



# Policy Panel Meeting

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

**Wednesday, 06 March 2024 at 18:00**

**The Policy 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

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## **Policy Panel – Terms of Reference**

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

**COLCHESTER CITY COUNCIL**  
**Policy Panel**  
**Wednesday, 06 March 2024 at 18:00**

**The Policy Panel Members are:**

Councillor Jocelyn Law	Chairman
Councillor Lesley Scott-Boutell	Deputy Chairman
Councillor Kevin Bentley	
Councillor Sue Lissimore	
Councillor Sam McCarthy	
Councillor Rhys Smithson	
Councillor Julie Young	

**The Policy Panel Substitute Members are:**

All members of the Council who are not members of the Panel.

**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 will introduce themselves.

**2 Substitutions**

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

**3 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 registerable interest or non-registerable interest.

- 4     **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.
- 5     **Minutes of Previous Meeting**  
The Councillors will be invited to confirm that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2024 are a correct record.
- Policy Panel Minutes 10 January 2024** 7 - 12
- 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     **Presentation on Shared Services**  
Richard Block, Chief Operating Officer, will give an update on ongoing work on shared services options with partner local authorities.
- 8     **Parking Policy/Strategy**  
Richard Walker, Head of Parking, will give a verbal update on the progress being made on the draft Parking Strategy.
- 9     **Case for Change to Active Wellbeing** 13 - 30  
This report provides Policy Panel with an update on key strands of work that make up the Active and Wellbeing element of the Councils 'Fit for the Future' transformation programme. This proposes a shift to a more holistic active wellbeing approach for the Council's Sport & Leisure service delivery model.
- 10    **Introduction of a memorial policy** 31 - 40  
The purpose of this policy is to set out clear guidance and boundaries to members of the public about requests for memorials in public open space owned by Colchester City Council.
- 11    **Work Programme 2023-24** 41 - 44  
This report sets out the dates of the Work Programme for 2023-2024 for the Policy Panel and gives the Panel an opportunity to consider what subjects for which it may wish to request Cabinet approval for the Panel to consider in the 2023-24 municipal year, and to formally make recommendations to put these to Cabinet for approval. Cabinet may also wish to consider what subjects it might want the Policy Panel to consider during 2023-24.

12 **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 PANEL

## 10 January 2024

**Attendees:** Councillors Law, Lissimore, McCarthy, Scott-Boutell, Smithson and J. Young.

**Substitutes:** Councillor J. Maclean for Councillor Bentley.

**Also in attendance:** Councillor King

### 90. Minutes of Previous Meeting

*RESOLVED* that the minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

### 91. Asset Based Community Development and Asset Mapping Update

Tom Tayler, Community & Partnerships Team Manager, introduced the report on the Council's approach to asset-based community development [ABCD], working with its partners. £35k had been obtained from a pilot for local delivery by Active Essex. The training in ABCD was described, but this had been paused due to the Council's transformational programme and restructure. The intention was to restart this training in the near future. A video was played, showing the experience of the training provided, and the intentions behind ABCD.

The principles of ABCD were explained and local examples given, showing how these helped residents and how groups showed the 'Communities Can' values at work. A Residents' Panel had been formed to ensure resident views were fed into the processes and service provision. Many local groups had also fed into these.

The next steps were laid out, taking stock and discussing how the ABCD can support the work of different service areas. Community 360 hosted a Communities Can job, embedded in the community volunteer service. This had only operated for six months, but had produced good initial results. Ways to introduce ABCD training into staff inductions were being considered. Other local authorities had been consulted as to how the Council could build confidence as to how to use this resource. This would be a long-term change, rather than a quick win, leaning on what was already being done in order to maximise the effect.

The Community & Partnerships Team Manager was asked how ABCD could be instilled in communities and volunteers, to increase awareness and confidence. It was explained that the training was only for internal recipients at this stage, but other training was occurring, including via C360. The intention was for people to be able to pick this up themselves. The Council's work with sports organisations would provide vital learning to inform future work with groups and residents.

A member of the Panel criticised the work done, saying that £35k was a lot of money and that there were no signs of next steps. The Community & Partnerships Team Manager was urged to cut red tape and find ways to axe legal fees, to enable local groups. The Panel member stated that the successes mentioned were from local groups, not the Council, and that the Council had held some of those groups back. The Panel member argued that some of the £35k should have been spent on action rather than training. The Community & Partnerships Team Manager noted this feedback and offered to look further at what could be learned from partners and community groups.

A Panel member raised the use of Locality Budgets for ABCD work, and asked the Leader of the Council to maintain these budgets for the following year. Councillor King, Leader of the Council, agreed that Locality Budgets could produce benefits, but noted the challenges in forming a new Budget, which prevented any guarantees from being given. A conversation on this with all members was likely. If the Council was to ask communities to take on actions, it would need to assist with expertise. This approach had been agreed with Cabinet, the Chief Executive and with partner groups.

The demographics and diversity of the Residents' Panel were discussed. The Community & Partnerships Team Manager explained that the Council was working to improve the diversity and agreed to provide specifics about the Panel's make-up.

Todorina Hammond, Engagement Manager at C360, explained Community Asset Mapping (CAM), which was based on a range of connections. CAM led to a better understanding of facilitations and barriers to accessing services, and how to address issues. Citizen voices were key. The main barriers and enabling factors were listed, with transport being prominent in both, being an enabler across all areas, whilst lack of transport was a universal barrier. Evidence used included open resources in public domain, local plans and strategies, data from Public Health England and the local Director of Public Health, community groups, interviews, focus groups with residents, and feedback from interested parties. A serious issue was the difference in health outcomes between rich and poor. There were good services provided, but these were often over-subscribed and there was often a lack of public awareness of their work. 44% of individuals engaged with needed information and advice, rather than direct personal support. A list was given of reports published on wellbeing.

The future goals of CAM were discussed. CAM had been pursued for the past two years. The Engagement Manager explained that future goals had not yet been set, but neighbourhoods were using reports to identify different possible improvements. Examples were given, including addressing challenges of diverse communities, such as the need to improve access to public transport. The past use of hopper busses from Greenstead and Stanway to the hospital was discussed. Two Panel members argued that this had worked well, but had not been heavily used, possibly due to a lack of awareness of the service. A Panel member described the use of Locality Budget funding to help start the Greenstead service, via C360 and with County Council funding. The high need for physical and mental health services in Greenstead was mentioned.

*RECOMMENDED* to CABINET that; -



- a) Training on Asset-Based Community Development be cascaded out to communities, partner organisations and local groups
  
- b) The Council works to assist local groups by removing barriers and red tape currently affecting Asset-Based Community Development work

## **92. Essex Procurement Partnership**

Samantha Preston, Head of Operational Finance, and James Sinclair, Procurement Specialist [Braintree District Council], introduced the report by giving an account of work done to develop an Essex Procurement Partnership [EPP] offer, and future work planned for 2024. The purpose of the Procurement Partnership was given, including to improve procurement resilience and prevent paralysis at local authorities, which could be caused by unplanned absences of key procurement personnel. The Partnership was also being designed to improve access to procurement expertise and to provide expertise and best practice in all procurement areas, ensuring that all third-party spending is effective. Specialists in each area would provide value for money for each partner organisation.

Value for money was aimed for by accessing economies of scale through collective action to increase contract sizes. Collaboration would also reduce duplication of efforts and costs. New procurement regulations were incoming, and a partnership would help avoid duplication of form and process updating. All updates for all partners would only need to be done once. Unified documentation and processes would help to reduce barriers for potential contractors/vendors.

Procurement was a niche area, and staff were in demand. By developing a wider partnership team, this would improve career opportunities and improve staff retention. The partners involved in the EPP were shown, with discussions ongoing with several more local authorities. Significant support was being shown, and the intention was to create a true partnership. The team was described, and it was underlined that the procurement consultants were all fully and directly employed members of their respective teams, not external consultants.

The proposed governance arrangements for the EPP were outlined, including elected members, officers and senior management. Challenge and ideas from outside of procurement were desirable, in addition to external peer review.

A common approach to social value had been set out, and work was now needed to embed this. A large amount of work was going into improving transparency of spending, driving the value gained from spending. The proposed terms of reference for the Members' Advisory Group had been laid out, and additional funding identified and gained. The total value of contracts between current proposed partners came to £55m, split between around 700 contracts and with around 111 projects currently on forward plans.

The three different sets of priorities were given, with the aims to achieve the first set,

then the second, then the third. As Priority One items were embedded, the EPP would move to Priority Two items and so on. Savings would be sought for each budget, and a plan would be tailored set out what training was needed on procurement, delivered by Essex County Council [ECC]. This would include innovations to improve savings, and better understanding of specific areas of procurement. A timetable was given for planned work in 2024.

A Panel member complained that there was no Council Officer present to lead on this item. The Procurement Specialist was asked what democratic processes had been followed by the local authorities involved, in getting to this stage of the EPP, and where and when decisions had been taken and scrutiny provided by elected members. The Panel member also gave the view that, as councils would have less money in the future, more priority should be given to providing social value, rather than value for money. Officers were asked where the Council's voice was on this issue, and what split in priorities between value for money and social value had been set. The Head of Operational Finance explained that the Council asked to see social value, but that the weighting given to this depended on the type of contract. The Council did not have a defined weighting at this stage. It performed well in getting social value, but was looking to further improve.

The Head of Operational Finance clarified that the Council had not yet signed up to be a member of the EPP, and that much work remained to be done before potentially joining in quarter two of 2024-25. Consultation would be carried out and elected members would have their say. Social value remained of importance to the Council, and all partners would have their say going forward. There would be no formal decisions made prior to consultation.

The Procurement Specialist gave assurance that none of the proposed oversight groups were decision-making bodies, and that each local authority partners would decide and approve choices on quality, spend, splits between value for money and social value, etc.

A Panel member asked whether membership of the Members' Advisory Group would be in the gift of the Leaders of the partner local authorities, and requested information on expected economies of scale, and potential threats from market volatility. The Procurement Specialist agreed that it was important to understand the risks of each procurement decision. Some procurement would emphasise supporting the local economy, others would seek maximum value for money. It was for each partner to decide their own approaches. Rosa Tanfield, Head of Neighbourhood Services, explained that the Council's representative on the the Members' Advisory Group would be Councillor Cory, Portfolio Holder for Resources.

The Panel discussed concern that, if the intention was for the Council to join the partnership in quarter 2 of 2024-25, there would be no time prior to that for consultation with members, due to the ending and starting of municipal years, and election periods. The importance of members setting direction, rather than officers, was emphasised. Officers were asked what to confirm the average value of contract, the expectations were for savings, and what the cost of joining and participating in the partnership would be. The Procurement Specialist explained that data was still being gathered, so average contract value could not yet be confirmed. Contracts ranged from very large to very small. Savings had not yet been targeted as data was

still being gathered and due diligence work needed to be carried out.

Councillor King, Leader of the Council, noted that the direction had been set and approved by Full Council and considered by Scrutiny Panel, Governance and Audit Committee and Cabinet. The Leader offered to recirculate the December paper on this subject, for clarity. This had laid out that the cost to Colchester for the work on the proposed Partnership was £25k for the current financial year, and would be £40k in the coming year. The Head of Operational Finance pointed out that the actual cost to the Council may be less than the projected £40k, as the Council would be contributing expertise and resources, which would act to minimise the financial cost. The range of work this paid for was outlined. Examples were given of the benefits of working with partners, especially how this would help meet the budget deficit. Partnership would improve the Council's influence, scope and resilience. Richer services and better expertise would be available. The Leader noted that the administration could learn from the discussion at this Panel, and better present the proposals, progress, and how the Council was proceeding.

The Panel queried why this subject had not been brought to Policy Panel previously by Cabinet. The Leader noted the full agendas laid out for Policy Panel's meetings in 2023-24, and reiterated his commitment to giving members as much engagement as possible. The intent had been published, and challenges set out, in the pursuit of openness. Shared services was not a new concept, and the Council was not at the end of the stage where members could feed in their views. A Panel member argued that the proposal should have been put before the Panel first, and that the Panel should get to decide what work it undertook. Panel members argued that the Panel should be given the opportunity to make recommendations on such decisions. Criticisms were made that the subject had been presented as a *fait accompli*, that lessons should be learned from this, and that the item should have been presented by Council officers.

The Leader offered further talks on this subject, either at the Panel meeting in March, or in September. The Chair noted that the March meeting agenda was heavy, and that an additional meeting would be needed.

The Panel queried how economies of scale could be achieved, if each partner was to conduct contracting individually. The Procurement Specialist clarified that each partner authority would remain separate, that the partnership would not be a single legal entity, and that joint procurement would be conducted for partners where partners demands were matched. A formal consortium model had been considered, but this was not currently being further explored as an option. A Panel member gave the view that any consideration of changes to the legal structure should be brought before Policy Panel and Governance and Audit Committee.

The Leader clarified that the statement that Colchester had joined in 2023, meant that Colchester had joined the conversation on the proposals, not that it had formally joined any scheme. It was projected that the Council would look to do this in quarter two of 2024-25. The £40k cost for the year was a contribution to a variety of shared services work. Policy Panel had not been excluded, but the work was not at a stage where there was enough to look at, and there were no decisions to sign off. The Leader welcomed the Panel's input once that time came.

*RESOLVED* that the POLICY PANEL hold an additional meeting to consider the issues and concerns raised at this meeting, regarding Council procurement, and the Essex Procurement Partnership.

**93. Work Programme 2023-24**

*RESOLVED* that the POLICY PANEL approves its work programme, with the addition of a further meeting to consider Council procurement, and the Essex Procurement Partnership.

*RECOMMENDED* to CABINET that approval be given to the Policy Panel to review the Council's 'Responsible Dog Owners Strategy' as part of its work in the 2024-25 municipal year.

**March 2024**

<b>Report of</b>	Associate Director for Alliance Strategic Integrated Partnerships	<b>Author</b>	Rory Doyle
<b>Title</b>	<b>Case for Change to Active Wellbeing</b>		
<b>Wards affected</b>	All		

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides Policy Panel with an update on key strands of work that make up the Active and Wellbeing element of the Councils 'Fit for the Future' transformation programme. This proposes a shift to a more holistic active wellbeing approach for the Council's Sport & Leisure service delivery model.
- 1.2 The focus of this report is the policy review element which will enable the development of a new place based Active Wellbeing Strategy. The following areas of work happening alongside this:
  - Review of the Sport and Leisure service operational staffing structure.
  - Sport & Leisure digital system contract review
  - Review and development an asset strategy and delivery model for the Council's estate (including Sport & Leisure estate)
- 1.3 Work is underway on a national basis to review and reframe the public sector sport and leisure offer. Sport England's report [The Future of Public Sector Leisure](#) and the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) and Local Government Association joint report on [Securing the Future of Public Sport and Leisure Services](#) recommend expanding the traditional offer of public leisure into an active wellbeing service, doing more to create healthier and more active communities. This includes considering their alignment with broader strategic outcomes, particularly health.
- 1.4 The need for change is being driven nationally by budget pressures, ecological improvements that are urgently needed within the sector, and a growing acceptance that the sport and leisure model has not had the required impact in reducing health inequalities.
- 1.5 In the main current models focus on delivery via physical assets and facilities with commerciality as the principal driver i.e. return on investment through the generation of income. Whilst there are pockets of good work, the model is doing little to tackle the very real cost of health inequalities and lost social connections in communities.
- 1.6 The pandemic, energy crisis, and cost of living crisis has accelerated the appetite for local authorities and their partners to look at leisure services more broadly and re-examine the purpose of their provision.
- 1.7 Colchester has been one of three Local Delivery Pilot (LPD) areas in Essex and one of twelve areas nationally to test new approaches to building healthier, more active communities. Doing things differently and challenging the traditional model of sport and

leisure provision by working alongside communities has been a key part of the learning journey.

- 1.8 Given the wider national policy context, local strategic drivers and the changing needs of local people and communities this report proposes the development of new local policy for Colchester.
- 1.9 The aim is to enable a shift in Colchester's current sport and leisure model to one that is better equipped to improve the wellbeing of communities more broadly. Importantly it must be financially sustainable, contribute to the reduction in health inequalities and support integrated working with system partners as set out below, including:
  - changing how our leisure centres, swimming pools, fitness facilities, services and teams serve our people and communities,
  - be less dependent on formal physical activity offers through facilities,
  - better support active lives for all,
  - tackle health inequalities,
  - ensure that active wellbeing becomes an integral and valued contributor to the wider health and care system locally.
- 1.10 It is important to understand there is a broad offer of physical activity taking place in the community already not delivered or overseen by the Council. The aspiration should be to take an asset based community development approach to understand this better and where relevant work alongside and enable it to create a more diverse, engaging and sustainable offer of activity that suits people and their needs in their locality.
- 1.11 Policy objectives are required to provide the framework against which an Active Wellbeing Strategy may be developed, decisions on priorities and resources can be made and outcomes for our residents assessed.

## **2. Action Required**

- 2.1 Given the strategic and national policy directives Policy Panel are being asked to consider the case for change for the current sport and leisure model to a new holistic active wellbeing model.
- 2.2 Policy Panel to consider and make recommendations on the scope, principles, priorities and outcomes for development of new local policy in the above context.

### **3. Background Information**

- 3.1 Work is underway on a national basis to review and reframe the public sector sport and leisure offer. Sport England's report [The Future of Public Sector Leisure](#) along with the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) and Local Government Association joint report on [Securing the Future of Public Sport and Leisure Services](#) recommends expanding the traditional offer of public leisure into an active wellbeing service, doing more to create healthier and more active communities. This includes considering their alignment with broader strategic outcomes, particularly health.
- 3.2 The need for change is being driven nationally by budget pressures, ecological improvements that are urgently needed within the sector, and a growing acceptance that the sport and leisure model has not had the required impact in reducing health inequalities.
- 3.3 In the main current models focus on delivery via physical assets and facilities with commerciality as the principal driver i.e. return on investment through the generation of income. Whilst there are pockets of good work, the model is doing little to tackle the very real cost of health inequalities and lost social connections in communities.
- 3.4 The pandemic, energy crisis, and cost of living crisis has accelerated the appetite for local authorities and their partners to look at leisure services more broadly and re-examine the purpose of their provision.
- 3.5 This is emphasised through Sport England's [Uniting the Movement Strategy](#) and the Active Essex [Fit for the Future - Physical Activity & Sport Strategy for Essex](#). Both set a long-term 10-year vision, and both are committed to the importance of an active lifestyle for everyone, no matter how people choose to be active. Both strategies focus on tackling stubborn inequalities that prevent so many people from reaping many benefits that being active brings. Sport England has a strong track record of supporting the development of physical activity and community sport in our county, including the award to Essex of one of the twelve Local Delivery Pilot's (LDPs) that are using innovation and system change to tackle population levels of physical inactivity in our disadvantaged communities.
- 3.6 Colchester has been one of the three areas (along with Basildon and Tendring) within the Essex LPD to test new approaches to building healthier, more active communities. Doing things differently and challenging the traditional model of sport and leisure provision by working alongside communities has been a key part of the learning journey. An example of this work is [Essex Pedal Power in Greenstead](#) Which provides free bikes to residents making cycling more accessible for everyone and providing access to employment, training and educational opportunities or key local services.

#### **Why Public Sport & Leisure Matters**

- 3.7 Public sector leisure facilities and services can help the health and social care system focus on reducing health inequalities, and maximise prevention by enabling people to stay healthy, well and connected, therefore moderating demand on wider Council and other public services across the system.
- 3.8 More generally, the public leisure sector has begun to demonstrate the critical preventative role it can play across a range of health conditions including diabetes, cancer and mental wellbeing. Physical activity can also support secondary prevention for people with different acute and complex needs and most importantly, it can play a role in rehabilitation and recovery, which further alleviates pressures across the system.

- 3.9 As set out in the [Sport for Development Coalition's Open Goal Framework](#) the benefits of building an active society extend far beyond just physical and mental wellbeing. Having an active population helps to create connected communities, reduce anti-social behavior and increase employability by creating highly productive individuals. Sport has an incredible ability to reach into the places we live, reduce loneliness and build a sense of pride in place and belonging. Those who engage in sport and physical activity are less likely to feel lonely than those who are inactive. Local sports clubs and activity groups are community hubs; places where people of different ages and backgrounds, who may otherwise never meet, come together through a shared passion. Much of this benefit is only possible thanks to a dedicated and skilled workforce, including people who volunteer their time to make sport and physical activity happen in their neighbourhoods. Sport accounts for over 50% of all volunteering in the UK, and one volunteer creates the capacity for at least 8.5 more people to participate.
- 3.10 In a [measuring impact report](#) commissioned by Sport England the Sport Industry Research Centre at Sheffield Hallam University found that, when measured against costs of engagement and providing opportunities, for every £1 spent on community sport and physical activity, a return on investment of £3.91 was created for individuals and society.
- 3.11 The research showed that £42 billion worth of value was created from improved life satisfaction for 24 million participants and 3.9 million volunteers through their involvement in sport and physical activity. Building on the national report Sport England produced a simple breakdown of the social value figure [for each local authority](#). The social value estimate for Colchester it is estimated to be £257 million.
- 3.12 The wider strategic and policy context points towards an evolution of the sector, transitioning from traditional leisure services into an active wider wellbeing offer.
- 3.13 Co-location of future leisure offers within local communities will be vital where improved access to, and joined up thinking between services, can significantly reduce demand and provide more tailored and effective public sector and community support.
- 3.14 An effective active wellbeing service can provide frontline provision aimed at narrowing health inequalities between people and places - especially when combined with a wider place-based agenda.

### **Work Happening Elsewhere – The ‘Pivot’ to Active Wellbeing**

- 3.15 There are a growing number of other local authority areas working to transform public sector leisure. Common themes for this work include collaboration and whole system approaches that change culture, systems, policy, and practice to create the conditions for people to be more physically active.
- 3.16 Several other places (Greater Manchester, North Yorkshire, Oxfordshire, Worcestershire, Watford) reference their sport and leisure services transformation work as a ‘pivot to active wellbeing’. This means working towards a more integrated health, social care and wellbeing offer requiring meaningful community engagement and co-design services; re-imagining leisure facilities into community hubs for wellbeing; maximizing the use of green and blue spaces; and seeking every opportunity to build movement into the everyday lives of residents.



3.17 What the work demonstrates is that a carefully planned and executed Active Wellbeing Strategy should enable sustainable provision focused in communities with local people across their life course to start well, live well and age well with a particular focus on the least active.

### The case for change in Colchester

3.18 The current sport and leisure service model in Colchester is unsustainable. The Council is required to deliver significant budget savings requiring a significant reduction in expenditure, a significant increase in income, identification of new sustainable external funding streams or a combination of all three.

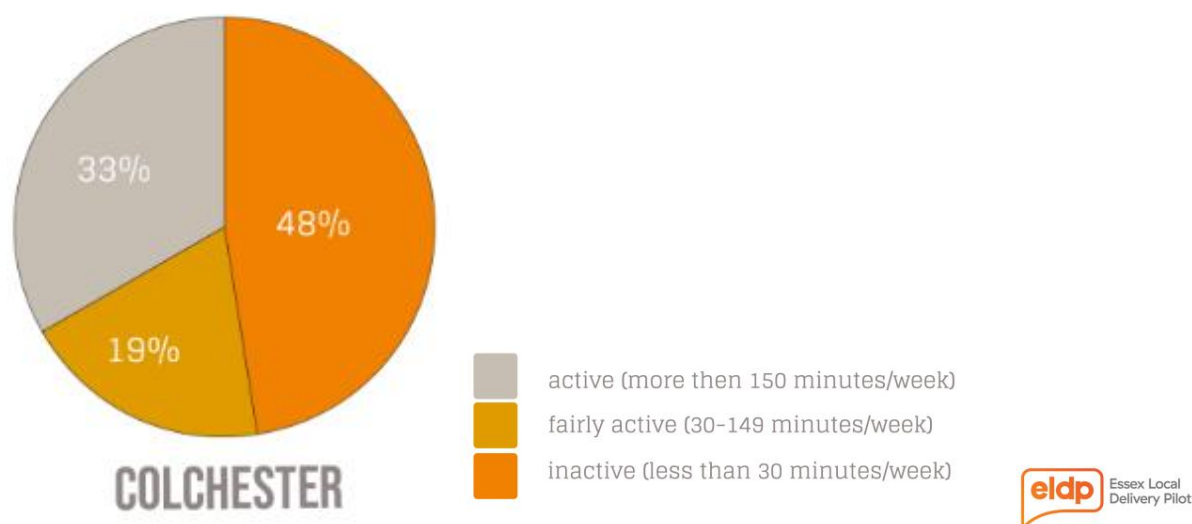
3.19 Feedback from stakeholders is that the current model lacks strategic vision and clarity of purpose.

3.20 The City continues to grow, along with demand for sport and leisure provision such as playing pitches, sports halls and swimming pools with an expectation that the Council delivers such provision.

3.21 The cost-of-living crisis is likely to increase barriers to participation in paid for sport and leisure activity for low income households.

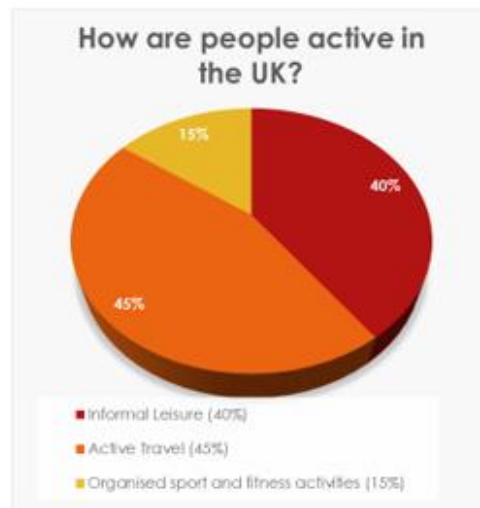
3.22 Even if the financial picture were less turbulent the model of delivery needs to change if it is to have an impact on Colchester's widening inequalities. There is little evidence to suggest the model is supporting those in most need.

3.23 Despite the highly publicised benefits of physical activity, most adults in the UK do not meet the minimum recommendations of doing 150 minutes (2 1/2 hours) of moderate intensity activity (such as brisk walking or cycling) or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity each week. Nationally, nearly 3 in 10 adults do not meet this guideline. In Colchester approx. 48% of the population are physically inactive which is doing less than 30 minutes moderate exercise a week.



3.24 In the past, the focus for providers of sport, leisure and physical activity was on providing more organised activities. This approach has been limited in its success in engaging sedentary people. The diagram below illustrates that most physical activity in the UK is

undertaken through informal activities and active travel. The picture is similar in Colchester and needs to be factored into future model development.



3.25 The operating environment for publicly funded leisure facilities is tough. Low-cost providers, changing customer needs and very high levels of capital investment required for venues to remain attractive and competitive and safe are all factors, alongside diminishing external funding for facilities renewal or replacement. Our leisure facilities (notably Leisure World) require significant investment in repair and maintenance to maintain current provision.

3.26 Sport and leisure buildings generate significant carbon emissions. Wet side facilities (pools) are inherently high consumers of energy, but the age of the buildings makes this more difficult and costly to address. Colchester Leisure World accounts for the largest proportion of the Council's carbon emission footprint equating to 53.7% of the Council's overall building emissions and 34.3% of the Council's overall greenhouse gas emissions. Cost estimates for the decarbonisation of the current Leisure World site are c£7m.

3.27 There is significant pressure on outdated and unsuitable primary care estate in Colchester. Whilst there are pockets of good practice, health and care, leisure, and community facilities in Colchester are not connected. There is opportunity to develop an innovative public estate approach incorporating primary care that supports the place-based partnership agenda.

### **Fit for Future Programme Update**

3.28 The Council has commenced a 'Fit for the Future' portfolio of transformation work which spans the next three years to respond to challenges we face to:

- Run council services within budgets
- Adapt our services to meet the changing needs of our communities
- Seek opportunities for additional income
- Invest in technology and the skills of our workforce to enable efficiencies and modernise services.

3.29 The aim is to rethink what we do as a Council and how we deliver it. Whilst this work will help to align us with the Medium-Term Financial Forecast and ensure we are closing the budget gap identified, it will also prepare us for the longer-term financial challenge that lies ahead.

3.30 The proposed shift to a more holistic active wellbeing approach and subsequent changes to the Councils Sport & Leisure service delivery model sits within this portfolio of work. There are cross cutting programmes of work running alongside the review of policy relating to Sport and Leisure as set out in this report, including:

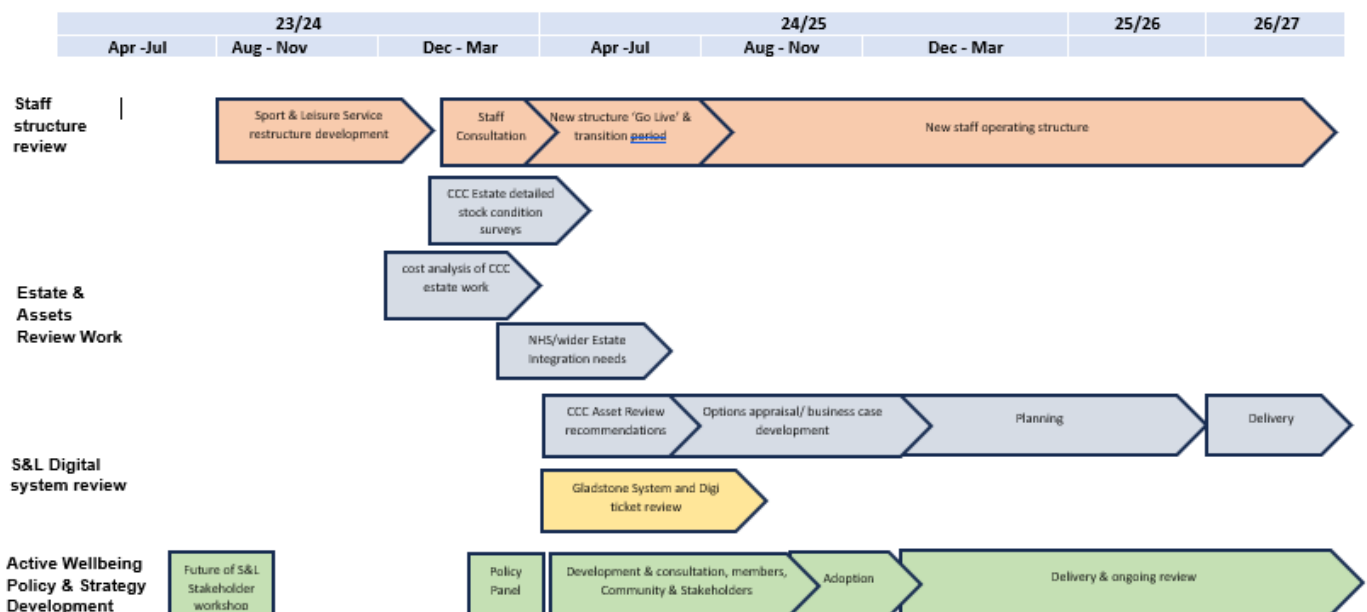
- Sport and Leisure operational staffing restructure
- Sport & Leisure digital system review
- Assets/estate review and the development of an asset strategy and delivery model (including Sport & Leisure estate)

3.31 Ideally policy will be in place to inform decision making and resource allocation of future work, particularly with regard to the sport and leisure estate, however the need to move a number of interrelated programmes of work together at the same time means work will take place concurrently. As such emerging insight, evidence and priorities from policy and strategy development will inform wider decision making as the programme moves forward.

3.32 The timeline below provides an overview of the main strands of work within the fit for the future programme. The review of the Sport & Leisure Service staff structure is currently in progress and at the point of formal consultation with staff. The proposed structure delivers a £200k reduction in staffing expenditure and aims to provide a more effective, flexible and resilient operational oversight of the business whilst providing capacity to support community outreach, business improvement and career development/succession planning which will be steered by the emerging policy and strategy development.

3.33 The review of the leisure estate is being undertaken as part of the wider City Council asset strategy review programme. This work includes:

- a forensic cost analysis of the ledger to provide accurate visibility of costs of the estate.
- detailed stock condition surveys to include 15–20-year life cycle costings to support financial planning beyond the current MTFP
- development of a 3-year action plan for the estate
- exploratory work with health and care systems partners re integration, colocation and use of council capital to support projects for secure revenue returns and community health improvement
- development of business cases/projects where there are revenue reduction implications or income generation opportunities.



## **4. Policy Development**

- 4.1 To help deliver a sustainable model and improve the wellbeing of our communities, work will now progress across multiple services, partners, and the voluntary community sector to encourage physical activity in a broad number of ways.
- 4.2 It is also recognised that there is a broad offer of physical activity taking place in the community already not delivered or overseen by the Council. The aspiration is to understand this better, work alongside and enable a more diverse and engaging offer to activity that suits people and their needs in their locality. This may be activity organised locally in the community, other providers as well as through the Council's offer.
- 4.3 A formalised Wellbeing model will help in knowing our communities better (e.g., understanding who is and isn't using services and why) and in getting the basics right. It will also contribute to creating space for good things to happen (through enabling work by the voluntary community sector and in community spaces). Consideration will also be given to learning from what hasn't worked well in the past, all the learning from the Essex LDP, and from experiences elsewhere of delivering and commissioning leisure and wellbeing services.
- 4.4 Financial sustainability and community health and wellbeing at the heart of the case for change. Policy Panel are being asked to debate and consider the aim and set of principles set out below. Once agreed these principles will act as the framework for future decision making, allocation of resources and development of future strategy that will be the vehicle for enacting how policy will be implemented.
- 4.5 The City Council through the NEE Health & Wellbeing Alliance and in partnership with Active Essex and The Active Wellbeing Society aim to develop a proposal with Sport England that positions Colchester as a willing vanguard test and learn pilot area for resource and investment to support Councils transitioning to new active wellbeing models of operating as the next phase to the Local Delivery Pilot work nationally.

### **Theory of Change**

- 4.6 Policy principles should shape our collective work with partners and communities to deliver sustainable change. The outcomes below were developed with stakeholders, and whilst these will likely evolve as thinking develops and there is greater understanding of the challenges, they form the basis of the aim and principles proposed.

### **Outcomes**

- A future engaging offer with and for local community to be active
- Fit for purpose financially sustainable services and facilities.
- Fit for purpose integrated workforce
- Services that reach out beyond facilities – 'leisure centres without walls'
- Accessible and inclusive utilising the wide civic and community infrastructure
- Positive measurable impact on local health inequalities, population health and social value
- Health system integrated – providing preventative and curative activity solutions.
- Shared place-based vision, accountability and alignment of resources

### **Aim**

4.7 In shifting to a more holistic active wellbeing model, it is proposed the Council will:

- change how leisure centres, swimming pools, fitness facilities, services and teams serve our people and communities,
- be less dependent on formal offers through facilities,
- better support active lives for all,
- tackle health inequalities,
- ensure that active wellbeing becomes an integral and valued contributor to the wider health and care system locally.

### **Policy Principles**

4.8 To achieve the above Policy Panel are being asked to explore a number of policy principles with suggestions set out below for consideration:

#### **People Focussed**

- Put people, their needs, and barriers to physical activity at the heart of our planning.
- Proportionate universalism - balancing universal and targeted provision in a way that's proportionate to level of need - focusing most on engaging the least active and those who face the greatest barriers to being active.
- More focus on activity that is informal, local to where people live and recreational in nature promoting participation with family and friends.

#### **Collaborative and Integrated**

- Take a shared place-based approach – prioritise partnership working with local sport & physical activity organisations, health providers and community organisations, bringing together experience, expertise, resources and skills and promoting joined up thinking to support local residents in accessing the physical and mental health benefits of an active lifestyle.
- Work toward integrated and formalised alignment of leisure, physical health, mental health and social care through the North East Essex Health & Wellbeing Alliance.
- Work toward colocation of leisure services with other health and social care services and facilities in communities.
- Leverage access to new and existing wider civic and community infrastructure (parks, open spaces, schools etc.) to make physical activity more accessible across Colchester.

#### **Enabling and Sustainable**

- Facility provision that is fit for purpose, financially sustainable and in operating delivers both positive health improvement and a social value return on investment.
- Emphasis on asset based community development (ABCD) rather than a public sector model focussed only on formal provision through facilities for a commercial return.
- Service provision not limited to physical assets and facilities with users closely involved in the design and planning of both programmes and services.
- maximise impact and value for money of services and facilities through colocation.

4.9 Endorsement of policy principles will provide steer and enable work to continue on the development, consultation and coproduction of a future active wellbeing strategy for Colchester.

## 5. Financial Information

5.1 The operating environment for publicly funded leisure facilities is difficult. Low-cost providers, changing customer needs and very high levels of capital investment required for venues to remain attractive, competitive and safe are all factors, alongside diminishing external funding for facilities renewal or replacement. Our leisure facilities (notably Leisure World) require significant investment in repair and maintenance to maintain current provision.

5.2 With a service principally delivered through the leisure estate risks associated with energy and utility prices remain a factor and impact on service budgets. To mitigate this a range of energy and water saving proposals are in development/being explored to reduce the energy demand of the leisure facilities. This includes £170,187 funding the Council has received through the Sport England Swimming Pool Support Fund. This also has the benefit of reducing the carbon impact of the sites.

5.3 The review of Council assets including the current leisure estate will inform options appraisals and business case development to inform future model delivery and required financial provision including through the Council's capital programme moving forward.

5.4 The budget position has improved considerably as a result of changes to VAT treatment of local authority leisure services. Previously local authorities were treated as undertaking a business activity if they provide leisure services to members of the public. Historically this has been a principal driver in Councils outsourcing to a leisure trust provider model. Following challenge from some local authorities the courts found that Council leisure services are provided under a statutory framework and can be treated as non-business for VAT purposes. This court ruling improved the Council's budget position by approx. £550k.

5.5 Tables below provide high level financial information and indicates the revenue budget cost of delivering the service in 23/24 is £191k moving to a positive £211k income position in 24/25

**Table 1. 23/24 Budget**

<b>All Sport &amp; Leisure</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Variance to budget</b>
Employees	£3,165,900	£447,509
Premises	£2,509,700	-£357,302
Transport	£1,600	£2,635
Supplies & Services	£1,092,600	-£19,092
Third Party	£55,700	-£2,676
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£6,825,500</b>	<b>£71,074</b>
Total Income	(£6,634,900)	-£70,470
<b>Net Position</b>	<b>£190,600</b>	<b>£604</b>

**Table 2. 24/25 budget (with proposed new staff structure in place from April 2024)**

<b>All Sport &amp; Leisure</b>	
Expenditure	£6,758,500
Income	£6,969,400
<b>Net Position</b>	<b>(£210,900)</b>

**5.6** The transformation work undertaken has already delivered a £200k saving to the budget through the review of staff structures. A further £26k saving will be delivered in 24/25 associated with the contract review of ICT systems used by the sport and leisure service. A further £725k saving has been identified for delivery in 26/27. Work is ongoing to bring forward this saving which will be informed by this policy work.

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

6.1 Development of the Councils policy and future strategy in relation to sport, leisure will be subject to a detailed Equalities Impact Assessment at an appropriate time in the planning stage of the programme overall and be informed by resident engagement to take place throughout 2024.

## **7. Strategic Plan References**

7.1 Research gives a clear picture of how community sport and physical activity significantly contributes positively to the Councils Strategic Plan with particular emphasis on:

- Creating safe, healthy and active communities
- Tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability
- Growing a fair economy so everyone benefits

7.2 The social value including physical and mental health, wellbeing, individual and community development is significant via routes such as a healthier population, consumer expenditure, greater work productivity, improved education attainment, reduced crime and stronger communities.

7.3 The proposed approach set out in the report recognises the wide health and wellbeing benefit of sport, leisure and physical activity including its contribution to closing the gap in health inequalities by targeting resources to those with poorer health outcomes.

7.4 The review of sport, leisure and physical activity and the related work to review facilities, estate and operational models of policy presents opportunity to deliver against the Council's commitment to the climate emergency by improving the environmental sustainability of facilities and by reducing their carbon footprint. Additionally encouraging facilities and opportunities that enable active travel will bring about further environmental benefit.

## **8. Consultation and Publicity Considerations**

8.1 Officers plan to engage with residents, Members, user groups, partners, and stakeholders to understand who is using leisure services, and for those who are not – what would encourage them to do so. It is imperative to understand what Colchester's communities want from the Council's leisure offer, whether the range of activities is

broad enough, and how the Council can work with its partners such as the NHS through the North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance to ensure those most in need of physical activity can access the right services, at the right time, in the right way.

- 8.2 Officers in the Sport & Leisure service, Community and Partnerships team are working alongside Active Essex colleagues and groups/community providers to plan a series of engagement events over the spring/summer in the community and at leisure facilities. Members and wider stakeholders will receive invites in due course.

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

- 9.1 See above

## **10. Health and Safety Implications**

- 10.1 There are no health and safety implications currently as a result of this report.

## **11.0 Environmental and Sustainability Implications**

- 11.1 The total emissions from Leisure World as measured in financial year 2022/2023 were 1,881.9 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e. This makes up 53.7% of the Council's overall building emissions (3505.21 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e), and 34.3% of the Council's overall greenhouse gas emissions (5491.81 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e).
- 11.2 Work is in train to identify and reduce energy losses from facilities building, as well as identifying how energy is used across the estate. Business cases for current and future use are in development including the successful application to Sport England (£170,187 grant income ) through the Sport England Swimming Pool Support Fund. Pro bono support has been received from Wolsey UK re development of technical solutions, desktop analysis and site visits which will inform and future capital investment requirements cross the estate.
- 11.3 The Councils facilities for sport and leisure have their part to play in the Council's approach to providing cool / warm spaces in the event of extreme weather conditions.



## Appendix 1 – Sport & Leisure Services Financial Information by site

LWC	Budget	Forecast P9	Variance	Forecast P10	Variance to Budget	Variance to P9
Employees	£2,377,100	£2,799,975	£422,875	£2,824,738	£447,638	£24,763
Premises	£1,788,000	£1,512,888	£-275,112	£1,512,888	£-275,112	£0
Transport	£700	£635	£-65	£635	£-65	£0
Supplies & Services	£785,000	£780,949	£-4,051	£785,829	£829	£4,880
Third Party	£15,300	£28,590	£13,290	£28,590	£13,290	£0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£4,950,800</b>	<b>£5,094,447</b>	<b>£143,647</b>	<b>£5,124,090</b>	<b>£173,290</b>	<b>£29,643</b>
Total Income	£-5,312,600	£-5,379,926	£-67,326	£-5,387,950	£-75,350	£-8,024
<b>Net Position</b>	<b>£-361,800</b>	<b>£-285,479</b>	<b>£76,321</b>	<b>£-263,860</b>	<b>£97,940</b>	<b>£21,619</b>
CSP	Budget	Forecast P9	Variance	Forecast P10	Variance to Budget	Variance to P9
Employees	£597,200	£588,321	£-8,879	£593,434	£-3,766	£5,113
Premises	£629,400	£581,262	£-48,138	£556,727	£-72,673	£-24,535
Transport	£700	£3,500	£2,800	£3,500	£2,800	£0
Supplies & Services	£274,800	£254,874	£-19,926	£260,799	£-14,001	£5,925
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£1,502,100</b>	<b>£1,427,957</b>	<b>£-74,143</b>	<b>£1,414,460</b>	<b>£-87,640</b>	<b>£-13,497</b>
Total Income	£-958,000	£-979,453	£-21,453	£-981,197	£-23,197	£-1,744
<b>Net Position</b>	<b>£544,100</b>	<b>£448,504</b>	<b>£-95,596</b>	<b>£433,263</b>	<b>£-110,837</b>	<b>£-15,241</b>
5712 LW Tiptree	Budget	Forecast P9	Variance	Forecast P10	Variance to Budget	Variance to P9
Employees	£113,700	£114,752	£1,052	£114,032	£332	£-720
Premises	£55,200	£46,283	£-8,917	£46,283	£-8,917	£0
Transport	£100	£50	£-50	£50	£-50	£0
Supplies & Services	£19,700	£17,067	£-2,633	£17,067	£-2,633	£0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£188,700</b>	<b>£178,152</b>	<b>£-10,548</b>	<b>£177,432</b>	<b>£-11,268</b>	<b>£-720</b>
Total Income	£-147,700	£-176,126	£-28,426	£-173,318	£-25,618	£2,808
<b>Net Position</b>	<b>£41,000</b>	<b>£2,026</b>	<b>£-38,974</b>	<b>£4,114</b>	<b>£-36,886</b>	<b>£2,088</b>
5713 LW Highwoods	Budget	Forecast P9	Variance	Forecast P10	Variance to Budget	Variance to P9
Employees	£77,900	£76,775	£-1,125	£81,205	£3,305	£4,430
Premises	£35,900	£35,300	£-600	£35,300	£-600	£0
Transport	£100	£50	£-50	£50	£-50	£0
Supplies & Services	£11,600	£8,312	£-3,288	£8,313	£-3,287	£1
Third Party	£40,400	£37,900	£-2,500	£24,400	£-16,000	£-13,500
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£165,900</b>	<b>£158,337</b>	<b>£-7,563</b>	<b>£149,268</b>	<b>£-16,632</b>	<b>£-9,069</b>
Total Income	£-143,900	£-148,887	£-4,987	£-148,072	£-4,172	£815
<b>Net Position</b>	<b>£22,000</b>	<b>£9,450</b>	<b>£-12,550</b>	<b>£1,196</b>	<b>£-20,804</b>	<b>£-8,254</b>

## Appendix 3 – Usage, Research & Data

### [Leisure World Colchester Customer Analysis](#)

The above linked report provides a full breakdown of customer use data for Leisure World Colchester analysed between dates; 1 Dec 2022-30 June 2023

#### Analysing Booking Data

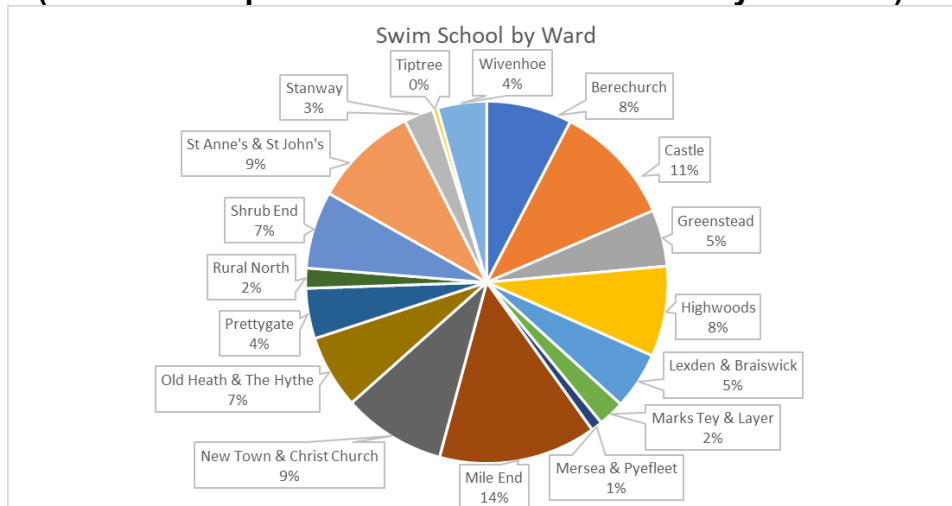
Personal data collected upon booking at our sport and leisure facilities has historically been minimal in order to make the booking process as quick and easy as possible – best practise in industry for online booking. Due to this, we do not hold the booking data required to gain a holistic view of our resident users.

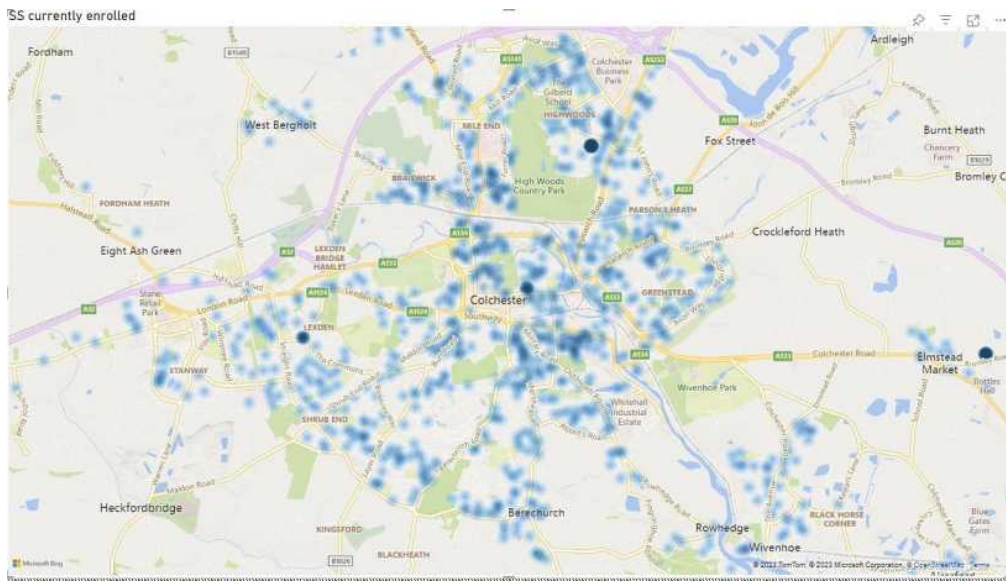
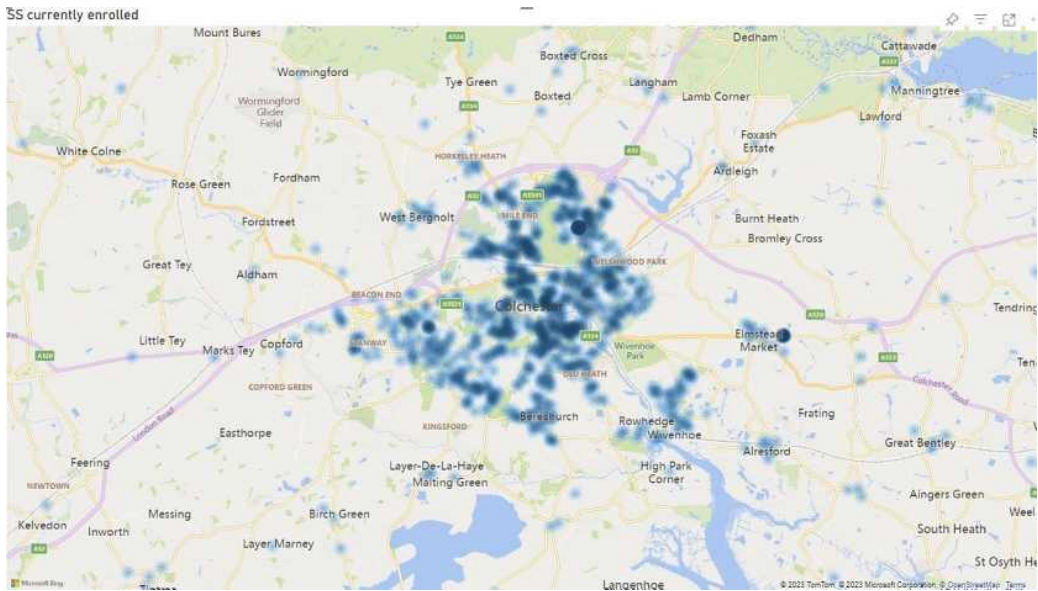
Our swim school and gym user data are the most thorough due to the nature of the booking process and need to collect additional data to process the bookings and so have focused on these activities when understanding the location of our users.

#### Overview of data

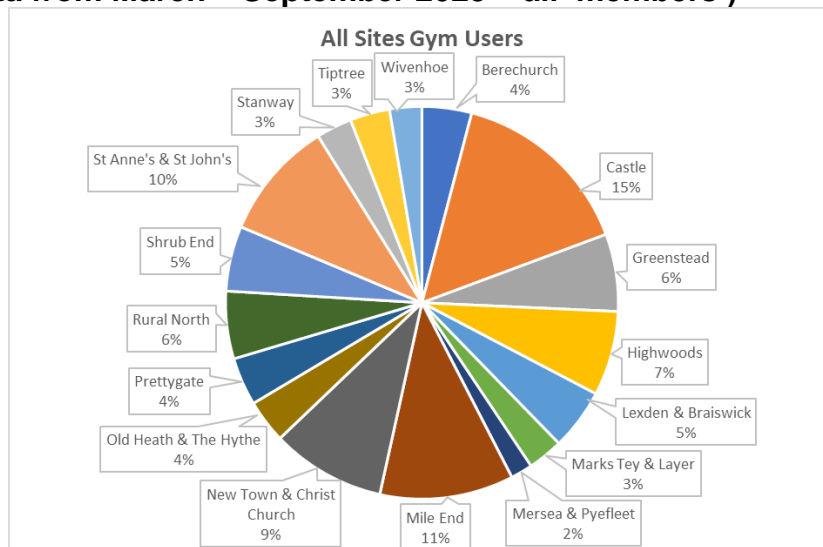
The data mapped and in the graphs, shows we have a level proportion of users from across Colchester. We are competitively priced and are one of the (if not *the*) most competitively priced swim school in the area – this may be the reason why we are still attracting from all wards, irrespective of where they rate according to deprivation. It is likely that this is also true of our gym pricing strategy.

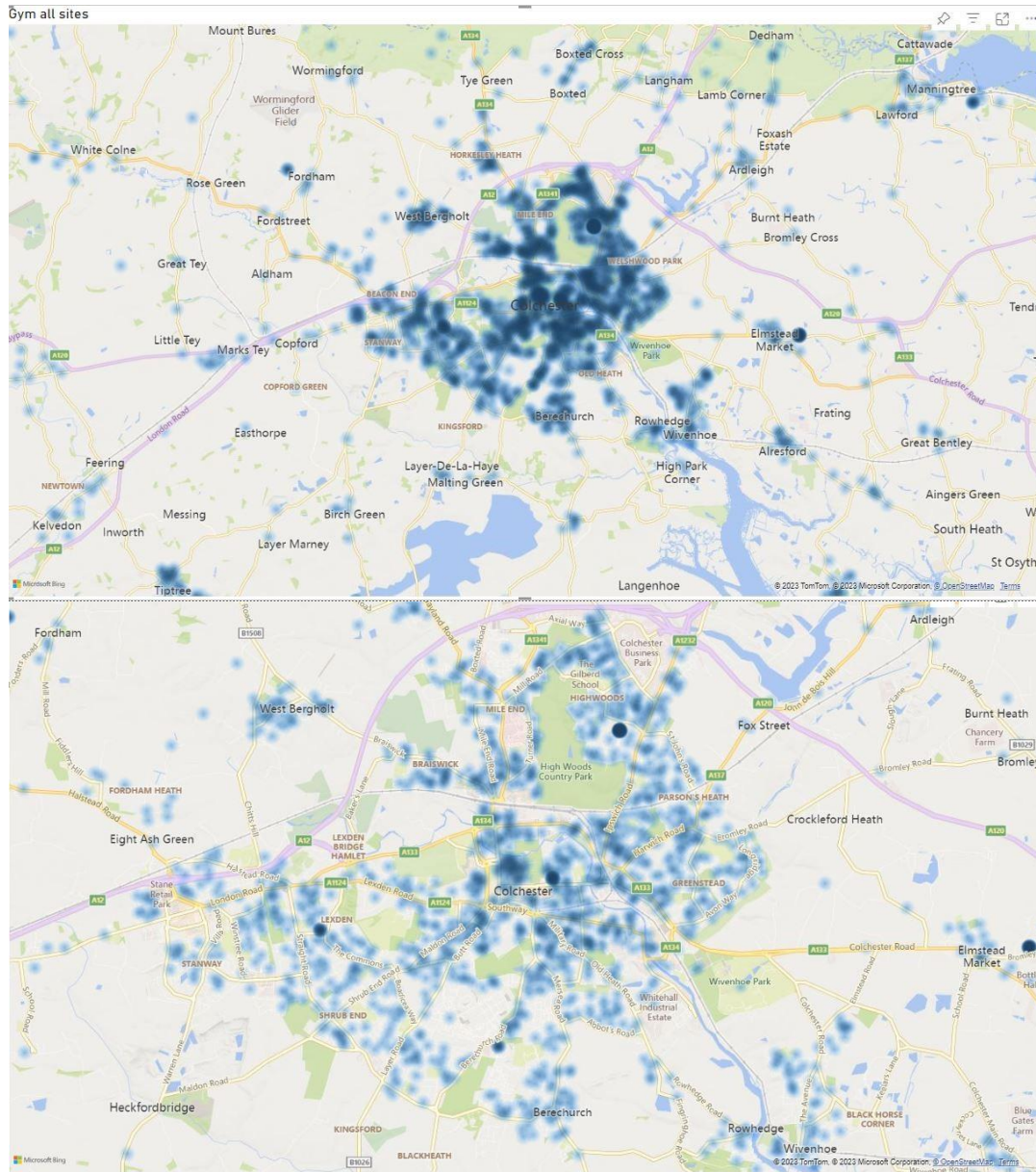
#### Swim School (Data from September 2023 for those ‘currently enrolled’)





**Gym Users (Data from March – September 2023 – all ‘members’)**





**Colchester Leisure World and Sport Park Usage figures 2023**

Usage/Heads 2023	CSP	Usage/Heads 2023	LWC
Jan	4877	Jan	67101
Feb	4850	Feb	67349
Mar	5117	Mar	64249
Apr	5359	Apr	56098
May	5114	May	54087
Jun	4820	Jun	51353
Jul	5272	Jul	63584
Aug	5808	Aug	68276
Sep	4699	Sep	52347
Oct	4649	Oct	55720
Nov	4279	Nov	45705
Dec	3616	Dec	33991
<b>Total Casual Use/Heads</b>	<b>58460</b>	<b>Total Casual Use/Heads</b>	<b>679860</b>
<b>Club/Hire Heads</b>	<b>72460</b>	<b>Club/Hire Heads</b>	<b>51912</b>
<b>Holiday Camp Heads</b>	<b>1373</b>	<b>Holiday Camp Heads</b>	<b>2060</b>
<b>LP Hire Heads (255 hires)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>LP Hire Heads (255 hires)</b>	<b>25500</b>
<b>Birthday Party Heads (88 hires)</b>	<b>1050</b>	<b>Birthday Party Heads (88 hires)</b>	<b>270</b>
<b>Cycling Course Heads</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>Cycling Course Heads</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>School Swimming Lessons Heads</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>School Swimming Lessons Heads</b>	<b>25331</b>
<b>Total Usage/Heads 2023</b>	<b>133643</b>	<b>Total Usage/Heads 2023</b>	<b>784933</b>
<b>Catering Transactions</b>	<b>53827</b>	<b>Catering Transactions</b>	<b>36580</b>

## Colchester Physical Activity Data (Source; Sport England's Active Lives)

Socio-economic groups –

NS-SEC groups are defined as:

most affluent (NS-SEC 1-2): managerial, administrative and professional occupations e.g. chief executive, doctor, journalist

mid affluent (NS-SEC 3-5): intermediate, lower supervisory and technical occupations e.g. secretary, plumber, train driver

least affluent (NS-SEC 6-8): semi-routine and routine occupations, long term unemployed or never worked e.g. shop assistant, bus driver

students and other (NS-SEC 9)

Nationally and across Essex, those from lower social groups (NS-SEC 6-8) are the least likely to be active. For example (Nov 21/22), 59% of adults in Essex from least affluent groups (NS-SEC 6 – 8) were active compared to 70% from the most affluent groups (NS-SEC 1 – 2).

In Colchester, activity levels for the lower social groups are not available for the recent survey (Nov 21/22). However, results from November 2021/22 indicates that activity levels of those from least affluent groups (57%) were lower than those from more affluent groups (74% active). Although mid affluence groups were also least active than lower social groups (50%) in Nov 21/22, but recent data indicates that activity levels have recovered (67%).

Furthermore, activity levels of those from lower social groups in Colchester remain below levels seen six years ago (61%) and pre-pandemic (64%). This may be the impact of cost-of-living pressures but also indicates a longer-term downward trend among this group.



## Policy Panel

Item  
**10**

6 March

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Head of Neighbourhood Services</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Matt Chittock</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Introduction of a memorial policy</b>		<b>☎ 07795 306882</b>
<b>Wards affected</b>	City wide		

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out clear guidance and boundaries to members of the public about requests for memorials in public open space owned by Colchester City Council.
- 1.2 This policy covers the general principles of the request and facilitation of memorials but does not aim to give details on specific designs of memorial items. This is to ensure that the Council retains the right to change the designs that it offers at short notice without changes to the policy. The customer will be given clear guidance on which designs are currently available during the application process.
- 1.3 The policy mainly covers frequently requested memorial items such as benches, trees and the spreading of ashes. Members of the public can request other items but the facilitation of this will be at the discretion of Colchester City Council.
- 1.4 All costs of memorial items facilitated will be charged to the member of the public requesting them. All factors will be taken into consideration when calculating cost including but not limited to cost of item, labour and running maintenance costs.
- 1.5 Many factors need to be considered when applications are received from members of the public regarding commemorations which include but are not limited to planning regulations, conservation areas and availability of space for items to be installed. Therefore, the policy makes it clear that the Council reserves the right to refuse any application for which it will provide the reasons for doing so in its response to the applicant.

### 2. Action Required

- 2.1 Review the Policy and make recommendations to Cabinet to implement the Policy with or without changes as agreed by the Panel.

### 3. Reason for Review

- 3.1 Although Colchester City Council does process requests from customers regarding commemorations for loved ones, it does not currently have an official policy in place. This has meant that whilst requests for memorials such as benches and plaques have been accommodated, it has been decided at the

discretion of the designated Council officer as to how this has been implemented.

- 3.2 Therefore, this policy has been drafted to ensure that a consistent, efficient and helpful response is provided to those requesting memorials to loved ones.

#### **4. Background Information**

- 4.1 The proposed Policy is set out in Appendix A.

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

- 5.1 The proposed Policy does not set out to impact on equality nor promote discrimination in relation to gender, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age and race/ethnicity. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) can be found [here](#).

#### **6. Standard References**

- 6.1 There are no particular references to the Strategic Plan; consultation or; community safety; or risk management implications.

#### **7. Consultation**

- 7.1 Consultation has not been undertaken on the proposed Policy, other than the discussion and review with the Policy Panel.

#### **8. Publicity Considerations**

- 8.1 This policy is putting a formal process in place for existing practices and is therefore not considered controversial.
- 8.2 All information will be provided to customers when they apply for a memorial item to be installed so that they can make a decision on whether it is right for them to proceed should their application be approved.

#### **9. Financial implications**

- 9.1 There should be no further financial implications to Colchester City Council as this policy is simply formalising processes that are currently in place.
- 9.2 All facilitation of memorial items will be at the cost of the person requesting them and not at the expense of Colchester City Council.
- 9.3 Factors including cost of item, labour and running maintenance costs will be included in the proposed invoice to the customer.
- 9.4 Fees and charges will be reviewed annually.



## **10. Health and Safety Implications**

- 10.1 Colchester City Council has a legal responsibility to ensure that its memorial areas are maintained so as not to cause a health and safety issue.
- 10.2 Items will be installed to a high standard to ensure that they are not a danger to members of the public. They will also be routinely monitored to make sure that this standard is maintained, and minor repairs conducted as appropriate.
- 10.3 Part of this policy states that should the item be beyond repair or in such a state as to be considered dangerous, then it will be removed immediately.

## **11. Environmental and Sustainability Implications**

- 11.1 Where possible, memorial items that are made from sustainable/recycled materials will be considered.
- 11.2 Installation of memorial items will require the use of vehicles to transport them to and from locations of installation and in most cases, power tools used to install them. We will try to keep this to a minimum where possible and look at alternative ways to reduce the environmental impact where we can.
- 11.3 Colchester City Council where possible will encourage customers to purchase trees of native origin and that are adapted to the conditions of where they are to be planted (e.g. can survive with low water requirements,).



# Policy for memorials within Colchester

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### 1. Introduction.

- 1.1 Colchester City Council receives occasional requests from members of the public who wish to place a memorial bench or item as part of a commemoration for a loved one within a public open space. These are often places with which individuals or families have a particular connection or special relationship. There is no legislative requirement for the provision of public or memorial benches although it is accepted that they provide a useful and valued public amenity.
- 1.2 This policy is intended to provide a guideline to applications for memorials in Colchester City Council owned locations. It is not exhaustive and is subject to change.

### 2. Background.

- 2.1 Colchester City Council does not have a current policy on commemoration items and historically, requests have been accommodated with decisions often being left to the discretion of the officer who has been allocated the request. The most common requests are for plaques on memorial benches, to which some, customers have purchased new benches, although in most instances they have only purchased plaques to be fitted onto existing benches. This approach, although generally accommodating to the customer, has resulted in inappropriate siting of memorial benches in some areas, maintenance difficulties due to a wide range of bench styles being used, and ineffective recording of memorial bench information.
- 2.2 This policy recognises the need for a consistent approach to the provision of memorial items in public open spaces. As resources available to the Council to provide public services reduce, much more consideration of the level of infrastructure that can be provided and maintained is required. Careful consideration needs to be made of the range and quality of infrastructure is needed to avoid items which are onerous to maintain, have a poor life expectancy or do not meet

# Policy for memorials within Colchester

the criteria for conservation areas within the city. In addition, opportunities to provide infrastructure for public benefit in different and new ways need to be maximised.

2.3 Colchester City Council will continue to welcome applications for donations of suitable benches and other items for appropriate locations in the public open spaces the Council manages. The operating principles below will ensure that requests for memorial items are responded to in a consistent, efficient and helpful manner. It will result in appropriate memorial styles being purchased and installed in appropriate locations to ensure they are easy to maintain and not unduly prone to vandalism.

2.4 With a number of existing memorials throughout the City's open spaces, it has become necessary for Colchester City Council to put in place this policy as a guideline for new applicants to understand locations available for memorial items, and the styles/types of memorials permitted.

2.5 The content of this policy will be revised as necessary to meet changing circumstances. The policy will be reviewed on a regular basis by the Council and proposed amendments will be submitted to the Policy panel for approval.

## 3. General principles.

3.1 Any memorial application will be subject to planning regulations and may be rejected on the grounds that it does not meet those regulations.

3.2 Whilst the Council will do minor repairs and maintenance on memorial items, should those items become too damaged to repair without considerable cost then they will be removed. The council will not be responsible for replacing any items that have been removed for the above reasons.

3.3 Applications to request any type of memorial should be submitted via the usual contact methods such as through the customer service centre. Acknowledgement of that application will be made within 7 days with the relevant officer responding to the application request within 28 days of it being submitted. This response will be either confirming that the application has been successful or rejected and if successful will include details of design options, prices and suitable locations.

3.5 Memorial applications for Colchester crematorium should be made via the Colchester City Council website using the email address provided.

3.6 Colchester City Council reserves the right to refuse any application which it deems unsuitable. The decision of the Council will be final.

## 4. Benches

4.1 Colchester City Council will reserve the right to choose which design of memorial bench will be installed at each location. These benches will be suitable low maintenance standard designs with the choice of bench being dependent on the location.

4.2 Colchester City Council will reserve the right to choose which design of memorial bench will be installed at each location.

## Policy for memorials within Colchester

- 4.3 Purchase of a memorial bench will be for the expected life period of the item only, after which time it will be removed or for a period of 10 years, whichever comes sooner. When a memorial bench is no longer capable of repair, CCC will use reasonable endeavours to contact the applicant in the first instance, if this is not possible, then the Council, in its absolute discretion, may remove and dispose of the item as it sees fit.
- 4.4 Colchester City Council does not accept liability for damage caused to any memorial bench or security of those items. CCC is not responsible for any replacement bench resulting from damage, vandalism, or deterioration with age. In the unlikely event that a memorialised item is stolen, CCC shall not be responsible for providing a replacement.
- 4.5 Colchester City Council reserves the right to refuse any application which it deems unsuitable. The decision of the Council will be final.
- 4.6 On memorial benches, plaques will be limited to 1 per bench.
- 4.7 The Council will accept only 1 plaque per bench policy. The plaque will be a small brass plate that will be fitted at the centre on the back of the bench. The size and design of the plaque will be determined by the Council.
- 4.8 Bench memorials will be leased for a period of 10 years with an option to extend this by a further 5 years after this period. Applications for lease extensions need to be submitted at least 6 months before the end of the initial 10-year lease period.

### 5. Trees/Shrubs

- 5.1 The public should be aware that in areas such as Castle Park and Highwoods Country Park, there are limited spaces for trees and shrubs to be planted as memorials and there is a need to maintain the area as a conservation area. Should projects such as new woodland areas be commissioned then there will naturally be more space for trees/shrubs to be planted.
- 5.2 The species of tree will be site specific and therefore the choice of species for any location will be at the sole discretion of the allocated Council officer. Customers will be made aware of the choices of tree species once the application has been processed.
- 5.3 Customers should also be aware that trees will only be planted during the Autumn period.
- 5.4 Trees that are newly planted only have a 50% survival rate and should the tree not survive then Colchester City Council holds no responsibility to replace that tree. Customers may decide to have the tree replaced and should they do so will be given full details on cost by the allocated officer.
- 5.5 The cost of tree planting will depend on several factors including location, labour and the size and species of the tree.
- 5.6 Any tree planted without consent on Council owned land will be removed without warning. Any person responsible for planting trees without consent may be charged for their removal.

# Policy for memorials within Colchester

## 6. Spreading of ashes.

- 6.1 Many people now prefer to scatter the ashes of their loved one in a location that meant something to them. Whilst there are no national laws restricting the scattering of ashes of the deceased over land, you do need the permission of the landowners if you're scattering them over private land. This also applies to Council owned land including open spaces. Applications should be submitted via the usual contact methods such as through the customer service centre.
- 6.2 Colchester Crematorium have their own designated area for the scattering of ashes. Details of which can be obtained by emailing the relevant address on the Colchester City Council website.
- 6.3 No applications will be considered for the scattering of ashes in Highwoods Country Park
- 6.4 There are several designated areas within Castle Park reserved for the scattering of ashes. These areas will be given to the customer once an application is submitted. Alternative locations may be considered but the final decision will be made by the officer dealing with the request.

## 7. Fees and charges

- 7.1 Prices for any memorial item will be provided to the customer on receipt of an application. Costs of any memorial item includes installation costs such as fixing a bench to the ground surface and basic ongoing maintenance if required. The price for adoption of a new bench will also include the price of the plaque.
- 7.3 Prices of statues, flags and other items will vary due to various designs and installation requirement considerations due to size and location.
- 7.4 Colchester Crematorium offer a selection of memorial options such as trees/shrubs, benches, and plaques. The full list of which and their fees and charges can be found via this link [Crematorium fees and charges - Oct 2023](#).
- 7.5 The fees will be reviewed annually and will be published on the Colchester City Council website.

## 8. Health and Safety.

- 8.1 As stated below in this document here the Government guidance refers to burial grounds. However, Colchester City Council has a responsibility to ensure that any memorial erected by us on our land is well maintained and safe. With public safety being a priority any memorial that is considered dangerous will be removed immediately and without warning.
- 8.2 In recent years the safety of memorials has become a focus of much attention and debate. The most recent guidance from the Ministry of Justice (2009) states that over the last 30 years eight people in the UK have been killed when a memorial has fallen on them. Given the number of memorials and the number of visitors to burial grounds in any one year, the risk of any injury is "extremely low." Action to manage risks in burial grounds, therefore, needs to be sensible, proportionate and undertaken in a sensitive way. Statistics from the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management indicate that there have been many serious injuries caused by unsafe memorials. They also highlight the instances where local authorities have been investigated by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE).

## Policy for memorials within Colchester

8.3 In the most serious cases the HSE has threatened prosecution. The Council is bound by the conditions of the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977. It has a legal duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and Occupiers Liability Act 1957 to ensure that its burial grounds are safe places to work and visit. Managing memorial safety, therefore, is an essential part of controlling the risks to health and safety.

DRAFT







## Policy Panel

Item  
**11**

6 March 2024

Report of	Group Manager – Neighbourhood Services	Author	Owen Howell ☎ 282518
Title	Work Programme 2023-24		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the dates of the Work Programme for 2023-2024 for the Policy Panel and gives the Panel an opportunity to consider what subjects for which it may wish to request Cabinet approval for the Panel to consider in the 2023-24 municipal year, and to formally make recommendations to put these to Cabinet for approval. Cabinet may also wish to consider what subjects it might want the Policy Panel to consider during 2023-24.

### 2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to note the dates of the Panel's Work Programme for 2023-2024 as set out below and to consider the proposed scheduling and whether it wishes to request Cabinet approval for work items to be added.

### 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 Panel's Work Programme will evolve as the municipal year progresses. Items can be added to the Work Programme by request of Portfolio Holders and/or Cabinet requesting policies, strategies or other issues to be reviewed.
- 4.2 Richard Walker, Head of Parking, has given notice that the draft Parking Strategy, that was for pre-decision consideration by the Policy Panel on 6 March is not yet at a stage where it is ready for examination, as it is currently incomplete. Furthermore, elements are still at an early stage where matters of commercial sensitivity would mean that the item would need to be considered in closed session. The Head of Parking has therefore asked for this item to be rescheduled, and for pre-decision review to be held in the coming municipal year, at earliest opportunity.

### 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 City as set out under the themes of:

- Respond to the climate emergency;
- Deliver modern services for a modern city;
- Improve health, wellbeing and happiness;
- Deliver homes for those most in need;
- Grow our economy so everyone benefits;
- Celebrate our City, heritage and culture.

### Policy Panel Work Programme 2022-23

<b>28 June 2023</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work Programme 2023-24</li></ul>
<b>2 August 2023</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grounds Maintenance Contract update</li><li>• Landscape, Nature and Waterways Strategy development update</li><li>• Work Programme 2023-24</li></ul>
<b>27 September 2023</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial inequalities and cost of living</li><li>• Future of Retail Vision</li><li>• City Centre: Marketing and Inward Investment</li><li>• Work Programme 2023-24</li></ul>
<b>29 November 2023</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</li><li>• Future of Sports and Leisure Strategy</li><li>• Work Programme 2023-24</li></ul>
<b>10 January 2024</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Council's Policy on Procurement</li><li>• Mapping and examination of community assets and asset-based community development approach;</li><li>• Work Programme 2023-24</li></ul>
<b>6 March 2024</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <del>Parking Policy/Strategy</del> Requested to be deferred to 2024-25, for consideration at earliest opportunity once ready</li><li>• Sports and Leisure Strategy</li><li>• Approach to local commemorations, including benches, flags and statues</li></ul>



