

# Policy and Public Initiatives Panel Meeting

**Grand Jury Room, Town Hall, High Street,  
Colchester, CO1 1PJ**

**Wednesday, 19 June 2019 at 18:00**

**The Policy and Public Initiatives Panel** provides legislative, improvement and policy advice to Cabinet and Portfolio Holders on issues that may affect executive functions. The Panel considers issues at the request of Cabinet and Portfolio Holders and must seek approval from Cabinet on whether and how issues proactively identified by the Panel are examined. The Panel also considers initiatives for review from members of the public.

# Information for Members of the Public

## Access to information and meetings

You have the right to attend all meetings of the Council, its Committees and Cabinet. You also have the right to see the agenda (the list of items to be discussed at a meeting), which is usually published five working days before the meeting, and minutes once they are published.

Dates of the meetings are available here:

<https://colchester.cmis.uk.com/colchester/MeetingCalendar.aspx>.

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## **Policy and Public Initiatives Panel – Terms of Reference**

- (1) To proactively identify issues and legislative changes that may require review and improvement and to seek Cabinet's agreement as to whether and how they should be examined.
- (2) To review strategies and policies at the request of the Cabinet and to make recommendations back to Cabinet for decision.
- (3) To review issues at the request of a Portfolio Holder and to make recommendations back to the Portfolio Holder for decision.

**COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**Policy and Public Initiatives Panel**  
**Wednesday, 19 June 2019 at 18:00**

**The Scrutiny Panel Members are:**

Councillor Phil Coleman	Chairman
Councillor Martyn Warnes	Deputy Chairman
Councillor Christopher Arnold	
Councillor Helen Chuah	
Councillor John Jowers	
Councillor Derek Loveland	
Councillor Lee Scordis	

**The Policy and Public Initiatives Panel Substitute Members are:**

All members of the Council who are not Cabinet members.

**AGENDA**  
**THE LIST OF ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING**  
**(Part A - open to the public)**

Please note that Agenda items 1 to 5 are normally dealt with briefly.

**1 Welcome and Announcements**

The Chairman will welcome members of the public and Councillors and remind everyone to use microphones at all times when they are speaking. The Chairman will also explain action in the event of an emergency, mobile phones switched to silent, audio-recording of the meeting. Councillors who are members of the Committee/Panel will introduce themselves.

**2 Substitutions**

Councillors will be asked to say if they are attending on behalf of a Committee/Panel member who is absent.

**3 Urgent Items**

The Chairman will announce if there is any item not on the published agenda which will be considered because it is urgent and will explain the reason for the urgency.

**4 Declarations of Interest**

Councillors will be asked to say if there are any items on the agenda about which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest which would prevent them from participating in any discussion of the item or

participating in any vote upon the item, or any other pecuniary interest or non-pecuniary interest.

- 5.1 **Policy and Public Initiatives Panel Minutes of 6 March 2019** 7 - 20  
The Councillors will be invited to confirm that the minutes are a correct record of the meeting held on 6 March 2019.
- 5.2 **Policy and Public Initiatives Panel Minutes of 22 May 2019** 21 - 22  
The Councillors will be invited to confirm that the minutes are a correct record of the meeting held on 22 May 2019.
- 6 **Have Your Say!**  
The Chairman will invite members of the public to indicate if they wish to speak or present a petition on any item included on the agenda or any other matter relating to the terms of reference of the meeting. Please indicate your wish to speak at this point if your name has not been noted by Council staff.
- 7 **Public Initiatives**  
The Chairman will invite members of the public who wish to suggest ideas for review by the Policy and Public Initiatives Panel. Speaking arrangements for this item would be the same as Have Your Say.
- 8 **Responsible Dog Ownership** 23 - 40  
A report for the Panel to note, giving information and recommendations regarding responsible dog ownership.
- 9 **Work Programme 2019-20** 41 - 44  
A report to set out the current Work Programme 2019-2020 for the Policy and Public Initiatives Panel, providing details of the items of business that are scheduled for each meeting during the municipal year.
- 10 **Exclusion of the Public (not Scrutiny or Executive)**  
In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public, including the press, from the meeting so that any items containing exempt information (for example confidential personal, financial or legal advice), in Part B of this agenda (printed on yellow paper) can be decided. (Exempt information is defined in Section 100I and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

**Part B**  
**(not open to the public including the press)**



# Policy and Public Initiatives Panel

Wednesday, 06 March 2019

**Attendees:** Councillor Roger Buston, Councillor Dave Harris, Councillor Chris Hayter, Councillor Sue Lissimore, Councillor Lee Scordis, Councillor Lesley Scott-Boutell

**Substitutes:** Councillor Theresa Higgins (for Councillor Andrea Luxford Vaughan)

**Also Present:**

## 24 Minutes of 9 January 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2019 were confirmed as a correct record.

## 25 Have Your Say!

Mark Goacher addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3). He wished to propose that the Council declared a climate emergency and set a target year to become Carbon Neutral. He was aware that a motion was being prepared for submission to the next meeting of the Council. He considered it to be important as it was predicted that there would be a 3 to 4 degree increase in temperature by the end of the century which would mean large parts of coastal areas would be flooded, with associated mass migrations and loss of livelihoods. He was aware that many Councils were declaring a climate emergency and setting carbon neutral targets, including Manchester, Brighton, Cambridge, Scarborough, Nottingham, Leicester, Lancaster and Wiltshire, most of which had set target dates of 2030. He also listed examples of practical initiatives which could be done to contribute to carbon neutrality.

The Chairman thanked Mr Goacher and confirmed that the Panel would discuss the proposal when considering the contents of the Panel's work programme.

## 26 'The Walls' Project

As part of a public engagement session for the Panel's meeting in September 2018, Nick Chilvers had submitted a proposal to support the small traders operating in Sir Isaac's Walk, Eld Lane, Trinity Street and Short Wyre Street, Colchester, details of which were included in the agenda for the meeting. An invitation had been extended to Mr Chilvers and Sam Good, Manager of the Colchester Business Improvement District (BID) to discuss the proposal with the Panel members.

Nick Chilvers explained that he had worked in retail for 40 years, managing eight non-food stores in the town centre. He did not consider himself to be an expert, but he had kept in touch with the current situation. He considered that attention should be given to the Walls area of the town rather than solely on the High Street. The area to include Trinity Church and Scheregate Steps as well as Trinity Street, Sir Isaac's Walk, Eld Lane and Short Wyre Street. He was of the view that the area needed a distinctive appearance, investment and an overall plan. He welcomed that umbrella lighting proposal, but it was important to improve the area from end to end. He advocated a collaborative approach between the BID, the Council and traders. He was of the view that the project could provide a tourist destination along the lines of similar areas in Folkestone, Hastings and Brighton with the emphasis on business not events. He suggested that interest needed to be secured from traders and a working party set up. He wished luck to the BID with the project.

Sam Good explained that the BID represented 490 levy payers, the large majority of whom were independent traders and, as such, the Walls Project was very relevant for them. The BID had set up an Independent Focus Group. He considered the Walls Project to be a succession of partnerships with Colchester Borough Council, Colchester Business Enterprise Agency (COLBEA) and other companies. The first stage would be for the Focus Group to look at feasibility, breaking the recommendations into smaller priorities. Several other Focus Groups set up by the BID would also be impacted by the project. He was of the view that the project needed to go back to the drawing board and he welcomed Nick Chilvers expertise and invited him to participate in the Focus Group. He was of the view that the BID would not be able to run the Project on its own and asked for the Council to determine its involvement in the Project. He indicated his willingness to attend future meetings following the undertaking of further research.

Councillor Harris welcomed the proposed Project and the ideas articulated by the two speakers, particularly given the need to compete with the recent impact of online shopping. He suggested that a number of small initiatives could be undertaken in the medium to short term to reinvigorate the town centre whilst further research was ongoing. He considered the Cabinet needed to consider the Project with a view to offering the Council's support.

Councillor Higgins confirmed her interest in the Project and was of the view that practical measures needed to be put in place whilst discussions were ongoing. As an example, she suggested that, if every shop displayed a living plant, this would not be expensive and would not require a significant input from the Council or the BID but would make tangible and visible contribution. She hoped that the BID would encourage all of the shops to participate, not just the independents.

Sam Good responded explaining that the BID was working in partnership with Colchester in Bloom on a BID in Bloom initiative, concentrating in particular areas of the town centre. He considered the BID had already achieved a lot since its launch four



months previously and they had received buy in from the businesses.

Councillor Lissimore welcomed Nick Chilvers' proposals and the work he had already put into the Project. She agreed that it was important to set out priorities for the Project and the need for the initiative to be easy for people to participate.

Councillor Buston welcomed the enthusiasm expressed by Nick Chilvers and was of the view that, generally, initiatives were successful through the drive and leadership of particular individuals. He considered the many small shops within the Walls Project area were different and the traders displayed enthusiasm and entrepreneurship which could be the key to making the Project work. He was also of the view that the Council needed to support the Project.

The Chairman welcomed the invitation extended to Nick Chilvers to participate in the BID's Focus Group meetings and he asked about the BID's Council's relationship with the Council and what could the Council do to make the Project become a reality in the short term.

Sam Good confirmed that the relationship with Council officers had been remarkable in all respects and observers from the Council also attended BID Board meetings in order to prevent any duplication of effort. He confirmed that the BID's relationship with Essex County Council wasn't as close as he would like but acknowledged that this relationship needed to be built upon. Assistance from the Council would be particularly welcome in relation to the area covered by Sir Isaac's Walk and Short Wyre Street to Queen Street and the need to build relationships with the relevant landlords to address the problem of empty units. He advocated the potential need for greater enforcement in order to create greater contribution to the vibrancy of the area.

Councillor Higgins referred to the problem of damage to historic Listed Buildings by large vehicles inadvertently entering the narrow streets within the Walls area due to the current poor visibility and location of signage. She was of the view that an improved relationship with the County Council was likely to improve this issue.

Nick Chilvers agreed with the views expressed by Councillor Higgins in relation to the benefit of small initiatives such as planting. He urged the Council to be willing to contribute funding for this. He referred to the opportunity for groups of traders to be creative and take the initiative to draw people into the shopping areas. He was of the view the BID needed to make sure it didn't spread itself too thinly but to undertake initiatives in manageable chunks.

Councillor Scott-Boutell asked what the BID's top priority would be.

Sam Good confirmed the need to understand the support wanted and needed by the traders themselves. He referred to the need to support improvements to the perception

and appearance of the town centre. He also explained the need to build the independent brand and the marketing of the area as a shopping destination by means of various ideas, including bringing online businesses into the town to occupy empty units.

*RESOLVED* that the appreciation of the Panel be extended to Nick Chilvers and Sam Good and the excellent relationship that the BID had with the Council be noted.

*RECOMMENDED* to Cabinet that as much support as possible be provided to the BID in order to secure the success of the Walls Project as quickly as possible.

## **27 Future High Streets**

Nick Chilvers addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3). He referred to evidence of improvements in the town centre and he welcomed the work being done by the Community safety team. He welcomed the bid for funding for the High Street. He asked the Panel to consider the question of the market and, more specifically, whether the market brought vibrancy to the High Street or whether it lowered the tone of the High Street. He speculated what the High Street businesses thought about the products being sold at the front of their premises and whether they were losing customers on market days. He suggested negotiations be re-opened with the owners of the former Co-op building with a view to finding a solution to the market location problem. He was aware the building benefitted from underground servicing, was convinced the proposal would have public support and considered it could become an incubator for aspiring shop-keepers. He was aware this idea had been proposed before but considered the owners may be more receptive to the proposal now.

Councillor Buston acknowledged the market had occupied many locations over the years but was aware that the appropriateness of the location strongly divided opinion. He was of the view that the proposal from Mr Chilvers should be welcomed and taken forward.

Ken Walker addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3). He welcomed the proposal made by Mr Chilvers. He hoped that the pedestrianisation proposals would be subordinate to the ambitions and objectives of the Future High Streets funding bid. He sought clarification as to how the focus areas corresponded with the Government's priority themes for investment. He considered that the themes were well placed but, should the bid prove to be successful, it was unlikely that anything would be implemented before 2020-2021. As such, he advocated a strong need for interim actions to be identified that could be undertaken in the intervening period with the current funding available.

The Panel considered a report by the Assistant Director Policy and Corporate providing further information on a proposed 'ambition statement' to inform the submission of an Expression of Interest to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

(MHCLG) 'Future High Streets' programme, followed by a public consultation on the options.

Matthew Brown, Principal Development Manager, Design – Colchester Amphora Trading Ltd., presented the report and responded to members questions. The Principal Development Manager explained that the key objective of the fund was to renew and reshape town centres to improve experience, drive growth and ensure future sustainability, with £675m being available nationally is available to help town centres and high streets evolve and adapt. The priority themes for investment were also detailed. A working group had been formed and a draft ambition statement had been agreed as follows:

- Ambition – to create a sustainable economic heart for a growing community
- Objective – to utilise the town's key economic heart for a growing community
- Strategy
- Bringing key buildings and spaces back into use
- Enhancing accessibility and capacity, improving experience
- Showcasing our rich cultural and heritage offer.

Areas on which to focus might include:

- Air quality, traffic congestion and journey time reliability
- Crime and perception of crime in the Town Centre
- Number of empty retail units in the Town Centre
- Patterns and trends in the residential population in Castle Ward, and the Wards to the immediate South of the Town Centre
- The demographic of visitors, employees and residents to help inform future requirements
- Future retail trends and the implication for traditional town centres
- Condition of certain heritage and historic assets, including buildings in the Town Centre which together could play a significant role in driving footfall, broadening the appeal and increasing the capacity of the Town Centre.

An Expression of Interest would be completed with letters of support from key stakeholders for submission by 22 March 2019.

Councillor Buston acknowledged that the purpose of the report was to set up the major objectives in order to then formulate a direction of travel.

Councillor Higgins welcomed the submission of the funding bid and commented on the particular issues for walkers and cyclists in Colchester being the town centre's location at the top of a hill. She commented on the plans for St Botolph's roundabout and the need for people's inclination to acknowledge desire lines rather than defined routes which were further or took longer to travel. She also referred to the need for future transport planning to encompass a greater number of mobility scooters and the need to provide charging points for electric cycles and covered cycle storage areas. She also

referred to different traffic practices which took place at night time.

Councillor Harris supported the views expressed by Councillor Higgins. He supported the submission of a funding bid but considered the level funding sought needed to be much greater if the investments in physical infrastructure were to be adequately resourced. He therefore advocated the need for the bid to be ambitious and he supported all the focus areas identified.

The Principal Development Manager acknowledged the need to maximise the bid and confirmed that it was not necessary to identify within the bid an actual sum of money being sought. He also acknowledged the points raised about walking and cycling access.

*RESOLVED* that the report and background information on the Government's 'Future High Streets' programme and the development of a draft ambition statement in collaboration with key stakeholders be noted.

*RECOMMENDED* to the Portfolio Holder for Business and Culture for consideration the following comments in relation to the draft ambition statement and the extent to which it met the key priorities for revisioning and repositioning Colchester's Town centre:

- A future strategy for the market, including the location and offer and the Farmer's Market;
- Limitations to access into the town centre, particularly in relation to walking and cycling and the need for desire lines to be taken into consideration in this context;
- Access issues for people with disabilities, including charging points for mobility scooters and electric cycles;
- Improvements to cycle storage in the town centre, including sheltered and secure facilities;
- Stronger partnerships with the local bus companies with a view to improving access to the town centre by means of public transport.

## **28 Sustainable Transport in Colchester**

**Councillor Harris (in respect of his membership of the Bus Users Group) declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).**

Steve Wickers, on behalf of First Essex Buses, addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3). He highlighted the need for a transport system which was fit for purpose. He confirmed that the bus network offered 90,000 seats into the town centre every day and, as such, was a valuable part of the economy. He advocated the need for a new transport plan which he would be willing to help formulate. He recognised the need for people to be able to get in and out of town much more quickly, to increase frequency of buses and schemes to boost the economy.

He emphasised how difficult it was currently to get in and out of town.

The Chairman asked Steve Wickers his view on bus lanes and whether they improved the flow of traffic for buses.

Steve Wickers responded by acknowledging the high cost of bus lanes and the difficulty of accommodating the lanes in areas where the streets were very narrow. He emphasised the importance of small-scale initiatives such as protected junctions and yellow lining which would reduce traffic in the town centre. He considered there was too much congestion and plans and policies were needed to make it quicker for buses to access the town centre, taking priority and shifting cars out of the town such as with park and ride. He acknowledged the need for policies to protect walkers and riders which could run in parallel. He also acknowledged the need for cleaner vehicles and explained that the bus companies had invested in this.

Councillor Buston did not support bus lanes on the grounds that for the majority of time these lanes were empty whilst the remainder of the road network was congested. He considered they should only be introduced where absolutely necessary.

Councillor Harris asked how the Council and the bus operators could work effectively together to ensure greater numbers of people regularly using the bus network.

Steve Wickers responded to Councillor Harris by explaining the need for policy that prioritised modes of transport such as rapid transport schemes and others with less of an impact on the road space. He emphasised that the bus operators wanted to participate in the decision making behind this formulation of policy.

Chris Blomeley, on behalf of Repair, Reuse, Recycle CIC, a proactive environmental social enterprise with a particular interest in using waste as a resource. He proposed a bicycle project which would support the new Colchester Orbital cycle route, promoting health and fitness for all and provide accessible solutions to sustainable transport. The project would target young volunteers to train as cycle mechanics to give them pathways to employment. The project would use repair and sell donated bikes to ensure they would not become funding dependent. Later phases of the project would be to launch a cycle hire scheme located to boost tourism and at key points along the Colchester Orbital and to promote individual and family use of Colchester Orbital. Initial partners had included Firstsite and Essex Youth Service and the Council's Zone Wardens. He asked for assistance to locate premises from which to operate to enable the project to grow. The project could then commence, sustain growth and increase the diversion of waste.

Councillor Harris asked about the most appropriate way to assist with the project and Councillor Higgins, whilst welcoming the proposal sought clarification on whether the project was linked with the existing bike hire scheme at the railway station.

Chris Blomeley explained that the core principle of the scheme was to use waste as a resource and this was achieved by using bikes which were found or donated and to get young people involved in acquiring new skills, repairing the bikes and subsequently gaining employment. Essentially, the project was based on a waste reduction core principle. He considered this to be a unique identity with a track record of success.

Councillor Lissimore welcomed the ideas whilst referring to the particular problem of bikes being stolen and the need for people to feel confident that they are able to bring their bikes into town but also travel home as well. She had been Chair of the Colchester Youth Strategy Group and referred to the Lads need Dads scheme and the need for skills to be passed on to young people.

Chris Blomeley explained that the proposal provided added value in terms of greater participation at family days for orienteering and treasure hunts and also work with the Youth Justice Team for young people to learn how to repair things using their hands and heads. He explained that he had previously worked in the military and in the NHS.

Councillor Buston acknowledged the problems associated with bikes being stolen and the impact this had on people's willingness to cycle.

The Chairman was of the view that the proposal was an exciting one which closely matched a number of the Council's Strategic Aims, including health and wellbeing, tourism and also helping to build skills and entrepreneurship or young people. He confirmed that the Panel would discuss the proposal when considering the contents of the Panel's work programme.

Nick Chilvers addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3). He referred to Colchester's bus station and that it was not very welcoming. He explained the difficulties for bus drivers as they approached the station, having to jockey for position with other road users and pedestrians waiting for buses. He also referred to the efforts of the Council to redevelop the adjacent Vineyard Gate area and he had asked whether these redevelopment plans would include a review of the facilities for buses. He had been told that there had been no discussions about the bus station layout, rather that this was a matter between the developer and the Highway Authority. He was of the view that the Council must have some stake in the future of the bus station, particularly if there was to be an emphasis on residents leaving their cars at home and adopting public transport options. He acknowledged there had been a lack of interest in the matter despite the need for Councils to work with the bus operators he was of the view that most people would expect the Council to lobby for an improvement and factor it in the development proposals for Vineyard Gate. He also referred to the plans for the development of the Queen Street Hotel.

Peter Kay, on behalf of the Bus Users Group, addressed the Committee pursuant to the

provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3). He referred to the new Transport Policy for Colchester which had been published in 2001 and his hopes for the emerging Transport Policy. He explained the need for Colchester travel in peak periods to be less car based than in off peak periods, and he considered this to be because 9 to 5 workers were provided with over 3,000 employer based free parking spaces in the central area. He referred to the thousands of people who travelled each day to work in their cars to Colchester from Tendring, half of whom lived near rail stations, but the poor rail service and expensive fares meant that the rail line was a wasted one. He asked whether there were any facts over the previous 25 years to demonstrate that sustainable travel alternatives had succeeded in reducing journeys by car. He asked for the consideration of work place parking levy powers as a means to address traffic problems, explaining that six local authorities had recently opted to investigate the measures. He considered that this would have a big impact on peak time traffic problems whilst enabling the Council to raise revenue to spend on transport improvements.

Councillor Lissimore asked what was considered the main priority to increase public transport and bus usage for short journeys. She was of the view that bus usage was cost prohibitive and it was cheaper to travel by car and park, especially as a couple or a group of people.

Peter Kay explained that bus companies charged much higher fares per mile for short, walkable journeys whilst the fares for journeys of three to four miles, which were too long to walk, were considered more reasonable. He explained that more recently there were more family tickets on offer, but he was of the view that the complexity of the offers made them difficult to market. He referred again to the free all-day parking offered by employers at work places in the town centre.

Councillor Buston referred to his preference for incentives to drive behaviour change. He cited the example of Edinburgh which operated a very cheap and comprehensive bus service and, as a consequence, the buses were always well used.

Peter Kay was of the view that it was easier to provide a cheap and attractive bus service in a city the size of Edinburgh whilst Colchester was too big to accommodate residents predominantly travelling by car but too small to operate a comprehensive transport system like the Edinburgh model. He advocated the investigation of the workplace transport levy by the Council and considered this to be the main priority which would make a difference in Colchester.

Ken Walker addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3). He explained that he used the park and ride facilities in Cambridge because he wanted to visit the shops and the cost of parking in the town centre was too prohibitive. He was therefore of the view that Colchester needed to be a place where people wanted to go and the parking charges needed to be pitched at the right level. He commuted to work, using public transport and on foot and he cycled at weekends, as

such he was in favour of sustainable transport. He asked what had prompted the report to be presented to the Panel and asked for reasons to be stated for the Council to invest in sustainable transport, whether this be to reduce air pollution, improve safety, reduce congestion or an ethical project for instance. He considered residents should know why the Council would consider spending money on this issue, what would be achieved and what it would cost.

The Committee considered a report by the Assistant Director Policy and Corporate providing a background to current sustainable transport initiatives, programmes and projects in Colchester.

Rachel Forkin, Transport and Sustainability Manager, presented the report and responded to members questions. She explained that the issue of Sustainable Transport had been included in the Panel's work programme following the public engagement session in September 2018 when key themes included provision of cycling, public transport and electric vehicle charging.

Increasing the use of sustainable travel could help tackle climate change by reducing reliance on the car and thus cutting carbon emissions and reducing congestion. It also influenced health, by improving air quality whilst also promoting physical activity. It was therefore important to better understand the factors and reasons behind why people chose to use sustainable transport, and how we provide for and promote sustainable transport as a suitable and viable option for journeys within, to and from Colchester.

Sustainable transport was used to describe all forms of transport which minimised emissions of carbon dioxide and pollutants and was used as a catch all term to include approaches and topics such as:

- reducing the need to travel;
- reducing car dependence and use;
- greater reliance on cycling, walking and other 'active travel modes';
- promotion and uptake of alternatives such as car sharing, public transport; and
- cleaner transport and new technologies such as electric vehicles.

The report set out some of the opportunities and challenges to providing and encouraging use of different forms of sustainable transport in Colchester and summarised some current projects which encouraged use of sustainable modes of travel, including:

- Air Quality
- Traffic flows and Congestion
- Transport Patterns
- Active Travel
- Travel Plans, Car Clubs and Ride Sharing
- Public Transport
- Low Emission Vehicles



Councillor Buston welcomed the report and the ideas contained in it which could be developed for future consideration. He referred to the need for a Southern Relief Road to address the congestion problem across the town.

Councillor Harris was supportive of the issues identified in the report. He was particularly interested in the walking initiatives highlighted and the benefits to healthy lifestyles. He expressed concerns about the piecemeal development of the town and the impact this had made on the areas around Brook Street and Mersea Road. He advocated the development of policies within the local schools and the academies to create a walking and cycling ethos, include principles of road safety, for young school age children. He considered this would create a step change impact.

Councillor Higgins considered the main objective for the adoption of sustainable transport measures had to be the reduction in air pollution. She agreed with the problems being concentrated in the areas around Brook Street, Magdalen Street and Mersea Road. She considered that residents needed to be educated in the benefits of reduced car ownership, especially in areas where residents parking systems were in operation. She was also concerned about the proliferation of work vans in residential areas and the space these were taking up. She referred to Essex County Council's recent review of bus stopping points, including relocations and a lack of seating and shelter and the impact this had on elderly people, particularly those with mobility problems. She mentioned issues for cyclists, including sheltered cycle storage, adequate signage for cycle parking and cycle routes. She also explained that there was no service on a Sunday from Colchester Town railway station which impacted on the number of car journeys were being made to Colchester North station as a consequence and she also commented that it was not possible to purchase combined train and bus tickets on the local buses. She was of the view that a significant number of Cambridge residents benefitted from free private car parking facilities in the town centre which impacted on local people's willingness to use the park and ride facilities. She supported the proposal to consider the introduction of a workplace parking levy although, on safety grounds, she considered this should not be applicable for those needing to park at their place of work at night.

Councillor Scott-Boutell supported the proposal to embed a walking and cycling ethos for young school children, particularly in the light of the allocation of senior school places at establishments which were not the closest for some residents.

Councillor Lissimore was of the view that the walking and cycling ethos needed to be targeted at children before they reach school age by reaching out to nurseries, pre-schools and childminders. She considered this would make a strong contribution towards default modes of travel to school being by foot and cycle in preference to cars. She referred to Section 106 Agreement funding and was aware that the average financial contribution in Essex per property was around £6,000 whilst Essex County

Council required funding of £30,000 in order to remain cost neutral. She was concerned that the Section 106 regime was being required to encompass more and more in terms of mitigation of a new development, whilst developers were inclined to seek reviews of Section 106 requirements on the grounds of reduced viability. She was of the view that the priorities for Section 106 funding contributions needed to be reviewed and that sustainable transport measures needed to be one of the top five priorities.

Councillor Buston referred to the issue of traffic congestion at school opening times whilst this was not a particular problem at school closing times. He also referred to the existence of cycling proficiency tests for school children and the high proportion of children who used to cycle to school in years gone by.

Councillor Hayter referred to the proposal for a walking and cycling ethos for school children and his own experience of the Bikeability Scheme which he supported as a means of encouraging children and parents to cycle together.

The Chairman asked how often Council officers met with the bus operators and whether the meetings could work better.

The Transport and Sustainability Manager confirmed that officers and representatives from the bus companies attended meetings organised by Essex County Council on a quarterly basis. She explained that the meetings were useful in terms of the discussions which took place on activities and new developments and she acknowledged that the Local Authorities could demonstrate their support for the objectives which the bus companies were endeavouring to work towards.

*RESOLVED* that the contents of the report be noted.

*RECOMMENDED* to Cabinet that the following issues be considered as potential contributions to the promotion of sustainable transport in Colchester Borough:

- A review of Parking Charges;
- Investigation of the workplace parking levy initiative, for peak times only, not for late night shift workers;
- The Repair, Reuse Recycle bicycle project, pitched to the Panel by Chris Blomeley, in terms of his request for suitable premises from which to operate the project, potential partnership working and tourism opportunities;
- An initiative to encourage nurseries, pre-schools and childminders, as well as local schools and academies, to adopt a walking and cycling ethos for journeys to school and pre-school;
- Work with Repair, Reuse and Recycle and other local charities to ensure walking and cycling for children is inclusive for all families, including those unable to afford bicycles and their maintenance costs;
- Closer working with Essex County Council to improve road signage of cycle routes;

- Working towards bringing cycling and public transport to the heart of Local Plan policies, such as discussions with the bus companies about viable routes within the Garden Community proposals;
- Work with the bus companies and Greater Anglia with a view to securing the introduction of a combined ticketing system across bus and train services and improvements to train timetabling and train frequencies at Colchester Town station;
- Liaison with Essex County Council and the local bus companies to highlight the importance of accessibility of bus stopping points, in terms of location, seating and shelter;
- A feasibility exercise to investigate the viability of introducing a Hopper bus service, potentially operating from North Station into the town centre, either working with the bus companies or investigating alternative sources of funding, such as the use of Section 106 contributions or sponsorship, to cover driver, vehicle and running costs;
- A review of the Section 106 financial contribution regime with a view to allocating sustainable transport measures within the top five priorities for funding.

## **29 Policy and Public Initiatives Panel Work Programme 2018-19**

The Committee considered a report by the Assistant Director Policy and Corporate giving details of the Panel's Work Programme, updated since the last meeting.

The Panel had rescheduled the report on Responsible Dog Ownerships to a date early in June and approval had been sought from Cabinet for the inclusion in the work programme of requests relating to the impact of Universal Credit / Austerity and the use of the River Colne to encourage more effective use from environmental and activity aspects.

The Chairman referred to the matter raised by Mark Goacher as a potential new idea/ initiative for the Panel, for the Council to declare a climate emergency and set a target year to become Carbon Neutral. He was aware that a motion on this subject was likely to be considered at the next full Council meeting and he suggested that the consideration of the matter be left for the Council to determine.

In relation to matters for consideration by the Panel in the next Municipal Year, he suggested that consideration be given to another public engagement meeting to invite ideas from the public or to revisit previous suggestions.

*RESOLVED* that, the contents of the work programme for 2019-20 be noted and it be updated for the next meeting of the Panel to accommodate another public engagement meeting and, as appropriate, decisions due from the Cabinet in relation to recent work programme requests.



# Policy and Public Initiatives Panel

Wednesday, 22 May 2019

**Attendees:** Councillor Christopher Arnold, Councillor Helen Chuah, Councillor Phil Coleman, Councillor John Jowers, Councillor Derek Loveland, Councillor Lee Scordis, Councillor Martyn Warnes

**Substitutes:** No substitutes were recorded at the meeting

**Also Present:**

## 30 Appointment of Chairman

*RESOLVED* that Councillor Phil Coleman be appointed Chairman for the ensuing Municipal Year.

## 31 Appointment of Deputy Chairman

*RESOLVED* that Councillor Martyn Warnes be appointed Deputy Chairman for the ensuing Municipal Year.





## Policy and Public Initiatives Panel

Item

8

19 June 2019

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Lucie Breadman</b> <b>Assistant Director of Communities</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Belinda Silkstone</b> ☎ 282745
<b>Title</b>	<b>Responsible Dog Ownership</b>		
<b>Wards affected</b>	All		

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Pet ownership is well recognised for the companionship, comfort and sense of wellbeing that it brings. Pet ownership has been found to decrease loneliness, isolation and depression, provide a sense of security and necessitates lifestyle changes that promote physical activity.
- 1.2 To improve our streets and local environment, Colchester Borough Council promotes and encourages positive dog ownership, whilst also tackling those antisocial behaviours such as dog fouling.

### 2. Action Required

- 2.1 For the Panel to note the information regarding responsible dog ownership included in the report.

### 3. Reason for Review

- 3.1 An online submission on responsible dog ownership was received from a member of the public, which was included in the Panel's public engagement session on 19 September 2018. This issue was adopted by the Panel at the meeting and was subsequently approved for inclusion in the Panel's Work Programme at the Cabinet meeting on 10 October 2018.

### 4. Background Information

#### Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1 Responsibility for a dog's actions ultimately rests with the owner or, where the owner is absent, the person in control of the dog. However, Colchester Borough Council and its partners, including Essex Police, the RSPCA and other Essex local authorities (Councils) share several responsibilities, including law enforcement responsibilities in relation to the control of dogs and dog welfare.

These responsibilities are summarised below:

#### 4.2 **The Council**

- Collection of stray dogs
- A 'duty of care' to the animals in its care i.e. collected stray dogs
- Primary responsibility for the enforcement of dog fouling legislation
- Primary responsibility for legislation relating to microchipping.

In addition to the above, the Council is also responsible for:

- The investigation and enforcement of statutory nuisances including noise from barking;
- Dogs, nuisance attributable to the manner in which animals are kept and accumulations of dogs' mess on private land; and
- The licensing of animal boarding establishments, pet shops and dog breeders.

#### 4.3 **The Police**

- Primary responsibility for dangerous dogs including those breeds that are prohibited by the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and any dog deemed to be out of control in a public place;
- Primary responsibility under the Guard Dogs Act 1975;
- Responsibility for dogs worrying livestock.

#### 4.4 **The RSPCA**

- The promotion of kindness to dogs and the alleviation of suffering;
- Dogs abandoned on private property;
- Dogs in distress.

### **The Responsible Dog Strategy.**

4.5 In 2012 the Council introduced a Responsible Dog Strategy 2012 -15. Despite extensive promotion of the strategy including two CBC-organised 'Bark in the Park' events held in Colchester Castle Park and other local events, the strategy document appended to this report as Appendix 1 remains virtually unknown.

4.6 Following discussions with dog owners, it was found that dog owners seek advice on how to look after their dogs responsibly via vets, charities rehoming centres, local dog behaviourists and social media, including Facebook groups, and did not consider the Council.

4.7 In addition, the Council online team has advised that it is exceptional for members of the public to download a pdf document and that information regarding dog ownership would be better presented in bite size chunks which are easier to read via a phone or on a tablet.



- 4.8 Therefore, with approval from the former Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities, the Strategy document was not updated.

### **Bark in the Park**

- 4.9 Two large dog-centred events were held in Castle Park during 2013 in 2015. These excellent events were led by Animal Services. To cover the costs incurred, 'Bark in the Park' charged an entrance fee.
- 4.10 There is no capacity to host an annual event from current Council resources. If future events were deemed necessary then Colchester Events Company could be approached to see if they could oversee or find an external organiser. CBC Animal Services which consists of two officers who are responsible for both the Commercial Pest Control and the Stray Dog Service would attend the event to provide advice on dog-related matters.
- 4.11 To provide information and advice to dog owners to enable and support compliance with the law, Animal Services continues to promote responsible dog ownership at CBH, Zone Team organised events, Police-led activities and events such as Street Weeks. These events are **free** and open to all residents to attend.

### **Promoting Responsible Dog Ownership**

- 4.12 Whilst the Strategy has expired, it is still relevant, and the Council continues to promote responsible dog ownership and many of the key objectives included in the strategy:
- To reduce the social and environmental impact of stray and abandoned dogs on our communities,
  - To work with partners and communities to ensure that stray dogs are reunited with their owners or re-homed as swiftly as possible,
  - To reduce the incidence of dog fouling,
  - To raise awareness of the legal responsibilities associated with dog ownership and breeding,
  - To provide information and advice to dog owners to enable and support compliance with the law.

### **Stray Dog Collection**

- 4.13 Stray and abandoned dogs have a negative impact on the Environment through indiscriminate fouling and anti-social behaviour.
- 4.14 The Council operates a stray dog collection service to ensure that stray dogs collected are reunited with their owners or re-homed as swiftly as possible
- 4.15 The number of stray dogs collected by the Council has fallen over recent years:  
In 2014 - **148**, 2015 – **125**, 2016 – **125**, 2017 – **126**, 2018 – **61** and to-date in 2019 – **16**

## **Free Dog Microchipping Service**

- 4.16 The Council continues to operate a free dog microchipping service to all the Borough's residents. Microchipping of dogs can be carried out either at the dog's home or at one of the free events attended by the Animal Services Team.
- 4.17 Free microchipping supports Responsible Dog Ownership by ensuring that cost is not a barrier to having a dog microchipped. A dog that is correctly microchipped ensures that if it does stray it can be promptly reunited with their owner/s.

## **Dog Fouling**

- 4.18 Allowing your dog to foul in a public place is antisocial. CBC's Zone Teams regularly patrol areas of the Borough, educating and enforcing upon the dog walkers the requirement for them to clear up after their pets. A Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) was renewed in Oct 2018 for a two-year period. This allows authorised CBC Officers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) of £100 to offenders. It is anticipated that this Order will need to be further extended.
- 4.19 In the past two years Zone Wardens have issued a total of 23 FPNs to members of the public who have either failed to clear up after their animal or breached a similar PSPO that is in force at Colchester Rugby Club.
- 4.20 CBC encourages members of the public to report dog fouling to us on line via <https://www.colchester.gov.uk/our-community/services/?action=Report>

## **5. Recommendations**

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Council website is updated to include a responsible dog ownership page to provide dog owners with information on responsible dog ownership and compliance with the law.
- 5.2 For the Animal Services Team to continue to support the free CBC Zone Team events, 'CBH Make a Difference Days' and Police-led events.
- 5.3 For CBC to continue to provide a free dog microchipping service.

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

- 6.1 The Equality Impact Assessments for responsible dog ownership can be found [here](#).
- 6.2 There are no particular Human Rights, Equality or Diversity Implications.

## **7. Strategic Plan References**

- 7.1 Responsible Dog Ownership supports the Council's [Strategic Plan 2018 -21](#) by promoting and improving Colchester and its Environment.

## **8. Consultation**

- 8.1 The Policy and Public Initiatives Panel carried out a public survey to provide guidance to the panel's priorities for the coming year. The results can be found [here](#).

## **9. Publicity Considerations**

- 9.1 The Council promotes responsible dog ownership at various events throughout the year.

## **10. Financial implications**

- 10.1 None

## **11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications**

- 11.1 Responsible dog ownership has a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the Borough's residents and visitors.
- 11.2 There are no community safety implications.

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

- 12.1 None

## **13. Risk management Implications**

- 13.1 None

## **14. Appendices**

- 14.1 Appendix 1 - CBC Responsible Dog Owners Strategy



# Responsible Dog Ownership Strategy

This strategy sets out what the Council will do to encourage and promote responsible dog ownership, and the Council's commitment to tackling the antisocial behaviour of irresponsible dog owners.



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If you have any questions about the strategy or need a copy in another format, please contact:

Colchester Borough Council  
Environmental & Protective Services  
Rowan House  
33 Sheepen Road  
Colchester  
CO3 3WG

Tel: 01206 282581

## Introduction

No one can deny the pleasure that owning a dog can bring and the many ways in which pet ownership enriches our lives. Indeed, it has long been recognised that the companionship, comfort and sense of wellbeing provided by a pet can decrease loneliness, isolation and depression whilst engendering a sense of security and the desire to nurture among both adults and children alike. Often, pet ownership also necessitates lifestyle changes that promote physical activity and therefore it is hardly surprising that it is widely believed that pets are good for us!

This strategy supports this belief and recognises that the majority of dog owners do behave responsibly by both caring for pets and fulfilling both their legal and moral obligations. However, the same cannot be said of a small minority of owners whose behaviour, and consequently the manner in which they allow their dogs to behave, is at best irresponsible and at worst, antisocial and in some instances, criminal.

It is with this very much at heart and the desire to improve our streets and local environment that Colchester Borough Council seeks to promote and encourage positive dog ownership, whilst also tackling those antisocial behaviours that all too often give our much loved pets a bad name.

## The Council's Strategic Plan

In October 2011, Colchester Borough Council undertook a consultation exercise to establish which aspects of life matter most to local people. The results of the consultation, together with the findings of other research work carried out in the borough have been used to ensure the priorities identified by local people are reflected in the Council's Strategic Plan and that resources are allocated to those areas with the potential to make most difference to the local quality of life.

Colchester Borough Council's Strategic Plan 2012 - 2015 sets out the overarching vision for the Borough and the Council for the next three years and this vision is for Colchester to be 'the place to live, learn, work and visit'. The Plan also identifies a number of broad aims and a set of priorities that support two distinct areas where the Council has a role to play namely, 'Leading our communities' and 'Delivering high quality, accessible services'.



The 'Leading our communities' theme is about influencing others in a range of functions where the Council does not have direct responsibility for delivery but knows these things are vital to the future of the Borough and its residents. The Responsible Dog Ownership Strategy supports a number of the priorities identified under this theme including:

- **Working in partnerships to help tackle health and crime issues, and**
- **Showing tolerance and changing behaviours to create better local communities**

The 'Delivering high quality, accessible services' theme concerns the Council's actual delivery of direct services either through our own resources or using others to provide services. The Responsible Dog Ownership Strategy supports a number of the priorities identified under this theme including:

- **Improving our streets and local environment.**
- **Tackling antisocial behaviour and using enforcement to support priorities, and**
- **Enabling local communities to help themselves**

The Council has listened to the views expressed by local people about local issues and the impact these issues have on quality of life. Antisocial behaviour and crime, in its broadest sense, was considered to be the most important area the Council can influence. This strategy acknowledges these views and therefore provides a response that:

- **focuses on behavioural change, prevention and tackling the underlying causes of dog fouling, straying and the antisocial behaviour of irresponsible dog owners, and**
- **Strengthens the Council's approach to enforcement of the law as and where this is necessary**





## Strategic Aims and Objectives

This strategy aims to protect public health by reducing dog fouling, noise nuisance caused by barking dogs, road accidents attributable to stray dogs, and injury caused by dog attacks. It also aims to promote the welfare of dogs.

The overarching objective of the Responsible Dog Ownership Strategy is the promotion and encouragement of responsible dog ownership and the specific objectives of this strategy can be summarised as follows:

- 1. To educate dog owners in the principles of sustainable and responsible dog ownership**
- 2. To raise awareness of the legal responsibilities associated with dog ownership and breeding**
- 3. To provide information and advice to dog owners to enable and support compliance with the law**
- 4. To reduce the social and environmental impact of stray and abandoned dogs on our communities**
- 5. To work with partners and communities to ensure that stray dogs are reunited with their owners or re-homed as swiftly as possible**
- 6. To reduce the incidence of dog fouling by working with partners using education and enforcement**
- 7. To ensure that areas affected by fouling are cleansed as soon as possible**
- 8. To work with partners to reduce the incidence of dog attacks in the Borough**
- 9. To work with Colchester Borough Homes to increase compliance with Conditions of Tenancy as they relate to dogs**
- 10. To clarify and raise awareness of Colchester Borough Council's role and responsibilities with regards to dogs, and those of our key partners including Essex Police and the RSPCA**
- 11. To share intelligence with key partners and wherever possible, work in partnership, pooling resources to promote responsible dog ownership and secure compliance with the law**
- 12. To ensure that robust enforcement action is taken where appropriate**

## Strategic Context

Responsibility for a dog's actions ultimately rests with the owner or where the owner is absent, the person in control of the dog. However, Colchester Borough Council and its partners, including Essex Police, the RSPCA and other Essex Local Authorities (Councils) share a number of responsibilities, including law enforcement responsibilities, in relation to the control of dogs and dog welfare.

A Memorandum of Understanding exists between the partners, which seeks to clarify these responsibilities in terms of the statutory duties held and the services provided. These responsibilities are summarised below:

### The Council

- **Collection of stray dogs**
- **A 'duty of care' to the animals in its care i.e. collected stray dogs**
- **A duty to enforce the requirements for dogs to wear a collar and tag when in a public place**
- **Primary responsibility for the enforcement of dog fouling legislation**

In addition to the above, the Council is also responsible for:

- **The investigation and enforcement of statutory nuisances including noise from barking dogs, nuisance attributable to the manner in which animals are kept and accumulations of dogs mess on private land, and**
- **The licensing of animal boarding establishments, pet shops and dog breeders**

### The Police

- **Primary responsibility for dangerous dogs including those breeds that are prohibited by the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and any dog deemed to be out of control in a public place**
- **Primary responsibility under the Guard Dogs Act 1975**
- **Responsibility for dogs worrying livestock**

### The RSPCA

- **The promotion of kindness to dogs and the alleviation of suffering**
- **Dogs abandoned on private property**
- **Dogs in distress**





This Strategy recognises the need for effective partnership working with these and other agencies and also with communities and voluntary organisations such as dog rescue groups, as it is through these partnerships that long term behavioural changes can be achieved and sustained.

The existing legislation around the control of dogs has developed piecemeal over a period spanning more than some 140 years. At the time of writing, two Private Members' Bills concerning the control of dogs remain before Parliament. One of these Bills (The Dog Control and Welfare Bill 2010-11) proposes the repeal of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, the compulsory micro-chipping of dogs and makes provision for the welfare of dogs and public safety around dogs. Neither Bill appears to be making significant progress but it is anticipated that the development of effective partnerships at a local, regional and national level, will be instrumental in shaping future Government policy and legislation that is relevant to the challenges we face today, and those we will face for years to come.

## Delivery

An Action Plan, setting out how the Council intends to achieve its objectives, sits alongside this strategy. This plan draws upon the various resources available to the Council as a whole, and those of its partners, including voluntary organisations and other interested groups and individuals.

Broadly speaking, the Council aims to achieve its objectives by way of the following:

### **Education and Awareness**

Raising awareness of the principles of responsible dog ownership and the impact of irresponsible dog ownership and associated antisocial behaviour is absolutely fundamental to the delivery of our objectives. The potential mechanisms for achieving this and for ensuring that these messages reach the right people will therefore require thorough exploration.

The Council will seek to ensure that information and advice is made available to both dog owners, and to persons who may be experiencing antisocial behaviour caused by irresponsible dog owners thereby improving access to the right services and organisations. The information and advice provided will address how to care for your dog and how this can be done in such a way that recognises the financial difficulties that so many of our residents are now experiencing.

Special emphasis will be placed on ensuring that young persons have access to advice and information and are educated in the ways of responsible dog ownership as they will not only be the dog owners of tomorrow, but also have the opportunity now to influence the behaviour of parents and other adults and young persons around them. We will therefore investigate the most appropriate and effective ways of engaging younger people and bringing these messages to them.

The Council will also seek to educate dog owners in the benefits of spaying and neutering their dogs and will investigate ways in which the Council can support owners in accessing affordable veterinary services for this purpose. Equally, the Council will raise awareness of the legislation relating to the breeding and sale of dogs and related licensing requirements.

To underpin the above and the Council's broader activities around the promotion of responsible dog ownership, we will formulate a Communications Strategy to ensure that key messages are communicated using a variety of media (including the appropriate use of signage) and that the profile, once raised, is maintained.

## **Enforcement**

Unfortunately, not all dog owners will respond positively to the responsible dog ownership messages we will communicate. Enforcement therefore has a key role to play in terms of achieving our strategic objectives and is there to support and complement the other themes such as education and awareness and promotional activities and events.

The Council will closely examine all legal duties, powers and provisions i.e. the enforcement tools at its disposal, and will determine not only the appropriateness of each tool, but also the most efficient and effective way of use including, for example the range of officers from within the Council and other individuals outside the Council, who may be authorised to take actions such as the issue of fixed penalty notices for dog fouling.

In order to tackle the underlying causes of the increasing number of stray and abandoned dogs, we will be proactive in our approach to the licensing of breeding establishments and enforcement in respect of non-compliance with the law.

We will work to ensure that all enforcement is well targeted, effective and fair and will be tough on those who commit serious breaches of the law.

## **Sharing Information and Intelligence**

We will work closely with partner agencies to develop and agree protocols for sharing intelligence and other information. This will enable us to make the most effective use of resources, targeting our patrols to known 'hot spots' and tackling the highest priorities.

We will investigate the use of a multi-agency intelligence database and the opportunities this may provide for the detection of crime and potential intervention.





## Partnerships

As previously stated, effective partnerships have a pivotal role to play in delivering our strategic objectives. Will we seek to strengthen existing partnerships with the Police, RSPCA and other Essex Local Authorities, but will also look to establish new and effective partnerships with voluntary groups, communities and individuals.

We recognise that a great deal of knowledge, skills and passion exists among responsible dog owners and we will seek to harness this energy, making effective use of this previously untapped resource by bringing together communities of interest with a common desire to effect the necessary changes in behaviour and attitudes, making irresponsible dog ownership socially unacceptable.

Furthermore, the Council will encourage effective co-operation between various agencies involved in the reunification and re-homing of stray and abandoned dogs.

## Promotional Activities and Events

The Council will seek to enable, facilitate and deliver a range of promotional activities and events working in partnership with other agencies, businesses, and voluntary and community groups.

These activities and events may involve Council Officers, charities and interest groups, national organisations and suppliers of services and products, and may be targeted towards specific groups, for example young persons or known offenders (along similar lines to that of the National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme), or more generic in their appeal.

Events and other activities will have clear, measurable objectives and will be planned and managed to ensure they are inclusive, accessible and achieve their aims. This approach will also ensure we make best use of partners' collective resources and post-event evaluation will be undertaken, the findings of which will serve to inform future events and allocation of resources.



## Community Empowerment

Our communities and individuals within these communities have an important role to play in influencing behaviour and the provision of support, advice and assistance to other dog owners, and potentially to those affected by the actions of irresponsible dog owners.

Communities also have a role to play in terms of influencing decisions that will affect them at a local level whether these are decisions taken by the Council, the Parish or Town Councils or even the Government.

The Council is keen to explore how it can support people and businesses in coming together to do things for themselves that will have a positive impact on their communities, environment and quality of life. Examples of this might include:

- **encouraging vigilance and empowering people to approach others who do not clean up after their dogs in a non-threatening way,**
- **educating and promoting responsible dog ownership in schools or through faith and other activity groups for young people e.g. Cubs and Brownies**
- **identifying businesses and individuals within the community who can either provide, or assist others in accessing affordable products and services that support the Council's wider strategic objectives e.g. low cost dog waste bags, collars and tags, veterinary care, pet insurance, or even know of someone looking to adopt a dog**

Clearly the opportunities are there and Colchester Borough Council is committed to supporting communities in achieving their full potential and developing communities to be proud of.

## Resources

Officers from across Colchester Borough Council have a role to play in delivering the objectives of this strategy, including:

- **Animal Control – responsible for the collection of stray dogs, enforcement of stray dog and dog fouling provisions and promotional activities**
- **Environmental Protection – responsible for the investigation of statutory nuisance complaints**
- **Zone Wardens – responsible for community engagement and providing assistance to dog owners and the enforcement of dog fouling legislation**
- **Environmental Health & Licensing Officers – responsible for the licensing of Animal Boarding Establishments and Pet Shops**
- **Parks and Recreation – responsible for the provision and management of the Council's parks and open spaces**

Wherever possible, officers are trained and developed to enable them to respond to a wider range of environmental issues in order to maximise Council resources. Resources are also shifted to enable a targeted, intelligence-led approach to enforcement.

However, as previously stated, the development and maintenance of successful partnerships is also fundamental to the achievement of our objectives and Colchester Borough Council is fully committed to fostering such partnerships.



## Consultation

Members of the public and key partners, including Essex Police and the RSPCA, have been consulted and this process confirmed overall support for the strategy and its objectives and in particular, strong agreement with the following strategic objectives:

- **Educate dog owners in the principles of sustainable and responsible dog ownership**
- **Raise awareness of the legal responsibilities associated with dog ownership and breeding**
- **Work with partners to reduce the incidence of dog attacks within the Borough and**
- **Ensure robust enforcement action is taken where appropriate**

Linked to the above, a number of comments, other ideas and suggestions were received and these have been considered and where appropriate, fed into the Action Plan accompanying this Strategy.

## Performance Monitoring and Review

The Action Plan accompanying this Strategy sets out specific and measurable targets for the achievement of the objectives and the team responsible for delivery.

The effectiveness of this strategy and the Council's performance against the associated Action Plan and Key Success Indicators will be routinely monitored and reported via the Council's website ([www.colchester.gov.uk](http://www.colchester.gov.uk))

This process of evaluation will ensure full accountability, the highlighting of successes and will also provide the opportunity for the early identification and intervention in respect of any areas of concern.









## Policy and Public Initiatives Panel

Item  
**9**

19 June 2019

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Assistant Director Policy and Corporate</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Owen Howell</b> ☎ 282518
<b>Title</b>	<b>Work Programme 2019-20</b>		
<b>Wards affected</b>	Not applicable		

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the current Work Programme 2019-2020 for the Policy and Public Initiatives Panel, providing details of the items of business that are scheduled for each meeting during the municipal year.

### 2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to note the contents of the Panel's Work Programme for 2019-2020 as set out below and to confirm the appropriate scheduling of work for the next municipal year.
- 2.2 The Panel is asked to discuss and approve:
- The methods for public engagement, as outlined within Section 4 of the report.
  - The format of the public engagement exercise at its meeting to be held on 25 September 2019.

### 3. Alternative Options

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

### 4. Background Information

- 4.1 The Policy and Public Initiatives Panel's Work Programme will evolve as the municipal year progresses. Items can be added to the Work Programme in two ways, either through Cabinet approving a request from the Panel, or Portfolio Holders and Cabinet requesting policies, strategies or other issues be reviewed. The Panel may also receive outline scoping reports on service reviews that are taking place across the Council and these will be added to the work programme when appropriate.
- 4.2 Approval was sought from Cabinet for the inclusion in the work programme of requests relating to the impact of Universal Credit / Austerity and the use of the River Colne to encourage more effective use from environmental and activity aspects. Cabinet considered and approved these requests at its meeting on 13 March 2019.
- 4.3 The two items named in 4.2 above are provisionally scheduled for consideration by the Panel on 31 July 2019 subject to the Panel's preferences and officer availability.

4.4 The Panel resolved to undertake another Public Engagement session, which has been provisionally scheduled for 25 September 2019.

### **Policy and Public Initiatives Panel meeting on 25 September 2019**

4.5 At the meeting of 6 March, the Panel agreed to consider holding another public engagement meeting, to encourage submissions from members of the public regarding initiatives that the Panel could review. Panel members will need to consider the methods used to encourage public engagement outlined below and confirm the scope of those ideas requested. The Panel's first public engagement session took place in September 2018 and it is suggested that the meeting scheduled for September this year be dedicated to this event.

4.6 Set out below are the arrangements which were undertaken in 2018 for the first public engagement event. Subject to any proposals and approval by the Panel, it is proposed that these arrangements be utilized again.

4.7 With regard to publicising the meeting, it is intended that the following communication channels will be used;

- Colchester Borough Council Twitter Feed - @yourcolchester – 13k followers
- Colchester Borough Council Facebook page – 5k followers
- Press release – 10 publications including BBC Essex, Colchester Gazette, Look East and East Anglian Daily Times.
- Colchester Borough Council Borough E-Newsletter – 3.7k subscribers
- Publish information on the Colchester Borough Council website homepage
- Publish information on the Colchester Borough Council Committee Management Information Website (CMIS).

4.8 In terms of the scope it is suggested that members of the public submit ideas regarding the Strategic Plan 2018-21 and the themes of Growth, Responsibility, Opportunity and Wellbeing. Members of the public may also want to contribute to items that are within the Policy and Public Initiatives Panel work programme.

4.9 In order to collate ideas in advance of the meeting, it is suggested that an online form is used. The form will be publicised by the methods outlined above and will invite members of the public to suggest relevant ideas. The form would require members of the public to provide details of the idea, the likely resources required and the benefit of reviewing such an idea. Responses received would then be put to the Panel in the form of a report at the meeting on 25 September. Members of the public would also be able to provide written submissions addressed to the Democratic Services Team at Rowan House.

4.10 Panel members will need to consider how best to conduct the meeting on 25 September and whether to emulate the format of the Panel's first public engagement meeting, held on 19 September 2018.

4.11 Officers have considered the different approaches and are minded to suggest that the structure of a formal Committee meeting is retained in order to provide a transparent and accountable approach to the ideas suggested. This also allows for the meeting to be recorded and published.

- 4.12 Public contributions could be made in three ways:
- a) Responses from members of the public received in advance (see 4.8)
  - b) Members of the public would be invited to attend and propose their ideas to Panel members. Members of the public would be timed, in accordance with the current have your say arrangements. Panel members may want to invite members of the public to structure their proposals to outline the perceived costs and benefits of undertaking such a review.
  - c) To be inclusive, provision could also be made for those individuals that wish to attend the meeting, but do not wish to speak. The provision of a flip chart and post-it notes in the public seating area has previously been welcomed by Panel members, and the Panel may wish for an adjournment be scheduled for a short period of time to allow members to consider those ideas that have been posted.
- 4.13 The Panel will need to consider those ideas suggested by members of the public that it wishes to take forward, either through a recommendation to Cabinet, or requesting officers undertake brief feasibility studies before returning to the Panel.

## 5. Standard References

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

## 6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 Policy review is integral to the delivery of the Strategic Plan's priorities and direction for the Borough as set out under the four themes of growth, responsibility, opportunity and wellbeing.

### Policy and Public Initiatives Panel Work Programme 2019-20

<b>19 June 2019</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Responsible Dog Ownership</li> <li>2. Work Programme 2019-20 and suggestion of items for consideration</li> </ul>
<b>31 July 2019</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The use of the River Colne in terms of encouraging more effective use from environmental and activity aspects.</li> </ul>
<b>25 September 2019</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Public Engagement – Survey Responses and Contributions at the meeting.</li> </ul>
<b>27 November 2019</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Impact of Universal Credit and Austerity Measures</li> </ul>

<b>15 January 2020</b>
1. Next steps regarding options for Colchester High Street: agreeing objectives, gathering data and consulting stakeholders and the public. <b>TBC</b>
<b>4 March 2020</b>

Requests awaiting consideration by Cabinet:

- None currently outstanding.