time. It is also hoped that this charge will improve the quality of first time submissions. Agents will be informed in advance of the charge being introduced as will all customer information via our website.

It is proposed to keep PPA (Planning Performance Agreements) fees unchanged in order to provide continued support to the development industry. However it is proposed to increase the fees for PE's (Preliminary Enquiries Minors and Others) as since their introduction in January 2011 they have remained unchanged. There is no additional fee for a subsequent listed building consent application. The fees set out in the appendix represent a starting point and the total fee charged will be determined following further negotiation with the applicant.

It is proposed to leave the Unilateral Undertaking/S106 monitoring fee unchanged as this was raised on 1 September 2013 in line with the Retail Price Index increase from the period 2006 to present.

It is not proposed to raise the charges associated with Landscape Practical Completion Inspections (LPCI) but it is proposed to change the name to Landscape Consultancy charges to embrace a wider range of activity and bring this within the scope of consultancy charges. It may, at the Service's discretion, be possible for clients commissioning consultancy work to negotiate a fixed fee.

Achieving predicted levels of income from planning fees will be entirely dependent upon the buoyancy of the national and local economy and there being a pick-up in the rate of development in Colchester.

The Planning Service continues to successfully operate the PPA Approach. It is not proposed to raise the cost to users of this service.

It is proposed to leave the administrative charge in respect of advertising by public notice in a local newspaper, as required under the Planning Act 1990, unchanged.

It is proposed to amend the charges that relate to Open Space Practical Completion Inspections (OSPCI) from a flat £500 and introduce a sliding scale of charges based on the size of the approved landscaping scheme. It should also be noted that there will no longer be an initial free inspection and the new sliding scale will be applicable at each practical completion inspection. Thereafter the same fee will be chargeable for each and every inspection until the scheme is signed off as complete.

Pricing Schedule

Planning Service - 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2014

General fees and charges (fees below are exclusive of VAT which will be charged where the service offered is not statutorily required)

Item	Fee 2013	Proposed fee 2014
Research cost	£55 minimum charge	No change £55 minimum charge

Item	New proposed fee 2014	
Retention fee for lapsed invalid applications	Householder	£50
	Minor and Other	£100
	Majors	£250
This fee is not transferable to subsequent applications		

Type	Fee 2013	Proposed fee 2014
S106 Unilateral Undertakings Legal & Monitoring Costs	£495 (from 1 September 2013)	No change £495

Type	Fee 2013	Proposed fee 2014
Public Open Space Practical Completion Certificate Inspection (OSPCI)	£500 for first visit waived if implemented scheme is satisfactory. If unsatisfactory then charge is levied Additional £500 per visit thereafter	Size of landscaping scheme (each insp) <100sq.m. £500 101 – 500 £1000 501-2500 £1500 2501-5000 £2000 5001-10000 £2500 10001+ £3000

Type	Fee 2013	Proposed fee 2014
Landscape Consultancy (Previously known as Landscape Practical Completion Inspection)	£120 for first hour and £50 per hour thereafter	No change £120 for first hour and £50 per hour thereafter

Type	Fee 2013	Proposed fee 2014
Planning Performance Agreements (PPA)	<p>Sliding scale of charges depending on size of proposal</p> <p>Super majors Inception meeting £3000</p> <p>Subsequently - as agreed at inception meeting for remainder of project depending on frequency of liaison, complexity of project management and number of officers involved</p> <p>Large-scale majors Inception meeting £2500</p> <p>Subsequently - as agreed at inception meeting for remainder of project depending on frequency of liaison, complexity of project management and number of officers involved.</p> <p>Standard majors Inception meeting £2500</p>	<p>No change</p> <p>Sliding scale of charges depending on size of proposal</p> <p>Super majors Inception meeting £3000</p> <p>Subsequently - as agreed at inception meeting for remainder of project depending on frequency of liaison, complexity of project management and number of officers involved</p> <p>Large-scale majors Inception meeting £2500</p> <p>Subsequently - as agreed at inception meeting for remainder of project depending on frequency of liaison, complexity of project management and number of officers involved.</p> <p>Standard majors Inception meeting £2500</p>

Type	Fee 2013	Proposed fee 2014
	Subsequently - as agreed at inception meeting for remainder of project depending on frequency of liaison, complexity of project management and number of officers involved.	Subsequently - as agreed at inception meeting for remainder of project depending on frequency of liaison, complexity of project management and number of officers involved.
Preliminary Enquiries (majors) (PE's majors)	<p>Super majors Initial meeting and written confirmation £1500</p> <p>Subsequent meetings £1000 per 3 hours (1 officer) fee variable with greater attendance</p> <p>Large-scale majors Initial meeting and written confirmation £1250</p> <p>Subsequent meetings £750 per 3 hours (1 officer) fee variable with greater attendance</p> <p>Standard majors Initial meeting and written confirmation £1000</p> <p>Subsequent meetings £500 per 3 hours (1 officer) fee variable with greater attendance</p> <p>Written response only per letter (no meeting) £500</p>	<p>Super majors Initial meeting and written confirmation £1500</p> <p>Subsequent meetings £1000 per 3 hours (1 officer) fee variable with greater attendance</p> <p>Large-scale majors Initial meeting and written confirmation £1250</p> <p>Subsequent meetings £750 per 3 hours (1 officer) fee variable with greater attendance</p> <p>Standard majors Initial meeting and written confirmation £1000</p> <p>Subsequent meetings £500 per 3 hours (1 officer) fee variable with greater attendance</p> <p>Written response only per letter (no meeting) £500</p>

Type	Fee 2013	Proposed fee 2014
<p>Preliminary Enquiries 'Minors' & 'Others'</p> <p>*excluding 'Householder**' category proposals (and Listed Building consent enquiries of a 'Householder' nature)</p> <p>(**as defined by DCLG for National Indicator purposes)</p>	<p>Written response only:</p> <p>per letter (no meeting) £100</p> <p>Meeting*** and letter: £150 for first hour and then an additional £50 per hour thereafter</p> <p>*** office based. (on-site by agreement)</p>	<p>Written response only:</p> <p>per letter (no meeting) £105</p> <p>Meeting*** and letter: £150 for first hour and then an additional £50 per hour thereafter</p> <p>*** office based. (on-site by agreement)</p>
<p>Preliminary Enquiries 'Householder**'</p> <p>including Listed Building consent enquiries of a 'Householder' nature)</p> <p>(**as defined by DCLG for National Indicator purposes)</p>	<p>Written response only:</p> <p>per letter (no meeting) £50</p> <p>Meeting*** and letter: £100 for first hour and then an additional £50 per hour thereafter</p> <p>*** office based. (on-site by agreement)</p>	<p>Written response only:</p> <p>per letter (no meeting) £55</p> <p>Meeting*** and letter: £100 for first hour and then an additional £50 per hour thereafter</p> <p>*** office based. (on-site by agreement)</p>

Type	Fee 2013	Proposed fee 2014
<p>Advertising by Public Notice in a local newspaper of applications under the Planning Act 1990 to divert, stop up or extinguish a public footpath</p>	<p>Such charge as shall be levied by the newspaper publisher for placing the public notice + £30 administration charge</p>	<p>No change Such charge as shall be levied by the newspaper publisher for placing the public notice + £30 administration charge</p>

Type	Fee 2013	Proposed fee 2014
Other ad-hoc professional planning or specialist advice No Change	Planning Officer: First hour £120 and then £50 per hour thereafter Principal Planning Officer: First hour £130 and then £60 per hour Planning Manager: First hour £140 and then £70 per hour Planning Projects Manager: First hour £140 and then £70 per hour Major Development Manager: By negotiation	Planning Officer: First hour £120 and then £50 per hour thereafter Principal Planning Officer: First hour £130 and then £60 per hour Planning Manager: First hour £140 and then £70 per hour Planning Projects Manager: First hour £140 and then £70 per hour Major Development Manager: By negotiation

Type	Proposed fee 2014
Consultancy rates for professional support	By negotiation - hourly or fixed rate with additional charges where appropriate

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

We have fully considered the equality, diversity and human rights impacts of our fees and charges report by undertaking a series of associated EqIA's (Equality Impact Assessments) and conclude that there are no adverse impacts that cannot be appropriately mitigated.

To view the Equality Impact Assessments go to the council's website www.colchester.gov.uk and follow the pathway: Council and Democracy > Policies, strategies and performance > Diversity and Equality > Equality Impact Assessments > Environmental and Protective Services

(xi) Parking Services

Proposal

It is proposed that a range of changes are made to fees and charges for parking services as set out below.

Reasons for Decision

The charging structure supports the demand management policies for Colchester contained within Essex County Council's Local Transport Plan, a plan which in turn provides funding for transportation. The tariffs recommended here are set at a level which ensures that for the majority of the time there is capacity within the 'Shoppers' car parks for arrivals to park at their first choice of parking place, encouraging users to travel off-peak.

The current charging structure in the peak-time "core tariff" serves to meet the government's policy of reducing unnecessary journeys particularly reducing congestion, pollution and improving road safety in the town centre.

As the offers in most car parks have been in place for some time it would seem sensible to incorporate them into the tariff rates for the respective car parks and these will now be included in the order.

These fees and charges will be advertised and the Cabinet are asked to authorise the Head of Operational Services to undertake the necessary statutory procedures to introduce the new fees and charges, by means of both a Notice of Variation under Section 35C of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to vary the schedule to the Parking Order and a full Order change to make the specified amendments.

Designing effective parking charges is unquestionably a compromise. However in setting fees and charges, an authority must:

- support town centre vitality;
- pursue policy objectives to curb travel during peak hours;
- influence supply, demand and congestion;
- be aware of price elasticity and resistance; and
- support the increasing costs of running and refurbishing car parks.

In order to encourage trade in the town centre, a unique range of tariffs are available and these compare very favourably indeed to other towns with which Colchester is comparable and competitive. The off-peak parking offers have been commended by Traders' groups.

Whilst parking charges form a proportionally small part of the overall spend in any shopping visit, an important consideration in setting the tariff is the perceived relationship with the vitality of the town centre.

Alongside that must be set the policy and strategic objectives of reducing car use, especially in peak hours, and moreover in the town centre. The high-peak or "core" tariff represents a control in this respect, encouraging drivers to choose to travel off-peak or consider the use of other means of travel, or alternative or more appropriate car parks rather than queuing in the peak hours.

Parking fees and charges form an important measure to influence driver behaviour through setting appropriate parking charge levels. The primary function of parking is not simply to raise revenue, but to support transport policy.

The financial support of the revenue generated is of significant benefit, however this is subject to economic factors, and cannot be relied upon simply to increase year on year.

Car Park income is generated from the Fees and Charges charged to users and is generally reconsidered on an annual basis as part of the budget review process.

There is a total of over 4,000 public parking spaces in the town, of which the Council controls just under 3,000. It is important to note that the Council has no control over the pricing structure at some car parks such as North Station, Nunn's Road and Osborne Street, which are controlled by private operators such as National Car Parks (NCP).

Detailed Proposals

The proposed fees and charges are shown on the attached Appendix and a summary of the main changes is given below.

- The tariff for St. Mary's and St. John's multi storey car parks on Saturdays will be increased
- The £2.50 offer period will be amended from four hours to two hours in Vineyard Street car park
- Introduces charging for Blue Badge holders other than those that are exempt for Vehicle Tax
- Introduce charging in Gosbecks Archaeological Park car park. The detail is included in the Fees and Charges report for the Parks & recreation service
- Charging will also be introduced into the Wivenhoe Cook's Shipyard car parks and Dedham car parks
- A new tariff will be also be developed for the car park that will replace Sportsway on the Leisure World site

Season tickets are offered as alternatives for regular customers to which there will be no change.

Special Offers

Additional Christmas special parking offers have been discussed with Traders Groups and will be implemented as part of the Colchester Christmas Package.

Pricing Schedule

ST. JOHN'S		
Time period	Mon to Friday and Sunday	Saturday
Up to ½ hour	0.90	1.00
Up to 1 hour	1.80	2.10
Up to 2 hours	2.70	3.10
Up to 3 hours	3.30	3.80
Up to 4 hours	3.50	4.00

ST. JOHN'S		
Time period	Mon to Friday and Sunday	Saturday
Up to 5 hours	4.40	5.10
Up to 6 hours	4.90	5.60
Up to 7 hours	5.70	6.60
Up to 8 hours	6.50	7.50
Day Rate (6am to 6pm)	3.50	N/A
Up to 12 hours	7.00	8.10
Over 12 hours (long stay penalty rate)	16.50	16.50
Lost or No Ticket	15.00	15.00
Daily evening charge entry after 1900 hours.....	2.00	2.00

ST. MARY'S		
Time period	Mon to Friday and Sunday	Saturday
Up to ½ hour	0.90	1.00
Up to 1 hour	1.80	2.10
Up to 2 hours	2.70	3.10
Up to 3 hours	3.30	3.80
Up to 4 hours	3.50	4.00
Up to 5 hours	4.40	5.10
Up to 6 hours	4.90	5.60
Up to 7 hours	5.70	6.60
Up to 8 hours	6.50	7.50
Up to 12 hours	7.00	8.10
Over 12 hours (long stay penalty rate)	16.50	16.50
Lost or No Ticket	15.00	15.00
Daily evening charge entry after 1900 hours.....	2.00	2.00

MIDDLEBOROUGH	
Mon - Fri	Existing Charge
Up to 2 hours (after 10 am).....	2.90
Long stay day rate (6am to 6pm)	3.50
Over-night charge (6pm till 6am)	0.50
Saturday	
Up to 2 hours	2.90
Up to 4 hours	4.10
Over 4 hours (long stay day rate).....	6.00
Over-night charge (6pm till 6am)	0.50
Sunday	
At any time (day rate).....	2.20
Over-night charge (6pm till 6am)	0.50

SHEEPEN ROAD	
Mon - Fri	Existing Charge
Up to 2 hours (after 6 am)	2.90
Up to 4 hours	4.10
Over 4 hours (long stay day rate).....	6.00
Over-night charge (6pm till 6am)	0.50
Saturday	
Up to 2 hours	2.90
Up to 4 hours	4.10
Over 4 hours (long stay day rate).....	6.00
Over-night charge (6pm till 6am)	0.50
Sunday	
At any time (day rate).....	2.20
Over-night charge (6pm till 6am)	0.50

BRITANNIA & PRIORY STREET	
Mon – Sat	
Up to 40 min.....	0.90
Up to 1 hour 10 mins.....	1.90
Peak hours only: Up to 2 hours	2.90
Peak hours only: Up to 4 hours	3.90
Up to 4 hours off-peak only (9.30am to 6.00pm)	2.50
Over 4 hours (penalty long stay day rate)	10.00
Sunday all-day charge (until 18.00 hrs)	0.50
Daily over-night charge (6pm till 6am)	0.50

VINEYARD STREET – Short stay, 2 hours maximum	
Mon – Sun	
Up to 40 min.....	1.20
Up to 1 hour 10 mins.....	2.30
Up to 2 hours off-peak only (6.00am to 6.00pm)	2.50
Over 2 hours (penalty long stay day rate)	10.00
Daily over-night charge (6pm till 6am)	0.50

BUTT ROAD; NAPIER ROAD NORTH & NAPIER ROAD SOUTH	
Mon - Sat	Existing Charge
Up to 2 hours	1.00
Up to 4 hours	1.50
Over 4 hours (long stay day rate).....	2.50
Over-night charge (6pm till 6am).....	0.50

BUTT ROAD; NAPIER ROAD NORTH & NAPIER ROAD SOUTH	
Sundays	
Up to 2 hours	1.00
Up to 4 hours	1.50
Over 4 hours (long stay day rate).....	2.50
Over-night charge (6pm till 6am).....	0.50

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications

Any increase in parking charges is likely to have a disproportionate impact on households with lower incomes. However, the careful design and availability of the parking offers and the introduction of shorter stay tariffs across a range of car parks gives these households affordable choices and options.

Disabled badge holders are still no longer able to park in any bay free of charge. The reserved bays that only disabled badge holders can park in are always in the most accessible positions and have been increased in number to compensate for the change above.

The EQIA is available on the Council’s website www.colchester.gov.uk and follow the pathway: [Home](#) > [Council and Democracy](#) > [Policies, strategies and performance](#) > [Equality and Diversity](#) > [Equality Impact Assessments](#) or on the link below:

<http://www.colchester.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=3748&p=0>

(xii) Environmental Health and Licensing Services from 1 January 2014

Proposal

It is proposed that many fees and charges will remain unchanged with a small number increasing as set out in the pricing schedules.

Reasons for Decision

Environmental Protection

The maximum amounts chargeable for various water sampling activities are stipulated in Schedule 5 to the Private Water Supplies Regulations 2009. All fees currently charged by the Council are in line with these maximums, the exception to this being the charges made to the most vulnerable households whereby the sampling fee is waived for customers in receipt of means tested benefits. It is therefore proposed to hold all fees at current levels.

The charge currently made for the provision of Environmental Information covers the costs incurred in responding to such requests and is in line with that charged by many other local authorities. It is therefore proposed to hold this charge at the current level.

It is proposed that the fees and charges set out in the pricing schedule to this report are implemented for all Environmental Protection services.

Pest Control

As with previous years we have benchmarked our charges against other Essex local authorities and this has shown that whilst we are at the top end of the scale with some of our charges, we are one of the cheaper for some of our other services.

Owing to the economic climate, some 37% of our customers are now in receipt of means tested benefits. It is proposed to hold all charges to domestic customers in receipt of means tested benefits at their current rates ie free of charge for rats, mice and cockroaches and £20.00 for other insect pests.

Small increases ranging from 3.0% are proposed across all other treatments with the exception of bedbugs where a larger increase £100.00 incl VAT is required if we are to ensure the effectiveness of the treatments offered and recovery of the costs incurred in providing this increasingly challenging and resource intensive service.

Dog Control

In order to continue to reward responsible dog owners and to remain competitive, we propose leaving the price for micro-chipping and dog waste bags at their current levels.

As previously stated, it is considered that a minority of dog owners potentially abuse the Council's stray dog service by using it as a means of disposal for unwanted dogs. Whilst the Council and its partners will make every effort to re-home these dogs, unfortunately this is not always possible. In the event of the Council being able to identify the owner of such a dog, the Council will, without exception, levy a charge to recover all costs incurred in collecting, transporting, medically treating, kennelling and re-homing/euthanizing the

dog. As these charges represent the cost of providing the service we are not proposing an increase.

Licensing and Food & Safety

Many of the licensing fees charged by the Council are set by government so there is no discretion to alter them. The heading of each section of the fees and charges schedule indicates to which fees this restriction applies.

The introduction of the EU Services Directive, aimed at breaking down the barriers to cross border trade, has caused the Council to carefully review and consider the discretionary fees charged for other licences and registrations so as to ensure that they are set at a level that is both reasonable and proportionate to the cost of the procedures involved.

Our proposed reduction in the fees that can be charged for sex establishments is the result of the High Court decision in the case of Hemming vs Westminster City Council. This was a challenge to the annual licence fee for sex establishments in Westminster and both the judge and the Court of Appeal found that local authorities, in setting their fees, may only take into account the costs they incur in administering the application. They are not permitted to include in the fee the costs of enforcing against unlicensed premises.

Competition from internet based training providers continues to suppress demand for 'classroom based' food hygiene training and therefore it is proposed to hold our charges at their current levels.

Pricing Schedule

Environmental Protection Fees & Charges 2014				
	2013 Fee excl. VAT	2013 Fee incl. VAT	Proposed 2014 Fee excl. VAT	Proposed 2014 Fee incl. VAT
Private Water Supplies				
Risk Assessment	£416.67	£500	£416.67	£500
Sampling (initial visit & revisit)	£83.33	£100	£83.33	£100
Investigation	£83.33	£100	£83.33	£100
Grant Authorisation	£83.33	£100	£83.33	£100
Sample Analysis (minor)	£20.83	£25	£20.83	£25
Sample Analysis (check monitoring)	£83.33	£100	£83.33	£100
Sample Analysis (audit monitoring)	£416.67	£500	£416.67	£500
Concession - sampling fee for residents living in a single dwelling who are in receipt of a means tested benefit	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE
Environmental Information Requests	£83.33	£100	£83.33	£100

MAIN FEES INCREASED BY 3.0 % INFLATION				
Animal Control Fees & Charges	2013-14 Fee excl. VAT	2013-14 Fee incl. VAT	2014-15 Proposed Fee excl. VAT	2014-2015 Proposed Fee incl. VAT
Pest Control				
Non-Domestic Premises				
Treatment of Rodents (rats, mice, squirrels) & Cockroaches (incl materials) - max 3 visits (additional visits pro-rata)	146.67	176.00	150.83	181.00
Treatment of other insect pests (per hour - min 1 hour). Treatment of other pests by agreement	80.00	96.00	82.50	99.00
Squirrels	104.17	125.00	107.50	129.00
Call out where no treatment required	35.83	43.00	36.67	44.00
Domestic Premises				
Destruction of Bedbugs	66.67	80.00	83.33	100.00
Destruction of Wasps Nests, Hornets & Bees - including materials	50.83	61.00	52.50	63.00
Fleas	66.67	80.00	68.33	82.00
Call out where no treatment required (insects)	17.92	21.50	18.33	22.00
Other Pests (incl ants & cockroaches) per hour incl materials (min 1 hr)	68.33	82.00	70.00	84.00
Destruction of Rats	40.42	48.50	41.67	50.00
Destruction of Mice	40.42	48.50	41.67	50.00
Call out where no treatment required (rodents)	17.92	21.50	18.33	22.00
Treatment of Squirrels - per treatment	40.42	48.50	41.67	50.00
Call out fee - appointments not kept by occupier	9.58	11.50	10.00	12.00
Reduced Charges for those in receipt of a Means-Tested Benefit				
Destruction of Wasps Nests, Hornets & Bees - including materials	16.67	20.00	16.67	20.00
Destruction of Bedbugs	16.67	20.00	16.67	20.00
Fleas	16.67	20.00	16.67	20.00
Other Pests (incl ants) per hour incl materials (min 1 hr)	16.67	20.00	16.67	20.00
Squirrels	40.42	48.50	16.67	20.00
Rats	0.00	FREE	0.00	FREE
Mice	0.00	FREE	0.00	FREE
Cockroaches	0.00	FREE	0.00	FREE
Dog Control				
100 Dog Waste Bags (100 bags = 2 rolls) or 6 rolls for the price of 4	1.25	1.50	1.25	1.50
Microchip - per dog	8.33	10.00	8.33	10.00
Fixed Penalty - Breach of Dog Control Order	75.00	NB	75.00	NB
Stray Dog Charge - Dogs WITH collar & tag/microchip	65.00	NB	65.00	NB
Stray Dog Charge - Dogs WITHOUT collar & tag/microchip	75.00	NB	75.00	NB
Stray Dog Kenneling Charge (per day or part thereof)	13.00	NB	13.00	NB
Stray Dog Return Fee (subject to officer availability)	25.00	NB	25.00	NB

Licensing, Food & Safety Fees Proposed Charges 2014

ENVIRONMENTAL LICENCES - VARIABLE

Schedule of Charges		Present Charges 2013 (excl VAT) £	Present Charges *(incl VAT) £	Proposed Charges 2014 (excl VAT) £	Proposed Charges *(incl VAT) £
Sex Establishment Licence - New Applications	E	5,000.00		1,040.00	
Sex Establishment Licence - Renewals	E	2,500.00		370.00	
Sex Entertainment Venue - New Applications	E	5,000.00		1,225.00	
Sex Entertainment Venue - New Applications	E	2,500.00		385.00	
Scrap metal Dealers Act Site New Application	E	337.00		465.00	
Scrap metal Dealers Act Site Renewal	E	154.00		215.00	
Scrap metal Dealers Act Collector New Application	E	228.00		315.00	
Scrap metal Dealers Act Collector Renewal	E	147.00		205.00	
Riding Establishment Licences (+ vet fee)	E	160.00		160.00	
Zoo Operators Licence (+ vet fee) (payable every 6 years - next due 2013)	E	1,000.00		1,100.00	
Dangerous Wild Animals (+ vet fee) (payable every two years)	E	160.00		165.00	
Pet Animal Licence	E	125.00		135.00	
Animal Boarding Establishment Licence	E	130.00		135.00	
Home Boarding	E	120.00		125.00	
Dog Breeder's Licence	E	125.00		135.00	
Food Export Certificates	E	55.00		55.00	
Food Surrender Certificates	E	100.00		100.00	
Skin Piercing - Premises - including 2 operators	E	160.00		160.00	
- Operators - up to 2 operators	E	80.00		80.00	
- Admin charge for transfers	E	40.00		40.00	
Basic Food Hygiene/Health and Safety Courses					
Basic charge	E	65.00		65.00	
If resident or employed within Colchester Borough	E	50.00		50.00	
Delivered at businesses own premises		£400 (10 pers) + £20 ph		£400 (10 pers) + £20 ph	
Basic charge (up to 10)	E	400.00		400.00	
Each additional person	E	20.00		20.00	
Exam resit fees	E	20.00		20.00	
Hypnotists	E	65.00		65.00	
Pleasure Boats	E	65.00		65.00	

NOTE: All charges marked with an 'E' do not attract VAT

HACKNEY CARRIAGES AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES - VARIABLE

Schedule of Charges		Present Charges (excl VAT) £	Present Charges *(incl VAT) £	Proposed Charges (excl VAT) £	Proposed Charges *(incl VAT) £
Vehicle and Operators Licences					
Hackney Carriage Vehicle	E	315.00		315.00	
Private Hire Vehicle	E	275.00		275.00	
Operators Licence - 1-2 vehicles (PHV)	E	295.00		295.00	
Operators Licence - 3+ vehicles (PHV)	E	350.00		350.00	

Category change fee	E	35.00		35.00	
Operators licence transfer fee	E	85.00		85.00	
Drivers Licences					
Initial Licence valid for up to 3 years	E	200.00		200.00	
Renewal Licence valid for up to 3 years	E	135.00		135.00	
Deposit - refunded if application proceeds	E	50.00		50.00	
Knowledge Test - initial fee (offset against licence if licence applied for)	E	35.00		35.00	
Knowledge Test - re-sit fee	E	35.00		35.00	
Licence Transfer Fees					
Vehicle to vehicle	E	85.00		85.00	
Person to person	E	85.00		85.00	
PHV to Hackney Carriage Vehicle	E	85.00		85.00	
Registration number change	E	30.00		30.00	
Vehicle Inspection Fees					
HC Vehicle Inspection Fee (other than brand new) as MOT	E	50.00		50.00	
HC Vehicle Inspection Fee (Brand new)	E	30.00		30.00	
PH Vehicle Inspection Fee (other than brand new) as MOT	E	50.00		50.00	
PH Vehicle Inspection Fee (Brand new)	E	30.00		30.00	
Failure to attend for appt	E	20.00		30.00	
Replacement Equipment					
Replacement Plates	E	25.00		25.00	
Replacement Badges	E	15.00		17.00	
Replacement vehicle window cards	E	3.00		5.00	
Standard Roof Sign	E	At Cost		At Cost + £10.00 handling charge	
Standard Door Signs	E	At Cost		At Cost + £10.00 handling charge	

NOTE: All charges marked with an 'E' do not attract VAT

Fees for drivers' licences do not include the £44.00 fee for a mandatory CRB check, which will be charged additionally

ALCOHOL & ENTERTAINMENT LICENCES - STATUTORY FEES (No discretion to change)

Schedule of Charges		Present Charges (excl VAT) £	Present Charges *(incl VAT) £	Proposed Charges (excl VAT) £	Proposed Charges *(incl VAT) £
Premises Licenses - Initial Applications					
Band A - Rateable Value £0 - £4,300	E	100.00		100.00	
Band B - £4,301 - £33,000	E	190.00		190.00	
Band C - £33,001 - £87,000	E	315.00		315.00	
Band D - £87,001 - £125,000	E	450.00		450.00	
Band E - £125,000 and over	E	635.00		635.00	
Premises Licenses - Renewals					
Band A - Rateable Value £0 - £4,300	E	70.00		70.00	
Band B - £4,301 - £33,000	E	180.00		180.00	
Band C - £33,001 - £87,000	E	295.00		295.00	
Band D - £87,001 - £125,000	E	320.00		320.00	
Band E - £125,000 and over	E	350.00		350.00	
Premises Licences - Variations					
Band A - Rateable Value £0 - £4,300	E	100.00		100.00	

Band B - £4,301 - £33,000	E	190.00		190.00	
Band C - £33,001 - £87,000	E	315.00		315.00	
Band D - £87,001 - £125,000	E	450.00		450.00	
Band E - £125,000 and over	E	635.00		635.00	
Minor Variations - all Bands	E	89.00		89.00	

Personal Licenses

Initial Application	E	37.00		37.00	
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Miscellaneous Fees

Copies of Documents etc	E	10.50		10.50	
Transfers	E	23.00		23.00	
Change of Designated Premises Supervisor	E	23.00		23.00	
Temporary Event Notices	E	21.00		21.00	
Notice of Interest in Premises	E	21.00		21.00	

NOTE: All charges marked with an 'E' do not attract VAT

GAMBLING LICENCES - VARIABLE

Schedule of Charges	Present Charges (excl VAT) £	Present Charges *(incl VAT) £	Proposed Charges (excl VAT) £	Proposed Charges *(incl VAT) £
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Premises Licenses - New Applications / Provisional Statements

New Small Casino	E	6,200.00		6,200.00	
New Large Casino	E	7,700.00		7,700.00	
Regional Casino	E	12,500.00		12,500.00	
Bingo Club	E	3,100.00		3,100.00	
Betting Premises (excluding Tracks)	E	2,600.00		2,600.00	
Tracks	E	2,100.00		2,100.00	
Family Entertainment Centres	E	1,600.00		1,600.00	
Adult Gaming Centres	E	1,600.00		1,600.00	

Premises Licenses - Annual Fees

Existing Casinos	E	2,600.00		2,600.00	
New Small Casino	E	4,200.00		4,200.00	
New Large Casino	E	7,700.00		7,700.00	
Regional Casino	E	12,500.00		12,500.00	
Bingo Club	E	850.00		850.00	
Betting Premises (excluding Tracks)	E	550.00		550.00	
Tracks	E	850.00		850.00	
Family Entertainment Centres	E	650.00		650.00	
Adult Gaming Centres	E	850.00		850.00	

Premises Licenses - Application to Vary

New Small Casino	E	3,000.00		3,000.00	
New Large Casino	E	4,000.00		4,000.00	
Regional Casino	E	6,000.00		6,000.00	
Bingo Club	E	1,000.00		1,000.00	
Betting Premises (excluding Tracks)	E	1,000.00		1,000.00	
Tracks	E	750.00		750.00	
Family Entertainment Centres	E	600.00		600.00	
Adult Gaming Centres	E	750.00		750.00	

Premises Licenses - Application for Transfer / Reinstatement

New Small Casino	E	1,200.00		1,200.00	
New Large Casino	E	1,500.00		1,500.00	
Regional Casino	E	5,000.00		5,000.00	
Bingo Club	E	1,000.00		1,000.00	
Betting Premises (excluding Tracks)	E	1,000.00		1,000.00	
Tracks	E	750.00		750.00	
Family Entertainment Centres	E	750.00		750.00	
Adult Gaming Centres	E	1,000.00		1,000.00	

Premises Licenses - Licence Application (Provisional Statement Holders)

New Small Casino	E	3,000.00		3,000.00	
New Large Casino	E	4,000.00		4,000.00	
Regional Casino	E	6,000.00		6,000.00	
Bingo Club	E	900.00		900.00	
Betting Premises (excluding Tracks)	E	900.00		900.00	
Tracks	E	750.00		750.00	
Family Entertainment Centres	E	600.00		600.00	
Adult Gaming Centres	E	800.00		800.00	

NOTE: All charges marked with an 'E' do not attract VAT

GAMBLING LICENCES - STATUTORY FEES (No discretion to Change)

Schedule of Charges	Present Charges (excl VAT) £	Present Charges *(incl VAT) £	Proposed Charges (excl VAT) £	Proposed Charges *(incl VAT) £
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Permits For Gaming Machines - New Application

FEC Gaming Machine	E	300.00		300.00	
Prize Gaming	E	300.00		300.00	
Alcohol Licensed Premises - 2 or less machines	E	50.00		50.00	
Alcohol Licensed Premises - more than 2 machines	E	150.00		150.00	
Club Gaming Permit	E	200.00		200.00	
Club Gaming Machine Permit	E	200.00		200.00	
Small Society Lottery Registration - New Application	E	40.00		40.00	

Permits For Gaming Machines - Annual Fees/Renewals

FEC Gaming Machine	E	300.00		300.00	
Prize Gaming	E	300.00		300.00	
Alcohol Licensed Premises - 2 or less machines	E	N/A			
Alcohol Licensed Premises - more than 2 machines	E	50.00		50.00	
Club Gaming Permit	E	50.00		50.00	
Club Gaming Machine Permit	E	50.00		50.00	
Small Society Lottery Registration - Annual Fee	E	20.00		20.00	

Permit - Miscellaneous Fees

Change of Name

FEC Permits	E	25.00		25.00	
Prize Gaming Permits	E	25.00		25.00	
Alcohol Licensed Premises - 2 or less machines	E	N/A			

Alcohol Licensed Premises - more than 2 machines
 Club Gaming Permit
 Club Gaming Machine Permit
 Small Society Lottery Registration

E	25.00		25.00	
E	N/A			
E	N/A			
E	N/A			

Copy of Permit

FEC Permits
 Prize Gaming Permits
 Alcohol Licensed Premises - 2 or less machines
 Alcohol Licensed Premises - more than 2 machines
 Club Gaming Permit
 Club Gaming Machine Permit
 Small Society Lottery Registration

E	15.00		15.00	
E	15.00		15.00	
E	N/A			
E	15.00		15.00	
E	15.00		15.00	
E	15.00		15.00	
E	N/A			

Variation

FEC Permits
 Prize Gaming Permits
 Alcohol Licensed Premises - 2 or less machines
 Alcohol Licensed Premises - more than 2 machines
 Club Gaming Permit
 Club Gaming Machine Permit
 Small Society Lottery Registration

E	N/A			
E	N/A			
E	N/A			
E	100.00		100.00	
E	100.00		100.00	
E	100.00		100.00	
E	N/A			

Transfer

FEC Permits
 Prize Gaming Permits
 Alcohol Licensed Premises - 2 or less machines
 Alcohol Licensed Premises - more than 2 machines
 Club Gaming Permit
 Club Gaming Machine Permit
 Small Society Lottery Registration

E	N/A			
E	N/A			
E	N/A			
E	25.00		25.00	
E	N/A			
E	N/A			
E	N/A			

NOTE: All charges marked with an 'E' do not attract VAT

MISCELLANEOUS FEES - VARIABLE

Present Charges (excl VAT) £	Present Charges *(incl VAT) £	Proposed Charges (excl VAT) £	Proposed Charges *(incl VAT) £
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H&S Disclosures

Statement of Relevant Facts (per hour)

33.33	40.00	33.33	40.00
41.67	50.00	41.67	50.00
8.33	10.00	8.33	10.00

Application Checking Service

Full Application
 Temporary Event Notice

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

We have fully considered the equality and diversity impacts of our fees and charges by undertaking Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) and conclude that there are no adverse impacts that cannot be appropriately mitigated.

To view the Equality Impact Assessments, please go to the Council's website www.colchester.gov.uk and follow the pathway: Council and Democracy > Policies, Strategies and Performance > Diversity and Equality > Equality Impact Assessments > Professional services

The decision to implement the proposed fees and charges for Environmental Health and Licensing services will not result in any breach of human rights.

(xiii) Recycling and Trade Services

Proposal

It is proposed that fees and charges are increased as set out below.

Reasons for Decision

The schedules supporting this report show the existing and proposed charges as well as the percentage increases where appropriate (each charge is multiplied by the expected volume of use to calculate the income target for the year exclusive of VAT).

The proposed charges will come into effect from 1 April 2014 unless otherwise stated. All charges are expected to be valid until 31 March 2015.

Trade Waste Collection and Disposal Charges – the Government's Waste Strategy clearly sets out the need to divert waste from landfill. In 2014/15 there will be a further increase of landfill tax per tonne per year but we are awaiting confirmation from Essex County Council. Trade Waste charges were not increased last year however, it is proposed that charges are increased by 1% in 2014/15 in order to continue to provide a competitive service that can be marketed against private sector providers.

Pricing Schedule

Trade tonnage subject to landfill tax	13/14 (ex VAT) £	14/15 (ex VAT) £	increase	
Green sacks trade	37.76	38.14	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
Green sacks schools	32.10	32.42	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
360l hire	1.39	1.40	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
360l emptying trade	6.42	6.48	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
360l emptying schools	5.67	5.73	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
660l hire	3.01	3.04	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
660l emptying trade	10.33	10.43	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
660l emptying schools	8.31	8.40	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
950l hire	2.83	2.86	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
950l emptying trade	12.09	12.21	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
950l emptying schools	-	-	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
1100l hire	3.66	3.69	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
1100l emptying trade	12.22	12.34	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
1100l emptying schools	10.33	10.43	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
Other Trade Income				
Duty of Care Certificate	29.21	29.50	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
Clear Cardboard Sacks - Trade	26.29	26.55	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
Clear Cardboard Sacks - Schools	-	-	0.00%	VAT EXEMPT
Delivery charge sacks	8.05	8.13	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
Regular Cardboard Collection - Trade	525.74	530.99	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
Regular Cardboard Collection - Schools	-	-	0.00%	VAT EXEMPT
Non-contract Cardboard Collection	40.88	41.29	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
Cleansing of Bulk Containers	25.74	26.00	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
Re-signing fee	56.00	56.56	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
Dayworks inc labour - Trade HGV	-	-	1.75%	

Trade tonnage subject to landfill tax	13/14 (ex VAT) £	14/15 (ex VAT) £	increase	
Dayworks inc labour Van	-		1.75%	
360l Trade glass bin	4.63	4.68	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT

Household/Garden Refuse	13/14 (ex VAT) £	14/15 (ex VAT) £	Increase	
Black waste sacks	£ 3.60	£ 3.64	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
Garden waste sacks - new properties				
Garden waste sacks	£ 3.60	£ 3.64	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
Garden waste/recycling boxes sacks - delivery				
Green recycling boxes				
Green recycling boxes - new properties				

Special collections	13/14 (ex VAT)	14/15 (ex VAT)	Increase	
Bulky items 1-6	£41.00	£41.41	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
Bulky items 6-12	£65.80	£66.46	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
Fridges, Fridge/freezers or Freezers	£ 25.20	£25.45	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
TVs, Monitors, Microwaves	£ 12.00	£12.12	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT
White goods - dishwashers, cookers, washing machines, tumble driers, spin driers (maximum 5 items) price per item	£ 12.00	£12.12	1.00%	VAT EXEMPT

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications

In relation to special collections it could also be the case that households on lower incomes would be disproportionately impacted by the price increase. However, the service is already offered free to residents in the most deprived areas of the Borough on a fortnightly basis. This has recently been extended to include certain areas in Shrub End ward.

There are no particular equality, diversity or human rights implications. This is covered in the original EQIA for the Service. The EQIA can be found here: http://www.colchester.gov.uk/Info_page_two_pic_2_det.asp?art_id=7977&sec_id=1988

(xiv) Helpline 2014/15

Proposal

It is proposed that fees and charges are retained at their current levels.

Reasons for Decision

The Community Alarms Team operate Helpline, a chargeable service which is widely used amongst elderly and vulnerable residents in Colchester. The service consists of a range of alarms which can be installed by our officers which are then monitored 24 hours a day by our Monitoring Centre Operators. There are currently two levels of service;

Monitoring only is the service whereby our operators monitor the alarms for a customer and if an alarm is raised the operator will contact the most appropriate person (for instance ambulance or doctor) as well as friends or family who's details have been provided to us.

Monitoring and Response is the service as explained above but with the addition of our Mobile Support Officers (MSO's). When an alarm is raised we would go to the person's property to check that they are ok, administer first aid if required and help those who have fallen.

The services we have been able to provide to the customer with regard to Telecare have increased dramatically over the last 5 years. We now offer the following additional equipment options:

Activity monitors, epilepsy sensors, fall detectors, bed/chair occupancy sensors, wandering alerts, movement detectors and door/window contact sensors, carbon monoxide detectors, gas detectors, temperature extremes sensors, enuresis detectors, fire/smoke alarms, flood sensors, remote control main switches, medication dispensers and bogus caller alarms.

We have also developed a service to offer key safe installations which are chargeable separate to the Helpline Charges. The key safes enable our MSO's to access properties when the resident may be stuck or injured and unable to answer the door.

The fees and charges for Helpline are regularly checked against other providers in the County through a countywide benchmarking exercise. Colchester Borough Council offers the most comprehensive services to its customers and subsequently has the highest charges.

Work has been carried out recently to review customers and the fees that they are paying for the service. Historically there have been a wide variety of different charges which meant that customers pay different prices for the same services. Work has been carried out in the past year to streamline the charges and ensure that all customers are on the correct charges of £3.79 for monitoring only and £5.95 for monitoring and response.

With the above in mind and considering the current commercial review of the service it is proposed that the fees and charges are frozen at this point. The Councils interim Commercial Manager has completed a situation analysis study, developed a number of options for the service going forward and is currently working on a full business case for the proposed option. In view of

this it is likely that the fees and charges for the service will need review within the 2014/15 financial year. The fees and charges included in this report are based on 'business as usual'.

It is recommended that no increase is applied to Helpline charges for 2013/14.

It is recommended that the Council introduces additional options for key safe installations. The charges for this are: £55 for the standard key safe including installation and £90 for the police approved key safe including installation.

The proposed changes will come into effect on 1st April 2014 and will be valid until 31st March 2015.

Pricing Schedule

Helpline Fees and Charges 2014 – 2015

	Private (52 week charge)	2014/15
59079274	Private dispersed alarm post 1.4.96 Monitoring and mobile response	£4.36
	Monitoring only	£2.10
	Equipment	£1.69
59079274	Private dispersed alarm pre 1.4.96 Monitoring and response	£3.13
	Equipment	£2.10
59079274 TZ03	Telecare Basic weekly charge (up to 4 items)	£5.95
	Additional items each per week (fixed)	£0.50
59079274 TZ03	Telecare Monitoring only weekly charge	£3.79
59079295 TZ03	Key Safe Standard key safe and installation	£55.00
	Police approved key safe and installation	£90.00

*Please note that the Private dispersed alarm post 1.4.96 and the Private dispersed alarm pre 1.4.96 charges are no longer available for new customers.

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

Not applicable as no change to fees and charges.

(xv) Cemetery and Crematorium 2014/15

Proposal

It is proposed that fees and charges are increased as set out in the pricing schedule below.

Reasons for Decision

The Crematorium and Cemetery provides a range of important and sensitive services to both residents and non residents of the Borough. Some of the charges, such as the cost of cremations or burials are typically passed on to relatives of deceased persons by the funeral directors who are organising the funeral for them.

Other discretionary charges, such as those relating to the purchase of memorials, are made directly by the bereaved relatives who wish to remember their loved ones in a particular way.

The volume of anticipated cremations and burials are affected by a number of factors such as changes to social demographics which can be seen nationally. For example falling death rates and an ageing population. In addition the service is affected by other external factors such as high levels of winter or summer deaths relating to weather extremes or alternative options for where a person is cremated or buried such as the new privately run crematoria near Braintree and Brentwood, and the new burial ground in Stanway. These factors can of course affect the expected income to the service and can make it difficult to forecast.

Colchester Cemetery and Crematorium are highly regarded for the quality of service provided to bereaved families as well as excellent facilities that are on offer. This combined with the favourable location on Mersea Road are felt to be the most likely factors for choosing our service rather than other local organisations.

The financial climate is having an impact on the income levels achieved by the service, where relatives and loved ones may be less able to spend money on the purchase of memorials. With this in mind the service has sought to provide a number of memorial options varying in price and with a range of payment options.

The Council provides an excellent service through the Crematorium and Cemetery which means we can justifiably set fees and charges at the top end of the benchmarking scale.

The Councils Bereavement Services Manager chairs a consortium group with other crematoriums in the Eastern Region. This forum enables Colchester to benchmark the services provided effectively as well as considering pricing structures against our competitors. Through this work it has been identified that whilst some of our competitors have increased their charges, Colchester has been more conservative when setting new fees and charges in recent years. This means that current charges in Colchester are around the middle and just below when compared to other local providers.

It is recommended that the Council adopts the fees and charges as set out in the pricing schedule for the financial year 2014/15.

Benchmark comparison with other local facilities indicate that the proposed charges are still competitive and, where a choice of venue is practicable, they are unlikely to discourage the use of our facilities.

The proposed increases will put the service back towards the upper bracket of charges when compared to other local providers. Colchester would still however not be the most expensive in the region.

Pricing Schedule

Fees & charges		Charges 2013 *(inc VAT) £	% Uplift	Proposed 2014/15 Charges *(inc VAT) £
Cremations				
Over 16 years of age	E	516.00	10	568
Environmental surcharge(Cremations over 16 years)	E	67.00	10	74
Non-viable foetal remains	E	91.00	5	96
Body part	E	91.00	5	96
Still born to one month of age	E	135.00	5	142
Exceeding one month to 7 years	E	180.00	5	189
Exceeding 7 years to 16 years	E	224.00	5	235
Interments				
For interment in a grave with or without an exclusive right of burial:-				
i) Of the body of a still born or child to one month in age				
	E	177.00	5	186
ii) Of the body of a child to 7 years				
	E	225.00	5	236
iii) Of the body of a child to 16 years				
	E	269.00	5	282
iv) Of the body of a person over 16 years				
- Single	E	516.00	10	568
- Double	E	618.00	10	680
- Treble	E	720.00	10	792
v) Of non-viable foetal remains				
	E	135.00	3	139
New combined charge - For any interment in a bricked grave				
	E	800.00	3	824
For the interment of cremated remains in a grave				
	E	155.00	10	170
Disinterment of cremated remains				
	E	285.00	5	299
Disinterment from a grave - price on request				

Fees & charges	Charges 2013 *(inc VAT) £	% Uplift	Proposed 2014/15 Charges *(inc VAT) £
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Book of remembrance			
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Inscription in the Book of Remembrance:-			
2 line entry	V	64.00	3 66
5 line entry	V	123.00	3 127
5 line entry with flower	V	175.00	3 180
5 line entry with crest	V	199.00	3 205
8 line entry	V	199.00	3 205
8 line entry with flower	V	250.00	3 258
8 line entry with crest	V	268.00	3 276

Memorial Cards (per card supplied):- price on request			
Garden of Remembrance Memorials			
Standard Rose Tree with cast aluminium plaque:-			
Initial Period of five years	V	250.00	3 258
Initial Period of ten years	V	327.00	3 337
Renewal for a further one year	V	70.00	3 72
Renewal for a further five years	V	128.00	3 132
Renewal for a further ten years	V	179.00	3 184
Fuchsia or shrub, with cast aluminium plaque			
Initial Period of five years	V	202.00	3 208
Initial Period of ten years	V	276.00	3 284
Renewal for a further one year	V	50.00	3 52
Renewal for a further five years	V	101.00	3 104
Renewal for a further ten years	V	154.00	3 159
Additional cast aluminium plaque	V	113.00	3 116
Name tower in rose garden for 10 years	V	226.00	3 233
Name tower in Jemima's Corner for 10 years	V	226.00	3 233
Tree initial period of 10 years (existing mature tree) with plaque	V	352.00	3 363
Tree for a further 10 years	V	200.00	3 206
Inscribed stone brick in either Wall of Remembrance (brick to remain throughout the duration of the wall standing or relocated elsewhere should the wall be removed within ten years)	V	270.00	3 278
Columbarium per niche	V	551.00	3 568
Additional inscription on plaque	V	125.00	3 129

Fees & charges		Charges 2013 *(inc VAT) £	% Uplift	Proposed 2014/15 Charges *(inc VAT) £
Memorial seat, including maintenance & plaque:-				
For a period of 10 years:	V	463.00	5	486
Renewal lease for a further 10 years		330.00	5	347
Additional seat plaque	V	125.00	3	129
Aboria plaque text only	V	130.00	2	133
Aboria plaque monochrome motif	V	154.00	2	157
Aboria plaque coloured motif	V	190.00	2	194
Aboria plaque photoplaque	V	238.00	2	243

Fees & charges		Charges 2013 *(inc VAT) £	% Uplift	Proposed 2014/15 Charges *(inc VAT) £
Exclusive Rights of Burial				
A grave in the lawn or traditional areas				
For the exclusive right of burial for a period of 50 years				
- selected in rotation (if in row that is being dug)	E	373.00	4	388
For the exclusive right of burial for a period of 100 years				
- selected in rotation	E	655.00	4	681
A grave in the Baby Burial Garden				
For the exclusive right of burial for a period of 50 years				
selected in rotation	E	180.00	3	185
For the exclusive right of burial for 100 years				
selected in rotation	E	288.00	3	297
A grave in the cremated remains burial area (LL)				
For the exclusive right of burial for 50 years				
- selected in rotation	E	187.00	5	196
For the exclusive right of burial for 100 years				
- selected in rotation	E	299.00	5	314
On the expiry of the initial period of grant, the period may be renewed for a further 50 or 100 years				
Scattering of cremated remains on grave space	E	72.00	3	74
Scattering of cremated remains in Garden of Remembrance				
where cremation took place at another crematorium	E	72.00	3	74

Fees & charges		Charges 2013 *(inc VAT) £	% Uplift	Proposed 2014/15 Charges *(inc VAT) £
Applications for the Erection of Memorials				
i) A flat stone or slab covering single grave space	E	175.00	3	180
ii) A memorial stone:				
a) Not exceeding 0.56m in height	E	89.00	3	92
b) Exceeding 0.56m in height	E	129.00	3	133
iii) A footstone, tablet or stone vase	E	89.00	3	92
iv) a) Kerb Stones - adult grave space	E	205.00	3	211
b) Kerb Stones - child grave space	E	105.00	3	108
v) For an additional inscription on an existing memorial	E	78.00	3	80
Miscellaneous - Crematorium				
Use of Crematorium Chapel for further 30 minutes of service	E	214.00	5	225
Use of Crematorium chapel for burial or memorial service	E	214.00	5	225
Register Search of over 8 names (not on computer)	V	25.00	5	26
Postage and packing of cremated remains - price on request				
Wooden grave markers with engraved plaque	V	n/a (new)		35
Blue box for cremated remains	V	6.00	9	6.5
Recording the Chapel Service on CD	V	43.00	5	45
Additional CDs	V	39.00	5	41
Decording the Chapel Service on DVD	V	49.00	5	52
Webcast of Chapel Service	V	54.00	5	57
Miscellaneous - Cemetery				
For registering transfer of Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial or surrender of a deed of grant	V	50.00	5	53
Cremation or Burial Cancellation Fee (if less than 48 hours notice)	V	291.00	5	306

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

An Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment has been completed to accompany this report. The assessment identified no negative impacts for those with protected characteristics.

Council Tax Technical Changes – Discounts & Exemptions

Reference to:	Council position
<p><i>Second Homes: (Prescribed classes of Dwelling A & B)</i> Local Government Finance Act 2012 added subsection (4A) to Section 11A of the 1992 Act. Allows discretion that the empty homes discount under section 11(2)(a) of the 1992 Act should not apply at all or be set at a percentage up to 100% (for classes of empty home prescribed for the purposes of section 11A(4A)). Reference: The Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 Statutory Instrument 2012 No.2964</p>	Discount be kept at 0%
<p><i>Empty dwellings undergoing major repair (formerly Exempt Dwellings “Class A”)</i> The Council Tax (Exempt Dwellings) (Amendment) (England) Order 2012 abolishes Classes A and C so that these homes are no longer exempt from Council Tax. Properties from 01.04.13 that were in this category would fall within the new Prescribed Classes of Dwelling Class D i.e. a chargeable dwelling .</p>	No discount applicable to this class
<p><i>Vacant dwellings (formerly Exempt Dwellings “Class C”)</i> The Council Tax (Exempt Dwellings) (Amendment) (England) Order 2012 abolishes Classes A and C so that these homes are no longer exempt from Council Tax. Properties from 01.04.13 that were in this category would fall within the Prescribed Classes of Dwelling Class C i.e. a chargeable dwelling which is unoccupied and substantially unfurnished.</p>	No discount applicable to this class
<p><i>Empty Homes Premium</i> The LGFA 2012 amends the LGFA 1992 by inserting regulation 11(B) which includes that amount of council tax payable in respect of that dwelling shall be increased by such percentage of not more than 50 as it may so specify.</p>	A maximum premium of 50% be charged.



Colchester

Cabinet

27th November 2013

Item
10(i)

Report of	Head of Commercial Services	Author	Tina Hinson Darren Brown ☎ 506972
Title	Colchester's Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2013-2043		
Wards affected	All		

This report seeks approval for a new Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan for 2013/14 to 2042/43

1. Decision Required

- 1.1 To approve Colchester's HRA Business Plan 2013/2014 to 2042/2043 as set out at Appendix A.
- 1.2 To note that the HRA Business Plan demonstrates:
 - That there will be sufficient resources over the long-term to meet the Councils obligations to its stock, tenants and servicing of housing debt,
 - That the availability of resources should be relatively resilient to changes in financial conditions,
 - That there will be additional resources available in the medium to long-term that can be reinvested to meet more of the Council's priorities.

2. Reasons for Decision

- 2.1 An effective HRA Business Plan has become a key part of the Council's financial planning arrangements since Central Government announced the reform of the rules governing local authority housing finance and the introduction of the new self-financing system in 2012. Local authorities who still own their own housing stock are now able to plan with more certainty for the medium to long-term. The new system required a national redistribution of debt, meaning in Colchester's case a one-off take-on of debt of £73.694million, in return for keeping all future revenue income. A proportion of Right to Buy receipts are still pooled and returned to central Government. It is essential that the HRA continues to be managed on sound business principles. The reforms also open up some exciting opportunities for Colchester.

3. Supporting Information

- 3.1 The Council last produced a 30 year HRA Business Plan around 2002/2003, the same time as Colchester Borough Homes was being created. The focus for the HRA and the Council's investment plans up until 2011 was on meeting the Decent Homes target.

- 3.2 As for all authorities, the operation of the old HRA subsidy system meant there was great uncertainty and volatility on levels of available resources, therefore the ability to plan further ahead than one year at a time was limited. To that extent, and with the focus of resources being on delivering Decent Homes, the Council followed an annual budget setting approach. This was also applied to the Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) Management Fee, meaning there was a knock-on effect for CBH as they were also unable to plan more than one year ahead as they could not be sure of the resources they would receive from the Council.
- 3.3 As previously stated, the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) subsidy system was abolished and replaced with a new system of self-financing from April 2012 based on a one-off adjustment to the Council's debt. The new system brings with it some significant opportunities for authorities with housing stock.
- 3.4 With the advent of HRA Reform, the Council produced a 30 year investment model for its housing stock to support our response to the Governments HRA Reform proposals and also aid future HRA Business Planning.
- 3.5 Members will recall that the 30 year financial model was considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 27th January 2013 as part of the annual HRA budget setting process. The financial modelling undertaken has been updated to reflect the 2012/13 outturn position, as well as revised outputs from our asset management strategy and inflation assumptions as part of the production of the HRA business plan attached at Appendix A. The 2014/15 HRA Budget to be considered by Cabinet in January 2014 will include the Medium Term Financial Forecast and 30 year financial model updated to reflect next year's proposed budget and any further changes in underlying assumptions.
- 3.6 The Financial Model cannot be considered in isolation and the Business Plan sets out to articulate the national and local strategic context and corporate priorities under which we are currently operating. This framework has enabled us to identify our challenges and priorities, specifically over the next five years, as well as identifying longer term issues and goals for the next thirty years.

4. The HRA Business Plan

Key Points

- 4.1 The Business Plan is attached at Appendix A. It reflects how we will sustain our existing homes, shows the viability of our current plans and how they translate in the long term, identifies that money should be available for investment in new homes, existing stock or services and where the funding comes from.
- 4.2 The refresh of the financial modelling, undertaken as part of the drafting of the business plan, has confirmed that:
- There will be sufficient resources over the long term to meet the Council's obligations towards its stock, the housing debt and towards tenants in terms of service delivery at current levels.
 - The availability of resources to meet the Council's investment and service delivery plans should be relatively resilient to changes in financial conditions.
 - In the medium to long-term there will be additional resources available that can be re-invested to meet more of the Council's priorities with the availability of borrowing headroom in the short-term.

Opportunities

4.3 The Business Plan sets out opportunities for the Council to consider. These fall into 4 main categories and are discussed in greater detail in Section 7 of the plan:

- Investment in services to tenants.
- Redevelopment/better use of assets
- Further stock investment beyond the decency standard.
- New build/acquisition

Risks

4.4 The Business Plan identifies a number of risks, their impact and how these will be mitigated against. The key risks to the delivery of a robust HRA Business Plan are:

- Welfare Reform.
- The accuracy of our asset information.
- Cost inflation.
- Interest rate risk.
- Government Right to Buy Policy.
- Re-opening of the self-financing settlement.
- Change of rent policy.
- Future Government Policy Changes.

4.5 Although not in the Business Plan we are aware that the Government is about to issue a consultation paper on rent policy for 2015 onwards. It is likely to suggest the ending of rent convergence (the method by which we have increased our rents since 2002 in order to bring local authority rents in line with registered providers) which will give the Council some flexibility in determining future rent increases. Government will still maintain some control over rent increases overall through the limit rent (the amount the Government is prepared to pay in housing benefit subsidy) and CPI. The Council will need to ensure it follows the assumptions regarding its approach to rent setting as set out in the Business Plan if it wishes to deliver all of the priorities in its plan. The consultation paper will give Cabinet the opportunity to consider its rent policy in the future.

5. Future Monitoring of the Business Plan

5.1 The HRA Business Plan will be a live plan which will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. A working group of officers from the Council and CBH will continue to develop the detailed investment and delivery programmes for the business plan, refining the plans, monitoring delivery and bringing forward updates to the plan on an ongoing basis. The outcome from this work will be reported to the Portfolio Holder at appropriate points.

5.2 The decision making arrangements for the HRA Business Plan in the future will be that a revised HRA Business Plan (financial forecast only) will be agreed each year by Cabinet and Council as part of the HRA budget setting report. This will build in any amendments to assumptions, costs and programming that are required. The plan as a whole (financial modelling and commentary) will be kept under review and revised as required and at least every 5 years.

6. Strategic Plan References

6.1 The HRA Business Plan presented here links to the following areas of the Council's strategic plan:

- Regenerating our borough through buildings, employment, leisure and infrastructure.
- Promoting sustainability and reducing congestion.
- Providing more affordable homes across the borough.
- Supporting more vulnerable groups.

7. Consultation and Publicity

7.1 A number of consultation activities have been undertaken to seek tenants' views on the priorities tenants feel the HRA Business Plan should focus on. These activities have included:

- Work with a Tenant and Leaseholder Panel to prioritise areas of investment and opportunities for the future.
- Tenant's views sought at the 3 "Big Events" consultation roadshows organised by CBH.
- A postal survey was sent to 500 tenants so that they could give their views.
- A survey of 137 of CBH's mystery shoppers and e-panel members.

7.2 The results of the consultation found that Colchester Borough Council's tenants' were broadly supportive of the proposals in the business plan and their top 3 priorities for investment were:

- Delivering a high quality repairs and maintenance service.
- Improving housing for older residents.
- Building new council houses.

7.3 These areas of investment are identified in the business plan as priority areas for investment.

7.4 CBH's Board were also consulted about the HRA Business Plan. They were assured that the Council had a robust plan in place to meet the obligations of a 10 year management agreement as well as having sufficient resources to implement a plan of investment.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 The financial modelling in the Business Plan found:

- There will be sufficient resources over the long term to meet the Council's obligations towards its stock, the housing debt and towards tenants in terms of service delivery at current levels.
- The availability of resources to meet the Council's investment and service delivery plans should be relatively resilient to changes in financial conditions.
- In the medium to long-term there will be additional resources available that can be re-invested to meet more of the Council's priorities with the availability of borrowing headroom in the short-term.

8.2 As set out in Section 5, the financial forecast will be updated and will be agreed each year by Cabinet and Council as part of the HRA Budget setting report. This will build in any amendments to assumptions, costs and programming that are required. It will also give Cabinet and the Council the opportunity to consider investment decisions in the context of the overall 30 year business plan and assess the impact of these decisions.

9. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications

9.1 The EQIA for the HRA Business Plan can be found here:
[HRA Business Plan EQIA](#)

10. Community Safety Implications

10.1 This report has no significant community safety implications

11. Health and Safety Implications

11.1 This report has no significant Health and Safety implications

12. Risk Management Implications

12.1 These have been taken into account in the body of the business plan report and also in paragraph 4.4 of this report.

Appendices

- Appendix A - Housing Revenue Account Business Plan

Background Papers

- None

Colchester's HRA Business Plan

2013/2014 to 2042/2043

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Colchester Borough Council owns 6,142 Council homes for rent and the freehold for 980 leasehold flats across the Borough. We also own 2,600 garages, and other land and buildings.
- 1.2 We are proud of the way we manage our housing through our Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) Colchester Borough Homes (CBH). We have had to make tough choices about how to use the money available during difficult financial times, and continue to consider the best way to deliver services whilst achieving efficiencies.
- 1.3 Until April 2012, Government rules meant that we had to pay an increasing amount of our income from tenants' rent into a national funding system, meaning we had little control or influence over our planned spend for the future. However, the Government has now changed the rules and has introduced a new financial system for Council housing, which is known as 'self financing'. Along with all other Councils who still own their housing stock, we had to agree to take on more housing debt. This means we can now keep all the income we raise and we can take much more control over our own Council housing finances. This will mean that, really for the first time in over 30 years, we are able to put our council housing on a sound financial footing for the medium to longer term.
- 1.4 Like other local authorities retaining housing stock, we have spent the time since April 2012 considering how to best make use of the new financial arrangements. We have been:
- Analysing our stock and the services we provide so that we can base our future plans on a robust and sustainable basis.
 - Developing a new longer-term management agreement with CBH.
 - Working up a range of plans for potential future investment in new homes which better match the needs of our communities.
 - Thinking through how the new future for Council housing can help the borough as a whole to deliver our overall objectives.
- 1.5 A key challenge within the new system is that we are continually testing the stock and services against the needs of our communities: how we can meet the need for more affordable housing in the borough; how we can ensure that the housing we have stays in good repair and is energy efficient and how we can continue to deliver quality services that meet our customers needs in challenging economic times.
- 1.6 Housing is a vital part of helping us meet some of the challenges we face as well as meeting our strategic objectives. The housing and services we provide will help deliver our key objectives from our Strategic Plan:
- Providing more affordable homes across the Borough.
 - Regenerating our Borough through buildings, employment, leisure and infrastructure.
 - Improving our streets and local environment.
 - Enabling local communities to help themselves.
 - Tackling anti-social behaviour.
 - Bringing investment to the Borough.

- 1.7 This Business Plan will identify how the service is delivered as well as:
- What it costs and how we think the finances will develop in the future.
 - Showing that our plans are laid on firm foundations, are sustainable and viable.
 - What additional resources we might have for investment.
 - What our priorities are for investment.
 - A summary assessment of the key risks in the delivery of the business plan with actions to mitigate these risks.
- 1.8 The planning is now at a point where we can set realistic priorities for investment for the next 2-11 years whilst making sure that we can cover everything that we need to do over the long term. This is our HRA business plan.

2. Overview

- 2.1 The last Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan was published in 2003 and showed a bleak financial picture. It demonstrated that the Decent Homes Standard could only be met in the short-term. It was only through the Government support by the setting up of an ALMO that ensured this. The previous subsidy system was the core reason for the previous plan not being sustainable in the medium to longer-term. It should also be noted the Colchester Standard, to which we are working to today, is of a higher standard than the Decent Homes Standard. Further information about this can be found in Chapter 6.
- 2.2 Because we are no longer linked to a national Council housing finance system, it is best practice to prepare a long-term plan. The standard period is 30 years, although we will continually refine and update the plan as time moves on. The HRA Business Plan also provides certainty at the start of a new 10 year capital investment programme starting in April 2014 by setting out our future plans.
- 2.3 We have prepared a financial model with assistance from our consultants, the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH), who are well respected industry experts. The business plan starts at April 2013 and runs over 30 years. Assumptions about how the plan will start and the way income and expenditure have been made and will develop over the long term. Details of the assumptions and outputs from the modelling are critical to this business plan and there is a detailed section setting out what we have assumed and what the key risks are.
- 2.4 We have developed a business plan that:
- Shows the sustainability of our existing homes.
 - Shows how viable our current plans are in the long term.
 - Identifies that there should be money available for investment in new homes and investment in our existing stock and services – and where that money comes from.
 - Shows our priorities.
- 2.5 Council housing, like all rented housing, is not without its challenges. The economic, financial and policy environment, offer challenges for us as a Council to get right. People who live in Council housing are likely to be affected by uncertainty in the economy, the rising cost of living and reductions in public services. Vulnerability and deprivation could increase. The impact of changes to the welfare system being implemented in 2013, following the Welfare Reform Act, is likely to affect our tenants and residents more adversely than other members of the community. We will need to address these challenges in a proactive way so that we are able to deliver our objectives for investment.
- 2.6 This plan is written for Elected Members, CBH Board Members, tenants and staff involved in the governance or the management of Colchester's housing service. This is the first HRA Business Plan produced to reflect the new HRA self-financing arrangements and therefore the plan could be considered an "*Initial* HRA Business Plan".

3. Summary of the Borough of Colchester

- 3.1 Colchester Borough Council is located in the County of Essex covering an area of 125 square miles and stretches from Dedham Vale on the Suffolk border in the north to Mersea Island on the Colne Estuary in the south.
- 3.2 Colchester is a diverse and growing Borough with a resilient economy and a buoyant town centre. Colchester is recognised as a successful place with the drive and the tenacity to deliver an ambitious growth programme. Colchester is the largest district in Essex accounting for about 13% of the Essex population.
- 3.3 Whilst economic growth has benefited the majority of residents and unemployment remains below the UK average, there are still significant pockets of deprivation in both the urban and rural areas. Our Economic Development Strategy in conjunction with other Council and partner plans intends to address and alleviate this variation in prosperity. The Economic Strategy forms a key part of the integrated strategic approach. This brings together the key strategies and delivery plans for economic development with those for housing, transport, the renaissance programme and spatial planning. Providing jobs for Colchester's growing community is a central objective of our Local Plan that sets out the overall direction for the Local Development Framework that will guide spatial planning and steer future development and investment in Colchester up to 2021.
- 3.4 From the latest Census (2011) the population of Colchester is estimated at 173,614 within 71,600 households. The population is forecast to increase to 200,324 by 2021, an increase of 15.4%, which is the highest in Essex and among the uppermost for the East of England. The estimated amount of homes let on social rents is estimated at 9,230 some 13%.
- 3.5 Our Vision and Strategic Plan Action Plan
- 3.5.1 Our Strategic Plan for 2012-15 provides the overall direction for the Council. Our vision for Colchester is:
- Colchester, the place to live, learn, work and visit.
 - Colchester as a vibrant Borough with a bright future wants to be known for:
 - Leading for the future.
 - Creating opportunities for all its residents.
 - Inspiring and innovating.
 - Being cleaner and greener.
 - Listening and responding.
- 3.5.2 Through delivering high quality, accessible services we aim to:
- Provide more affordable homes across the Borough.
 - Tackle anti-social behaviour.
 - Support the more vulnerable groups.
 - Bring Investment into the Borough.

Our housing and the housing services we provide have a key role in assisting us with our aims.

3.5.3 In our Strategic Action Plan for 2013/14 our key housing objectives are:

- To deliver 400 new affordable homes with our partners between 2012/2013 and 2014/2015.
- To collect 97% of the council housing rent due.
- To re-let our houses within 20 days for general needs properties; within 75 days for sheltered properties and within 30 days for our temporary accommodation.

Our business plan will focus on identifying the resources to assist in the delivery of new affordable homes and exceeding the targets for the above indicators.

3.6 Our Strategic Tenancy Strategy

3.6.1 As part of our sub-regional housing partnership; the Greater Haven Gateway and following the requirement of The Localism Act we have published a Strategic Tenancy Strategy.

3.6.2 The strategic tenancy strategy sets out the matters to which registered providers of social housing in Colchester are to *have regard to* when they develop their own policies relating to:

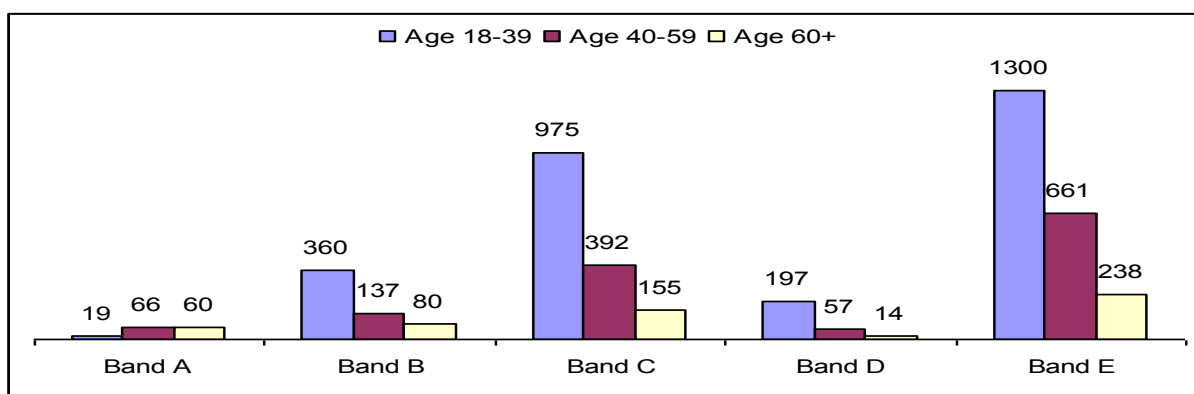
- the kinds of tenancies they grant,
- the circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind,
- where they decide to grant tenancies for a fixed term the lengths of the terms, and
- the circumstances in which they will grant a further tenancy when an existing tenancy comes to an end.

3.7 Colchester's Housing Need

3.7.1 The need for affordable housing is considerable. Currently we have 6,145 homes with another 3,960 owned by 18 Registered Providers.

3.7.2 The number of applicants on our housing needs register with a Colchester address as at November 2012 is 4,741. Most people on our register are aged below 39 years. The age of applicants for housing is shown in the chart below.

Chart 3.1 Number of Applicants Waiting for Affordable Housing in Colchester



Our three priority bands for re-housing are A to C. Band A is the highest priority band for those who need to move immediately.

- 3.7.2 The waiting time for housing applicants on the Housing Needs Register can be extremely long.
- 3.7.3 Our latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment will be published in Autumn 2013 and will enable us to project future demand for affordable housing.
- 3.8 Affordability of homes
 - 3.8.1 The rents we charge are based on the Government’s rent restructuring policy, and compare favourably with Registered Providers and the private rented sector.

Table 3.3 Average Rents Charged per Sector

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed
Colchester Council	£68.58	£78.75	£90.93	£100.52
Registered Providers	£73.30	£85.76	£98.97	N/A
Affordable Rents	£93.57	£118.20	£142.00	£179.95
Local Housing Allowance*	£100.38	£126.92	£160.38	£196.15

*Local Housing Allowance is the maximum amount of benefit payable to those who rent privately. The local limits are based on the cheapest 30 per cent of properties in an area.
 Source: Council Database, Hometrack and Rightmove - 2012 levels

- 3.8.3 The above table demonstrates that our rents are below those of other parts of the rented housing sector. There will obviously be factors such as stock type that will influence the figures, such as a higher proportion of flats versus houses or sheltered stock.
- 3.8.4 Our rents will be different to Registered Provider’s rent for a number of reasons, such as some of their properties will be new build or let on higher affordable rents.

Affordable rents are up to 80% of market rents. In addition, they would have converged their rents with formula (or target) rent by April 2011 rather than the April 2015 target set by Government for us. However the new social rent policy may have an impact on this happening.

3.8.5 The affordable rent levels shown in Table 3.3 are the rents Registered Providers are able to charge if they build new homes. In order to achieve viability for new build homes both the rent for new build and a proportion of existing properties when they are re-let can be charged at up to 80% of the market level rent. These rents are termed 'affordable rent'. As an example, in 2012 we charged the equivalent of 53% of market rent for a 2 bedroom property on average.

3.8.6 The Strategic Tenancy Strategy looked at the affordability of affordable rents and found that, based on 25% of gross income, only 1 or 2 bedroom properties will be affordable in the Colchester area. This enforces the need for properties to be available at social rent levels. We have no plans to let any new build properties in the foreseeable future at the affordable rent levels above.

3.9 Colchester's Homelessness Strategy

3.91. We are writing a new Homelessness Strategy for Colchester 2013-2018

3.92 The emerging priorities in the new Homelessness Strategy are:

- Preventing homelessness by sustaining tenancies.
- Mitigating the impacts of welfare reform.
- Improving the health and wellbeing of homeless people.
- Changing the culture and perception of social housing through education-managing expectations.

3.93 The action plan which will accompany the Homelessness Strategy will show how our partners can help us deliver services which help address these priorities. CBH will have a key role in this.

3.10 Colchester's Housing Strategy

3.10.1 We are producing a new Housing Strategy for Colchester for 2012-2020.

3.10.2 The emerging draft vision for the new Housing Strategy is

Colchester Borough Council and its partners will:

- Make Colchester a place where people choose to live in a decent, safe home which;
 - meets their needs,
 - at a price they can afford and,
 - in locations and neighbourhoods that are sustainable and desirable.
 - Work to improve the quality life of local residents

3.10.3 The emerging draft objectives for the Council's housing service and its partners, to achieve this vision were:

- Maximise the supply of housing to meet local needs at a price people can afford.
- Work with partners and residents to create mixed and sustainable communities.
- Prevent homelessness and rough sleeping.
- Improve the life chances of Colchester's residents.
- Work with customers to enable them to make informed choices about their housing.
- Make the best use of existing homes including reducing the number of empty homes and homes that are under occupied.
- Work to ensure that existing and new homes are healthy, safe and energy efficient.
- Ensure that housing and related services meet a range of specialist needs.

These objectives have been agreed as the basis for the three year delivery plan for Colchester Borough Homes.

3.11 Our Local Plan Focused Review (Core Strategy & Development Policies)

3.11.1 The previous policy has been revisited to take account of viability issues in plan making and decision taking due the change in economic circumstances. In addition the previous density and housing mix requirements are proposed to be deleted recognising the need for greater flexibility within sites.

3.11.2 The relaxation of the requirement for 35% affordable homes means that potentially only 20% of sites will be required to be affordable, due to the overall sites viability.

4. Housing Stock and Services

- 4.1 Since 2003, we have delegated the day to day delivery of housing landlord services to our wholly owned ALMO, Colchester Borough Homes (CBH).
- 4.2 An appraisal process undertaken during 2012, included a survey, Task and Finish Groups, E Survey, development of a Tenant and Leaseholder Sounding Board, confirmed in principle tenants support for the continuation of the ALMO model through CBH. We have set up a new management agreement with the company to continue to manage Council housing in the borough. This provided the opportunity to have a fresh look at some of the services within the agreement and our overall financial position. Additional services were contracted to CBH including non-HRA services such as housing options, homelessness, and management of temporary accommodation, the provision of a Borough wide anti social behaviour service and the administration of disabled facilities grants. The new 10 year management agreement does however gives us and CBH the opportunity to plan ahead to meet the challenges of providing quality services and the impact of welfare reform.
- 4.3 CBH is overseen by a board of management which includes Councillors/Council-nominees, tenants, leaseholders and independent people who bring additional skills. The board is responsible for developing its vision, mission and strategic plan for the services provided by the company. CBH agrees a three year Delivery Plan with us which ensures that all services and investment in Council homes provided by the company fits in with the priorities of this HRA business plan.
- 4.4 We and Colchester Borough Homes have a strong commitment to empowering tenants in the delivery of services. As part of the new management agreement, there is strong resident involvement structure which forms a central role in the delivery of the vision for CBH, as part of a 'tri-partite' working relationship between residents, CBH and us.
- 4.5 CBH is proud to serve the people of Colchester, whose motto is "Proud to serve our customers and communities".
- 4.6 CBH's key company values or "The CBH Way" focus on the following in the planning and delivery of their services:
- Building Trust - We will work with customers to build trust in our services.
 - Delivering Tenant Led Services - We will work with customers to improve what we do, and promote fair and equal services for all.
 - Commitment to Our Communities - We will offer customers services they can rely on, which respect the needs of the community and individuals.
 - Delivering Professional Services - Our staff are highly trained to enable customers to receive a knowledgeable response.
 - Providing Value for Money - In everything we do.

4.7 The current key priorities, taken from the CBH Annual Delivery Plan, collectively drawn up by residents, CBH board and CBH staff and us are:

- Provide high quality homes
- Deliver an effective repairs service
- Prepare for welfare reform
- Support the Council's strategic aims

4.8 Delivery of the services provided by CBH is via a performance framework agreement with us which encompasses partnership working, governance and tenant scrutiny, regular planning and reporting, benchmarking with other organisations and external assessment.

4.9 Key performance indicators are monitored using a quarterly performance review dashboard approach. This involves targets and detailed analysis for a wide range of indicators and is shared with us as well as being reviewed internally and benchmarked externally on a regular basis.

4.10 Stock Data

The breakdown of the stock is identified below by type and number of bedrooms:

Table 4.1 Colchester Borough Council Stock at 1 April 2013

	Bedrooms								TOTALS
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
General Needs:									
Houses		9	388	1,749	91		1	1	2,239
Bungalows	14	521	167	3		1			706
Flats	150	1,215	1,127	4					2,496
Sheltered:									
Houses		2	2	6					10
Bungalows		84	33	2					119
Flats	110	330	84	1					525
Homeless Persons:									
Houses	1	2	1						4
Bungalows			1						1
Flats	28	7	2	5					42
									6,142

Taken from the Housing Rents Database

Table 4.2 Age Profile of the Stock (These proportions' will change over time.)

Age:	As a % of total stock
Pre 1930	8%
1931-1940	6%
1941-1950	6%
1951-1960	20%
1961-1970	18%
1971-1980	28%
Post 1980	14%

Taken from the Asset Management Strategy

4.11 Resident Involvement Strategy

4.11.1 CBH published its resident involvement strategy in June 2013 to inform and direct its work priorities for the next three years.

4.11.2 The key aims and action points of the strategy are summarised below:

- Resident Scrutiny – Tenant led and independent from Governance.
- Empowerment of involved tenants and leaseholders.
- Increased levels of tenant scrutiny. Tenants should be able to challenge and assess decisions made by CBH and other tenants.
- Resident Involvement in the Governance of CBH.
- Recruitments – to increase involvement by recruiting more tenants and leaseholders by 10% each year.
- Increase resident involvement using technology.
- Demonstrate Value for Money.
- Calculate the Social Return on Investment (on resident involvement team's work).
- Maximise funding and resources for resident involvement.

4.12 Equal Opportunities

We and CBH are committed to promote equality and remove unlawful discrimination through 9 'Protected Characteristics'. Both organisations are committed to achieving equality of opportunity both as an employer of people and as a provider of services. We will strive to provide services that are appropriate, sensitive and accessible to everyone. We will not discriminate in employment or through service delivery. We are committed to working with partners and communities to promote good relations and to combat prejudice, discrimination, harassment and negative stereotyping.

4.13 Service Standards

4.13.1 CBH produced in 2011 a detailed publication identifying the service standards that can expected of the repairs service. In summary it covers:

- How to report a repair
- The right to a repair
- Customer Care through Service Standards

- What elements are rechargeable

4.13.2 CBH continually to monitor their standards in line with the TSA (Tenant Services Authority) Standards in the absence of any further standards from the TSA's replacement the HCA.

5. Development and Governance of the Business Plan

- 5.1 Following the implementation of self financing for the HRA in April 2012, we will prepare and agree on an ongoing basis a business plan setting out the long term financial and investment plans for our housing stock and landlord services. There is no longer a requirement to 'submit' our plans to Government; there is a need for us to consult widely with tenants, residents, partners and the wider community around our plans for Council housing.
- 5.2 As the new system settles down, most Councils have reviewed their asset management and investment plans in the light of the new resource base and the opportunities presented by self financing. A Working Group of senior officers from housing, asset management and finance from both us and CBH, led by us, have developed this business plan for Colchester's Council housing.
- 5.3 In line with good practice, we will approve successive HRA budgets and capital programmes in the context of the long term business plan, refreshing the plan regularly with updated data, more detailed analysis of the housing stock, the changing financial position and to take account of our overall priorities.
- 5.4 We have a range of bodies which play a role in the governance of the business plan, ensuring that plans continue to be developed and refined in the context of members' objectives, take full account of the needs and views of tenants and residents, and are subject to appropriate scrutiny by members and tenants.
- 5.5 The key roles are set out as follows:
- The Council: determines the overall financial and debt management strategy for the Council as a whole, of which the HRA is a significant part.
 - Cabinet: approves the business plan and asset management strategy, allocates resources to the revenue and capital programmes and agrees the priorities for investment via the business plan.
 - CBH board: plays a key role as delivery agent in developing service delivery planning delegated to it, and preparing capital programme and investment plans for approval by the Council.
 - The Tenant & Leaseholder Consultative Committee: a key role in high level consultation on the priorities within the business plan.
- 5.6 A "task and finish" group initially focused on the establishment of a detailed Baseline Business Plan financial model which is derived from the 2013/2014 budget as the starting point. A commentary on the basis for the forecast is set out below. Existing policies, along with a series of financial assumptions have been factored into the plan to produce a Baseline Forecast.
- 5.7 This forecast has then been subject to a series of sensitivities to test its resilience to changes in financial conditions. The forecast highlights the investment potential

within the plan. Work has then been undertaken to develop a range of different scenarios for investment. Scenarios have begun to be informed by a detailed investigation into the housing stock base through the asset management database known as Codeman.

Consultation with Tenants and Leaseholders has been consistent throughout this process through mediums such as, the 'Sounding Board', 'Task and Finish' Groups, CBH Board, Asset Management Group and localised events for tenants. This approach has enabled tenants to give their views on priorities for housing in the borough of Colchester.

- 5.8 The HRA Business Plan will be a live Business Plan which will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. A working group of officers from CBH and us will continue to develop the detailed investment and delivery programmes for the business plan, refining the plans, monitoring delivery and bringing forward updates to the plan on an ongoing basis
- 5.9 Going forward the decision making arrangements of the HRA Business Plan will be as follows
- A revised HRA Business Plan (the financial forecast only) will be agreed each year by Cabinet and Council as part of the HRA Budget setting report. This will build in any amendments to assumptions, costs and programming that are required.
 - The officer working group will meet on a quarterly basis to monitor progress on the overall business plan and key projects within it.
- 5.10 This written commentary HRA Business Plan will be kept under review and revised as required and at least every 5 years.
- 5.11 The diagram at Appendix 5 represents the HRA business plan at the heart of a range of strategies and documents we have developed to set out our ambitious plans for the future, and those of our key delivery partner Colchester Borough Homes
- 5.12 The HRA Business Plan for Council housing is a delivery vehicle for other plans and documents – drawing on the objectives within them and bringing them together into an overall financial plan for delivery.
- 5.13 Our day to day housing management, repairs and investment services are delivered through CBH. Our plans and strategies contain and reflect the improvements, efficiencies and development in service delivery in the CBH Delivery Plan.
- 5.14 Many other plans and strategies also interplay with Council housing but the key strategic linkages for this business plan are to the Housing Strategy. The detailed development of service delivery plans are generated by CBH.

6. Housing Asset Management

- 6.1 We produced an Asset Management Strategy in 2010. Written by Ridge and Partners LLP in conjunction with us and CBH, the detailed document details the works required to the (then) 6,276 tenanted properties, 950 leaseholders and 2,595 garages owned by the Council and identifying priorities.
- 6.2 A procurement strategy was also produced for facilitating the appointment of contractors for the delivery of future capital works and the revenue repairs service, with the ultimate aim of achieving quality along with value for money.
- 6.3 Both organisations have embraced the principles of effective asset management, recognising the importance associated with maintaining effective stock condition and attribute information, the assessment of stock viability and future options for poorly performing stock, effective procurement, the value of an established relationship between the maintenance and management functions, and the effective delivery of the works programmes required to keep the stock in good condition.
- 6.4 The Asset Management Strategy:
- Defines Colchester's position with regard to asset management and how this aligns to our core objectives.
 - Defines needs, future trends and changes influencing these.
 - Defines the stock, its condition, use and required reinvestment over the next 30 years.
 - Identifies the risks and issues relating to the assets and how these maybe reduced.
 - Defines the methodologies and implementation processes for the Strategy; and
 - Establishes frameworks and templates for monitoring, recording and evaluating performance.
- 6.5 The strategy establishes the framework within which asset management operations will be provided. It highlights the component parts of the asset management function and their inter-relationship.
- 6.6 The strategy was written when the future of HRA reform (self-financing) was uncertain and therefore acknowledged that resources would be constrained in meeting the levels of investment identified. Therefore a further iteration of the Asset Management Strategy will be required following the publication of this Business Plan in the coming months.
- 6.7 Cost information is provided from the Codeman Asset Management Database. This system is maintained with up-to date stock condition and attributes data. Robust stock condition information forms the cornerstone of an effective strategy and gives rise to programmes of re-investment designed to maintain the stock appropriately and in good condition. Condition data will be enhanced and validated by an ongoing programme of stock surveys and feedback from other repairs and maintenance activities.

- 6.8 By regularly reviewing component costs and updating the Asset Management Database, Colchester aims to ensure that our budgets and Housing Investment Plan are aligned with the requirements of the stock.
- 6.9 We achieved bringing all our stock up to Decent Homes Standard (DHS) by December 2012, as a key directive from the strategy. One key objective of this Business Plan is to maintain this. According to the DHS, a “Decent Home” must meet the following four criteria:
- Meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing (HHSRS);
 - Is in a reasonable state of repair;
 - Has reasonably modern facilities and services; and
 - Provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.
- 6.10 Government stresses that the DHS is a minimum that is to be attained and also that a landlord’s delivery plans should be sustainable.
- 6.11 Colchester believes that residents deserve a higher standard than “Decent Homes” and aims to deliver the Colchester Standard albeit in a sustainable way that delivers value for money. The “Colchester Standard” is a local standard and is a document prepared in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders to record repairs and maintenance policies (for example the use of low maintenance products) and the materials standards that are to be adopted when procuring work. The Colchester Standard is summarised in Appendix 4.
- 6.12 Our approach to asset management, including the important functions of effective “planning” and “delivery”, is defined within our Housing Asset Management Strategy via CBH.
- 6.13 We and CBH are aware that not all residents will want work undertaken in their homes and where health and safety, or structural condition is not jeopardised will respect this wish; further details may be found within the Refusals Policy.
- 6.14 The capital programme for 2013/2014 onwards will support the Green Agenda, including energy efficiency measures that enhance the housing stock’s SAP ratings through the Colchester Standard. This may reduce energy consumption for tenants and tackle fuel poverty.
- 6.15 We have formed a Housing Asset Management Group with members from both organisations. This inclusive group assesses works programmes, promotes options appraisals in the context of the stock viability model findings, considers wider initiatives, monitors and reviews performance and takes ownership of the Colchester Standard, reassessing it from time to time in the context of the Housing Investment Plan. Colchester will continue to promote resident involvement through direct Tenants and Leaseholder representation on the Asset Management Group and the detailed scrutiny of service development and delivery through the work of the Property Services Consumer Group.
- 6.16 In order to fully understand the needs of the stock, we undertook an update Stock Condition Survey during 2009/2010 This survey assessed the condition of all the

elements in each of our property types and set out a financial profile (capital profile) over a 30 year period as per the Colchester Standard., informing the Asset Management Strategy.

- 6.17 The total needs of the stock are factored into the business plan to ensure that we are able to generate enough money to meet these needs based on our financial assumptions So that the data can be updated as time moves on and as work is carried out, we utilise the Codeman data base for all elements for all properties, with the exception of the Homeless Person Units. The latest outputs from the Codeman database are presented below, updated from the original stock condition and cost tables in the Asset Management Strategy:

Table 6.1 Colchester Standard Stock Investment Requirements – For 2014/2015 Onwards

Cost Summary - 2014/15 Figures (General Needs and Sheltered) from Codeman							
Note: Figures exclude VAT, inflation, fees and management costs							
	Years 1-5	Year 6-10	Year 11-15	Year 16-20 2030-2034	Year 21-25	Year 26-30	Total
	2014-19	2019-24	2025-29	2034	2035-39	2039-44	
Catch up Repairs¹	£8,162,518	£9,557,396	£0	£0	£0	£0	£17,719,914
Future Major Works²	£22,962,252	£29,217,014	£31,663,496	£24,592,226	£32,450,039	£22,845,287	£163,730,314
Improvements³	£12,835,230	£5,873,950	£3,426,900	£3,288,700	£3,426,900	£3,288,700	£32,140,380
Estate Works⁴	£1,300,000	£1,000,000	£1,000,000	£1,000,000	£1,000,000	£1,000,000	£6,300,000
Contingent Major Repairs⁵	£2,875,000	£2,550,000	£2,425,000	£2,675,000	£2,425,000	£2,675,000	£15,625,000
Exceptional Extensive Works⁶	£675,000	£150,000	£225,000	£400,000	£225,000	£210,000	£1,885,000
Total	£48,810,000	£48,348,360	£38,740,396	£31,955,926	£39,526,939	£30,018,987	£237,400,608

6.18 The above data is at 2013/2014 prices and excludes any procurements fees, which are already accounted for within the HRA management budgets. The forecast costs also exclude inflation, which is added within the financial modelling. Year 1 in the table represents 2014/2015 and is year 2 in this business plan. As the business plan is launched from 2013/2014 the current capital programme is used for the basis of year 1 and its value is identified within the funding table in Section 6.30.

6.19 Adaptations to Council homes to make them more suitable for tenants or family members with disabilities have been excluded from the above table though we recognise the need for investment with regards to this. An annual provision of £0.5million has been included within the plan, which is higher than the £350,000 contained within the stock condition survey.

6.20 Though the Asset Management Strategy a Stock Viability Model was developed to assess sustainability and re-investment priorities. The appraisal process takes

¹ works that need completing now – but are not essential

² Works that are planned replacements, such as kitchens, bathrooms etc

³ Works that are improvements to properties i.e. Sheltered remodelling and smoke detector installations to all properties

⁴ These principally cover the costs of works to garages

⁵ This covers contingencies for asbestos and works to pathways

⁶ This covers maintenance to canopies and non-traditional structural works

account of a range of factors, including demand and projected costs resulting in properties being allocated a red, amber or green re-investment status.

- 6.21 Using this process and through a strategic review, some of our sheltered schemes have been reviewed and two schemes have been disposed of on the open market and four schemes are having extensive investment work to ensure that no bedsits with shared facilities remain within the sheltered housing stock and make the accommodation fit for the future. The expenditure profile for remodelling, capital receipts and net reduction of units have been included within the business plan forecasts.
- 6.22 The capital programme is managed and delivered by CBH in conjunction with us. Currently overheads which cover the direct administration (fees and management) of the capital programme amount to £1.1million per annum and this has been used as the basis for projecting forward.
- 6.23 Through the Asset Management Strategy a minimum lettable standard for void works has been established ensuring that tenants will have a safe, clean home in good repair.
- 6.24 The HRA budgets for 2013/2014 provide for £4.979million of expenditure on Repairs and Maintenance, but this includes management costs of £0.714million, with the net comparable figure of £4.265million.
- 6.25 Whilst not directly covered by the Asset Management Strategy, due to its time of publication, we have embarked on a new build programme of our own with 34 new homes to be delivered in 2014/2015 without the support from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) but by using our own resources and receipts from right to buy sales.
- 6.26 Capital costs are constrained by the following funding sources:
- Depreciation – a direct charge to the HRA into the Major Repairs Reserve.
 - Right to Buy Receipts.
 - Non Right to Buy Receipts.
 - External Grants.
 - Voluntary contribution (RCCO) – from the HRA.
 - Borrowing.
- 6.27 Using the above stock investment requirements, and the current capital programme, the following table demonstrates the capital programme for the next 5 years directly from the business plan model, including inflation:

Table 6.2 Funding the Medium Term Capital Programme £'000:

	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	TOTAL
Colchester Standard	6.077	5.551	4.629	7.602	7.442	31.301
Sheltered Units	2.023	4.384	4.933	2.727	3.145	17.212
Disabled Adaptations	0.500	0.513	0.525	0.538	0.552	2.628
Estate Works/Garages	0.300	0.512	0.202	0.218	0.224	1.456
Other	0.360	0.257	0.263	0.269	0.276	1.425
New Build	1.000	2.670				3.670
Fees	1.100	1.100	1.100	1.128	1.156	5.583
Total Programme	11.360	14.987	11.652	12.482	12.794	63.275
Funded By:						
Major Repairs Reserve	7.423	6.998	7.285	7.467	7.654	36.827
Right to Buy	0.300	0.634				0.934
Other Receipts	0.825					0.825
Borrowing		2.569	0.603	0.883	0.650	4.705
Revenue Contributions from the HRA	2.812	4.786	3.764	4.132	4.490	19.984

6.28 The above table demonstrates that the medium term aspirations for stock investment can be financed from our available resources. The HRA's financial position is discussed in more detail in chapter 9.

6.29 We own around 2,600 garages in block sites across the Borough. It is recognised that there are high void levels due to the condition of garages and their common areas that make them unappealing. Through consultation with residents in certain areas of large volumes of garages we have identified that there is a demand for garages and there would be an uptake on their use if invested in. Therefore we are undertaking a pilot on a site where the garage site will be completely remodelled, rebuilding the garages and providing security lighting to test the take up of garages and whether they would be in effect self-funding through the additional income stream. The cost of this pilot is not included within the above costs and may impact on the availability of resources in the short-term against those identified in Chapter 9.

7. Options and Priorities

- 7.1 Our priorities can be summarised into the following headings:
- Improving and maintaining our stock
 - Increasing the supply of housing
 - Improving Energy Efficiency and Tackling Fuel Poverty
 - Supporting Tenants
- 7.2 Under the self-financing regime we are able to deliver more investment for Council housing than we have previously. The sources of additional funding are quite complex but can be summarised in the following way.
- 7.3 When considering the change to self-financing, the Government recognised that the calculations that led to Colchester making circa £7million payment per year into the national subsidy effectively were taking more resources from us than should have been the case. In the debt settlement where Colchester's debt was increased by £73.694million, this was taken into account within the calculations. So in other words, the circa £7million payment in subsidy that would have been paid, has been replaced by an interest charge of circa £2.6million. This is why we have additional resources to spend on Council housing.
- 7.4 As we no longer make this subsidy contribution and as long as we keep control of our costs, we can use these resources to reinvest into services. However, there are risk factors that will affect these projected resources and need to be considered and these are discussed later within this plan.

Improving and maintaining our stock

- 7.5 If we or CBH can deliver any additional efficiencies then these will be able to be re-invested back into the service or investment in the stock.
- 7.6 Through the Asset Management Strategy a clear set of investment priorities have been identified and being embarked upon as part of the Colchester Standard works namely:
- Heating and Boilers
 - Kitchens
 - Bathrooms
 - Electrics
- 7.7 The appraisal on sheltered stock has seen investment and rationalisation as required.
- 7.8 However, with the additional resources available we could consider other options to utilise the available borrowing headroom and future revenue surpluses as they accrue. These options are discussed below:

Increasing supply

7.9 Through our Housing Strategy and long waiting lists there is an ongoing need for the delivery of new affordable housing. We have already embarked on delivering 34 new HRA homes and are forecast to fully utilise the newly available resources from the reinvigorated right to buy receipts that have been accrued to date and for estimated sales to March 2015. The current right to buy policy is likely to change and therefore it is difficult to predict any future receipts for investment for new homes. Therefore we can only foresee the delivery of new homes using our own resources unless we seek grant through the HCA. Within the scenario modelling within Chapter 9 we will test the plans ability in terms of the number of homes we can potentially deliver.

Energy Efficiency/Tackling Fuel Poverty

7.10 Whilst the Colchester Standard seeks to deliver energy efficiency through replacement boilers and higher levels of insulation there are areas within the stock where improvements could be made to assist with tackling fuel poverty and are identified below:

- In the early stages of the Decent Homes programme when new windows were replaced, due to financial constraints, single glazed windows were used instead of double glazed units. Whilst the replacement of these units have been factored into the asset management database with double glazing, it is likely that this will not be for another 10 to 15 years.
- The more rural properties in some instances are using oil boilers due to a lack of connection to the mains supply, which could easily be achieved at a cost of approximately £500 per unit, before boiler installation. Some areas do not have gas mains supply and therefore we could consider implementing a programme of ground and air source heating pumps, which whilst are initially expensive will deliver savings in terms of running costs for both us and tenants.
- Early replacement of problematic boilers which have a history of poor performance and reliability

7.11 Further improvements to properties over and above the Colchester Standard could include:

- Thermostatic showers above baths
- Redecoration of properties after major works – to the affected areas
- Environmental improvements such as:
 - Replacing and Implementing Fencing for all gardens.
 - Door entry and improved security to blocks of flats
 - Relaying of boundary walls.
 - Providing an annual 'community chest' in which tenants bid for estate improvement work.

7.12 In terms of the delivery of the Colchester Standard tenant satisfaction could be increased and potential future efficiency savings could be achieved if:

- Delivery of programmes could be more estate based (rather than pepper potting).

- The external door programme is brought into line with the window programme.

Supporting Tenants

7.13 One of the key risks facing all social landlords is welfare reform and is identified in Chapter 8. With the increase of non-dependant deductions, removal of the spare room subsidy and an overall cap on total welfare benefits receivable has resulted in working age tenants receiving housing benefit having to supplement their rent payments. With the introduction of Universal Credit direct payments of benefit to the landlord to cover rent payments will end. In addition, Universal Credit will be paid monthly in arrears. This will affect arrears performance. To counter-act this, we could consider increasing our resources to CBH to implement a range of measures to help ameliorate the effects. This could include support to help tenants into work, education and training. Whilst this would be a cost to the business plan, it may well be offset against otherwise increased provisions for bad debt.

8. Risks and Challenges

- 8.1 The main risks to the HRA that have a potential to affect the delivery of the plan over the long-term are set out below. Risk management strategies against these are set out in Appendix 3; and a financial sensitivity of the plan is included within Chapter 9.
- Getting our asset information right.
 - Cost inflation.
 - Interest rate risk.
 - Government Right to Buy Policy.
 - Welfare reform.
 - Re-opening of the self-financing settlement.
 - Change of rent policy.
 - Future Government Policy Changes.
- 8.2 The highest in terms of both financial, social and pressure to staff within the Housing service will be Welfare reform. With the introduction of Universal Credit for the working age we face further increases to arrears and additional administration costs with the withdrawal of direct payment. This, places the onus on tenants to pay their rent from their monthly receipt of Universal Credit. Currently proposals are in place where arrears are more than eight weeks will divert to direct payment but only through agreement with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). However, the expectation of DWP is that we will have taken all steps to prevent the arrears occurring, hence the need for more intensive management.
- 8.3 Currently around 500 tenancies (8.5%) are affected by reductions to their benefit as a result of the withdrawal of the spare bedroom subsidy. It is estimated that an average of £16 per week will be lost amounting to a total reduction in benefit payable of around £400,000 in 2013/2014.
- 8.4 Guidance has been published, though at a consultation stage, for a change to the social rent policy, effectively diverting from what has been assumed within the self-financing settlement and previously applied by us. The changes that have been consulted on have not fully been modelled into our base position i.e. the end of rent convergence, but the impact is demonstrated within the sensitivities that have been tested. Any divergence from the rent increase assumptions contained within this plan will affect its viability.
- 8.5 The plan may well be at risk to future changes in Government policy. We have benefited from self-financing but could face the consequences of higher right to buy sales. In addition a recent consultation on a cap has been proposed for leaseholders protecting them from high recharges, with the cost of unrecovered works falling on the HRA.
- 8.6 Another risk to the plan in terms of meeting and maintaining the Colchester Standard but also the availability of additional resources for investment will be following the strategies identified in this plan for income. Within Chapter 9 we discuss the influence of potential changes to the Government's policy on rent levels

but if we do not maximise our income by deviating from what we have forecast then services and improvements will be at risk and we will be less best placed to tackle the other risks identified within this chapter.

- 8.7 We have a risk management strategy that has a commitment to managing risk in an effective and appropriate manner. It ensures that ownership and accountability are clearly assigned for the management of risks.

9. Financial Strategy and Planning

- 9.1 Detailed financial modelling has been developed to support this business plan with officers and CIH consultancy. Using the HRA budget for 2013/2014 and confirmation of the investment for the 30 year capital programme, the three key conclusions from the forecast are:
- There will be sufficient resources over the long term to meet our obligations towards our stock, the housing debt and towards tenants, in terms of service delivery.
 - The availability of resources to meet our obligations should be relatively resilient to changes in financial conditions.
 - There will be additional resources arising in the medium to long-term within the business plan which can be reinvested in meeting more of our priorities with the availability of borrowing headroom in the short-term.
- 9.2 The business plan baseline forecast model utilises the budget for 2013/2014 as the basis for forecasting revenue expenditure and income forward over 30 years, but with the opening balances adjusted to the latest audited figures. The capital expenditure is based on the asset management database outputs for 2014/2015 provided by CBH. Year 1 matches the latest capital programme projections.
- 9.3 Core inflation within the plan is forecast to be 2.5% for non-rental income and both revenue and capital expenditure in line with the long term economic prospects published in the Government's most recent Budget (March 2013). Rental income is discussed further in Section 9.4.2.
- 9.4 In projecting forward over 30 years, we have to make assumptions around the future changes in income, expenditure and stock investment needs. A short commentary on each of the assumptions we have made within the baseline forecast is set out below.

9.4.1 Property Numbers

The number of rented properties as of April 2013 was 6,142 (including 47 units of temporary accommodation).

The stock will still see some rationalisation from our asset management strategy and the financial modelling assumes the net loss of some 30 units over a period of 3 years from April 2014 onwards.

Due to the reinvigoration of the right to buy policy sale numbers have far exceeded those experienced in recent years. It is estimated that 25 will be sold this year, 25 next year and then reduce to an average of 8 from April 2015 onwards. As we have entered into a Local Agreement with the Government for the reinvestment of additional RTB receipts following the change in discount rates implemented in April 2012, sales in excess of 10 per annum will result in resources for reinvestment in new or replacement homes. The sale of the forecast 50 properties will result in an estimated £0.9 million receipt which will be utilised on the 34 new build units we are undertaking, with the balance of the funding for this project coming from a combination of new borrowing and revenue contributions.

9.4.2 Rent Income, Voids and Welfare Reform

The self-financing settlement and associated debt calculation was based on the Government's policy of social rent restructuring. We have adopted this policy since its inception in 2002 and the forecast is based on continued progression towards the implementation of target rents.

The Government's assumption within the settlement was for convergence in April 2015 (suitably adjusted for authorities like Colchester where not all properties would reach target by that date). A detailed property by property forecast highlights that at April 2015 around 84% will achieve convergence. The trajectory is likely to run over the period to 2021 by which time it is expected that all but a handful of properties will have reached convergence.

The Government announced earlier this year that it would be changing the rent policy for social rent in that the main inflationary driver of RPI (Retail Price Index inflation) plus 0.5% would be replaced by CPI plus 1.0%.

In addition, in a recently published consultation the ability for convergence may be withdrawn which will affect the rent forecasts presented within this plan. Within the sensitivity section we have demonstrated the impact of this change in Government policy.

Void levels are estimated at 1.5% for all stock for the early years then reducing to 1.25% allowing for the rationalisation of sheltered housing. We will need to address any increases in void periods as a result of people moving due to welfare reform – for example if it is likely that the number of people moving from larger properties (under-occupation) to smaller properties might increase the number of voids each year.

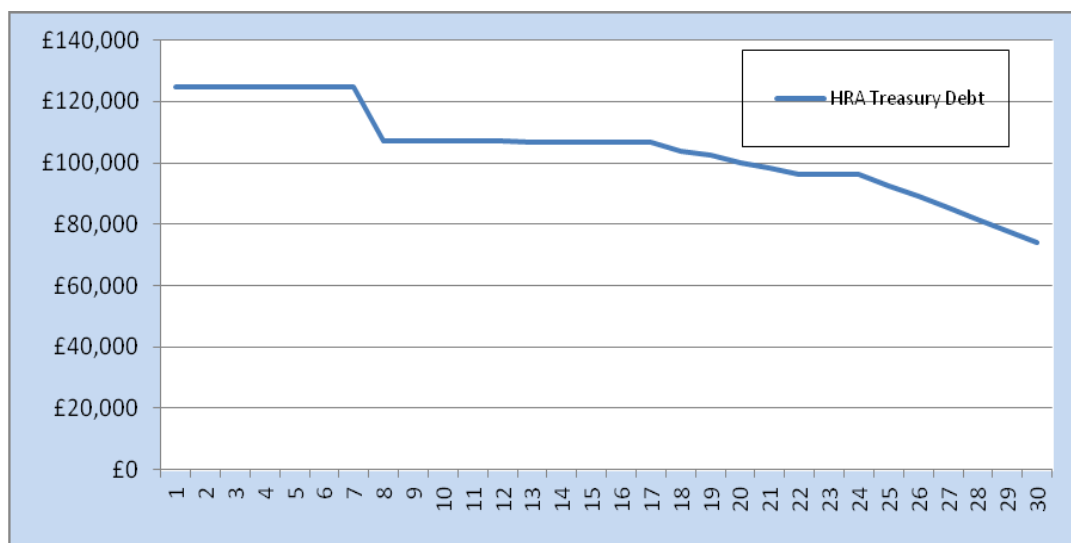
The budget for bad debts (i.e. unpaid rent arrears) has increased to £0.25m (1% of rental income) for 2013/2014. This will be kept under close review but the financial modelling maintains the provision at this level for the whole plan. Given that there is currently no further provision in the plan for the impact of the above measures and officers in CBH will undoubtedly see an increase in their workload dealing with arrears, consideration must be given to either increasing the future levels of bad debt or increasing resources for tackling the impact of welfare reform directly. The sensitivity section demonstrates the impact to the plan should bad debts levels increase or if additional resources were provided to CBH as a scenario.

9.4.3 Treasury Management

As detailed earlier as part of self-financing we undertook additional borrowing of £73.694million resulting in total HRA debt (HRACFR) of £124.577million. We are unable to borrow more than £140.275million due to a Government imposed cap, partly in order to stop Councils investing too much. This has not been forecast to change throughout the lifetime of the plan.

The current debt for the HRA is a mix of 88 individual loans with differing interest rates and repayment dates. The loan maturity profile is demonstrated below:

Chart 9.1 Treasury Loan Maturity Profile £'000



Over the next 30 years the current loan portfolio will reduce from £124.577million to £73.855million. This chart excludes any future borrowing undertaken to finance the Colchester Standard or other options.

We will decide on our treasury and debt strategy, through our debt management strategy, on an ongoing basis and no decisions have yet been taken around the options for financing and refinancing of loans over the 30 years of the plan. It is difficult to predict interest rates going forward and we are best placed to determine our approach to borrowing and debt at the relevant time when loans become due.

The baseline model within this business plan is therefore based on the implicit assumption of the refinancing of loans when they mature. The assumption is that the refinanced loans will be at slightly higher interest rates on average than the ones that fall to be repaid. This 'default' assumption is made pending further exploration of our options around debt management.

There are a number of options as to how we could deal with debt over the lifetime of the plan – some will be appropriate at some periods and some more appropriate at others. Essentially, as the plan generates resources, one or a combination of the following can be done:

- Repay loans as they fall due – reducing the amount of debt and interest costs, and increasing future borrowing headroom
- Hold money in reserves – and earn interest income, although currently interest earnings on deposits are very low
- Invest in new homes, existing stock or services – which could deliver increased rent income, and potentially therefore deliver a longer term and higher return on investment, or prevent future expenditure liabilities

As decisions are taken in the future, the balance between these approaches and the refinancing of debt will need to be sufficiently flexible to respond to the financial environment at the time and positioned to deliver the objectives within the business

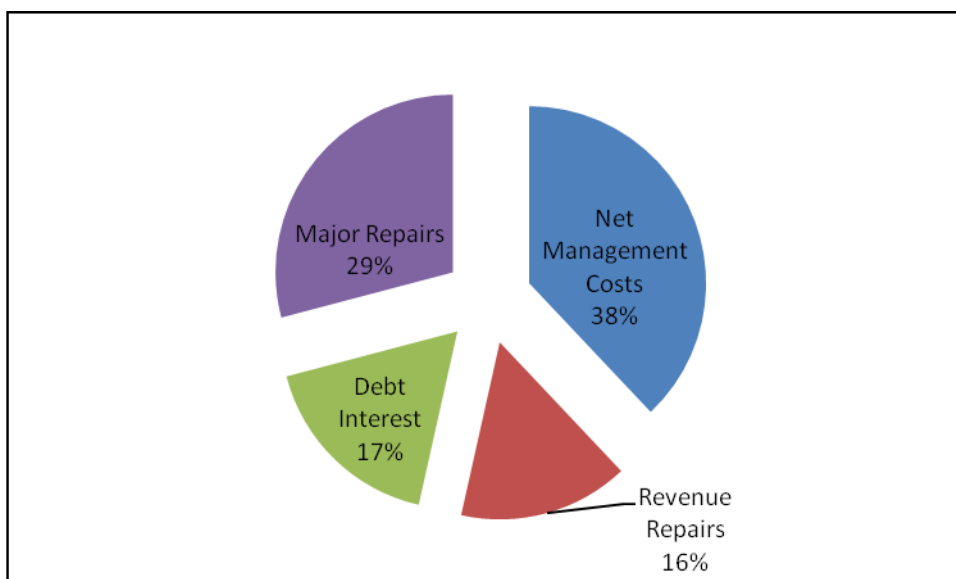
plan and wider housing/corporate strategies. We will therefore continue to seek expert advice from our external Treasury Advisers in order to further inform the options for debt management going forward, including identifying whether there are options for cost savings from a more efficient restructuring of the HRA's debt.

As part of the treasury strategy we have assumed that revenue balances should not fall below £1.6million, allowing for inflation in future years.

9.4.4 Service Revenue Income and Expenditure

The chart below shows the way in which we spend our rents and other income for 2013/2014:

Chart 9.2 Breakdown of How Rent is Spent (2013/2014)



All revenue income and expenditure has been forecast forward based on core inflation only from the 2013/2014 budget. The underlying assumptions are therefore that:

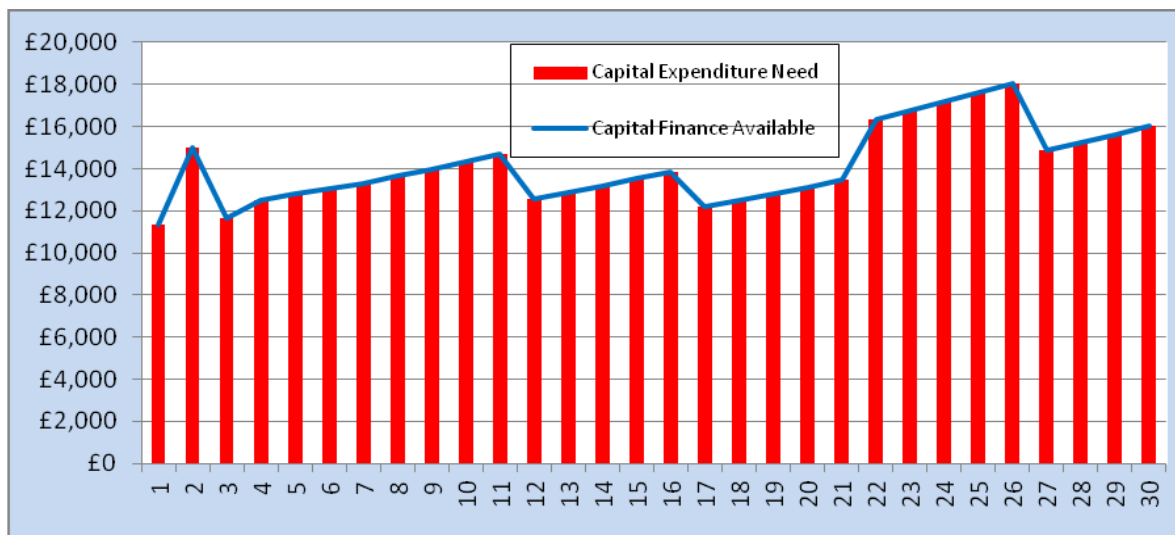
- There is no real change up or down to the level of non-rent income, service charges, non-dwellings rents, leaseholder charges and all other sources of income.
- There is no real change up or down to the level of CBH's management fee.
- There is no real change up or down to the level of costs spent by us directly (the 'housing client') and which is charged to the HRA.

The overall outcome of this approach is that we plan to control expenditure on day to day services to inflation only, whilst rent income increases above inflation to converge with target rents. This is vital to the plan as it means that, over time, the amount we spend on day to day services as a proportion of rent income will reduce and the amount for investment in capital and new homes will proportionately increase.

9.5 Capital Investment Needs and Resourcing

Based on the latest capital programme and investment requirements from the Asset Management Database the chart below demonstrates the future spend levels inclusive of inflation, overheads, disabled adaptations and other minor capital spend.

Chart 9.3 Capital Expenditure and Financing £'000



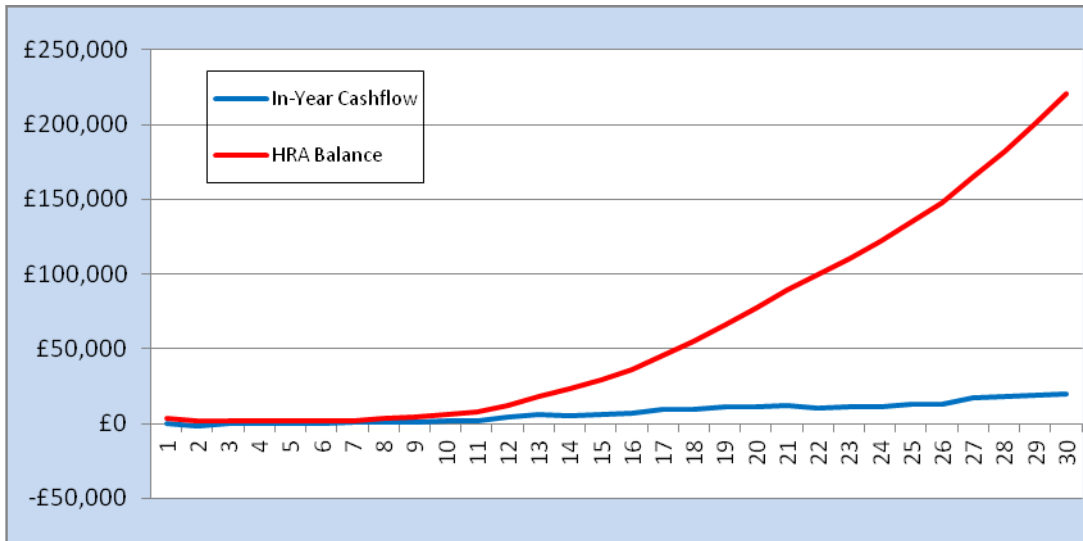
The headlines are:

- Planned Capital Investment, including the 34 New build units can be fully financed.
- During this period the HRA reserve balances do not fall below £1.6million (inflated).
- Borrowing is utilised up to the value of £5.136million, leaving £10.562million headroom remaining.

9.6 The Revenue (HRA) Forecast

The chart below shows the total revenue reserves over the period of the plan. This includes interest on balances and is on the basis that all loans are refinanced, so in other words the HRA debt remains at £134.427million after funding the capital expenditure above.

Chart 9.4 Projected HRA Balances £'000

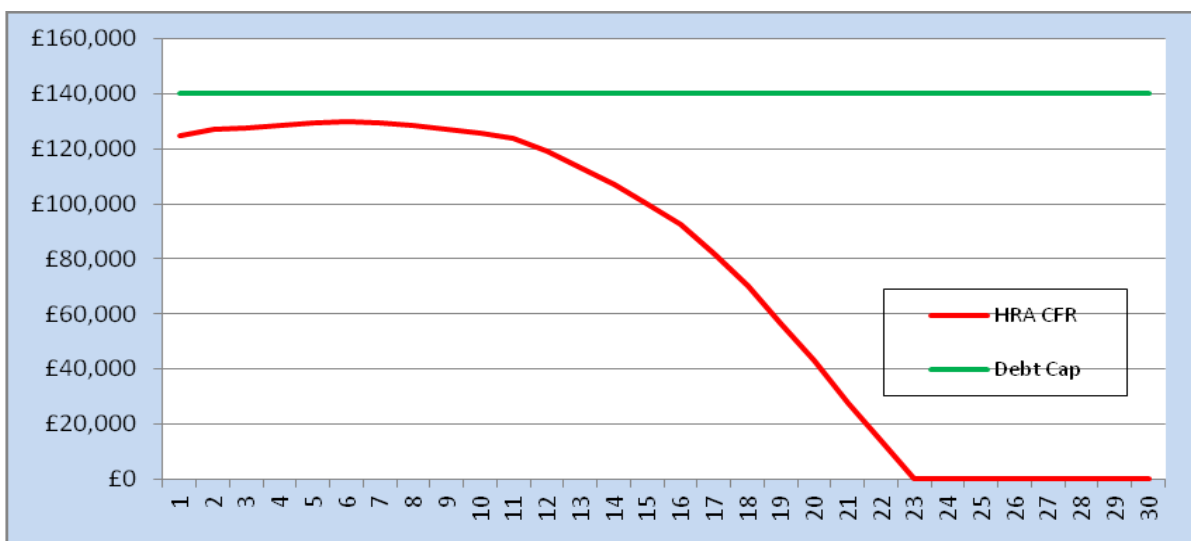


Reserves rise significantly over time and therefore there is adequate provision to meet all of the obligations towards the stock, service delivery and financing the interest of the debt with additional (as yet) unallocated resources available for investment. With projected balances of £220million in year 30, the debt of £134million is easily covered.

9.7 Testing the Viability of the Plan

As a standard test of assessing the viability of the plan, it is usual to understand how quickly the debt could be repaid should we wish to direct all our available HRA resources to repaying the £134.427million. The chart below shows the potential repayment profile.

Chart 9.5 – HRA Viability – Potential for Debt Repayment £'000



The above chart demonstrates that the debt could be fully repaid as early as 23 years, though during this time revenue balances would be limited to the set

minimum balance of £1.6million (inflated). We have had to allow for the premiums payable for early redemptions of the loans in these projections, given that many of our loans maturity dates fall well beyond this date. The revenue balances on the HRA will start to accumulate to around £150million by year 30.

9.8 The following section explores the available resources for investment in stock, new build and services whilst maintaining a minimum revenue balance and keeping within the debt cap.

9.8.1 The Short to Medium-Term Resources Available (Years 2 – 11)

With the high levels of investment of the Colchester Standard, where we are spending nearly £135million over the next 10 years (from 2014/2015 and with inflation), there is little scope for significant additional investment.

9.8.2 Reviewing the resources available for the next 5 years (2014/2015 to 2018/2019), our HRA balances will be at their minimum reserve level of £1.6million. However we have the borrowing headroom of £10.562million. The actual usability of this will be diminished given that the HRA would have to pay interest on using this headroom. Therefore it is estimated that additional expenditure is limited to £1.75million per annum for the five year period, allowing for inflation and interest charges, or alternatively £8.3million as a one-off expenditure item in 2014/2015.

9.8.3 If the headroom is utilised by 2018/2019 (as above), the only resource available to the HRA will be the surpluses the rental income will generate as the rental income is set to increase by a higher margin than expenditure, due in the main to the interest charges remaining relatively constant and with management and repair costs increasing by RPI only. Over this period of 5 years from 2019/2020 to 2023/24 it is estimated that balances could be some £2.6million higher than the minimum reserve balance, therefore allowing for additional investment to this value. However as the available balances grow over the five years, careful re-profiling of expenditure would be needed to meet the in-year resources available.

9.8.4 The above available resources may well be restricted in terms of the key risks that the HRA faces in terms of the impact of Welfare reform and the new social rent policy. The sensitivity section below demonstrates the potential impact to the HRA and the available resources.

9.8.5 If the provision of new social housing comes before the other options identified such as environmental improvements, energy efficiency measures or improvements to the Colchester Standard, and assuming that there is no further support from right to buy receipts or grants from the HCA, then we have estimated that the following number of additional units could be built based on £120k per unit build costs on HRA land:

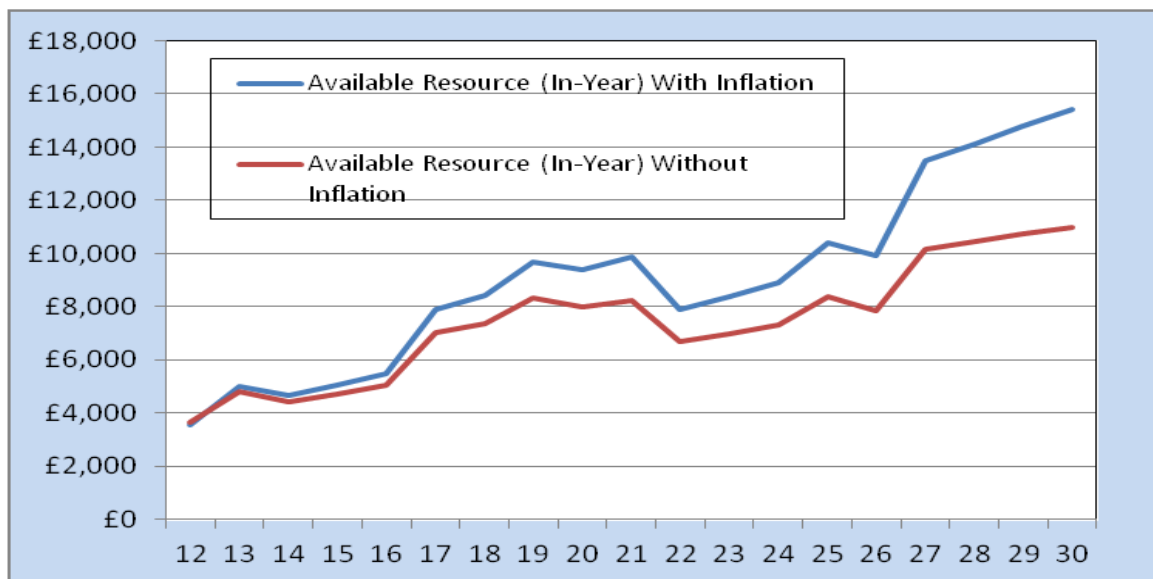
- In Years 2-6 using the Headroom: 78 units
- In Year 7-11 an additional 32 units

9.8.6 The Long-Term Resources Available (Year 12 and beyond)

Assuming that the short to medium-term available resources are utilised, including borrowing to the debt cap, the model identifies the resources available for 2024/2025 and beyond.

9.8.7 As the capital expenditure requirement reduces from 2024/2025 onwards from the previous levels, the plans revenue surpluses continue to accrue. The chart below identifies the future resources available for each year with or without inflation.

Chart 9.6 Potential Long-Term Resources Available £'000



Therefore for the longer-term within the plan there are clearly additional resources available to fund the options identified in chapter 8, with the obvious caveat in terms of the risks that the HRA holds.

9.8.8 As we move forward we will continually revisit and update this business plan in terms of developing our forward strategy, including the asset management strategy, and how we will make best use of these resources.

9.9 Sensitivity to Changes in Assumptions

Whilst the plan makes assumptions about future behaviour of income and expenditure, there are consequences if the assumptions made do not prove to be true.

9.9.1 In order to show the sensitivity of the business plan forecast to changes in assumptions and financial conditions, the plan shows below how the forecast for the key outputs change based on some changes to key assumptions, some within our control, some outside.

9.9.2 The following sensitivities have been modelled:

- Welfare Reform (1): With the phased introduction of Universal Credit and direct payments, arrears are anticipated to increase and therefore bad debt provision needs to be made for this. This sensitivity assumes the provision will increase from 1% to 3% and then back down to 1.5% over the period of 10 years.

- Welfare Reform (2): In this sensitivity the management costs are increased by £180,000 to allow for additional tenancy support, with bad debts not increasing over 1.75%
- Social Rent Policy (1): The change from RPI +0.5% to CPI +1% is assumed within the latest spending review to achieve savings to the treasury through a reduction in the benefit bill. Therefore, to achieve this, the gap between RPI and CPI would have to increase. Long-term estimates predict that the gap could extend to 1.5% from its current 0.6%. The base plan assumes a long-term 0.5% variance. The two sensitivities assume a 1%(a) and 1.5%(b) future variance
- Social Rent Policy (2): This assumes no convergence
- Cost inflation may be higher or lower than 2.5% per year. The two sensitivities show +1%(a) and -1%(b)
- Interest rates may be higher successively as loans are refinanced. This sensitivity assumes an additional 1% interest charge on refinanced loans

Table 9.7 Schedule of the Impacts of Risks and Sensitivities

£'million	HRA Bal at Yr 11	Head-room at Yr 11	Capital S/fall	HRA Bal at Yr 30	Head-room at Yr 30	Capital S/fall
Base Position	7.4	10.6	-	220.6	10.6	-
Welfare Reform (1)	5.9	8.5	-	216.2	8.5	-
Welfare Reform (2)	5.6	8.8	-	209.6	8.8	-
Social Rent Policy (1a)	1.9	8.3	-	117.6	8.3	-
Social Rent Policy (1b)	1.8	0.3	-	24.3	0.3	-
Social Rent Policy (2)	3.5	7.8	-	191.1	7.8	-
Inflation (a)	1.9	-	1.3	42.5	-	-
Inflation (b)	17.8	12.6	-	343.2	12.6	-
Interest Rates	6.5	10.4	-	212.0	10.4	-

9.9.3 The above table uses the baseline position with no utilisation of the available borrowing headroom for new build or additional investment in the stock.

9.9.4 The table shows that our plan is reasonably resilient to changes in assumptions – the only area that would be a major problem for us is we failed to control cost inflation; in effect this is a risk we manage well under the current system and across

all service areas. This also means that we must keep our rent increases in line with the current rent restructuring policy.

9.9.5 The sensitivity “Social Rent Policy (2)” is a key risk to the short to medium term for the ability to deliver new affordable housing or service enhancements. In delivery terms, if rent convergence was terminated from April 2015 the total number of affordable properties that could be financed would be reduced from 110 to 66 over the first eleven years of the plan.

9.10 Performance Management

With the introduction of self financing, the process of robust performance monitoring is imperative across a range of core performance areas to monitor and ensure the sustainability of the plan for both the short and long term. In this respect, there are a range of performance management frameworks in place, including our Performance and Improvement framework as part of the working arrangements between us and CBH. These aim to ensure that our ALMO maintains high service delivery.

Strong financial performance and management is imperative to maintain a viable business plan and this has ensured and enabled us to implement the plan based on a sound financial footing. We will also develop a range of performance frameworks around the need to ensure effective support services and financial / treasury management.

Through the ongoing process of performance management, the scrutiny of this plan and reporting mechanisms in place, we, jointly with CBH, will also ensure that we develop action planning to address any under performance and mitigate associated risks impacting on the business plan.

Appendix 1: Schedule of Key Financial Assumptions

The table below details the main financial assumptions that we have made in preparing the financial plan which support this business plan.

Description	Short to Medium Term	long term
Financing	Opening debt at £124.577m against cap of £140.275m – Planned Borrowing £5.136m Headroom of £10.562m	Long term cap £140.275m not fully utilised – headroom £10.562m All loans refinanced (no repayment)
Property changes over the plan	6,142 properties 1/4/2013 with 25 to 8 RTB per annum Total of 30 demolitions/disposals	8 RTB per annum
Economic – inflation and interest rates	2.5% core inflation, CPI 2%+1% rent inflation, interest rates start at 5% for new borrowing	2.5% core inflation, CPI 2%+1% rent inflation, interest rates stable at 5% long term except existing borrowing
Rents – convergence rate and CPI	Assumed rent converge where possible by April 2015	CPI + 1%
Arrears and bad debts	1% of rents	1% of rents long term
Management costs	2013/2014 budget rising 1% less than inflation (2.5%)	Inflation long term at 2.5%
Repairs costs	2013/2014 budget rising with inflation at 2.5% only	Inflation long term at 2.5%
Capital profile	Existing programme plus Colchester Standard with 2.5% inflation	Colchester Standard on existing stock moving with 2.5% inflation
Assumptions of efficiencies being delivered	All inflationary pressures above main inflation absorbed	All inflationary pressures above main inflation absorbed
Use of capital resources (RTB receipts etc) and explanation for basis	RTB receipts to General Fund with exception of new build 1-4-1 receipts	RTB receipts to General Fund

Appendix 2: Financial Projections

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT PROJECTIONS Colchester BC

Year	2013.14	2014.15	2015.16	2016.17	2017.18	2018.19	2019.20	2020.21	2021.22	2022.23	2023.28	2028.33	2033.38	2038.43
£'000	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30
INCOME:														
Rental Income	26,391	27,209	28,567	29,398	30,217	31,093	32,604	32,907	33,850	34,819	190,357	219,221	252,452	289,498
Void Losses	-398	-411	-430	-443	-380	-391	-409	-413	-425	-437	-2,391	-2,753	-3,170	-3,635
Service Charges	1,948	1,996	2,046	2,098	2,150	2,204	2,259	2,315	2,373	2,433	13,106	14,828	16,777	18,981
Non-Dwelling Income	661	692	725	745	764	784	803	828	852	878	4,801	5,566	6,452	7,480
Grants & Other Income	597	607	618	628	639	650	661	672	684	696	3,689	4,066	4,490	4,967
Total Income	29,199	30,094	31,526	32,426	33,390	34,340	35,918	36,309	37,335	38,389	209,562	240,928	277,001	317,291
EXPENDITURE:														
General Management	-8,956	-9,141	-9,278	-9,464	-9,707	-9,950	-10,198	-10,453	-10,715	-10,982	-59,170	-66,946	-75,743	-85,696
Special Management	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Management	-188	-191	-194	-198	-202	-207	-212	-217	-222	-228	-1,228	-1,390	-1,572	-1,779
Rent Rebates	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bad Debt Provision	-250	-274	-287	-296	-304	-313	-328	-331	-341	-350	-1,915	-2,205	-2,539	-2,911
Responsive & Cyclical Repairs	-4,979	-4,893	-4,910	-5,033	-5,159	-5,288	-5,440	-5,575	-5,714	-5,856	-31,542	-35,669	-40,335	-45,613
Total Revenue Expenditure	-14,373	-14,499	-14,670	-14,990	-15,371	-15,757	-16,178	-16,576	-16,991	-17,417	-93,855	-106,209	-120,189	-135,999
Interest Paid	-5,568	-5,632	-5,712	-5,749	-5,787	-5,814	-5,825	-5,805	-5,157	-5,157	-25,763	-25,727	-26,048	-27,142
Finance Administration	-144	-110	-112	-114	-116	-119	-122	-125	-129	-132	-710	-803	-909	-1,028
Interest Received	23	29	24	25	27	27	32	44	62	84	1,318	4,312	8,881	14,800
Depreciation	-6,500	-6,697	-7,285	-7,467	-7,654	-8,071	-8,273	-8,480	-8,692	-8,909	-49,684	-58,116	-67,906	-79,265
Net Operating Income	2,637	3,184	3,771	4,131	4,488	4,606	5,552	6,167	6,428	6,858	40,868	54,386	70,850	88,657
APPROPRIATIONS:														
FRS 17 / Other HRA Reserve Adj	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Revenue Provision (HRACFR)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Revenue Contribution to Capital	-2,812	-4,786	-3,764	-4,132	-4,489	-4,566	-5,048	-5,174	-5,304	-5,436	-17,119	-6,334	-13,428	-2,964
Total Appropriations	-2,812	-4,786	-3,764	-4,132	-4,489	-4,566	-5,048	-5,174	-5,304	-5,436	-17,119	-6,334	-13,428	-2,964
ANNUAL CASHFLOW	-175	-1,602	7	-1	-1	40	503	992	1,124	1,421	23,748	48,051	57,403	85,692
Opening Balance	3,367	3,192	1,590	1,597	1,596	1,595	1,635	2,138	3,130	4,255	5,676	29,424	77,475	134,878
Closing Balance	3,192	1,590	1,597	1,596	1,595	1,635	2,138	3,130	4,255	5,676	29,424	77,475	134,878	220,571

HOUSING CAPITAL PROJECTIONS
Colchester BC

Year	2013.14	2014.15	2015.16	2016.17	2017.18	2018.19	2019.20	2020.21	2021.22	2022.23	2023.28	2028.33	2033.38	2038.43
£'000	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30
EXPENDITURE:														
Planned Variable Expenditure	0	-3	-4	-4	-4	-4	-24	-24	-25	-25	-119	-150	-247	-271
Planned Fixed Expenditure	-8,500	-10,445	-9,760	-10,543	-10,806	-11,031	-11,214	-11,494	-11,782	-12,076	-54,593	-50,620	-65,609	-62,032
Disabled Adaptations	-500	-513	-525	-538	-552	-566	-580	-594	-609	-624	-3,364	-3,806	-4,307	-4,872
Other Capital Expenditure	-260	-257	-263	-269	-276	-283	-290	-297	-305	-312	-1,682	-1,903	-2,153	-2,436
New Build Expenditure	-1,000	-2,670	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Procurement Fees	-1,100	-1,100	-1,100	-1,128	-1,156	-1,185	-1,214	-1,245	-1,276	-1,308	-7,045	-7,970	-9,018	-10,203
Previous Year's B/F Shortfall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Capital Expenditure	-11,360	-14,987	-11,652	-12,482	-12,794	-13,068	-13,321	-13,655	-13,996	-14,346	-66,803	-64,450	-81,333	-79,815
FUNDING:														
Major Repairs Reserve	7,423	6,998	7,285	7,467	7,654	8,071	8,273	8,480	8,692	8,909	49,684	58,116	67,906	76,851
Right to Buy Receipts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HRA CFR Borrowing	0	2,569	603	883	650	431	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Receipts/Grants	825	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HRA Reserves	300	634	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Revenue Contributions	2,812	4,786	3,764	4,132	4,489	4,566	5,048	5,174	5,304	5,436	17,119	6,334	13,428	2,964
Total Capital Funding	11,360	14,987	11,652	12,482	12,794	13,068	13,321	13,655	13,996	14,346	66,803	64,450	81,333	79,815
In-Year Net Cashflow	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cumulative Position	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MRR Account:														
Opening Balance	1,223	300	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net Contribution (Depr)	6,500	6,697	7,285	7,467	7,654	8,071	8,273	8,480	8,692	8,909	49,684	58,116	67,906	79,265
Use of Reserve to Capital	-7,423	-6,998	-7,285	-7,467	-7,654	-8,071	-8,273	-8,480	-8,692	-8,909	-49,684	-58,116	-67,906	-76,851
Contribution to HRACFR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Closing Balance	£300	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£2,415

Appendix 3: Risk Management

Risks have been classified into the following headings for the HRA Business Plan

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation and residual risk
Insufficient knowledge of current stock causes unknown liabilities	LOW	CRITICAL	Increase surveys, full understanding of asset management database, complete Assets Investment Model -> reduce impact to NEGLIGIBLE
Cost inflation is higher than income inflation	SIGNIFICANT	CRITICAL	Effective budget and financial control within the Council and via the CHB management fee mechanism; agree efficiency targets in advance -> reduce impact to LOW
Interest rates rise	LOW	MARGINAL	Refinancing of some loans might be higher cost; manage via effective corporate treasury strategy -> reduce impact to NEGLIGIBLE
Right to Buy levels increase	SIGNIFICANT	MARGINAL	Depends on uptake of sales with increased discount; managing costs to the number of properties held -> reduce impact to NEGLIGIBLE/MARGINAL (as additional receipts can be used to support new build programmes)
Restriction on housing benefits; introduction of Universal Credit	VERY HIGH	CRITICAL	Intensive management and services to vulnerable tenants, comprehensive assessment of revenue impact/arrears exposure, prudent approach to bad debt provision -> reduce likelihood to CRITICAL/MARGINAL
Government revisits the self financing settlement	ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE	CRITICAL	No action by the Council/CBH but investment of available resources could reduce scale of impact
Rent increases are not implemented in accordance with this plan	SIGNIFICANT	CRITICAL	Council policy towards raising rents to convergence to targets (dependant on final guidance) are included in this plan, successive rent increases take account of investment plans -> reduce impact to MARGINAL

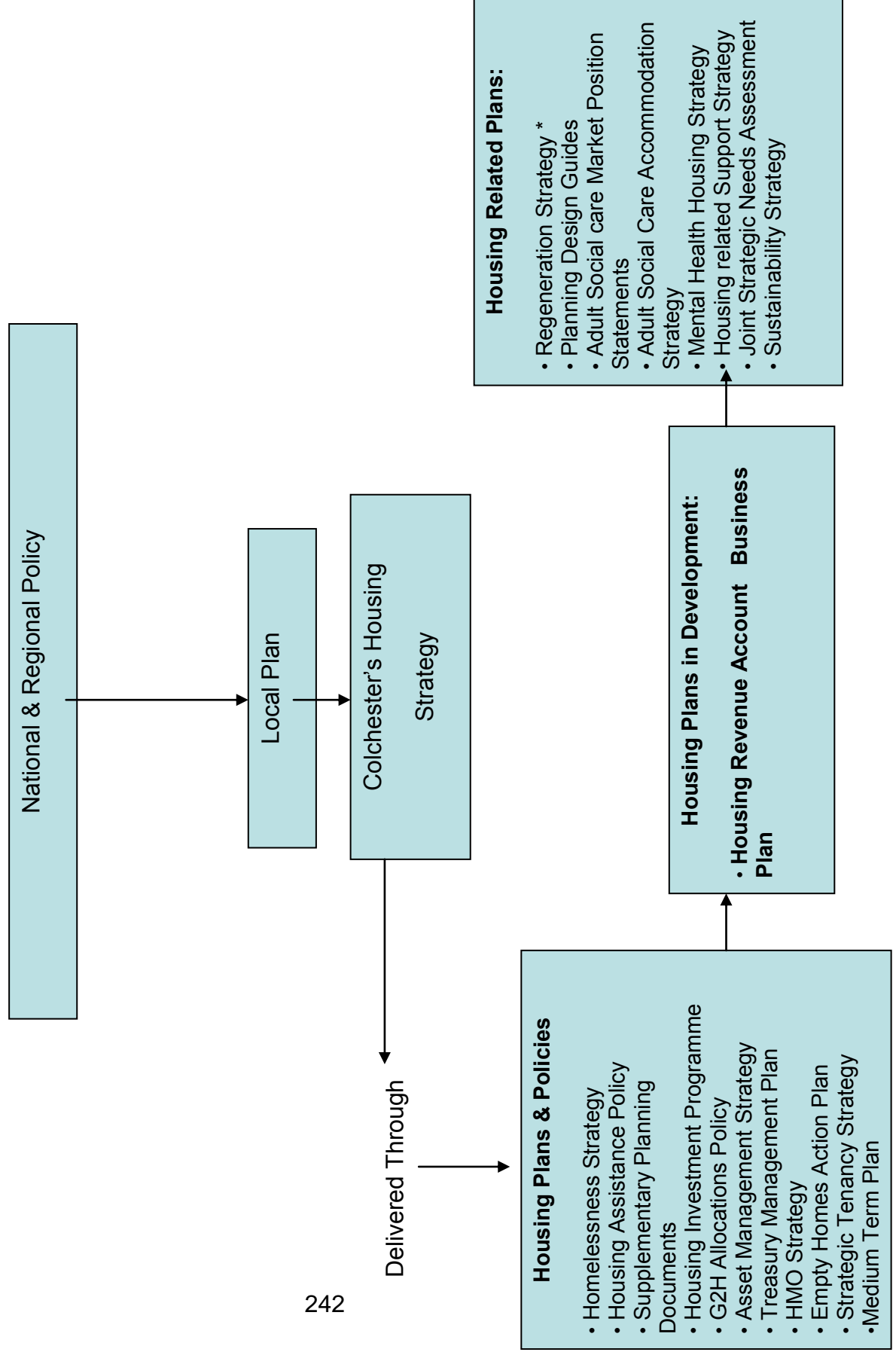
APPENDIX 4: The Colchester Standard

In summary, the Colchester Standard includes:

1. Listening to the requirements and wishes of residents;
2. Consultation with residents about the works to be undertaken in their homes, including items of choice;
3. Keeping rents within the Government's target range;
4. The provision of an effective responsive repairs service;
5. The delivery of an agreed void standard;
6. Undertaking regular cyclical servicing and testing, to help maintain condition;
7. The use of good quality, durable and low maintenance products;
8. An 'external overview' (like an 'MoT') of all dwellings on a 6 year cycle to undertake all the external redecoration and repairs required;
9. All rented dwellings to be brought up to the Government's Decent Homes Standard by the end of 2012;
10. All dwellings to be free of any 'Category 1' (Severe) HHSRS hazards as soon as possible after identification;
11. Any kitchen, bathroom or heating distribution system that is old and in poor condition will be renewed or repaired alongside other internal components;
12. When visited by the internal works programme all works that are required by the 5 year programme (internally) will be undertaken at the same time, helping to avoid repetitive visits and keeping costs down;
13. Both internal and external works programmes will deal with any minor un-reported repairs whilst the contractor is on site;
14. Where renewed, a bathroom will be installed complete with sanitary ware, wall tiles, floor coverings and redecoration (with resident wall and floor colour choice);
15. Where renewed, a kitchen will be installed complete with units, worktop, wall tiles, electrics, floor coverings and redecoration. Residents will have a choice of kitchen units, worktops, floor covering, paint colour and tiles, as well as having a hand in the layout design process;
16. New kitchens and bathrooms will be fitted with extract ventilation where required;
17. Where renewed, windows will be double glazed, to 'Secured by Design Standards';
18. Where renewed, doors will be double glazed composite or PVCu units, to 'Secured by Design Standards';
19. Where a boiler is changed a new energy efficient unit will be fitted along with thermostatic radiator valves (where these are not already fitted);
20. A hard wired mains smoke detector will be installed to every dwelling's hallway and landing when electrical systems are renewed or upgraded;
21. Where needed, additional electrical sockets will be provided when a property is rewired, or within a kitchen when it is renewed, to meet modern living requirements;
22. Common parts of flats and estate areas will be improved, with residents taking the lead on identification of suitable projects to be delivered through a 'challenge fund' that will be managed by the Asset Management Group;
23. Loft and wall insulation will be provided to current Building Regulation Standards, where required to be improved;

24. Communal television reception systems will be upgraded to receive digital signals; and
25. Whilst planning work, the requirements of the resident in terms of aids and/or adaptations required will be assessed and, wherever possible, incorporated into the works

Appendix 5: How the HRA Business Plan links to Other Key Council plans



Report of	Head of Commercial Services	Author	Gareth Mitchell John Rock
			282719 282762
Title	Capital Housing Investment Programme. Appointment of a single contractor to provide Adaptations to Council Housing.		
Wards affected	All Wards		

This report sets out the procurement process for a single contract to provide Adaptations to council housing and recommends an appointment.

1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To agree to appoint NPG Barron, to deliver the Adaptations contract.
- 1.2 To agree to enter with the successful contractor into the latest version Joint Contracts Tribunal (JCT) Measured Term Form of Contract to deliver the works.

2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 Members will be aware that the contractor previously delivering these services decided to invoke a Break Clause, which existed in the three individual contracts that were in place, and as a result it has been necessary to undertake a procurement exercise.
- 2.2 In order to maintain services to customers, the Portfolio Holder for Housing together with the Proper Officer agreed in February 2013 that Contract Procedure Rule 2(2) should be invoked to allow an exemption from the normal procurement requirements to be followed and Cabinet Procedure Rule 22 was also invoked to deal with the situation under "Matters of Urgency".
- 2.3 As a result during an interim period while a new tender process was being conducted services have continued to be delivered to our customers through Colchester Borough Homes using a local supply chain.
- 2.4 The procurement approach agreed by Cabinet on 1st December 2010 as part of the Asset Management Strategy is to let a JCT Form of Contract for this and similar types of work.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 Not to accept the tender but this would impede the delivery of previous Cabinet decisions and may not deliver best value which the Council has a duty to seek.
- 3.2 Not to continue with the programme but again this would be at odds with the previous Cabinet decisions.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 In October 2009 Cabinet agreed to re-commence the Capital Improvement Programme with the aim to complete the decent homes programme by December 2012 and within the resources available to the Council.
- 4.2 in order to achieve this, two contracts covering the internal works elements and replacement of windows and doors were awarded. The contractors appointed were Apollo Property Services Group and Mears Limited. Members will recall that this successfully delivered the decent homes programme for the Council on time and under budget.
- 4.3 An existing contractual arrangement for the provision of the aids and adaptations was due to expire in April 2011 and following a tender process Cabinet agreed in March 2011 to appoint Apollo Property Services Group Ltd to deliver this service.
- 4.4 In March 2012 the Council was made aware of a merger between Apollo and Keepmoat and although the contractual relationship between the Council and Apollo Property Services Group did not change the overall ownership of the company did.
- 4.5 Following a protracted period of negotiation, Apollo Property Services Ltd decided to invoke a break clause available to both parties in all the contracts held with the Council. This meant that works would cease on the 18th March 2013 on the Aids and Adaptations contract.
- 4.6 The action taken under the contract to invoke the break clause would have resulted in services not being delivered to tenants whilst a procurement exercise was being carried out. The Portfolio Holder for Housing was kept apprised of the situation. During February 2013, to maintain services to customers, the Portfolio Holder for Housing together with the Proper Officer agreed that Contract Procedure Rule 2(2) should be invoked to allow an exemption from the normal procurement requirements to be followed and Cabinet Procedure Rule 22 was also invoked to deal with the situation under "Matters of Urgency.
- 4.7 To ensure customers continued to receive a service an interim plan was agreed with the Portfolio Holder for Housing whereby Colchester Borough Homes were to establish a supply chain with local contractors that they had standing relationships with and deliver the services while a tender exercise was conducted. Performance monitoring was established and regularly reported to the Portfolio Holder.
- 4.8 In February 2013 a detailed project plan was formulated and a timeline to complete the procurement process was agreed.
- 4.9 As part of the procurement process robust tender specifications were developed to ensure the Council and its tenants receive best value on the evaluation criteria of price and quality. The documentation was written to contain a strong emphasis on quality and resident satisfaction coupled with relevant performance indicators.
- 4.10 EU regulations are not required for this size of contract. The contract was advertised in local papers for 2 weeks. A two-stage contractor selection process consisting of a Pre-Qualification Stage which is open to all interested parties, followed by a Tender Stage which is restricted to contractors selected by analysis of the first stage responses was followed. The Pre-Qualification Stage invited interested contractors to submit information concerning their Financial Capacity, Technical Capability, Relevant Experience and References. Information was requested in a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire from all interested contractors prior to tender.

4.11 The Aids and Adaptations Contract generated the following response:

- 3 contractors responded to the advertisement and were sent the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire to complete and return. All 3 submitted completed Pre-Qualifying Questionnaires (PQQ).
- CBH carried out a robust analysis of the completed PQQ's which resulted in the 3 contractors being invited to proceed to tender.
- Tenders were sent out to the 3 prospective contractors on the 16th August 2013 and 3 were returned and opened by legal services on 4th October 2013.
- The tenders were scored on an 60% cost, 40% quality split using the information in the returned tenders and method statements. The cost and quality analysis was conducted by CBH and the quality evaluation was scrutinised on 22nd October 2013 by a panel consisting of a tenant representative, CBH staff and CBC staff.

4.13 Financial credit checks on the recommended contractor has been conducted by CBH and their individual rating does not give cause for concern

4.14 A copy of the overall results of the assessment of Tender Price and Quality for the contract are available on Part 2 of the agenda within the Tender Report.

4.15 The Form of Contract to deliver the contract is the latest version of the Joint Contracts Tribunal (JCT) Measured Term Form of Contract.

4.16 Current robust controls and monitoring arrangements will continue as a minimum standard. The formal monthly Capital Monitoring Group meeting (CMG) attended by both CBC and CBH will be put in place with arrangements to capture the performance monitoring of the contract including progress against the agreed programme, monitoring of expenditure against agreed budgets, the quality and standard of the services provided to tenants (by reviewing customer satisfaction reports) and direct liaison with tenants.

4.17 The role of CBH as the Contract Administrator (CA) is key to the success of this contract. The CA through the nominated representative will attend the monthly CMG to report on the contractor's performance. The role of CA is also clearly defined within the JCT Form of Contract.

5. Proposals

5.1 To accept the recommendation of the Colchester Borough Homes by:

- Awarding the contract to deliver the Adaptations Contract to NPG Barron

5.4 To enter with the successful individual contractor into the latest version of the JCT Measured Term Form of Contract for the rates tendered

6. Strategic Plan References

6.1 This decision is part of delivering against the Council's Strategic Priorities 2012 – 15 by regenerating our borough through buildings, employment, leisure and infrastructure by ensuring the housing stock is maintained to a decent standard.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 The Portfolio Holder for Housing has been kept fully briefed on the situation.
- 7.2 Tenants were involved in the tender process and will be further involved in the set up and mobilisation of the successful contractor with particular emphasis on engaging with the tenants receiving services through the contract.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 Good communication with tenants is vital and the Council, working closely with CBH, will need to issue information to our tenants to advise them of new contract arrangements, how it will affect them with ongoing updates as the programme progresses. Again this information will follow once the contract has been let and more detailed discussions have taken place with the two successful contractors.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1 The financial implications are contained within the main body of the recommendation report within Part 2 of the agenda, which contains commercially sensitive information. There are sufficient funds allocated within the annual Housing Investment Programme account budget to meet the anticipated first year direct spend on works.

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 10.1 Link to individual strategy provided
<http://www.colchester.gov.uk/article/4962/Strategic-Policy-and-Regeneration>
Title: The Annual Housing Investment Programme (HIP)
- 10.2 Through the Housing Procurement Strategy within the (AMS) staff ensure that all future procurement and purchasing documentation recognise, understand and support CBC and CBH policies with regard to equal opportunities, diversity and human rights.

11. Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 There are none directly arising from this report although through the procurement process all contractors will be aware of the specific needs of our customers and direct on site delivery will be managed by CBH to safeguard both customers and contractors.

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 Through the role of Contract Administrator CBH will be responsible for ensuring Health and Safety requirements are fully complied with.

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 By following the Council's own procurement policy and by implementing the controls and recommendations as set out in this report, the Council is seeking to mitigate against any potential risks or challenges.

Report of	Head of Commercial Services	Author	Gareth Mitchell John Rock
			☎ 282719 ☎ 282762
Title	Capital Housing Investment Programme. Appointment of two contractors to deliver Capital Internal Works (Inc Kitchen Renewals, Bathroom Renewals, Central Heating Renewals and Rewires)		
Wards affected	All Wards		

This report sets out the procurement process for two contracts to deliver Capital Internal Works in Council owned tenanted properties and recommends an appointment to each of the contracts

1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To agree to appoint Vinci Facilities, to deliver Contract 1 (Internal Works)
- 1.2 To agree to appoint Axis Plc, to deliver Contract 2 (Internal Works)
- 1.3 To agree to enter with the successful individual contractors into the latest version Joint Contracts Tribunal (JCT) Measured Term Form of Contract to deliver the works.

2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 Members will be aware that one of the contractors previously delivering these services decided to invoke a Break Clause which existed in the contract. By mutual agreement it has been decided not to extend the internal elements of the second contract with the contractor involved although the Capital Voids element will continue. This work will be combined with the Revenue Voids contract through a sub-let arrangement which exists in the contract. As a result it has been necessary to invite tenders again for the internal works.
- 2.2 In order to maintain services to customers, the Portfolio Holder for Housing together with the Proper Officer agreed in February 2013 that Contract Procedure Rule 2(2) should be invoked to allow an exemption from the normal procurement requirements to be followed and Cabinet Procedure Rule 22 was also invoked to deal with the situation under "Matters of Urgency"
- 2.3 As a result during an interim period while a new tender process was being conducted services have continued to be delivered to our customers through Colchester Borough Homes using a local supply chain.
- 2.4 The procurement approach agreed by Cabinet on 1st December 2010 as part of the Asset Management Strategy is to let a JCT Form of Contract for this and similar types of work.

- 2.5 The central heating renewal boiler replacement programme has a direct effect on the individual properties' energy efficiency which can be measured on a 1 to 120 scale through the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) score with zero being the lowest score and 120 the highest. Figures in excess 100 can only be achieved by the installation of energy production devices, and on very thermally efficient homes.
- 2.6 The SAP score increases by 10 points when replacing a back boiler with a modern condensing gas boiler, and carbon dioxide saving of 0.70 tonnes per annum per property. This can be further represented as a financial saving on the tenants heating bill of £187.00 per annum (modelled on a 1950's 3 bed semi-detached house). The typical SAP score rises from about 64, to 74.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 Not to accept the tenders of one or more of the proposed contractors. This would impede the delivery of previous Cabinet decisions and may not deliver best value which the Council has a duty to seek.
- 3.2 Not to continue with the programme but again this would be at odds with the previous Cabinet decisions.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 In October 2009 Cabinet agreed to re-commence the Capital Improvement Programme with the aim to complete the decent homes programme by December 2012 and within the resources available to the Council.
- 4.2 In order to achieve this, two contracts covering the internal works elements and replacement of windows and doors were awarded. The contractors appointed were Apollo Property Services Group and Mears Limited. Members will recall that this successfully delivered the Council decent homes programme on time and under budget.
- 4.3 In March 2012 the Council was made aware of a merger between Apollo and Keepmoat and although the contractual relationship between the Council and Apollo Property Services Group did not change the overall ownership of the company did.
- 4.4 Following a protracted period of negotiation Apollo Property Services Ltd decided to invoke a break clause available to both parties in all the contracts held with the Council. This meant that works would cease on 22nd April 2013 on the Internal Works and Windows and Doors programmes.
- 4.5 The second contract being delivered by Mears was coming to its anniversary date in 2014 when an extension could be agreed. It was mutually agreed that the internal elements of the contract should not continue although a sub-let arrangement to deliver the capital voids work should be sub-let to Morrison PLC who are owned by Mears and recently won the revenue voids work through competitive tender. The contractual arrangement will be unaltered and will remain between Mears and the Council.
- 4.6 The action taken under the contract to invoke the break clause would have resulted in services not being delivered to tenants whilst a procurement exercise was being carried out. The Portfolio Holder for Housing was kept apprised of the situation. During February 2013, to maintain services to customers, the Portfolio Holder for Housing together with the Proper Officer agreed that Contract Procedure Rule 2(2) should be invoked to allow an exemption from the normal procurement requirements to be followed and Cabinet Procedure Rule 22 was also invoked to deal with the situation under "Matters of Urgency.

- 4.7 To ensure customers continued to receive the internal works service an interim plan was agreed with the Portfolio Holder for Housing whereby Colchester Borough Homes were to establish a supply chain with local contractors that they had standing relationships with and deliver the services while a tender exercise was conducted. Performance monitoring was established and regularly reported to the Portfolio Holder.
- 4.8 Following the receipt of three quotations, Ridge & Partners LLP were appointed to manage a procurement process for the Internal Works programme. As with the recommended previous arrangement to provide flexibility and competition two contractors were to be sought.
- 4.9 EU regulations require contracts of this nature and scale to be advertised across the European Union. A two stage contractor selection process consisting of a Pre-Qualification Stage which is open to all interested parties, followed by a Tender Stage which is restricted to contractor's selected by analysis of the first stage responses was followed. A Pre-Qualification Stage questionnaire invited interested contractors to submit information concerning their Financial Capacity, Technical Capability, Relevant Experience and References. The Tender Stage restricted to contractor's selected by analysis of the first stage responses was then followed.
- 4.10 In April 2013 a detailed project plan was formulated along with a timeline to complete the procurement process.
- Ridge & Partners LLP placed the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) notices within the European Journal inviting contractors to submit an interest in tendering for the Capital Internal Works Programme by 19th June 2013
 - 22 contractors who responded to the advertisement submitting completed Pre-Qualifying Questionnaires (PQQ).
 - Ridge & Partners carried out a robust analysis of the completed PQQ's which resulted in 9 contractors being recommended to tender.
 - Successful letters were sent out to the 9 prospective contractors on the 23rd July 2013 and 9 tenders were returned and opened by Legal Services on 16th September 2013.
 - The tenders were scored on a 70% cost, 30% quality split derived from the returned tenders and PQQ's. The cost and quality analysis was conducted by Ridge & Partners and the quality evaluation was scrutinised on 18th October 2013 by a panel consisting of tenant representatives, CBH staff and CBC staff. A recommendation report was then provided by Ridge and partners to the Council.
- 4.11 A copy of the overall results attributed to Tender Price and Quality are available on Part B of the agenda as it contains commercially sensitive information.
- 4.12 As part of the procurement process robust tender specifications were developed to ensure the Council and its tenants receive best value on the evaluation criteria of price and quality. The documentation was written to contain a strong emphasis on quality and resident satisfaction coupled with relevant performance indicators.
- 4.13 The Form of Contract to deliver the contracts is the latest version of the Joint Contracts Tribunal (JCT) Measured Term Form of Contract.

- 4.14 Current robust controls and monitoring arrangements will continue as a minimum standard. The formal monthly Capital Monitoring Group meeting (CMG) attended by both CBC and CBH will be put in place with arrangements to capture the performance monitoring of both contracts including progress against the agreed programme, monitoring of expenditure against agreed budgets, the quality and standard of the services provided to tenants by reviewing customer satisfaction reports and direct liaison with tenants.
- 4.15 The role of CBH as the Contract Administrator (CA) is key to the success of these contracts. The CA through the nominated representative will attend the monthly CMG to report on the contractor's performance. The role of CA is also clearly defined within the JCT Form of Contract.
- 4.16 Financial credit checks on each of the recommended contractors have been conducted by Ridge & Partners and their individual rating does not give cause for concern

5. Proposals

- 5.1 To accept the recommendations of the Ridge & Partners PLL by:
- 5.2 Awarding Contract 1 to deliver Capital Internal Works to Vinci Facilities
- 5.3 Awarding Contract 2 to delivery Capital Internal Works to Axis Plc
- 5.4 To enter with the successful individual contractors into the latest version of the JCT Measured Term Form of Contract for the rates tendered

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 This decision is part of delivering against the Council's Strategic Priorities 2012 – 15 by regenerating our borough through buildings, employment, leisure and infrastructure by ensuring the housing stock is maintained to a decent standard.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 The Portfolio Holder for Housing has been kept fully briefed on the situation.
- 7.2 Tenants will be involved in the set up and mobilisation of the successful contractors with particular emphasis on engaging with the tenants receiving the services by making choices of design colour particularly in their kitchens and bathrooms.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 Good communication with tenants is vital and the Council working closely with CBH will need to issue information to our tenants to advise them of new contract arrangements, how it will affect them with ongoing updates as the programme progresses. Again this information will follow once the contracts are let and more detailed discussions have taken place with the two successful contractors.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1 The financial implications are contained within the main body of the recommendation report within Part 2 of the agenda. This contains commercially sensitive information however the anticipated first year annual direct spend on works confirms that there are sufficient funds allocated within the annual Housing Investment Programme account budget to cover this.

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

10.1 Link to individual strategy provided

<http://www.colchester.gov.uk/article/4962/Strategic-Policy-and-Regeneration>

Title: The Annual Housing Investment Programme (HIP)

10.2 Through the Housing Procurement Strategy within the (AMS) staff ensure that all future procurement and purchasing documentation recognise, understand and support CBC and CBH policies with regard to equal opportunities, diversity and human rights.

11. Community Safety Implications

11.1 There are none directly arising from this report although through the procurement process all contractors will be aware of the specific needs of our customers and direct on site delivery will be managed by CBH to safeguard both customers and contractors. I.

12. Health and Safety Implications

12.1 Through the role of Contract Administrator CBH will be responsible for ensuring Health and Safety requirements are fully complied with.

13. Risk Management Implications

13.1 By following the Council's own procurement policy and by implementing the controls and recommendations as set out in this report, the Council is seeking to mitigate against any potential risks or challenges.

**EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL
HELD ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2013**

15. Waste and Recycling Task and Finish Group // Update

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Operational Services providing an interim update on the work of the Waste and Recycling Task and Finish Group prior to a full report being presented to a future meeting of this Panel.

Matthew Young, Head of Operational Services, attended the meeting explaining that the Waste and Recycling Task and Finish Group had been set up to aid the Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste in considering matters identified in the Waste Prevention and Recycling Options Appraisal that was produced by the Strategic Waste Team in January 2009. At that time the methods identified in this appraisal to meet the vision were agreed as follows:

- Less waste is produced by everyone
- There is an active reuse culture
- Home composting is 'the norm'
- Being able to recycle is easy for everyone
- More waste is recycled and composted than sent to landfill
- The collection service is high quality
- There is high customer satisfaction with the service

The first meeting of the Group took place in April 2009 and it agreed to aid the Portfolio Holder for Waste and Street Services, in considering the amount of residual waste going to landfill, investigating recycling options. Since 2011 the Task and Finish Group focused itself on two main issues to look at in support of the Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste:

- The experience and results from the Food Waste Collection Trial that was due to commence in November 2011
- The initiatives undertaken to strongly encourage recycling

Over the trial period the Task and Finish Group received regular updates on the progress of the trial particularly the participation rate and the tonnages being collected. It reviewed the data being presented by officers and would comment on the success of the methods being used to encourage participation. It also made suggestions on improvements that could be made to the service and questioned officers on the lessons being learnt as the Trial progressed. Also during the existence of the Task and Finish Group the Council was successful in being selected to receive two grants from Government to support its waste collection services.

In response to questions Matthew acknowledged the hard work of the refuse operatives and also spent some time explaining where the food waste and other recyclable materials were sent. He referred to the current development of an anaerobic digestion plant which Essex County Council was developing and speculated about the potential opportunities available to a private business which

might choose to enter this market, especially given the known high percentages of food waste generated by commercial companies.

Particular discussion from the Panel members was in relation to:

- The value provided by the Task and Finish group in being able to work cross party, outside the gaze of publicity;
- The importance of continuing the group in the future when important discussions need to be had about the delivery of the waste and recycling service in the future;
- The availability of food caddy liners from local retailers;
- The benefits of giving people information about tangible benefits of recycling such as the products that can be made from recycling materials in order to obtain buy in;
- The ability of councillors and the public to report households which regularly leave large numbers of black sacks for collection;
- The possibility of providing councillors with explanatory recycling information for inclusion in leaflets delivered to households in their wards;
- The need for updated information to be made readily available on what materials are currently recyclable;
- The cost of food waste caddy liners and which local retailers had agreed to offer them for sale

RESOLVED that –

- (i) Arrangements be made for councillors to be supplied with the necessary information for them to include in their ward leaflets, together with the list of local suppliers of caddy liners;
- (ii) The next report from the Task and Finish Group to be presented to this Panel in March 2014 to be based on potential future options, including but not exclusively, the Waste Strategy, encouragement of an Anaerobic Digester for Colchester.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the work of the Waste and Recycling Task and Finish Group be acknowledged and the Group be given authority to continue its work to assist the Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste in important issues for the delivery of the waste and recycling service in the future.

27 November 2013

Report of	Chief Operating Officer	Author	Lee French ☎ 282217
Title	Award of Contract under Delegated Authority for ICT systems Supporting the UCC FSR		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

This report concerns the procurement of ICT software solution(s) to enable change as part of the fundamental service review of customer contact.

1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 That Cabinet notes the award of contracts to Northgate Information Systems UK and Goss Interactive, as approved by the Chief Operating Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, for the supply and support of the Customer Experience ICT solution as part of the Universal Customer Contact Fundamental Service Review (UCC FSR).

2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 An early priority of the UCC FSR IT theme is to provide application software (termed the Customer Experience Solution) to match the changing needs of the customer with those of the organisation, which is itself undergoing massive change
- 2.2 Following a procurement exercise, the evaluating group recommended the selection of Northgate Information Systems UK and Goss Interactive as the two suppliers who together offered the best solution for our needs. That is: a solution intended to support a high quality and consistent customer service, operating across all contact channels. This recommendation was based on a comprehensive analysis of tender responses and supplier presentations, taking into account: quality, functionality and cost.
- 2.3. The Chief Operating Officer reviewed this recommendation, consulted with the Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources and approved the contract award under delegated authority (as outlined in 3.2 below).
- 2.4. The necessary legal and procurement activities have now taken place including the necessary standstill challenge period. There have been no legal challenges to date, and initial implementation activities are now in progress.
- 2.5. The award is now being reported back to Cabinet in line with the previous report, which required that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Cabinet, advising of actions taken.

3. Supporting Information

- 3.1 The procurement exercise for the Customer Experience software was completed on 19th August 2013. The chosen solution allows the Council to increase online transactions and reduce the services offered face-to-face or via the telephone. It also enables the Council to exploit its knowledge more effectively and to offer improved facilities to help both customers and staff to quickly locate the information they want.
- 3.2 At their 10 July 2013 meeting, Cabinet agreed to delegate the authority to award the contract for this software to the Chief Operating Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources in order to avoid undue delay in the subsequent implementation of the selected solution.
- 3.3 The delegated authority was requested as it was thought the value of the contract could potentially exceed the £500,000 financial threshold. In the event, the total value of the contracts was approximately £375,000.

4. Proposals

- 4.1 That Cabinet notes the award of contracts.

5. Strategic Plan References

- 5.1 The objectives of the Universal Customer Contact Fundamental Service Review underpin the delivery of the Strategic Plan in delivering high quality accessible services

6. Consultation

- 6.1 There are no consultations associated with this paper

7. Publicity Considerations

- 7.1 The specific decisions sought by means of this paper require no publicity as no individual or group will be affected. The UCC FSR programme itself has a communications and publicity plan associated with it, through which the procurement and implementation of the software solution will be communicated.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 No additional finances are required, as both capital and revenue budgets have been identified to procure and maintain this solution. Actual costs will be within the amounts allocated from those budgets for the procurement and support of this solution.

9. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications

- 9.1 This work will improve access to Council services for customers.

10. Community Safety Implications

- 10.1 There are no community safety considerations resulting from this paper.

11. Health and Safety Implications

11.1 There are no health and safety implications

12 Risk Management Implications

12.1 There are a number of risks that this work helps to mitigate. The strategic risk register identifies it as an increasing risk as our dependency on it to deliver services grows. The work being undertaken helps to improve our resilience and this work in particular will improve access for customers and underpin the aims of the UCC FSR.

12.2 There is a continued risk that any delay to the implementation of this work could affect the delivery of both the improvements for customers from the UCC FSR and the savings that are built into the budget for future years.

Background Papers

None.

**EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL
HELD ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2013**

13. Demand Management and Behaviour Change

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Customer Services inviting the Panel to consider the behaviour change 'framework' and programme being developed by the Council and to make relevant recommendations to Cabinet.

Mandy Jones, Research and Engagement Manager, explained the context of huge financial challenges for Councils in the years ahead with an estimated £14.4 billion shortfall in funding by 2019/20 combined with forecast increases in demand from customers brought about by the recession and demographic changes. She then gave details of work at a national level on influencing behaviour through demand management which suggested that local authorities would need to employ behaviour change approaches if they were to meet this funding shortfall.

'Demand management' involved managing the demand customers have for Council services. This could be about reducing contact with customers (for instance, by encouraging recycling or promoting self-serve) or, by stimulating demand in the use of services that generate income (in leisure services, for example). 'Behaviour change' is part of demand management and involves using intelligent ways to change or influence customer behaviours. In addition, behaviour change can also be about encouraging and supporting customers to make better choices for themselves and their communities (for instance, by encouraging clean streets or healthy living, or enabling greater community involvement).

Mandy also provided a summary of demand management and behaviour change, outlining Colchester's involvement to date, specifically in terms of:

- Why we need to manage customer demand;
- What we mean by 'demand management' and 'behaviour change';
- Using 'customer insight';
- Behaviour change and psychology;
- Measurement;
- Developing behaviour change projects;
- Organisational issues: Barriers and shifts needed;
- What we are doing to progress demand management and behaviour change.

In response to questions, Mandy explained that a significant amount of work had been undertaken over the last five years by the Council's Customer Insight Team and it was important that this work continued to receive support in the future. In order to help to engage Councillors in the principles, Mandy had undertaken a recent Development Session for Councillors and was very willing to do more of them. The Customer Insight Team worked with other teams and utilized a project management tool to determine the types of interventions which would work best.

The Chairman invited each of the guests in turn to address the Panel on the issues from their perspective.

Elsbeth Kirkman explained that the team of 14 that she worked in had been set up specifically by the Prime Minister after he had read about low cost effective interventions which tapped into what motivates human behaviour. She outlined in a visual presentation some of the theory behind 'behaviour change' together with some results from the practical application of 'behavioural insight' to projects across the public sector. Elspeth confirmed that the Cabinet Office Team annually reviewed their achievements. Currently there was more demand for work than resource to meet it and those projects with social benefits were the ones which were selected for delivery. Moving forward the Team was being formed into a Company and their support would be provided only on a chargeable basis. In response to questions, Elspeth explained that evidence relating to the longevity of behavioral 'nudges' did not yet exist but was something that was beginning to be addressed. Recent work had involved linking in changes to people's habits in order to find sustainable solutions and incentives.

Carol Adams had been working with the Cabinet Office on a behaviour change project to help people back to work and presented some of the findings. The project had been initiated in Loughton, involving around 1800 claimants and had then been rolled out across Essex. In Colchester there were around 3600 claimants and the staff had been provided with coaching to explain behaviour change concepts and the reasons behind them. Much of the work was in the context of the Universal Credit regime which would be digital by default and the work had concentrated on building relationships with claimants and getting them to make commitments to finding work. The work, although not necessarily including all the measures adopted in Essex, was due to be rolled out nationally in October.

Particular discussion from the Panel members was in relation to:

- The potential to stereotype claimants rather than for them to be treated on an individual basis;
- The concept of behavioural 'nudges' and whether there was a limit to the number of times people would respond to nudges;
- The need for Councillors to be supportive of the concepts to ensure that successes recorded so far would not be lost;
- The extent of the problem of Benefit fraud and the penalties currently in place to deter and prevent;
- The problems associated with using online self serve initiatives which sometimes do not provide good customer experience;
- The need for 'appropriate contact' to be retained with certain customers who can't self serve and for adequate resources to be diverted to support this requirement;
- The recognition that resources may need to be provided to people in order to enable them to interact in different ways;
- The need to work with customers to find out what suits them better in order to change small pieces of behaviour;
- The similarities between demand management and what could also be termed intelligent marketing.

RESOLVED that –

- (i) Elspeth Kirkman and Carol Adams be thanked for the insights they provided and their valuable contributions to the meeting.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the following issues be borne in mind when considering the Behaviour Change framework and future programme of work:

- (i) The benefits of expanding and building on the Behaviour Change work;
- (ii) The need to provide Behaviour Change training and support to staff and councillors in order to manage demands;
- (iii) The valuable assistance and support provided by the Cabinet Office Insights Team.

Extract from the minutes of the Council meeting on 16 October 2013

31. Abbots Activity Centre

The Motion on Abbots Activity Centre below was referred to Cabinet without discussion for consideration and determination in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11(2):-

"Council informs Cabinet of its opinion that the premises known as Abbots Activity Centre should be used as a community centre for the benefit and enjoyment of residents throughout the Borough."



Cabinet

27 November 2013

Item
15(ii)

Report of	Assistant Chief Executive	Author	Philippa Turvey ☎ 505411
Title	Calendar of Meetings 2014-2015		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

This report proposes a Calendar of Meetings for the 2014-2015 Municipal Year

1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 Cabinet is requested to approve the draft Calendar of Meetings for the next municipal year from May 2014 to April 2015.
- 1.2 To delegate authority to cancel meetings to the Chairman of the relevant Committee/Panel in conjunction with the Assistant Chief Executive.

2. Reasons for Decision

- 2.1 The Calendar of Meetings needs to be determined so that decisions for the year can be timetabled into the respective work programmes and the Forward Plan.
- 2.2 Advance notice of the Calendar of Meetings needs to be made available to external organisations, parish councils and other bodies with which the Council works in partnership and to those members of the public who may wish to attend meetings of the council and make representations.
- 2.3 The meeting rooms also need to be reserved as soon as possible so that room bookings can be made for private functions by private individuals, external organisations and internal Council groups.
- 2.4 A formal arrangement needs to be in place for the cancellation of meetings that no longer need to be held.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 This proposal has been largely devised based on the current meeting structure and frequency. It would be possible to devise alternative proposals using different criteria.

4. Proposals

- 4.1 The attached draft Calendar of Meetings for 2014-15 is largely based on the current meeting structure and frequency of meetings. However, the Annual Meeting is later than usual as a consequence of the Borough Elections being moved to coincide with the European elections and this has had an impact on the schedule of meetings. The following matters have also been taken into consideration:-

- The Municipal Year to begin with the Annual Meeting on 16 June 2014.

- No Cabinet meetings in the six weeks before the local elections in May 2015;
- To facilitate the hearing of call ins, a Scrutiny Committee meeting to follow after a Cabinet meeting;
- Nine member training days between July 2014 and March 2015;
- Political group meetings on Mondays prior to Council and Cabinet;
- No Policy Review and Development Panel meetings have been scheduled, as under the revised governance arrangement agreed in March 2013, the Panel was only due to be retained for the 2013-14 municipal year.

4.2 The Calendar of Meetings 2014-15 comprises:-

- Council – the Annual Meeting plus four Council meetings. Council meetings are scheduled for Wednesdays, with the exception of the December meeting, which is scheduled for a Thursday to avoid the difficulties caused by the clash with late night shopping that would ensue if the meeting were held on Wednesday.
- Cabinet – seven meetings on a Wednesday.
- Governance Committee – seven meetings on a Tuesday.
- Local Plan Committee – six meetings largely on a Monday.
- Licensing Committee – eight meetings on a Wednesday.
- Licensing Sub-Committee Hearings – Meetings for sub-committee hearings of the Licensing Committee have been scheduled for a number of Fridays, to be held during the day. A number of weeks have been left free to enable commercial bookings to be taken. It is not anticipated that a sub-committee meeting will be held on each of the dates scheduled but it is necessary to have the flexibility for meetings to be called at short notice.
- Planning Committee – 22 meetings on a Thursday. As established in the current schedule, the Committee moves to a three week cycle during July, August and September with a two weekly cycle throughout the rest of the year.
- Scrutiny Panel – nine meetings on a Tuesday.
- Trading Board – six meetings largely on a Wednesday.
- Occasionally it proves necessary to schedule additional meetings of Committee and Panels at short notice. Six “reserve” dates have been included in the Calendar where meeting rooms will be booked. This will facilitate the scheduling of additional/urgent meetings. These meeting dates will not be used unless needed.
- The following Civic events have also been included for completeness:

Opening of the Oyster Fishery 5 September 2014
 Oyster Feast 31 October 2014
 Remembrance Sunday 9 November 2014

5. Financial implications

- 5.1 In general terms the costs are those associated with the meetings process such as the number of panels/committee, hallkeeping charges, agenda printing costs and members travelling allowances. The costs are covered by existing budgets.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Consultation has been undertaken with the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, Executive Management Team and Heads of Service.

7. Publicity Implications

- 7.1 The dates of council meetings are published on the Council's website. They are also distributed to parish council and advertised at Council offices and libraries throughout the borough.

8. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment covering the Council's decision making and meetings processes has been completed and can be found by on the Council's website www.colchester.gov.uk following the route: Home/Council and Democracy/Polices, Strategies and Performance/Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessments/Decision Making and Meetings or by clicking on the link below:-

[Decision Making and Meetings EQIA](#)

9. Standard References

- 9.1 It is considered that there are no direct Strategic Plan references, human rights, community safety, health and safety and risk management implications raised by this report.

2014

		May		June		July		August
Mon								
Tue					1			
Wed					2			
Thu	1	Planning Committee			3			
Fri	2				4		1	
Sat	3				5		2	
Sun	4		1		6		3	
Mon	5	<i>Bank Holiday</i>	2		7		4	
Tue	6		3		8	Scrutiny Panel	5	
Wed	7		4		9	Licensing Committee	6	Trading Board
Thu	8		5		10	Planning Committee	7	
Fri	9		6		11	Licensing Sub-Committee	8	
Sat	10		7		12		9	
Sun	11		8		13		10	
Mon	12		9		14	Groups	11	
Tue	13		10		15		12	Training
Wed	14		11		16	Council	13	
Thu	15	Planning Committee	12		17	Reserve Meeting Date	14	Reserve Meeting Date
Fri	16		13		18		15	
Sat	17		14		19		16	
Sun	18		15		20		17	
Mon	19		16	Annual Meeting	21		18	Local Plan Committee
Tue	20		17		22	Training	19	Scrutiny Panel
Wed	21		18	Trading Board	23	Governance Committee	20	
Thu	22	Borough and European Elections	19	Planning Committee	24		21	Planning Committee
Fri	23		20	Licensing Sub-Committee	25	Licensing Sub-Committee	22	Licensing Sub-Committee
Sat	24		21		26		23	
Sun	25		22		27		24	
Mon	26	<i>Bank Holiday</i>	23	Groups	28	Groups	25	<i>Bank Holiday</i>
Tue	27		24	Governance Committee	29		26	Governance Committee
Wed	28		25	Cabinet	30	Cabinet	27	Licensing Committee
Thu	29		26		31	Planning Committee	28	
Fri	30		27	Licensing Sub-Committee			29	Licensing Sub-Committee
Sat	31		28				30	
Sun			29				31	
Mon			30	Local Plan Committee				
Tue								

¹ Daytime meeting Light shading = Essex school holidays

2014

		September		October		November		December
Mon	1	Groups					1	
Tue	2						2	Scrutiny Panel
Wed	3	Cabinet	1				3	<i>Late Night Shopping</i>
Thu	4		2	Planning Committee			4	Planning Committee
Fri	5	Opening of Oyster Fishery	3				5	
Sat	6		4		1		6	
Sun	7		5		2		7	
Mon	8		6		3		8	Groups
Tue	9	Training	7	Training	4		9	Training
Wed	10		8	Licensing Committee	5	Trading Board	10	<i>Late Night Shopping</i>
Thu	11	Planning Committee	9		6	Planning Committee	11	Council
Fri	12	Licensing Sub-Committee	10	Licensing Sub-Committee	7	Licensing Sub-Committee	12	Licensing Sub-Committee
Sat	13		11		8		13	
Sun	14		12		9	Remembrance Sunday	14	
Mon	15		13	Groups	10		15	
Tue	16	Scrutiny Panel	14	Governance Committee	11	Scrutiny Panel	16	Local Plan Committee
Wed	17	Licensing Committee	15	Cabinet	12		17	<i>Late Night Shopping</i>
Thu	18		16	Planning Committee	13	Reserve Meeting Date	18	Planning Committee
Fri	19		17		14		19	Licensing Sub-Committee
Sat	20		18		15		20	
Sun	21		19		16		21	
Mon	22		20	Groups	17		22	
Tue	23	Governance Committee	21	Scrutiny Panel	18	Training	23	
Wed	24	Trading Board	22	Council	19	Licensing Committee	24	
Thu	25		23	Local Plan Committee	20	Planning Committee	25	<i>Bank Holiday</i>
Fri	26	Licensing Sub-Committee	24	Licensing Sub-Committee	21	Licensing Sub-Committee	26	<i>Bank Holiday</i>
Sat	27		25		22		27	
Sun	28		26		23		28	
Mon	29		27		24	Groups	29	
Tue	30	Reserve Meeting Date	28		25	Governance Committee	30	
Wed			29		26	Cabinet	31	
Thu			30		27			
Fri			31	Oyster Feast	28			
Sat					29			
Sun					30			
Mon								
Tue								

¹Daytime meeting Light shading = Essex school holiday; Party conferences Lab 21-24 Sept, Cons 28 Sept – 2 Oct, Lib Dems 4-8 Oct

2015

		January		February		March		April
Mon								
Tue								
Wed							1	
Thu	1	<i>Bank Holiday</i>					2	Planning Committee
Fri	2						3	<i>Bank Holiday</i>
Sat	3						4	
Sun	4		1		1		5	
Mon	5		2	Local Plan Committee	2	Reserve Meeting Date	6	<i>Bank Holiday</i>
Tue	6		3		3	Training	7	
Wed	7		4		4		8	
Thu	8	Planning Committee	5	Planning Committee	5	Planning Committee	9	
Fri	9	Licensing Sub-Committee	6	Licensing Sub-Committee	6	Licensing Sub-Committee	10	Licensing Sub-Committee
Sat	10		7		7		11	
Sun	11		8		8		12	
Mon	12		9		9		13	Local Plan Committee
Tue	13	Training	10	Training	10		14	
Wed	14	Trading Board	11		11	Trading Board	15	
Thu	15		12		12		16	Planning Committee
Fri	16		13		13		17	
Sat	17		14		14		18	
Sun	18		15		15		19	
Mon	19		16	Groups	16	Groups	20	
Tue	20	Governance Committee	17		17	Scrutiny Panel	21	
Wed	21	Licensing Committee	18	Council	18	Cabinet	22	
Thu	22	Planning Committee	19	Planning Committee	19	Planning Committee	23	
Fri	23	Licensing Sub-Committee	20	Licensing Sub-Committee	20	Licensing Sub-Committee	24	Licensing Sub-Committee
Sat	24		21		21		25	
Sun	25		22		22		26	
Mon	26	Groups	23		23		27	
Tue	27	Scrutiny Panel	24	Scrutiny Panel	24		28	
Wed	28	Cabinet	25	Licensing Committee	25	Licensing Committee	29	
Thu	29	Reserve Meeting Date	26		26		30	Planning Committee
Fri	30		27		27			
Sat	31		28		28			
Sun					29			
Mon					30			
Tue					31			

¹ Daytime meeting; Light shading = Essex school holidays

2015

		May		June
Mon			1	
Tue			2	
Wed			3	
Thu			4	
Fri	1	Licensing Sub-Committee ¹	5	
Sat	2		6	
Sun	3		7	
Mon	4	<i>Bank Holiday</i>	8	
Tue	5		9	
Wed	6		10	
Thu	7	<i>Elections</i>	11	
Fri	8		12	
Sat	9		13	
Sun	10		14	
Mon	11		15	
Tue	12		16	
Wed	13		17	
Thu	14		18	
Fri	15		19	
Sat	16		20	
Sun	17		21	
Mon	18		22	
Tue	19		23	
Wed	20		24	
Thu	21		25	
Fri	22		26	
Sat	23		27	
Sun	24		28	
Mon	25	<i>Bank Holiday</i>	29	
Tue	26		30	
Wed	27			
Thu	28			
Fri	29			
Sat	30			
Sun	31			
Mon				
Tue				

¹ Daytime meeting

Light shading = Essex school holidays

**EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
HELD ON 15 OCTOBER 2013**

23. Guidance for Councillors and Officers on Outside Bodies

The Committee considered a report by the Monitoring Officer setting out the revised guidance for Councillors and Officers on Outside Bodies.

The Council had provided guidance to Councillors and officers who were nominated to serve on outside bodies. This Guidance had last been reviewed by the Standards Committee in June 2009 and the opportunity was being taken to review its contents.

It was explained that Councillors and officers were appointed to outside bodies to represent the Council. However along with the appointment came potential liability in other capacities. For example, where a Councillor was also appointed to the Board of a Company they then become a Director of that Company and with that came additional responsibilities including their Fiduciary Duty to the Company which must take priority over their responsibility to the Council.

The revised Guidance sought to provide advice to Councillors in these situations. It was suggested that the revised guidance be provided to all Councillors and officers who are nominated to outside bodies and that it be included in the Council's Constitution.

Members of the Committee welcomed the revised guidance and were collectively of the view that its contents would clarify and greatly support their roles on outside bodies. The members were also of the view that this Guide, together with the Members Code of Conduct could usefully be sent out to all councillors without delay and with a recommendation that the contents be considered in detail.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The Guidance for Councillors and Officers on Outside Bodies be approved and adopted for inclusion in the Council's Constitution.
- (ii) All Councillors as well as those Officers who are appointed to Outside Bodies be provided with a copy of the Guidance and Councillors be advised of the importance of ensuring they are aware of the Guidance's contents.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that it be noted that the revised Guidance includes advice to Councillors appointed as Board members regarding their Fiduciary Duty to the Company taking priority over the Councillor's responsibility to the Council when acting as a Board member.

PETITIONS, PUBLIC STATEMENTS, QUESTIONS

(i) Have Your Say speakers

Date of Meeting	Details of Members of the Public	Subject Matter	Form of Response	Date Completed
Cabinet, 9 October 2013	Melva Lingard	Allotment rent increases	Verbal response provided at the meeting by Councillor Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure Services.	9 October 2013
Cabinet, 9 October 2013	Nick Chilvers	The condition of the gardens opposite and around the Minorities	Verbal response provided at the meeting by Councillor Barlow, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Councillor Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure Services, and Councillor T. Young, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Community Safety and Culture.	9 October 2013
Council, 16 October 2013	Sally Young and Melva Lingard	Allotment rent increases	Councillor Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure Services, invited speakers to attend Scrutiny Panel on 12 November 2013 when the call in of Portfolio Holder decision relating to Allotment Charges and Review of Tenancy Agreement to be considered.	16 October 2013

Council, 16 October 2013	Nick Chilvers	Whether Colchester would be hosting the Tour Series in 2014 and what contribution the Council would be making to the costs of the event	Verbal response provided at the meeting by Councillor Turrell, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy.	16 October 2013
Council, 16 October 2013	Elaine Rogers and Margaret Banister	Closure of Abbots Activity Centre	Verbal response provided at the meeting by Councillor Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure Services.	16 October 2013

(ii) Petitions

Date petition received	Lead Petitioner	Subject Matter	Form of Response	Date Completed
16 October 2013	Lizzie Bolton and Jessica Scott-Boutell	Reduction of speed limit in Dale Close	Petition submitted to Essex County Council Highways Liaison Officer for consideration.	18 October 2013

