

# Scrutiny Panel Meeting

**Grand Jury Room, Town Hall, High Street,  
Colchester, CO1 1PJ  
Tuesday, 12 March 2024 at 18:00**

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

## Information for Members of the Public

### Access to information and meetings

You have the right to attend all meetings of the Council, its Committees and Cabinet. You also have the right to see the agenda (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>.

Most meetings take place in public. This only changes when certain issues, for instance, commercially sensitive information or details concerning an individual are considered. At this point you will be told whether there are any issues to be discussed in private, if so, you will be asked to leave the meeting.

### Have Your Say!

The Council welcomes contributions and representations from members of the public at most public meetings. If you would like to speak at a meeting and need to find out more, please refer to the Have Your Say! arrangements here: <http://www.colchester.gov.uk/haveyoursay>.

### Audio Recording, Mobile phones and other devices

The Council records public meetings for live broadcast over the internet via its YouTube Channel and the recordings are available to watch afterwards [here \[\(4\) Colchester City Council - YouTube\]](#). When it is not possible to video stream meetings, they will be audio streamed on the Council's website: [www.colchester.gov.uk](http://www.colchester.gov.uk)

Audio recording, photography and filming of meetings by members of the public is also welcomed. Phones, tablets, laptops, cameras and other devices can be used at all meetings of the Council so long as this doesn't cause a disturbance. It is not permitted to use voice or camera flash functions and devices must be set to silent. Councillors can use devices to receive messages, to access meeting papers and information via the internet. Looking at or posting on social media by Committee members is at the discretion of the Chairman / Mayor who may choose to require all devices to be switched off at any time.

### Access

There is wheelchair access to the Town Hall from St Runwald Street. There is an induction loop in all the meeting rooms. If you need help with reading or understanding this document, please take it to the Library and Community Hub, Colchester Central Library, using the contact details below and we will try to provide a reading service, translation or other formats you may need.

### Facilities

Toilets with lift access, if required, are on each floor of the Town Hall. A water dispenser is available on the first floor.

### Evacuation Procedures

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

Library and Community Hub, Colchester Central Library, 21 Trinity Square,  
Colchester, CO1 1JB

telephone (01206) 282222 or textphone 18001 followed by the full number you wish to call

## Scrutiny Panel – Terms of Reference

1. To fulfil all the functions of an overview and scrutiny committee under section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and in particular (but not limited to):

- (a) To review corporate strategies;
- (b) To ensure that actions of the Cabinet accord with the policies and budget of the Council;
- (c) To monitor and scrutinise the financial performance of the Council, performance reporting and to make recommendations to the Cabinet particularly in relation to annual revenue and capital guidelines, bids and submissions;
- (d) To review the Council's spending proposals to the policy priorities and review progress towards achieving those priorities against the Strategic and Implementation Plans;
- (e) To review the financial performance of the Council and to make recommendations to the Cabinet in relation to financial outturns, revenue and capital expenditure monitors;
- (f) To review or scrutinise executive decisions made by Cabinet, the North Essex Parking Partnership Joint Committee (in relation to decisions relating to off-street matters only) and the Colchester and Ipswich Joint Museums Committee which have been made but not implemented referred to the Panel pursuant to the Call-In Procedure;
- (g) To review or scrutinise executive decisions made by Portfolio Holders and officers taking key decisions which have been made but not implemented referred to the Panel pursuant to the Call-In Procedure;
- (h) To monitor the effectiveness and application of the Call-In Procedure, to report on the number and reasons for Call-In and to make recommendations to the Council on any changes required to ensure the efficient and effective operation of the process;
- (i) To review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of functions which are not the responsibility of the Cabinet;
- (j) At the request of the Cabinet, to make decisions about the priority of referrals made in the event of the volume of reports to the Cabinet or creating difficulty for the management of Cabinet business or jeopardising the efficient running of Council business;

2. To fulfil all the functions of the Council's designated Crime and Disorder Committee ("the Committee") under the Police and Justice Act 2006 and in particular (but not limited to):

- (a) To review and scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions;
- (b) To make reports and recommendations to the Council or the Cabinet with respect to the discharge of those functions.

**COLCHESTER CITY COUNCIL**  
**Scrutiny Panel**  
**Tuesday, 12 March 2024 at 18:00**

**The Scrutiny Panel Members are:**

Councillor Darius Laws [Chairman]  
Councillor Dennis Willetts [Deputy Chairman]  
Councillor Tracy Arnold  
Councillor Sam McCarthy  
Councillor Sam McLean  
Councillor Thomas Rowe  
Councillor Fay Smalls

**The Scrutiny Panel Substitute Members are:**

All members of the Council who are not Cabinet members or members of this Panel.

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

**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 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 registerable interest or non-registerable interest.

**5 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

There are no minutes to approve at this meeting.

**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 Decisions Taken Under Special Urgency Provisions**

To consider any Cabinet decisions taken under the special urgency provisions.

**8 Cabinet or Portfolio Holder Decisions called in for Review**

The Councillors will consider any Cabinet or Portfolio Holder decisions called in for review.

**9 Items requested by members of the Panel and other Members**

(a) To evaluate requests by members of the Panel for an item relevant to the Panel's functions to be considered.

(b) To evaluate requests by other members of the Council for an item relevant to the Panel's functions to be considered.

***Members of the panel may use agenda item 'a' (all other members will use agenda item 'b') as the appropriate route for referring a 'local government matter' in the context of the Councillor Call for Action to the panel. Please refer to the panel's terms of reference for further procedural arrangements.***

**10 Local Highways Panel**

7 - 24

The Local Highways Panel (LHP) is an Essex County Council (ECC) function where local Members introduce small scale capital infrastructure projects and prioritise them according to local need. Colchester City Council work alongside ECC to help ensure the City Council initiatives and schemes complement the ECC schemes and add value to the LHP outcomes.

**11 Portfolio Holder Briefing [Planning, Environment and Sustainability]**

A verbal update on work done within this Portfolio Holder's remit.

**12 Portfolio Holder Briefing [Communities]**

A verbal update on work done within this Portfolio Holder's remit.



**13 Annual review of Town Deal programme**

25 - 38

This report provides an update on our Town Deal programme.

- 14 **Celebrating Our City Status** 39 - 52  
This report details how Colchester is capitalising on its new status over the past year.
- 15 **Annual Scrutiny Report for 2023-24** 53 - 68  
This report sets out the work of the Scrutiny Panel during 2023/24 and requests that the Panel recommend the report to Full Council for approval on 17 July 2024.
- 16 **Exclusion of the Public (Scrutiny)**  
In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in accordance with The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended) to exclude the public, including the press, from the meeting so that any items containing exempt information (for example confidential personal, financial or legal advice), in Part B of this agenda (printed on yellow paper) can be decided. (Exempt information is defined in Section 100I and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

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

	<b>Scrutiny Panel</b>		Item <b>10</b>
	<b>12 March 2024</b>		
<b>Report of</b>	Head of Sustainability	<b>Author</b>	Jane Thompson
<b>Title</b>	Local Highways Panel		01206 508642
<b>Wards affected</b>	Not applicable		

**1. Executive Summary**

1.1 The Local Highways Panel (LHP) is an Essex County Council (ECC) function where local Members introduce small scale capital infrastructure projects and prioritise them according to local need. Colchester City Council work alongside ECC to help ensure the City Council initiatives and schemes complement the ECC schemes and add value to the LHP outcomes.

**2. Action Required**

2.1 The Scrutiny Panel is asked to note the role of the LHP and acknowledge the work that the City Council carries out, complementing and adding value to the outcomes of the LHP schemes.

**3. Reason for Scrutiny**

3.1 The Scrutiny Panel wishes to consider the operation of the Colchester Local Highways Panel and to scrutinise how effectively the Council’s financial contributions are being used.

**4. Background Information**

4.1 Local Highway Panels (LHPs) have been set up in all 12 Borough, City or District areas in Essex. These panels are responsible for making recommendations and setting priorities for highway schemes in their areas. The scope of the Local Highways Panel funding is set out in the [Terms of Reference](#).

4.2 The Panel is made up of ECC Councillors and City and there is also a representative of the Colchester’s Parish Councils. The LHP Chairman is appointed by the ECC Cabinet Member with responsibility for Local Highway Panels.

**In Colchester the membership is –**

ECC Members

- Cllr Sue Lissimore (Chair)
- Cllr Lewis Barber
- Cllr Mark Cory
- Cllr Simon Crow
- Cllr Dave Harris
- Cllr John Jowers
- Cllr David King
- Cllr Lee Scordis

Colchester City Council Members

- Cllr Jeremy Hagon
- Cllr Richard Kirby Taylor
- Cllr Andrea Luxford-Vaughan
- Cllr Tim Young

Parish Council representatives

- Cllr Sue Allen-Shepherd (CALC)
- Cllr Robert Johnstone

**4.3 Purpose**

4.3.1 The Purpose of the LHP is to deliver the:

- Locally requested measures that are not able to be prioritised for funding through other dedicated highways budgets but meet the desires of the local community.
- Road safety casualty reduction schemes as identified through the collision analysis. The casualty reduction schemes are identified and prioritised by ECC Road Safety Team and potential engineering solutions developed. These will be presented to the LHP for inclusion in their annual prioritised programme.

#### 4.4 **Decision making process**

4.4.1 The local community may request schemes via their ECC Councillor, who will forward them to the LHP for their consideration.

4.4.2 The LHP prioritise the schemes and may include, but are not limited to:

- Traffic management improvements
- Tackling congestion
- Public Rights of Way improvements
- Cycling schemes
- Passenger transport improvements
- Minor improvement schemes

4.4.3 Major schemes are considered separately by ECC.

4.4.4 Information on the LHP is available on the ECC website, and this includes a Schemes Awaiting Funding List which is updated with outcomes and decisions in line with the quarterly meetings.

#### 4.5 **Funding**

4.5.1 The budget for each district is set using a formular which considers % of total sum of Employment, Population and Road Length (from 2010) in each district from the total sum of Employment, Population and Road Length in county. This formular means that Colchester, jointly with Chelmsford and Basildon, get the highest proportion of funding at 12.5% of the annual budget.

4.5.2 This means that for year 2023/24 a capital budget of £500,000 was available. However, funding for this year has been supplemented with an additional funding of £250,000 for Footway schemes and £250,000 for additional footways minor works.

4.5.3 It has been confirmed that the Essex wide budget of £4,000,000 will be reduced to £2,000,000 for 2024/25. This will mean Colchester LHP will receive a £250,000 budget for LHP capital schemes in 2024/25. However, the LHP will also have the opportunity to bid for funding for larger scale schemes at the Chairmans' Panel, with budget yet to be confirmed.

4.5.4 The district councils can provide additional funding to the LHP, and for the year 2018/19 the City Council contributed £100,000 towards LHP schemes. No further funding contribution from the City Council has been allocated.

4.5.5 LHP also has a limited revenue budget which is used to fund traffic surveys that are required to support the scheme requests.

#### 4.6 **Example of recent schemes funded by LHP which help promote sustainable transport**

- 20mph Zone – Rowhedge Village
- School Advisory 20mph with wig-wags - Outside Fordham C of E Primary School, Mill Road, Fordham
- Speed indicator Device (x2) and poles - B1508 Colchester Road, West Bergholt
- Footway improvements - Monkwick Schools

#### 4.7 **How the City Council adds value to the work of the LHP**



- 4.7.1 City Council officers observe the work of the LHP to help ensure consistency with the LHP decisions and policies and projects being carried out by the City Council.
- 4.7.2 The infrastructure that the LHP funds, which enable more journeys to be made on foot, wheeling, by bike or busses goes towards a quality network encouraging sustainable travel choices. This could be by just installing dropped kerbs or speed reduction measures – sometimes it is the small interventions which can make a sustainable journey possible.
- 4.7.3 The LHP work within the policies adopted by ECC for example the [Colchester Future Transport Strategy](#). These policy documents tie in well with the City Council's Strategic Plan and [Sustainable Travel Our Approach](#).
- 4.7.4 The City Council carry out projects which help people to choose to travel sustainably, for example:
- Fixing the Link – wayfinding and improvements encouraging more people to walk the route between the rail station and city centre.
  - Walk with Words – arts and digital content wayfinding encouraging better walking links with city centre to the University and city centre.
  - Opening the first in region Colchester Car Club where users can use a pay as you go car instead of having to own a car (or a second car).
  - E-cargo bike Library – enabling those needing to transport goods to access an e-cargo bike for occasional services.
  - Opening the first in region Secure Cycle Park for those working or visiting the city centre to be confident that their bikes will be safe and secure
  - Improvements to Wivenhoe Trail to better link the Wivenhoe to Colchester and University.
  - Hosting the Colchester Travel Plan Club to help local employers to embrace sustainable travel reaching over 20,000 employees and 20,000 students.
  - Planning for active and sustainable environments making sure new developments encourage sustainable travel and link up with existing walking and cycling networks.
- 4.7.5 And working with ECC on major schemes for example:
- Town Deal Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP4) city centre to University and Greenstead
  - Levelling up Fund (LUF) St Botolph's roundabout scheme to improve access by sustainable modes as part of the area's urban regeneration
  - Active Travel routes giving better access to and through the city centre

As well as policy documents to help target investment in Colchester's infrastructure.

## 5. Strategic Plan References

- 5.1 The work of the LHP is in line with the vision, themes and objectives of the [Three-Year Plan 2023-26: A City fit for the Future - Colchester City Council](#)
- [Respond to the climate emergency](#)
  - [Improve health, wellbeing and happiness](#)
  - [Grow our economy so everyone benefits](#)

## 6. Consultation

- 6.1 There are no consultation considerations for the City Council as the LHP is an ECC function. Any schemes which come forward as part of the LHP prioritisation will be subjected to any consultation which may be required by ECC.

## **7. Publicity Considerations**

- 7.1 There are no publicity considerations for the City Council as the LHP is an ECC function. Any schemes which come forward as part of the LHP prioritisation will be subjected to any publicity which may be required by ECC.

## **8. Financial implications**

- 8.1 There are no financial considerations for the City Council as the LHP is an ECC function and the City Council does not contribute towards its schemes.

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

- 9.1 City Council Members can influence the work of the LHP and if sustainable and active travel schemes are priorities then this can have a benefit to health, wellbeing and community Safety.

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

- 10.1 City Council Members can influence the work of the LHP and if sustainable and active travel schemes are priorities then this can have a health and safety benefit to those living, working or visiting the city.

## **11. Risk Management Implications**

- 11.1 There are no specific risk management implications contained in this report.

## **12. Environmental and Sustainability Implications**

- 12.1 City Council Members can influence the work of the LHP and if sustainable and active travel schemes are priorities then this can have a positive outcome for the environment and sustainability of Colchester.

### **Background papers**

[Colchester LHP | Essex County Council \(essexhighways.org\)](https://www.essexhighways.org/colchester-lhp)

[terms of reference final.pdf \(essexhighways.org\)](#)

[ECC Colchester Future Transport Strategy](#)

[CCC Sustainable Travel – Our Approach](#)



---

# SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL – OUR APPROACH

Sustainability, Transport & Climate Change Team, 2022

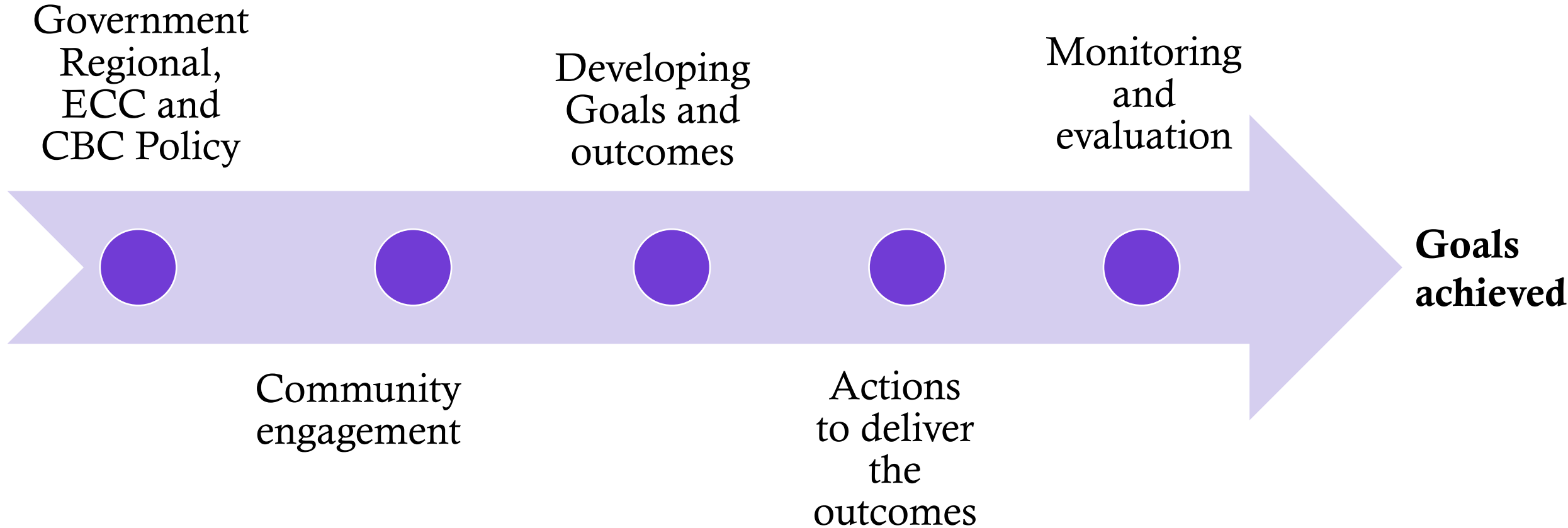
---

# CONTEXT

- Sustainable Travel is embedded within CBC's Strategic Plan and Climate Emergency Action Plan
- How it aligns with ECC workstreams – Active Travel Fund, Colchester Future Transport Strategy and others
- Aligns with national Government policy

---

# OUR APPROACH



---

# HOW WE'VE HONED OUR APPROACH



Internal meetings to map out workstreams and identify goals and outcomes



Engagement with ECC and other partners to ensure work aligns



Synthesised engagement with residents

---

**KEY  
BARRIERS:**

**Lack of  
walking/cycling  
infrastructure**

**Expensive/unavailable  
sustainable travel options**

**WHAT  
RESIDENTS  
SAY**

**Poor air quality and  
environment**

**Poor health of  
residents**

**Lack of  
confidence/perceived  
safety**

---

# RESIDENT SURVEYS

## **Air Quality (Clean Air for Colchester Survey 2019-2020)**

- 41% think Colchester is highly polluted
- 87% concerned about pollution levels in Colchester

## **Electric Vehicles (Positive Parking Strategy 2020)**

- 37% of respondents want EV charge points in car parks
  - **Shared travel (2021 survey; events & via door knocking)**
  - 68% interested in shared sustainable transport schemes (I.e., ebikes, ecargo bikes and ecar club)
  - 43% consider giving up a first or second car if they have access to a shared transport scheme
- 





---

# RESIDENT SURVEYS CONTINUED



## Walking and Cycling

- ECC's Colchester Future Transport Strategy consultation showed that those who regularly drive for short and medium distances, would be encouraged to cycle more often if segregated routes were provided
- **84%** of Monkwick residents wanted to walk and cycle more (Get Monkwick moving survey, 2021)
- **100%** of children say that they want to cycle more as a result of completing bikeability (Bikeability evaluation)

---

# GOAL 1: INCREASED PROPORTION OF SHORT TRIPS MADE VIA SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

**Outcome 1:** More uptake of walking and cycling for short journeys such as for work, shopping, school drop-off.

**Outcome 2:** More businesses trialling eCargo bikes and opting for sustainable transport options

**Outcome 3:** People are aware of the walking and cycling network leading to greater use of them

**Outcome 4:** People feel confident about locking up their bikes safely in the town centre, so feel more willing to cycle into town.

**Outcome 5:** Widespread take up and recognition of the benefits of cycle training to build confidence, safer cycling practices.

---

## **GOAL 2: REDUCTION IN AIR POLLUTANTS IN THE AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREAS TRANSLATING INTO BETTER HEALTH**

**Outcome 6:** Residents and businesses use range of sustainable shared transport options on a pay as you go basis

**Outcome 7:** More people switching off their engines when stationary

**Outcome 8:** Understanding within CBC and ECC as to how the EV transition should be promoted in Colchester

**Outcome 9:** Residents understand and feel more supported and confident about transitioning to use an electric vehicle in Colchester.

**Outcome 10:** Shared transport choices are accessible to all sections of our community regardless of income

---

# OUR ACTIVITIES – SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL INFRASTRUCTURE

- Lobby for investment in sustainable transport infrastructure - rural and urban
- Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plans
- Active Travel Fund routes
- Town Deal
- S106 contributions
- Fixing the Link
- Secure Cycle Parking – CBK and shared transport

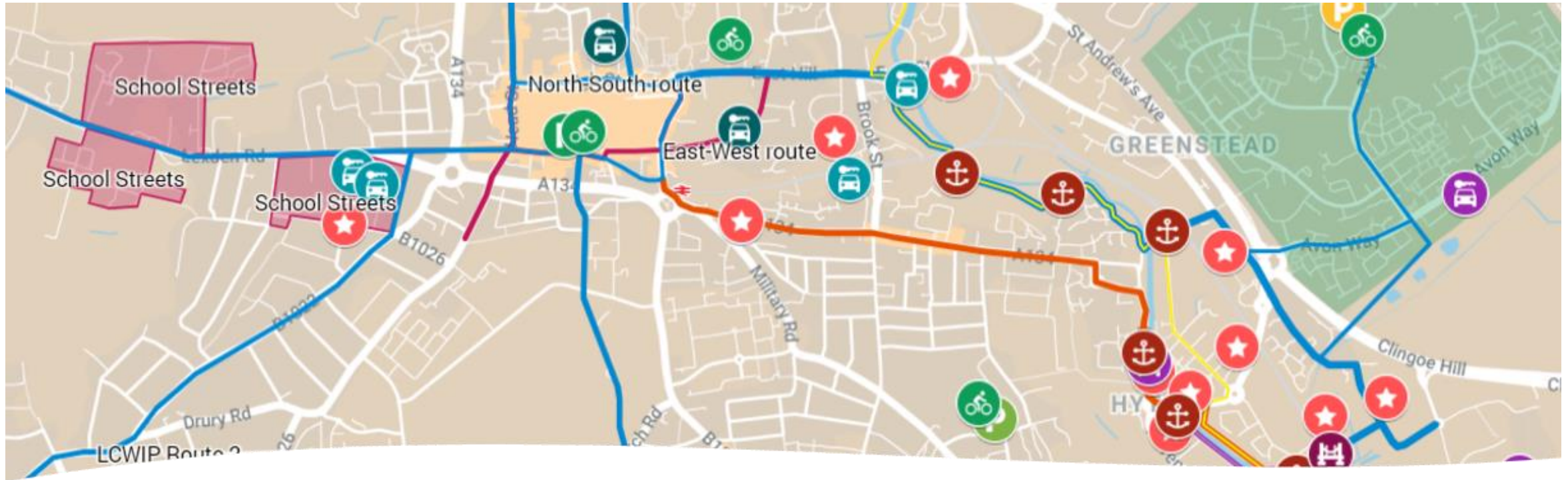


---

# OUR ACTIVITIES – PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

- Colchester Travel Plan Club
- Bus Service Improvement Plan
- E-scooter trial
- Colchester eCargo bike library
- ECC delivered Adult Free cycle training
- Bikeability Plus
- Clean Air for Colchester phase 2
- Orbital
- Shared Transport Hubs – Bikes and e-car club





## Walking/ Cycling & Shared Transport Map

[Sustainable travel and transport choice - Google My Maps](#)

---

# NEXT STEPS

Use our Sustainable Travel approach to -

- apply for future funding, initiate new projects and steer our future work
- deliver this work in partnership with Essex County Council and others
- enable and promote sustainable travel initiatives
- develop a Sustainable Travel Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)







## Scrutiny Panel

Item  
**13**

March 24

Report of

Deputy Chief Executive

Author Matt Sterling

Title

Annual review of Town Deal programme

Wards affected

All Town wards

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on our Town Deal programme.
- 1.2 The governance and monitoring of performance for the Town Deal is managed by the independent We Are Colchester Board. However, the Council is the accountable body for the funds provided by Government.
- 1.3 The Town Deal is one of several programmes being delivered to support the economy and communities in our area. Many of these funds are within the Government's Levelling Up initiative.

### 2. Action Required

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to consider the progress made to date.

### 3. Reason for Scrutiny

- 3.1 Scrutiny Panel has requested annual updates on our progress delivering the projects which form part of our Town Deal. This report is the second of our annual progress reports to Scrutiny Panel.

## 4. Background Information

- 4.1 In response to the Government's Town Deal Programme, Colchester was one of 101 English towns invited to submit a Town Investment Plan (TIP) and bid for up to £25m. In response, Colchester City Council (CCC) with Essex County Council and others established the 'We are Colchester' board. The TIP for Colchester was submitted to Government on 29 October 2020, and an £18.2m award was made to Colchester in March 2021. This was in addition to £1m for the accelerated Town Deal projects which were the improvements to the Balkerne Gate area and the St Nicholas Square project. The TIP covers just the wider urban area of Colchester.
- 4.2 The Town Deal Programme and our TIP were required to reflect six specific intervention themes prescribed by the then Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, these being: 1) Local transport, 2) Digital connectivity, 3) Urban regeneration, planning and land use, 4) Arts, culture, and heritage, 5) Skills infrastructure, 6) Enterprise infrastructure.
- 4.3 'We are Colchester' was established and launched in January 2020, comprising of a board chaired by an independent person, and including key organisations and interests. The programme developed a vision which was designed to provide a platform for strategic intervention at a scale which will achieve transformation, whilst complimenting local economic and place-making activity.
- 4.4 Decisions about the projects included in our Town Deal were made by the independent We Are Colchester Board. Colchester City Council acts as accountable body for the monies. The accountable body role includes a:
- Commitment to manage the secretariat to the Town Deal board, including member and senior officer leadership and involvement in the board.
  - Commitment to managing external relationships including with the members of the partnership, local MPs, and other key stakeholders.
  - Commitment to help to develop the role of the Town Deal board into the next phase and provide wider leadership including for example developing our strategic relationships with BID (Business Improvement District), University, Health and Business – to drive investment in Colchester in a strong, coherent and visible 'whole place' manner.
  - Commitment of CCC officer time and capacity to progress to the next stage (business case development), noting there will be no further provision of capacity funding from government.
  - Committing to holding responsibility for financial management, audit and delivery assurance of the £19.2m capital programme; in line with existing CCC models of governance for capital programmes.
- 4.5 Following the announcement of Colchester's Town Deal award in March 2021, the Town Deal Board agreed plans to manage the lower £19.2m award (from the £25m original grant submission).
- 4.6 The Council was required to, (and did), complete the following steps:
- Instigate a specific Town Deal board (makeup prescribed by Government): set up in January 2020
  - Prepare and submit a full Town Investment Plan: submitted October 2020
  - Following submission, and confirmation of our conditional award and Heads of Terms in March 2021, the Council has been required to:

- Confirm final list of projects to be taken forward to business case development - submit project confirmation documents to Government: June 2021
      - Submit updated financial profiles for each project: September 2021
    - Prepare Business Cases for the key workstreams or where required projects.
    - Submit summary documents (relating to each of the business cases) to Government by 24th March 2022.
- 4.7 Over time other related streams of work are emerging such as our successful application from the Government's Levelling Up Fund and our UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation.
- 4.8 During the Winter of 2021/2, officers and partners developed detailed Business Cases for each project. This work included convening project teams, engagement with stakeholders, detailed planning, architectural design work and cost estimation.
- 4.9 Each Business Case covers five themes which cover the strategic scope, alignment and case for the project, the economic benefits, the financial case, commercial opportunities and viability, and the approach to management. These are detailed plans which are Green Book compliant and have been subject to independent expert support and challenge.
- 4.10 These Businesses Cases were reviewed by the Council's Section 151 Officer who independently assessed the sustainability, viability, and value for money of each business case to ensure they are sound.
- 4.11 The development of these Business Cases resulted in all projects being assured sound and viable to progress.
- 4.12 The necessary documents were submitted to Government in March 2022.
- 4.13 Since then, Service Level Agreements have been signed with Essex County Council covering the 6 projects they are leading on, and North Essex Heritage for the Jumbo project. The agreements help to manage the release of monies and assure agreed outcomes.
- 4.14 In August 2022, Government confirmed it had approved all our Business Cases and would therefore be releasing our full first year tranche of funding which was paid to us on 12 August 2022.
- 4.15 Since that approval we have been working to deliver each project.

## **5. Outcomes**

- 5.1 The detailed Business Cases for each group – or theme - of projects contain details of outcomes and benefits. These include direct 'easy-to-measure' outcomes of the work, and wider benefits. For some of the projects they also contain wider economic benefits.
- 5.2 These outcomes will be delivered as projects are built out. It will be possible to report these to Scrutiny Panel at future meetings as the capital works in the

programme are completed and these benefits begin to accrue. In the meantime, progress to deliver outputs is possible.

## 6. Recent Progress

- 6.1 The independent We Are Colchester board, and the CCC-led Town Deal Operational Board are meeting regularly and monitoring progress, engagement, spend, and risks. They are also making decisions where required about individual projects. To assist with this, the Operational Board receives updates from the Programme Manager, project sponsors or owners along with some project managers, and the Council's Section 151 Officer.
- 6.2 With engagement at the heart of our Town Deal programme, activity to include people and hear their views is embedded within the delivery of projects and at programme level. This has recently included sessions with the Residents Panel and with the 6th Form College, in-person and survey engagement with business owners, and dedicated sessions with Members and with stakeholders such as the Civic Society.
- 6.3 For the individual projects an update on the current position is shown below:
- 6.4 **Heart of Greenstead**
- 6.5 This theme will create a refreshed and expanded multi-agency community hub, build affordable new housing, and attractive public space whilst helping those furthest from employment and training to participate. It will also promote a 'liveable neighbourhood' which gives freedom by making walking and cycling easy and safe and providing bikes.
- 6.6 **Tamarisk Way:** Following the appointment of the architect and further community engagement, the initial designs drafted were over budget. Revised designs have now been submitted and the design and budgets are being considered by the Heart of Greenstead and We Are Colchester Boards.
- 6.7 After protracted negotiations over land value, the land acquisition for housing from Notting Hill Genesis is set to be completed March 2024.
- 6.8 A lease surrender agreement for the Community Association has been agreed in principle.
- 6.9 Engagement activity led by Community360 is progressing well with the recruitment of ambassadors and drawing on insight from an established scheme in Bromley-by-Bow.
- 6.10 **Essex Pedal Power and Liveable Neighbourhood:** The Bicycle handout is progressing well, and temporary storage has been secured in Commerce Way. A shopfront and permanent solution are still required with discussions underway to share space with CBH.
- 6.11 ECC have levered-in an additional £250-300k for a Walkability pilot in early 2024.

- 6.12 After extensive engagement with schools and communities, ECC are finalising designs for the Healthy School Streets as the first phase of the 'liveable streets' initiative which will be presented to the Heart of Greenstead Board shortly.
- 6.13 ECC are on-track to start preparing a longer-term vision and proposals for this initiative in Spring 2024.
- 6.14 The table below summarises the key dates and financial information for these projects.

<b>Heart of Greenstead</b>			
<b>Multi-use Community Hub</b>	<b>KEY DATES</b>	Onsite Start Date: Sep-24	Expected Completion Date: Mar-26
	<b>PROJECT FINANCES</b>	Total Cost = £5.9M	Budget = £5.9M (contingency tbc)
<b>Essex Pedal Power</b>	<b>KEY DATES</b>	Onsite Start Date: Jul-23	Expected Completion Date: Mar-26
	<b>PROJECT FINANCES</b>	Total Cost = £320K	Budget = £320K
<b>Liveable Neighbourhood</b>	<b>KEY DATES</b>	Onsite Start Date: Oct-23	Expected Completion Date: Mar-26
	<b>PROJECT FINANCES</b>	Total Cost = £150K	Budget = £150K

### 6.15 Town Centre

6.16 This theme includes a suite of projects to improve the public realm in the City Centre to boost footfall; and to bring heritage buildings back into use.

6.17 **St Nicholas Square:** This project will transform this 'back' space into a coherent and attractive public square.

6.18 The work to secure approval of designs and the issuing of licences for this scheme from Essex Highways took a great deal of time and involved changing the original plans. However, we are in contract with the build contractor and have now secured the necessary permissions to start work on the western portion of the site. Building work started on site in the week of 12 February.

6.19 Final designs for the eastern portion of the site are nearing completion with work well underway to secure permission from ECC to start on this area.

6.20 This table summarises the key dates and financial information for this project.

<b>St Nicholas Square</b>			
<b>KEY DATES</b>	Onsite Start Date: Feb-24	Expected Completion Date: Sep-24	
<b>PROJECT FINANCES</b>	Total Cost = £1.6M	Budget = £1.6M	Contingency = Used

6.21 **Holy Trinity Square:** This project will introduce a light-touch improvement to the churchyard to allow it to be accessibly opened to the public.

6.22 Tree surgery was carried out in 2023 on the advice of an arboriculture specialist. A public and stakeholder consultation led to revisions to the initial designs to create a new entrance to the square by the library and to lessen the impact of new paths on the environment. The changes secured the support of CCC Planning Officers and Historic England who were able to support applications for

planning permission and listed building consent in February 2024. These applications were successful at Committee on 15 February.

6.23 Final design work including to the lighting scheme will now be carried out and then a tender for the construction work will be held ahead of a start on site later this year.

6.24 This table summarises the key dates and financial information for this project.

<b>Holy Trinity Square</b>			
<b>KEY DATES</b>	Onsite Start Date: Sep-24		Expected Completion Date: Feb-25
<b>PROJECT FINANCES</b>	Total Cost = £600K	Budget = £600K	Contingency = £44K

6.25 **Kerbless Street:** This project is intended to enhance the public realm and improve accessibility on the route of mainly independent traders from Sir Issacs Walk through to Short Wyre Street by introducing a kerbless design.

6.26 Work on this project was paused to allow Highways resources to focus on finalising the St Nicholas Square project. While on hold, We Are Colchester approved a reallocation of funds from this project to the Digital Works Hub to offset price inflation on the build costs as this scheme was already well underway.

6.27 We have submitted Project Adjustment Requests to Department of Levelling UP, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) to approve this reallocation and to allow unused monies from our Levelling Up Fund award to fund the Kerbless Street work.

6.28 In the meantime, we have engaged with businesses along the route in-person and via a survey to test continued support for the scheme in the light of likely disruption while the work is carried out. Initial results of this engagement suggest most traders believe the benefits of the improvement work will outweigh the negative effects of disruption. However, we have also learned of specific concerns (around deliveries for example) which we will seek to mitigate.

6.29 **Essex County Hospital:** This project introduces attractive and accessible public realm to the work by Essex Homes to redevelop the site of the old Hospital.

6.30 Following a procurement tender process, a Contractor has been appointed (Kind and Co). Final Planning issues have been resolved and a work programme is to be published shortly with a start of site expected in Spring 24.

6.31 This table summarises the key dates and financial information for this project.

<b>Former Essex County Hospital Public Realm</b>			
<b>KEY DATES</b>	Onsite Start Date: Apr-24		Expected Completion Date: Dec-24
<b>PROJECT FINANCES</b>	Total Cost = £488K	Budget = £488K	Contingency = N/A

6.32 **Holy Trinity Church:** This project will repair and adapt this disused church building into a community hub to be operated by local charity Community360 on behalf of the One Colchester partnership.

6.33 With the Church having been placed on the Building at Risk list, emergency repair work was carried out to the roof of this building enabled by the Council's Building Maintenance fund.

6.34 Detailed work has been carried out to submit a Stage 1 bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). This work was coordinated with those submitting bids from the Jumbo project and our Museums Service.

6.35 Other funders have also been approached and have given favourable initial responses to additional bids to fund restoration work to the church's Saxon tower.

6.36 This table summarises the key dates and financial information for this project.

<b>Holy Trinity Church</b>			
<b>KEY DATES</b>	Onsite Start Date: Nov-25		Expected Completion Date: Sep-26
<b>PROJECT FINANCES</b>	Total Cost = £2.8M	Budget = £2.8M	Contingency = 15%

6.37 **Jumbo and Balkerne Gate Phase 2:** These projects are to carry out repairs to the tower and to support a larger bid to the NHLF to allow this much-loved local landmark to come back into use as a community facility. They are also to improve the public realm between the tower and the area outside the Mercury Theatre recently improved as part of our Balkerne Gate Phase 1 project.

6.38 The projects are being managed by the North Essex Heritage Trust.

6.39 Following the Trust's appointment of design consultants, a stage 1 NLHF bid was submitted and judged successful. Council officers supported this application by brokering 'check and challenge' sessions and links to our Events and Museum services.

6.40 The Trust are now mid-way through the year-long preparation of their stage 2 bid with their 6-monthly review by the NLHF due in March. An Activity Plan is being written as part of this work to guide engagement.

6.41 This table summarises the key dates and financial information for these projects.

<b>Jumbo Water Tower / Balkerne Gate Phase 2</b>			
<b>KEY DATES</b>	Onsite Start Date: Aug-25		Expected Completion Date: Sep-26
<b>PROJECT FINANCES</b>	Total Town Deal Cost = £1.781M	Total Town Deal Budget = £1.781M	Overall contingency = TBC once NLHF bid is ready

#### 6.42 Transformed Youth Facilities



6.43 This theme is to improve the life chances of Colchester’s young people by modernising the main City Centre youth centre – The Townhouse - and making improvements to the youth centres in Highwoods and Stanway.

6.44 These projects are being managed by Essex County Council.

6.45 Detailed plans for the Townhouse and other sites, produced with engagement with young people, have been approved. The work at the Townhouse includes an updated electrical systems and full redecoration with improvements to the Sports Hall, and the introduction of a Teaching Kitchen, recording studio, garden area and storage.

6.46 A contractor has been appointed and work is due to start in Highwoods in March (lasting until May), at the Town House in May (until September) and in Stanway in July (until August).

6.47 This table summarises the key dates and financial information for these projects.

<b>Transformed Youth Facilities</b>			
<b>Townhouse Youth Centre</b>	<b>KEY DATES</b>	Onsite Start Date: May-24	Expected Completion Date: Sep-24
	<b>PROJECT FINANCES</b>	Total Cost = £1M	Budget = £1M
<b>Stanway Youth Centre</b>	<b>KEY DATES</b>	Onsite Start Date: Jul-24	Expected Completion Date: Aug-24
	<b>PROJECT FINANCES</b>	Total Cost = £170K	Budget = £170K
<b>Highwoods Youth Centre</b>	<b>KEY DATES</b>	Onsite Start Date: Mar-24	Expected Completion Date: May-24
	<b>PROJECT FINANCES</b>	Total Cost = £150K	Budget = £150K

**6.48 Physical connectivity**

6.49 This project will create a new or, in parts, upgraded 2.96kms walking and cycling route between the City Centre towards the University and Greenstead with improved facilities, including lighting and cycle parking.

6.50 This project, to deliver the route known as LCWIP 4, is being managed by Essex County Council. It is expected to encourage additional cycle trips of 190 per day in 2026, 700 by 2033, and 1,324 by 2041.

6.51 The works are being managed in sections with the first – at Colne Causeway – completed. A Traffic Regulation Order for the East Hill section has been issued, and extensive engagement with local stakeholders undertaken. The East Hill design is being revised following a road safety audit and the project's budget is being scrutinised to manage cost inflation.

6.52 Legal work for the section across the Moors is progressing well.

6.53 This table summarises the key dates and financial information for this project.

<b>Town Centre / Greenstead / University Walking and Cycling Route (LCWIP4)</b>			
<b>KEY DATES</b>	Overall Start Date: May-23	Expected Completion Date: Mar-26	
<b>PROJECT FINANCES</b>	Total Cost = £2.88M	Budget = £2.88M	Contingency = 17.5% (East Hill Section Only)

#### 6.54 Digital connectivity

6.55 This theme includes three projects to help Colchester capitalise on the opportunities presented by the growth of the digital economy. They are the building of a new Digital Working Hub in Queen Street, the creation of a Digital Skills Hub at the Wilson Marriage Centre, and two 5G mobile pilots to act as a catalyst for further private sector investment.

6.56 Digital Working Hub: This project sees the demolition of the old bus depot on Queen Street and the building of new grow-on workspace for creative and digital business. This project is part funded by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership.

6.57 The old bus depot has been demolished, planning consent for the new build has been granted, a successful tender for construction has been carried out, value engineering to ensure the contract is affordable completed, and the building work has started with contractors now onsite finishing ground works.

6.58 Following the withdrawal of the organisation previously appointed to manage the new facility, a second procurement exercise was carried out to appoint a managing operator in late 2023. Unfortunately, this did not result in an appointment. We are now liaising with those who expressed an interest and receiving their proposals to operate the facility. It is hoped an appointment can be made shortly.

6.59 This table summarises the key dates and financial information for this project.

<b>Queen Street Digital Working Hub</b>			
<b>KEY DATES</b>	Onsite Start Date: Jan-24	Expected Completion Date: Jan-25	
<b>PROJECT FINANCES</b>	Total Cost = £6.25M	Budget = £6.3M	Contingency = £170K

6.60 **Digital Skills Hub:** This project is to refurbish a disused gym building into a modern training suite for digital skills including ICT and virtual reality.

6.61 The project was managed by Essex County Council through their Adult Community Learning service.

6.62 This project has progressed well and was completed on time and on budget in time for courses to be offered from September 23. A successful launch event was held and future updates to Scrutiny will be able to report on uptake data.

6.63 This table summarises the key dates and financial information for this project.

<b>Digital Skills Hub</b>			
<b>KEY DATES</b>	Onsite Start Date: Mar-23		Expected Completion Date: Aug-23
<b>PROJECT FINANCES</b>	Total Cost = £879K	Budget = £879K	Contingency = N/A

6.64 **5G:** This project is to pilot two true-5G sites in the City Centre, the first deployment of its type in Colchester to stimulate full roll-out. The key differences between 4G and 5G are faster mobile broadband speeds, larger capacity, and reduced data transfer delays. 5G technology opens new business opportunities such as virtual reality tourism.

6.65 This project is being managed by Amphora Ltd on behalf of the City Council. Research has confirmed the best, current real-life use application of 5G in Colchester is virtual reality tourism.

6.66 A tender exercise has been carried out to appoint a contractor to build the 5G pilot networks. Due diligence is currently underway ahead of an appointment.

6.67 We have identified the winner of the tender for the award of the 5G network build. We are also exploring opportunities to extend their projects scope by securing additional funding.

6.68 This table summarises the key dates and financial information for the 5G project.

<b>5G</b>			
<b>KEY DATES</b>	Onsite Start Date: Apr-23		Expected Completion Date: Mar-24
<b>PROJECT FINANCES</b>	Total Cost = £977K	Budget = £977K	Contingency = 10%

## 7. Key risks

7.1 Risks for the whole programme and individual projects are being managed first by project managers, then project steering groups, then Operational Board and then ultimately by We Are Colchester.

7.2 The main programme-level risks now are:

- The effect of cost inflation on the viability of projects – detailed costings have been generated for projects and forecasts are being kept up to date, with alternative sources of funding being sourced for shortfalls.
- Overruns on the St Nicholas Square accelerated public realm project becoming a precedent which might be replicated in other projects.
- Failure to achieve necessary land acquisition in Greenstead - negotiations are being closely managed.
- Ensuring opportunities to maximise the impact of Jumbo and Balkerne Gate projects are effectively harnessed alongside a Heritage Lottery Fund

bid, at the same time mitigating the Council's exposure to unexpected costs.

- Loss of key partners
- Human resource capacity across programme under constant review

## 8. Financial implications

8.1 Town Deal projects are funded by DLUHC, with regular progress reporting, risk management and approval processes. Further assurance is provided through six-monthly monitoring returns to DLUHC with check and challenge as required. The Section 151 Officer also makes an annual declaration to DLUHC to confirm that all the necessary checks have been undertaken to ensure that the council has in place the processes to ensure the proper administration of its financial affairs with regards to the funds, inclusive of all payments received. The Section 151 Officer is of the opinion that the financial affairs of the council and Town Deal Board are being properly administered regarding the funds.

8.2 Due to delays to certain projects this means that spend has been behind budget. However, with delivery accelerating, spend is thought likely to catch up in 24-5.

8.3 The table below summarises the costs, available budget, total Town Deal funding and any forecast overspends that have not been mitigated for each project.

Theme	Project	Project Total	Budget	Town Deal Funding	Unmitigated Overspend
Heart of Greenstead	Multi-agency Community Hub	£5.9M	£5.9M	£5.9M	Being calculated
	Essex Pedal Power	£320K	£320K	£320K	£0
	Liveable Neighbourhoods	£150K	£150K	£150K	£0
City Centre Schemes	St Nicholas Square	£1.6M	£1.6M	£1.25M	£0
	Holy Trinity Square	£600K	£600K	£600k	£0
	Essex County Hospital Public Realm	£488K	£488K	£488k	£0
	Holy Trinity Church	£2.8M	£2.8M	£500k	£0
	Jumbo / Balcerne Gate Phase 2	£1.781M	£1.781M	£1.781M	£0
Transformed Youth Facilities	Townhouse	£1M	£1M	£1M	£0
	Stanway	£120K	£120K	£120K	£0
	Highwoods	£170K	£170K	£170K	£0
Physical Connectivity	LCWIP4	Being calculated	£4.6M	£2.88M	Being calculated
Digital Connectivity	Digital Working Hub	£6.25M	£6.3M	£879K	£-50K
	Digital Skills Hub	£879K	£879K	£879K	£0

	5G	£977K	£977K	£977K	£0
--	----	-------	-------	-------	----

8.4 This table summarises DLUHC amounts awarded, paid and spent in accordance with the Accountable Body's last monitoring return to DLUHC covering the period April to September 2023. This excludes funding for accelerated projects, other sources of income and programme management costs have also been deducted.

Project	Town Deal funding total due to CCC	Town Deal funding paid to CCC to date	Town Deal funding spent to date
Digital Working Hub Queen Street	£879,672	£720,985	£720,985
Transformed Youth Facilities	£1,290,187	£1,290,187	£1,290,187
Digital Skills Hub Wilson Marriage Centre	£879,374	£879,374	£879,374
Town Centre & Gateways	£4,401,097	£1,600,090	£670,313
Heart of Greenstead	£6,477,514	£586,307	£536,307
5G	£977,414	£689,783	£98,183
Walking & Cycling Links	£2,883,369	£337,949	£279,197

## 9. Standard References

9.1 There are no particular consultation or publicity considerations; community safety; health and safety, environmental and sustainability or risk management implications.

## 10. Strategic Plan References

10.1 The Town Deal is intended to boost the local economy, support the creation of jobs, improve areas of public realm, facilitate increased cycling and walking, improve housing and health outcomes as well as leveraging private sector investment.

10.2 It will contribute to the delivery of the Three-Year Strategic Plan 2023-26 (A City Fit for the Future) priorities and direction under the strategic themes of: Respond to the climate emergency; Improve health, wellbeing and happiness; Deliver homes for those most in need; Grow our economy so everyone benefits and Celebrate our city, heritage and culture.

## Appendices





## Scrutiny Panel

Item  
**14**

12 March 2024

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Lucie Breadman, Strategic Director</b>	<b>Authors</b>	<b>Karen Turnbull, Charlotte Holl Laura Hardisty Claire Taylor</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Celebrating Our City Status</b>		<b>☎ 282915</b>
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards affected		

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In 2022 city status was granted as part of the celebrations of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II's, Platinum Jubilee.

This report details how Colchester is capitalising on its new status over the past year, in particular:

- The success of Colchester's Year of Celebration
- Assessing the marketing of Colchester through the work of the City Status Marketing Task and Finish Group, led by the Our Colchester Business Improvement District (BID)
- Initial thoughts on evaluating the impact of city status and
- How young people and Colchester's rural communities have been involved

Colchester continues its 2000-year evolution to being an even more significant player in the region. Its 'city status' is evolving from being a new status to actually being and behaving as a city with aspirations and showing leadership where the opportunity presents itself.

This is a long-term approach which involves engaging with people and businesses, partners and anchor institutions, being aspirational and leveraging city status for the good of Colchester and all of its communities, the surrounding area and beyond.

There is no additional funding for city status so the challenge is to maximise the leverage from the status itself over the longer term.

The regeneration of the city centre funded by the £40m Town Deal, Levelling Up Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund will inevitably be associated with city status. Whilst they are major place-shaping projects, they were conceived as aspirations before Colchester became a city once more. Once delivered they will make a positive difference to the experience, image and perception of the place and so, have been included in this report.

Colchester is a city once more. Places need to change in order to compete for talent, residents, students, visitors, business and investment. Like other places Colchester is subject to macro-economic and social change and being a city is part of this change; the latest event on its 2000 year journey. It will be for its people, particularly young people, to continue this evolution to meet their future needs which inevitably will be different than those of the many generations which have gone before.

## **2. Action Required**

This new era for Colchester commenced in 2023. It featured three distinct work strands which both celebrated the new status and laid the foundations for the longer term:

- Year of Celebration
- Assessing the marketing of Colchester through the work of the City Status Marketing Task and Finish Group, led by the Our Colchester Business Improvement District (BID)
- Evaluating the impact of city status

This report updates the Scrutiny Panel on these strands and also includes an update on the delivery of place-shaping projects which were conceived separately to city status but, in delivery, will inevitably be seen as part of the creation of the regenerated centre of Colchester and will be perceived as being in tandem with its new status as a city.

- 2.1 It also reviews how young people and residents from both urban and rural communities were involved and were able to take part in the Year of Celebration so that the benefits of city status are being felt across the whole city area.
- 2.2 Consideration has also been given to the planned approach to assessing the benefits and impact of city status going forward.
- 2.3 Recommended to be noted by Cabinet.

## **3. Reason for Scrutiny**

- 3.1 Scrutiny has been requested by the Panel.



## 4. Background Information

Colchester was granted City Status as part of the celebrations of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, Platinum Jubilee in 2022. City Status was formally granted in November 2022 with Letters Patent, which saw Colchester become legally a city once more. The event was celebrated by one of King Charles & Queen Consort Camilla first official visits to the new group of cities when they visited Colchester in March 2023.

### 4.1 Year of Celebration

As well as the usual diverse programming that venues in and around the district offer to local people and visitors alike, the Year of Celebration also featured some highly popular events. A list of events can be seen at Appendix A and a video of the highlights of the Year of Celebration can be seen at Appendix B.

#### **King Charles III and Queen Consort's visit to Colchester (March 2023)**

Their Majesties visited Colchester Castle and Castle Park, where they met those who took part in Colchester's city status procession last year, including charities, volunteers and refugees who have settled in Colchester, alongside schoolchildren taking part in educational visits to the Castle Museum.

Their Majesties met representatives from local organisations who support a range of local communities and conservation projects during a reception to mark Colchester's status as a modern city, where they viewed the Letters Patent and signed Colchester Castle's visitor book. Their Majesties also met representatives from Essex Native Oyster Restoration Initiative (ENORI), Firstsite, Next Chapter, and Colchester Zoo.

#### **Coronation Street Party and Family Fun Day (May 2023)**

- This free event was hosted by the Mercury Theatre on the Piazza outside the theatre. It was organised in partnership with the Council and the BID.
- An estimated 2000 people attended this event which featured live music from local band JamJar, who played a range of popular songs to get everyone dancing.
- There was also a variety of activities to keep children and adults entertained, including a bouncy castle, soft play area, giant garden games, arts and crafts and a dressing up area.

#### **Gladiators exhibition, Castle Museum (from July 2023-January 2024)**

- Supported with Arts Council funding, as well as grants from Garfield Weston, Magic Little Grants, and Mass History Alliance, the exhibition showcased the spectacle of gladiatorial combat, where warriors battled for glory and survival in the heart of Roman Colchester.
- The exhibition offered visitors a unique opportunity to explore the life and times of these fighters, and the animals that were part of the deadly entertainment that captivated audiences for centuries.
- The immersive exhibition featured many objects from all over the UK, including one of the largest loans from the British Museum to a regional museum. Lifelike reconstructions, and interactive displays all were designed to encourage a family audience from Colchester, the region and beyond.
- The exhibition won a prestigious award from the Society for Museum Archaeology (SMA) in 2023.

- Total visitors to the exhibition were almost 46 000, generating a net income at the Castle of £368 615 during the run of the exhibition, including income from admissions, schools, activities and retail.
- 'Gladiators; a Day at the Roman Games' was taken on the road to Castle Park's Roman Festival in July, where the Museum's team engaged with thousands more visitors.
- The exhibition will go on to tour in partnership with the British Museum from 2025, which is expected to reach a very wide audience and strengthen Colchester's reputation as a cultural destination.

### **Siege Spectacular, Castle Park (August)**

- 10,000 people from all over the City and beyond
- Commemorating and telling the story of this important historic event over two days with 400 re-enactors
- Covered in the Daily Telegraph beforehand, plus Essex Life, East Anglian Daily Times and the local press
- Many positive posts on social media
- Video coverage

### **Olly Murs, Castle Park (August)**

- 6000 attendees from all over the district and beyond.
- Partnered with Colchester Zoo and Castle Museum social media
- Olly cardboard cutouts around both attractions for people to find. This enabled them to potentially win tickets to the concert.
- Worked with Lion Walk Shopping Centre: large poster of the show in WHSmith window. A popular selfie spot.
- Great feedback from people.

### **Soapbox Rally, High Street (September)**

- 7000 people from all over the district and beyond on the High Street
- Several hundred spectators watched large screens in Culver Square and Castle Park.
- 48 karts entered with over 300 participants across all business sectors
- Business feedback reported an average of 35% uplift in sales year on year, some as high as 70% up.

### **Enlightened, Castle Park (December)**

- Enlightened returned to Colchester for the third year running every evening from 1st to the 31st December 2023, with tickets available every 15 minutes from 5pm each night from
- It was the biggest, brightest, and boldest year yet, with a lighting trail bursting with interactive and immersive elements along with visitor favourites.
- 23,000 tickets were sold to this event.

### **'Colchester Through Time' tours**

- As a special initiative for the Year of Celebration, the VisitColchester Information Centre offered a programme of free walking tours just for residents called 'Colchester Through Time'.
- Delivered by our official City Guides, the tours covered either different periods in Colchester's history starting with the Iron Age, or explored the history of distinct areas/communities outside the city centre with tours of Lexden, New Town, Dedham and Wivenhoe.
- The latter were deliberately included to include rural communities in city status celebrations.

- In total 147 residents went on a tour.
- The feedback was very positive - people were delighted to be participating in something that celebrated the history of their place and was put on just for them as residents.

#### 4.2 Young people

City status for Colchester has engaged the imagination of local young people. In July last year the Mercury Theatre held a Youth Takeover event, part-funded by the Council, and a key aim of this event was to find out what local young people felt about their new city. The event included DJ workshops, a Make your own Podcast; Arts & Crafts; Live Music; and a Panel Discussion.



*3D map of the city created during the Youth Takeover event.*

A most exciting output from the day was the premiere of a film: 'A City Awakens' (Appendix C). Here we get a flavour of how excited the next generation of Colcestrians are about their new city and how they will continue the evolution of the city to meet their future needs.

Appendix D shows "Thoughts and drawings about Colchester" by young people during the Youth Takeover event (thanks to the Mercury Theatre for sharing).

Comments included:

*As a young person, what makes me want to live in Colchester is... "The History."*

*What 5 things would you like to see in Colchester in the next 50 years? "Wheelchair parks; More art and culture that is free; Less knife crime; Less crime...against fashion; A new queen Boudica; Free coffee for every 50 smiles; Sushi train (life size); Pedestrian high street (cars suck)."*

*I want to always live in Colchester because... "There is lots to do in terms of art and culture e.g. Firstsite, The Mercury, The Arts Centre."*

*What I want for Colchester. "Easier transport for young people; Safer at night."*

The Mercury Young Company have produced podcasts:

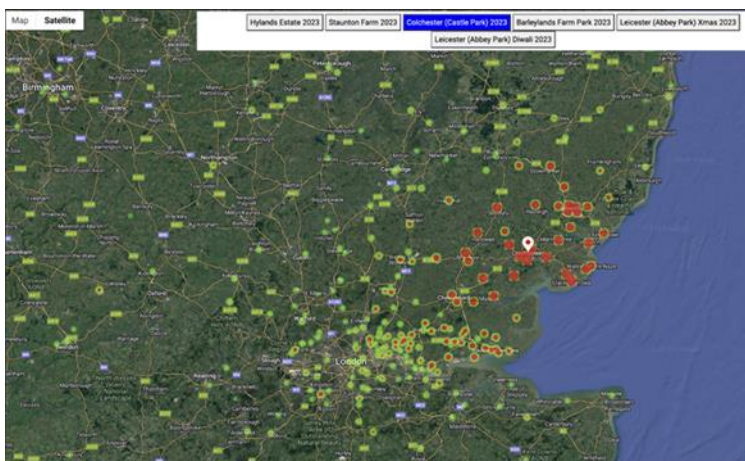
Here they interview Simon Cairns, Colchester City Council's Joint Head of Planning  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OxCjF-BpQbc>

and here they interview Pam Donnelly, Colchester City Council's Chief Executive.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pVK0ynssMHQ>

### 4.3 Rural Communities

As can be seen from section 4.1 above, many of the Year of Celebration events were enjoyed and appreciated by residents from both urban and rural communities.

For example, *Enlightened* was ticketed and postcode analysis on the map below shows that the event drew visitors from as far afield as Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire. It also had a strong attraction regionally particularly in Suffolk and South Norfolk. Local data also shows the breakdown of attendees as follows:



#### Rural England Prosperity Fund

Colchester was delighted to receive £532,195 as a new rural grant as part of the Government's Levelling Up programme.

The funding is a two year programme (2023/25) is available to most 'rural' areas outside the 'city' boundary (including towns, villages and hamlets with populations of less than 10,000 people or towns with a population of up to 30,000 people that serve their surrounding rural areas).

REPF investments are not linked to city status but, as new investment into rural business and communities, it may be seen as part of the whole regeneration of the city and provides a balance to the significant regeneration of the urban centre.

The fund supports projects which address the particular challenges that rural areas face and succeeds the EU funding from LEADER and The Growth Programme, which were part of the Rural Development Programme for England.

The programme provides capital support to new and existing rural businesses to promote growth and diversification, as well as to co infrastructure projects, to strengthen rural communities and the rural economy.

The first round of allocations has been made by an independent panel and the second round of grants available went live in January.

Recipient Business & Project Name	REPF Grant	Brief Project Description	Key Outputs & Benefits
-----------------------------------	------------	---------------------------	------------------------

	<b>Funding Allocation</b>		
<b>RDS Farms (Little Doves Nursery Expansion), Peldon</b>	£149,972	A farm diversification project to expand an existing children's nursery through new build on site.	Supports both farm diversification and a rural micro business. Will create 7 new jobs and 25 new nursery placements.
<b>Alex Miller Contracting / Oxley Barns (Timber Yard), Abberton</b>	£21,307.50	A farm diversification project to develop a timber yard that will supply end users (such as hobbyists and joiners) with bespoke and 'characterful' timber.	Supports farm diversification. Will create 2 new jobs, two new (to the business) products and will have indirect benefits to 10 supplier businesses.
<b>Foxes Farm Produce (Play Equipment), Aldham</b>	£8,870	Purchase and installation of play equipment and infrastructure to improve the visitor experience of an existing and established farm diversification operation.	Supports farm diversification. Will create 1 new job and drive an additional 5,000 visitors to the site, likely resulting in positive outputs for the wider local economy.
<b>BMB Properties (Installation of Photovoltaic system), West Bergholt</b>	£8,410.50	Installation of a photovoltaic system (a renewable energy technology transforming thermal energy from the sun into electricity) into office premises, reducing energy costs and co2 emissions and driving a commercial benefit for the applicant business.	Supports a small rural business. Will improve business turnover and sustainability and is likely to benefit tenant businesses by maintaining levels of affordable rent. Improves co2 emissions and reduces carbon footprint.
<b>Layer Marney Parish Meeting/ Parochial Church Council (Layer Marney Community Hub)</b>	£68,760	The project will enhance the facilities in a church for community use, community gatherings, meetings and shared activity. Specifically, funding new kitchen facilities and installation of a lighting scheme and controls, a sound reinforcement scheme, a Hearing Loop, microphones and speakers and other electrical works.	Investment to support infrastructure for community benefit & improvement in digital infrastructure for community facility. Need demonstrated. Outputs to the community are varied and multiple.
<b>Great Tey Community Pool</b>	£49,998	The project funds capital expenditure towards the refurbishment of the Great Tey Community Swimming Pool, including purchasing the pool kit and plant equipment, installation costs, construction of a Plant Room/Reception, landscaping the grounds around the pool, and installation of utilities.	Investment to support infrastructure for community benefit. Multiple and varied outputs. Community Group has a large, skilled and dedicated committee, increasing the chances of the project succeeding. Meets an identified (and well evidenced) need.
<b>Orpen Memorial Hall Trust (West Bergholt Community Hub)</b>	£24,999	The construction of a 30 square metre highly insulated "Community Hub" extension (to existing complex of rooms and halls) that will contain a meeting area, disabled toilet and desk space.	Good fit to a number of REPF Objectives. Very low displacement whilst offering potential opportunities for business and enterprise growth. Meets a community need identified in WB Neighbourhood plan. Majority of funding sourced elsewhere (offering good value for money returns on the outputs).
<b>Freedom Boat Adventures, West Mersea</b>	£24,249	The project will build the Southeast of England's first fully accessible boat with access to all areas of the craft including driving position without any need for lifting or other indignity for those with mobility challenges. The REPF grant funding sought will fund the fibreglass cabin build and will fit windows and doors.	Investment to support a volunteering and social action project to develop social and human capital in local places. Meeting an identified need to provide accessible watercraft in the southeast of England. Potential business benefits to the wider area (Mersea) as the boat will be an attraction and draw in visitors.

<b>Marks Tey Parish Council (Replacement of Heat Source Pumps in Recreation Hall)</b>	£16,326	The project will fund the supply and installation of a new replacement heat-pump air conditioning system for the Recreation Hall at Marks Tey Parish Hall	Investment to support infrastructure for community benefit. Equipment will require replacement to continue to operate this valuable community resource. If outputs can be robustly assured, they are varied and multiple.
<b>Marks Tey Parish Council (Solar Panels)</b>	£15,000	The project is to install solar panels on the roofs of the Parish Halls. A battery will also be installed to store electricity for use during the hours of darkness when the halls and outside facilities are heavily used.	Investment to support infrastructure for community benefit. Will provide indirect support to a large number of community, social and creative programmes and events by reducing the organisation's electricity costs and allowing the provision to continue at affordable rates.
<b>Abberton Rural Training (Sustainability &amp; Carbon Reduction Plan Wormingford)</b>	£11,782	This project is to install 20 solar panels (plus batteries) on a permitted building, to help reduce the impact of future electricity costs and help increase sustainability (both environmentally and of the organisation's key aims).	Will provide indirect support to a large number of community programmes and projects by reducing the organisation's cost base (and thus increasing the sustainability of its operations). Indirectly supports almost all REPF Community objectives.

#### 4.4 Longer Term Work

##### 4.4.1 Place marketing

Realising more of Colchester's potential was the fundamental rationale for the Council to apply for city status in 2022.

It was acknowledged that Colchester could achieve even greater success if we were bolder and work together to achieve it.

The city status bid document said:

***Businesses and residents feel ready to reimagine themselves, ready to realise our shared future potential, building on an historic past.***

Colchester has the best of both worlds: an important history and an investible future. Investment in digital infrastructure, skills development, housing development, the great quality of life here plus the ambitious regeneration programme all provide opportunities for the next generation of place, people and business in every sense.

The City Status Marketing Task & Finish Group's task was formed and led by the Our Colchester BID to represent the voice of the Colchester business community.

Its membership includes international trading companies, representatives from the visitor economy, the third sector, new residents, local media, young people and business strategy.

The group's task was to take a high-level, forward-focused approach to communications for Colchester as a city: to set a broad direction of travel and provide a framework for the future.

It was also tasked to develop a concept which could be a framework for the future, to provide a recommendation on a vision for place and to offer a marketing approach for the city of Colchester especially around inward investment, and later, tourism and regeneration.

This would collectively provide a compelling, authentic message for the future of Colchester as a city which is relevant for its target audiences: visitors, residents and businesses.

These messages could then be adopted by the membership, stakeholders, partnerships and others to reinforce and amplify a positive narrative about Colchester and its future opportunities.

The report of the City Status Marketing Task & Finish Group's recommendations (Appendix E) was reviewed by Policy Panel in September 2023 in response to its request to learn more about City Centre Marketing and Inward Investment.

The recommendations were to:

**Develop Vision Pillars** - upon which other visions, such as the Masterplan, the BID Business Plan and funding applications' visions, can be compared, tested and formulated. The three vision pillars are that:

**The City of Colchester should be:  
Memorable, Liveable and Viable.**

**Develop an overarching narrative – aka the Colchester ‘Elevator Pitch’**  
– a common theme for businesses, partners and anchor institutions to ‘talk up’ Colchester when we collectively talk about our products, services, target markets, investments and aspirations. The overarching narrative is that:

**A ‘tech’ theme came through strongly and  
could be a NEW, highly competitive, future focussed communications  
message for Colchester.**

The infrastructure investment, digital and tech companies and the innovation taking place means that Colchester has the ‘product/offer’.  
It is a product/offer which complements the history and heritage messages well and positions Colchester as a forward-thinking, open orientated, city.

This approach has received support from Tech East, the regional body responsible for developing the digital and tech sector. Chief Executive of Tech East, Tim Robinson, said: “Year after year Colchester is adding strategic new elements to its digital/tech infrastructure and its new Angel network [of tech investors] is already playing a key role in dealflow. As befits one of the UK’s newest cities the range of digital skills support, start-up incubators and plans for cross sector innovation hubs is impressive and creates the conditions for the next wave of start ups to form and then scale and grow.”

One of the recommendations from the City Status Marketing Task and Finish Group was to improve the marketing of Colchester to investors and businesses. To this end there is a current programme of improvements in hand which:

- Updates the content on the Colchester Ambassadors' website and connects them into the following websites and vice versa
- Reviews, enhances and better connects the Economic Development and Regeneration content on the Colchester.gov website
- Updates and better connects the official website for business in and around Colchester: Colchesterultraready.co.uk

The City Status Marketing Task and Finish Group completed its report in May 2023. However, during its work it was agreed that Colchester would further benefit from a group representing statutory partners and organisations that are well placed to make a valuable contribution to the development and implementation of 'placing Colchester on the map' and making the most of its status as a city once again. To this end the group will now evolve into the Place Colchester Group with the following objectives, which are to:

- Work more closely together to understand Colchester as a place in a competitive world
- Challenge assumptions
- Understand current marketing activities, how they can be supported, coordinated, connected and reinforced
- Influence through networks by promoting the overarching narrative around tech and encourage others to amplify too
- Be more confident about Colchester: its important past, its impressive present and its exciting future
- Identify potential future projects from evidenced 'needs gaps'
- Collect a series of case studies
- Be a resource for potential future place strategy work post Devolution
- Develop an action plan for the group

#### 4.4.2 **Place accreditations**

CCC is working towards joining the City of Sanctuary network as an awarded member, after signing up to the network's vision and values in 2016.

#### 4.4.3 **Impact Evaluation of City Status**

The bid for City Status was key to raising Colchester's profile. However, it is recognised that places operate in a wider context over which they have little control. Government and international policy frameworks, market driven economic change, legal, technological and social changes all impact on places and, as places respond, they themselves change

Impacts will be both direct and indirect, take place over time and be difficult to attribute to city status as there is always a lag in the reporting of statistics and we don't know what would have happened anyway. Add to this the current period of significant economic and political uncertainty and the limited resource available to undertake a detailed assessment and the difficulty becomes apparent.

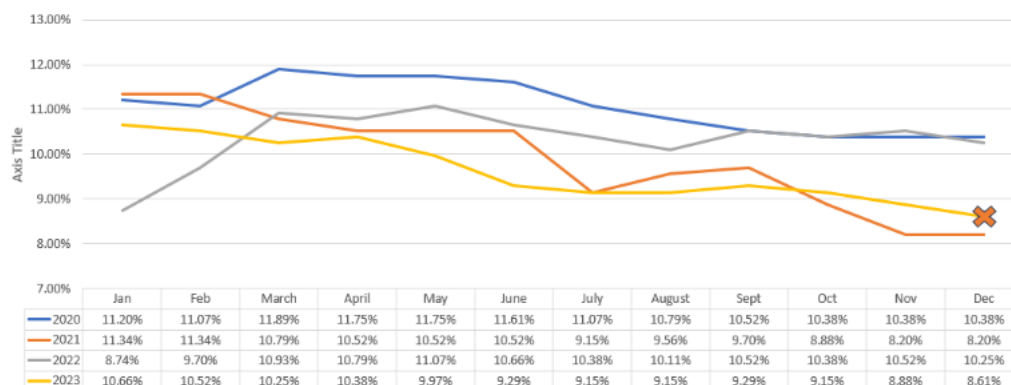
However, there is a set of data points which are being tracked to show trends over time and this is set out in Appendix F. Three years of data is required to show a trend so, with the data lag, it will be around a further three years before that report can be provided showing a more meaningful picture.

One very fresh data release from the BID is particularly of note and worth including here. Data around Vacant Units in the City Centre demonstrates the confidence in Colchester of which city status is a factor. The graph tracks



trends from 2020 showing vacant units and how the city centre is both recovering from the pandemic and also changing as these units adapt to the challenge of online retail and the post pandemic world. Importantly these new businesses, though different to traditional uses, attract new and different customers, contributing to city centre footfall and vibrancy, and provide employment for local people:

## City Centre – Vacant Units



### BID Vacant Unit Data

Here is a chart mapping the last four years of vacant unit data with the City Centre currently sitting at 8.61% which is 4% lower than the national and regional average.

Anecdotal evidence is also coming through. Inward investment enquiries and investment into new hotels and city centre attractions are outlined below.

## 4.5 Future and legacy

### **Delivering Place-Shaping Projects**

Colchester City Council and its partners are entering into the delivery phase of a significant number of place-shaping projects. These were conceived separately to city status but, in delivery, will inevitably be seen as part of the creation of the regenerated centre of Colchester and will be perceived as being in tandem with its new status as and experience of being a city.

#### £19.2m Town Deal

- St Nicholas Square regeneration – commences February 2024
- Trinity Square regeneration – commences Summer 2024
- Digital Hub in Queen St – construction commenced January 2024
- Digital Skills Hub at Wilson Marriage Centre – opened October 2023

#### £19.6m Levelling Up Fund

- Regeneration of St Botolph's roundabout and surrounding area
- New heritage trail from the Castle to St Botolph's Priory including the Roman Wall
- City centre shop front improvement programme in partnership with CCC Planning and the BID. Includes business support with a Local Suppliers' List, Council Shopfront Design Guidance with free consultations with CCC Planning and HAT Projects Architects. 16 businesses have been supported to date and have projects in the pipeline.

### **Colchester Reimagined:**

Debenhams: The former store, which closed in May 2021 along with around 160 other stores nationwide is being transformed into an indoor leisure centre operated by Flip Out. Significant investment by developers M&G is taking place in this new attraction which will include a trampoline park, karting track and mini-golf course. Work is currently taking place to transform the building. It is anticipated that the attraction will bring 50 new jobs to Colchester.

### **Inward investment:**

There is relatively strong economic confidence in Colchester. Inward investment continues with £40m from the Government's Town Deal and Levelling Up Funds plus a further £50m which is funding the installation of Gigabit and 5G digital infrastructure. These regeneration projects will start to deliver positive change in the experience of Colchester from 2024 onwards and new visitor attractions. Along with new visitor attractions there has been an interest in Colchester from big brand hotel chains which have seen two Planning Applications. Recent investments are also delivering new leisure use for the former Debenhams and there are ongoing discussions with other interesting potential investors.

### **Complements and aspirations around city status:**

Colchester is seeing more interest from national and international chain businesses which are associated with city locations. There are two current Planning Applications for a Marriott Moxy hotel which would be a first for the city and the region.

It would join a group of 16 other Moxi Marriott Hotels in such places as London, Manchester, Birmingham, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, York and Chester shows how Colchester is realising its tourism potential as well as being perceived externally as both having the right tourism offering and being highly investible.

In addition, Pret a Manger has also announced its intention to locate in Culver Square.

### **Engagement and Promoting the Year of Celebration:**

#### **With businesses**

At a variety of engagement events which have taken place over the past year, the subject of city status has been a welcome topic of discussion. Previously the conversation was around looking back to Colchester's history: the legacies of the Romans and Victorians for instance; and the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial heritage of Paxmans, Woods and the Garrison. However, for the first time, 'city status' has enabled a future-focussed conversation to take place. This is an ongoing approach and is informing the project delivery and future aspiration of this new city.

More locally it was heartening to see the city status branding being adopted widely by businesses, events and institutions such as Wilkins 'Tiptree' Jams, Colchester Zoo, Colchester Institute and Thompson Smith & Puxon LLP:



A full list of promotions and partnerships can be found at Appendix G.

### **With other cities**

Colchester joined the Key Cities Group and has been fortunate both to learn from their best practice as well as share our experience: particularly around the development of the Cultural Sector, where Colchester is seen to be a leader.

Key Cities is an objective network that reflects and represents urban living in the UK. Formed in 2013, it provides an authoritative voice and alliance of shared interests right across the country.

### **Learning from Other Cities**

On learning of Colchester's city status award, the team reached out to Southend and Chelmsford. In addition, national learning has been sourced through the Key Cities Group. We learnt the following which have all informed our collective approach over the past year:

- The importance of building on Colchester's strengths and what we already have
- Engaging with young people
- Having a Year of Celebration to include as many people as possible
- Working in partnership

### **Annual Business Opinion Survey 2023**

The Annual Business Opinion Survey for 2023 is currently out on distribution with an anticipated report date of early summer 2024. This is the second report to ask about the wider business experience of city status.

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

- 5.1 The award of City Status has no direct impact on equality, diversity and human rights, however the ambition that comes with it for a happier, healthier and more fair society does, and in a positive way.
- 5.2 Our Year of Celebration is about reflecting on the strengths we have and being proud of Colchester, the wide and diverse range of events and activities should help to showcase Colchester's inclusive approach and aims to bring people together to celebrate now and our future opportunities.
- 5.3 Much of the future approach is aimed at delivering on priorities which focus on improved health, wellbeing, equality and inclusive growth and prosperity as well

as tackling the impacts of climate change and reducing inequalities.

- 5.4 This report and City Status is not introducing a new policy or any major changes to a policy and therefore an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has not been completed.

## **6. Standard References**

- 6.1 References to the Strategic Plan are set out in 7.1; Financial implications in 8.1. There are no consultation or publicity considerations or community safety; health and safety, environmental and sustainability or risk management implications.

## **7. Strategic Plan References**

- 7.1 City status potentially affects all the themes identified in the Council's [Strategic Plan 2023-2026](#) but particularly the aim to:
- Grow our economy so everyone benefits
  - Celebrate our city, heritage and culture

## **8. Financial implications**

- 8.1 A budget of £50k was set aside for Year of Celebration and, of this figure, £28,606 was spent, predominantly on the Siege event.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A. Events 2023  
[Events 2023.pdf](#)

Appendix B. Year of Celebration – Highlights reel  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JQo2Qao0-4o>

Appendix C. Youth Takeover film – A City Awakens  
[A City Awakens\\_WIP07\\_APPROVED\\_master+audio \(1\).mp4](#)

Appendix D. Thoughts and drawings about Colchester (from Youth Takeover)  
[Drawings & thoughts on colchester.pdf](#)

Appendix E. The City Status Marketing Task & Finish Group's Report  
[City Status Place Marketing Group - FINAL report June 2023.docx](#)

Appendix F. An approach to evaluating the impact of city status  
[Impact evaluation of city status April 2023.docx](#)

Appendix G. A full list of promotions and partnerships over the Year of Celebration  
[YOC Comms Actions\\_2023 \(1\).pptx](#)



## Scrutiny Panel

Item  
**15**

12 March 2024

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Chief Operating Officer</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Owen Howell</b> <b>Tel. 282518</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Annual Scrutiny Report</b>		
<b>Wards affected</b>	Not Applicable		

**This is a report setting out the work of the Scrutiny Panel during 2023/24**

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the work of the Scrutiny Panel during 2023/24 and requests that the Panel recommend the report to Full Council for approval on 17 July 2024.

### 2. Action Required

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to consider and comment on the draft Annual Scrutiny Report.
- 2.2 The Panel is asked to recommend this report to Full Council for approval on 17 July 2024.

### 3. Background Information

- 3.1 The Constitution states the Scrutiny Panel shall report annually to the Full Council on its work and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.
- 3.2 The purpose of the report is to inform the Council of the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Panel, and for the Full Council to form an opinion of the effectiveness of the scrutiny function. The final report will be submitted to Full Council for consideration and approval following endorsement by Scrutiny Panel members.
- 3.3 This Scrutiny Report is a descriptive record of the scrutiny reviews undertaken by the Scrutiny Panel in 2023/24. It also provides a report on any work undertaken by the Scrutiny Panel in its role as Crime and Disorder Committee for the Council.
- 3.4 The draft Annual Report gives a general overview of the series of Portfolio Holder briefings received by the Scrutiny Panel during 2023-24. Whilst detail from individual briefings has been omitted from this report, any resolutions or recommendations which arise from those briefings are shown within the report.

### 4. Standard and Strategic Plan References

- 4.1 Scrutiny and challenge was integral to the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2023-2026 priorities and direction for the Council as set out under the strategic 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.

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

## **5. Appendices**

5.1 Appendix A – Draft Scrutiny Panel Annual Report 2023-24.

# Scrutiny Panel Annual Report 2023-24

This Annual Report demonstrates the contribution made by the Scrutiny Panel at Colchester City Council.

## Scrutiny Panel Role

The role of the Scrutiny Panel is to examine the Council's policies and strategies from a City-wide perspective and ensure that the actions of the Cabinet accord with the Council's policies and budget. The Panel also reviews corporate strategies that form the Council's Strategic Plan, Council partnerships and the Council's budgetary guidelines, and scrutinises Cabinet or Portfolio Holder decisions which have been called in.

## The Scrutiny Panel in 2023/24

The function of the Scrutiny Panel continued to be important, given the challenges faced by the Council in addressing the effects of the extreme financial pressures caused by the macroeconomic situation in which the UK finds itself, and the impacts this is having on the local government sector. Pressures on the Budget required the Council to address changes in income and expenditure to continue to provide services in a safe but successful manner under difficult circumstances. As a consequence, the Council was required to continue to innovate and look for different ways to mitigate financial pressures, and to adapt service provision in ways which sought to enable the continued delivery of vital services throughout the City, whilst minimising costs and seeking ways to fund non-statutory service provision, where possible. The Scrutiny Panel played an important role in examining the strategic decision making relating to the Council's delivery of services.

The Panel continued to carry out its annual programme of scrutinising the Council's financial affairs, budget setting and performance against its Strategic Plan. In-depth and detailed examination of the Council's draft Budget for 2024-25 was carried out, supported by members of the Cabinet and the Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer and his team. Scrutiny work was also carried out on the early stages of the 'Fit for the Future' programme of transformational change at the Council.

The success of Scrutiny Panel reviews depended on the involvement of Councillors, Council officers, partner organisations, expert witnesses and members of the public, and the Chairman of the Scrutiny Panel would like to thank everyone for their contribution to the work of the Scrutiny Panel in 2023/24.

## **Call-ins**

The general low level of call-ins and matters of urgency on Scrutiny Panel agendas suggests that the governance arrangements within the Council are working effectively.

There were no call-in requests during 2023-24.

## **Decisions taken under urgency provisions**

Certain decisions may be taken by Portfolio Holders or Cabinet under urgency provisions within the Constitution. Decisions taken by Cabinet or Portfolio Holders under urgency provisions are decisions made to take immediate action on urgent matters, which must then be reported on to the Scrutiny Panel at the earliest possible meeting. Such decisions are not subject to the usual decision making/call in process.

The Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules state that; 'A decision would be urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the Call-In procedure would seriously prejudice the legal or financial position of the Council or the decision relates to the commencement of a statutory consultation process.'

No decisions were taken under special urgency provisions during 2023-24 and by the time of the writing of this report.

## **Pre-decision scrutiny of decision making.**

The Scrutiny Panel can conduct proactive scrutiny of key strategies and decisions to be made by Cabinet or portfolio holders. In 2023-24, this included examining options for the introduction of a new charging scheme for garden waste collections, before these were to be decided by the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Waste

### Garden Waste Charging scheme

On 9 August 2023, the Panel reviewed the options for the following questions:

- a) The pricing model
- b) Receipt of benefit(s) discount
- c) The financial process for residents
- d) The process for dealing with unwanted wheeled bins already in the community

The Panel covered a range of questions and concerns regarding the affordability and fairness of the scheme, and the specific options available. This included proposed discounts for residents who were in receipt of Council Tax support, and options for reducing costs via sharing wheelie bins.

The Panel examined the different options provided within the report, and the financial assumptions made. Questions were asked across a wide range of subjects, including affordability and finance, payment options, accessibility and



challenges to wheelie bin use. Criticism came from some members of the Panel regarding the business case for the charging scheme, who described it as unconventional, and the options presented as being overly restrictive.

Panel members held a range of different views regarding the scheme for charging for garden waste collection, and the options presented to them for consideration. As no consensus could be reached, no recommendations were made to Cabinet.

### Budget setting for 2024-25

At its meeting on 23 January 2024, the Scrutiny Panel scrutinised the draft Budget 2023-24, Capital Programme and Medium-Term Financial Forecast, Housing Revenue Account and Housing Investment Programme. Members of Cabinet and senior officers presented the extreme financial challenges facing local authorities, and the efforts made to mitigate the worst impacts whilst producing a balanced budget for the coming financial year. The Panel were also informed of the reductions in spending which Cabinet felt were necessary in order to produce a balanced Budget.

Intensive questioning was held on the assumptions and projections included within the proposed Budget, and disagreements voiced regarding a number of areas, including the Council's reserve, investments, and approach to projecting expected cumulative deficits.

The Panel recommended that the following further information was produced to support Full Council's consideration of the 2024-25 Revenue Budget and Medium-Term Financial Forecast: -

- a) A statement of reserves for the period of the 2024-25 Revenue Budget, consistent with the reserves position;
- b) A Treasury Management Strategy Statement or further information on the current position on Treasury Management.
- c) A supplementary note for the Medium Term Financial Forecast to provide clarity and explanation regarding Appendix C and the cumulative deficit figures regarding the General Fund budget from 2024/25 through to 2028/29

### Fit for the Future Programme

The Panel had been due to consider an initial report laying out the work being done to construct the Programme, which would show the Council's approach to cutting costs and transforming services to match capacity in the future.

The report provided details of proposals to reimagine what the Council would do and how services would be delivered so it was 'Fit for the Future'. The proposals were in the form of an integrated portfolio of activity covering all services that aimed to transform their delivery, generate additional income and reduce Council net operating costs by 25% over the next three years.

Details of the overarching portfolio of activity were provided as well as information about each programme. Enabling plans to ensure governance, people and communications implications were managed effectively were also included.

Presentations on all parts of the Programme were given by members of the management team, including the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer and lead officers on each strand. Concerns were raised by some Panel members that the Programme would leave shortfalls for future Council budgets, even if it achieved its targets, and that whilst some projections and predictions were given, these had not been provided on all matters. Officers answered questions on this, and on projected cash flows and savings. Further questions and concerns were raised regarding the Council's reserves and accusations that figures given did not match those included in the 2024-25 Budget approved by Full Council. Assurances were provided by the management team, with promises that ongoing financial information would be provided when this became available.

The impacts of cuts on services and staff were discussed, with questions asked and answered regarding these subjects. Assurance was given that staff would be supported, and a range of options would be used, such as reskilling/redeployment and use of voluntary redundancies where possible.

The use of shared services options, and exploration of further shared service ideas, was explained to the Panel and considered. The current shared services partnerships were explained, with some North Essex local authorities pressing ahead together, whilst others waited to see how these fared. More information on the work being done was due to come to the Policy Panel at a coming meeting. The Panel discussed the potential extent of economies of scale.

The Panel was briefed on the Council's intended approach to the 30-year Housing Revenue Account business plan, which was under review. A Panel member raised a range of concerns about viability, and the intention to continue buying properties to bring into use as social housing.

The Council's asset programme was outlined and considered, including Cabinet's decision to adopt a corporate landlord model, and the production of a new Estates Plan. The Panel discussed and questioned the challenges and risks involved, including those related to complicated assets such as Colchester Castle. The approach that would be taken was explained, with some assets likely to be divested, so that investment can be made where appropriate.

The Future Workforce strategy was outlined and discussed. This included support for staff, their wellbeing and investment in skills and training. Hard-to-recruit areas were described, including finance and ICT, as well as specialist roles such as in building control.

The plans for governance and communications were discussed, regarding how capacity and transformation was overseen, consulted upon and then communicated to staff, the public and partner organisations.

The Panel resolved to receive a report on the impact on reserves that Fit For the Future would have, and what reserves would be available to cover deficit spending. The Panel also recommended that Cabinet table such a report for consideration at one of its future meetings.

## **Scrutiny Reviews at Colchester City Council**

The Scrutiny Panel held a number of reviews during 2023/24.

### Capita Data Breach

Richard Block, Chief Operating Officer, welcomed this as a chance to gain recommendations that helped the Council to improve. Regarding Capita, the Chief Operating Officer explained that in this particular instance, a purchase order had been used as Capita already had a wider contract for the Council, set up using a normal tendering process, to handle personal data for revenues and benefits. The specific contract in question here had been procured under that wider contract and was already covered by the data protection requirements set out in the existing contract with Capita. The Head of Operational Finance noted that Capita's data protection practices and policies were far more extensive than what was needed to ensure data security, but that these had been negated, in this instance, by human error which was in contravention of their policies. The Panel noted the explanation, but it was pointed out that the report did not cover this detail and only gave a general statement that contracts purchased via purchase order were not covered by data protection clauses.

The Head of Operational Finance and Chief Operating Officer gave assurances that the need to strengthen the process regarding purchase order use had been recognised, to ensure data protection clauses set out requirements expected of contractors. Whilst the Capita contract was already subject to the data protection requirements within the earlier, wider contract with that company, the Scrutiny Panel could potentially make recommendations to remedy the general data protection issues relating to procurement of contracts via purchase order. The Deputy Leader agreed that the report showed where general procedure could be improved.

Concern was raised at the statement, in the report, that the Council did not have data protection clauses in the terms and conditions for items purchased via purchase order, and that this specific contract had been procured via a purchase order. A Panel member criticised the way that the procurement process used had not meant that data protection policies were laid out for the contractor, to enforce their compliance. It was asked how such a contract could be laid out without obligations being placed on the third-party data processor [Capita].

A number of Panel members agreed that it appeared that the situation regarding purchase order terms and conditions on data protection in contracts needed to be tightened, to ensure data security and lay out the Council's recourse to gain compensation if third-party processors failed to comply with the terms of their agreements.

The Council's own policies stated that 'no third-party processors will be appointed who cannot comply with the data protection requirements and policies of

Colchester City Council.' A Panel member suggested that the Council's policy be reviewed to show how the Council could ensure secure data processing by its contractors. A discussion was held regarding officer responsibilities to carry out ratified policies.

It was recommended to Cabinet that: -

- a) All contractors be required, in writing, to agree to comply with the data protection requirements and policies of Colchester City Council;
- b) Internal Audit be asked to review the Council's data protection policy and arrangements, specifically regarding ensuring that the Council's requirements are met by its contractors and third-party data processors.

#### Business case for charging for the kerbside collection of garden waste

Following its earlier pre-decision scrutiny of the proposed scheme for moving to a subscription model for garden waste collection, the Panel requested a further item to examine the performance of the scheme, projections for its future operation, and take up by residents.

This report set out the latest financial position of the new chargeable garden waste service. Owing to higher-than-expected uptake, the Council [at time of the report being written] had received £1.474m income of which £741,594 was accounted in the financial year 2023/24 budget. The budget for 2024/25 estimated a net revenue impact of £1.3m, which included a net decrease in the fleet portfolio.

The report set out measures being taken to minimise costs and to ensure sustainable service delivery. This included strategic staffing adjustments and redeployment, as well as vehicle and fuel cost optimisation through deployment strategies. Rosa Tanfield, Head of Neighbourhood Services, gave a run-through of the decision making, through Full Council and Cabinet, to move to the current system.

The Panel questioned and discussed a range of aspects of the report and business case. These included:

- How the 11% initial uptake target had been chosen.
- Perceptions that the new scheme was unpopular.
- Whether the scheme was actually saving and making money, with changes up and down on a range of cost centres.
- Concern that Scrutiny Panel had not been given a complete presentation of the business case when last it considered this subject.
- Resource implications, regarding both staff and vehicles, and use of agency staff.
- The uptake of the scheme by those on Council Tax support, who were eligible for a discounted rate.
- The uptake of the scheme, area by area.

## Middle Mill Weir Collapse

The Panel received a preliminary report on the situation regarding the Weir collapse, what had led up to it and what work was being investigated to remedy the situation. This would be followed by a more comprehensive report once stakeholders had been consulted on options, and options solidified and financial implications estimated.

The Panel asked questions regarding the need for a fish path at the site, options for temporary bridges at the location, whether parts of the Weir could be saved, and the inspection procedure that was in place for the Weir and whether evidence had been seen of problems before the collapse. Timescales for deciding upon remedial action were asked for, with these being dependent on the choice of action and stipulations by stakeholders such as Essex County Council and the Environment Agency.

The swift ballasting of the damaged site was commended by the Panel, with the Chair noting that the Environment Agency had proffered the view that the collapse would not cause riverside flooding. The Operations Manager confirmed that there was no risk of such flooding, due to the operation of the Eastgate weir's automatic opening and closing to manage water levels. The Chair gave a reminder of the Panel's wish to ensure that effects along the length of the Colne were examined.

Councillor David King, Leader of the Council, acknowledged the concerns regarding cost and impacts on the environment. The scope had to be understood, and best price found to mend the situation. Details would be shared with members when these became available. It was not expected that this would carry on into 2025, but the process would not be a quick one. A Panel member asked how the Council would avoid 'overspecifying' for a solution, and gave the view that the Environment Agency and Natural England were a drag on achieving a solution. The Panel member argued that contractors should be brought in swiftly to start work, before any consultation was done. The Leader of the Council made an undertaking to set the best pace possible and to manage costs, seeking the best plan at the best pace, to give a solution that lasted.

The Operations Manager explained that, due to the timings of the consultation, a substantive report would not be possible for the meeting of the Panel scheduled for 12 March 2024.

The Scrutiny Panel resolved to receive a substantive report on the Middle Mill Weir situation at its first meeting in the 2024-25 Municipal Year.

### **Monitoring of the Council's performance relating to its Strategic Plan Action Plan and Key Performance Indicator Targets**

The Scrutiny Panel reviews the Council's performance and target setting at regular intervals, receiving the following reports on the dates given:

Corporate Key Performance Indicator Targets for 2023-2024 [6 June 2023]

*RECOMMENDED* to CABINET that:

- a) Noting the Council's policy of continuous improvement in its services, the Council's performance targets should be set by Cabinet so as to take performance in an upward direction, unless there are exceptional circumstances to justify diverging from this approach;
- b) The proposed range of performance targets be adopted as being a reasonable way of measuring progress on the Council's new Strategic Plan

Year End April 2022 – March 2023 Performance Report Key Performance Indicators (KPI), Other Performance News and Strategic Plan Action Plan [4 July 2023]

*RESOLVED* that the Scrutiny Panel confirms that the Council has made satisfactory progress in delivery against its Strategic Plan Action Plan, and compliments Cabinet on the progress made..

Corporate Key Performance Indicator Targets for 2024-2025 [13 February 2024]

The Panel did not, at this stage, feel there were any issues on which it wished to make recommendations.

**Scrutiny Panel recommendations to Cabinet during 2022-23**

Over the course of 2023-24, the Panel made a range of recommendations to Cabinet regarding the topics brought before the Panel for consideration. A constructive working relationship was pursued by the Scrutiny Panel, as a 'critical friend' regarding decision making. The majority of recommendations made by the Panel were fully accepted by Cabinet.

**Partnership arrangements**

During 2023-24, the Scrutiny Panel conducted the following reviews of subjects involving partnership working between the Council and other organisations.

Assessment of Colchester's ability to develop the skills the economy needs for the future

This report was provided to the Scrutiny Panel in response to their question posed at their meeting on 15 March 2023: 'How able is Colchester to develop the skills needed for the future?'

The report considered what is meant by 'skills', why they are important, assesses the current strategic situation in the UK labour market in terms of recent policy changes, new legislation and social change. It looked at local evidence of need and skills priorities and outlined Colchester's 'skills landscape'. This includes providers of training, projects currently taking place to address skills development and partnership work to address shortages directly.

A wide range of key partners in business, education and training attended to outline the employment and skills needs in the local economy, and the work

ongoing to provide for these and prepare people for careers in the areas where employment was needed. A large amount of information on a wide range of activities was given to the Scrutiny Panel, including training and education at Colchester Institute, University of Essex and Wivenhoe House Hotel, support from Colbea for new enterprises, and support for City Centre businesses by the Colchester Business Improvement District.

The Panel highlighted the importance of retaining skills in the local area, and a member noted that whilst many people left the area after completing school, many graduates of the University remained to live in the area after completing their studies. The guests were asked whether the Council could do more to help with retention. The BID Chief Executive stated that the main barriers to retention are national ones, but local issues included the additional costs face by people working in the City centre, which were double the costs of those working in the outskirts. Education of employers was a key issue. Much had to be done to simplify training and apprenticeships and to make them easier to provide. A Panel member argued that the Council must do what it could to improve the public realm and local cultural offerings. The Chief Executive agreed that this was important, albeit a secondary factor, which was why Parklets had been installed on the High Street to improve the 'dwell time' of visitors to the City centre. Work was carried out to reduce youth disengagement with the City centre and investments made to make it a place people wanted to be.

The Panel discussed retention problems in the hospitality sector, issues with housing for those working locally, educational levels of those who lived in the area and those who worked here, how to stress the importance of jobs that were essential but described as 'low skill', ways to support partner organisations and remove government barriers to success.

The Panel discussed and questioned how better data on skills needs, provision and levels could be collected and shared with councillors, as well as by partner organisations.

The Director of the Research & Enterprise Office, University of Essex, argued that if partner organisations, such as the University, were to contribute to quality assurance of data produced, then they would need to be involved in the design process for the collection of that data.

It was recommended to Cabinet that the Council seek to collect and publish annual data on skills provision within the Colchester area, involving the relevant local partners (organisations which provide skills and training) in designing the process for collecting data and providing quality assurance.

#### Review of Colchester City Council's Strategic Arts Partners

The Panel conducted a review of the partnership arrangements with organisations receiving a Strategic Arts Partner Grant from the Council: The Mercury Theatre, Colchester Arts Centre and Firstsite. Representatives from these three organisations attended, presented to the Panel and answered questions. The Panel was invited to review the performance and programming of each organisation and consider how effectively this supports the Council's strategic priorities and provides value for money for the funding provided.

The Panel discussed the presentations which had been given. The representatives were asked what work was being done to cross-fertilise activity across the artistic and creative sector. A range of work was described by each guest, mainly in the Colchester area but extending beyond to other areas also.

The Panel raised the importance of supporting and engaging young people, with curriculums being squeezed, especially around the arts. The Panel also discussed the ways in which the venues supported and improved accessibility for disabled and neurodivergent people. All of the venues had conducted work on these areas, and continued to do so. There were some accessibility issues which proved difficult to address, such as access for wheelchair users to standing music gigs, but a large amount of work had gone into providing support and options.

The guests were asked for more information on what was being done to ensure workforce diversity, including in gender and neurodiversity. This was provided and discussed.

A Panel member noted the successes of the three organisations, but also the huge challenge of escalating energy costs. The guests were asked whether an appropriate funding balance had been set, given the need for the Council to save money. The Executive Director of the Mercury emphasised that the funding was an investment, and allowed Essex County Council and Arts Council England to authorise further funding to the venues. Council funding was key to leveraging further funding at local and national levels. The argument was further made that a reduction in Council funding, and the mothballing of sites providing artistic and creative content would cost the Council more in the long term.

The Chair summarised that the Scrutiny Panel was seeking to ascertain whether the Council was getting value for money from the funding it provided. The creative sector was key in making Colchester a vibrant, special place, and to generate income and employment. The work of the arts organisations was praised.

The Panel gave the view that it considered that the arts organisations in receipt of Council funding are succeeding and adding to the local economy, but notes the challenge of high energy costs which imperil the organisations, and the potential need to review the funding provided in order to reflect these costs and enable the organisations to continue their positive work.

### **Portfolio Holder Briefings**

During 2023-24, the Scrutiny Panel scheduled the following briefings from members of the Cabinet, to be delivered at the Panel's meetings as shown below.

As for the previous municipal year, Scrutiny Panel directed that these only be scheduled in the latter part of the municipal year, to allow Portfolio Holders time to settle in to their new positions:



- Briefing from Councillor Paul Smith, Portfolio Holder for Housing [3 October 2023]
- Briefing from Councillor Martin Goss, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services and Waste [3 October 2023]
- Briefing from Councillor David King, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy [14 November 2023]
- Briefing from Councillor Alison Jay, Portfolio Holder for Economy, Transformation and Performance [12 December 2023]
- Briefing from Councillor Mark Cory, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Resources [23 January 2024]
- Briefing from Councillor Michelle Burrows, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage [13 February 2024]

Briefings still to occur, at time of writing:

- Briefing from Councillor Natalie Sommers, Portfolio Holder for Communities [12 March 2024]
- Briefing from Councillor Andrea Luxford Vaughan, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Environment and Sustainability [12 March 2024]

These briefings were arranged for Portfolio Holders to provide an overview of the work ongoing within their remits, and the main challenges being faced. They also gave the Scrutiny Panel an opportunity to specify particular issues on which members might wish to conduct 'deep dive' scrutiny, going in to more detail. Particular focus was given to actions or work for which the Portfolio Holders were personally responsible.

Whilst these briefings were mainly to facilitate the ability for the Panel's information, they did allow for the Panel to make recommendations to Cabinet or individual Portfolio Holders, and to make resolutions. The following resolution was made on 23 January 2024, resulting from the briefing from the Portfolio Holder for Resources:

*RECOMMENDED* to CABINET that the Portfolio Holder for Resources provides further information, to a future Cabinet meeting, on what is done to allocate assets which had previously been held under companies wholly-owned by the Council, where those companies are put into dormancy.

The minutes covering the Portfolio Holder briefings above are available on the Council's website here: [. Colchester City Council \(cmis.uk.com\)](https://www.colchester.gov.uk/cmis).

### **Scrutiny Panel operating as Crime & Disorder Committee**

The review held by the Crime and Disorder Committee provided information on the work of the Safer Colchester Partnership during 2022-23, and provided updates from partner organisations covering their work over the year. Additional detail was given on work done to tackle priorities, such as reducing exploitation, 'hidden harms', domestic abuse and violence and tackling County Lines gangs.

The Committee conducted scrutiny of the work of the partners, and their setting of priorities for the partnership and individual partners. Overall, the level of crime recorded had reduced by 7.5% as of the end of August 2023.

The five main priorities of the Safer Colchester Partnership were covered, with an explanation of the work being done to address each one. The five priorities were:

- a) Safeguard adults and children at risk of violence and exploitation
- b) Tackle neighbourhood crime and anti-social behaviour
- c) Support victims of domestic abuse and sexual offences and reduce violence against women and girls.
- d) Develop early intervention and prevention to tackle the drivers of crime and reduce reoffending.
- e) Work with communities to build resilience and promote safety.

*RESOLVED* that the CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE: -

- a) Concurs that the Safer Colchester Partnership is dealing well with its priorities
- b) Holds an additional meeting, within the next six months, to scrutinise the Strategic Assessment document of the Safer Colchester Partnership for the coming year, and to receive benchmarking data against a wider selection of different geographic areas, and an explanation of the divergence of domestic abuse statistics compiled by different partner organisations.

*RECOMMENDED* to the SAFER COLCHESTER PARTNERSHIP that: -

- a) Enhanced efforts be made by all relevant Safer Colchester Partnership partners to enforce the City Centre and vehicular Public Spaces Protection Orders [PSPOs];
- b) Whilst the Crime and Disorder Committee concurs that the Safer Colchester Partnership is dealing well with its priorities, a clearer place within its priorities should be found for addressing fraud, knife crime, shoplifting and other crimes against businesses.

### **Councillor Call for Action (CCfA)**

There were no CCfA issues brought to the attention of Scrutiny Panel during 2022/23.

### **Task and Finish Groups**

There were no Task and Finish Groups commissioned by the Scrutiny Panel 2023/24.

### **Appendix**

Appendix A – Schedule of Meetings and Reviews for 2023/24.

## Schedule of meetings and reviews

### Scrutiny Panel 2023/24

Councillor Laws (Chairman)\*, Councillor Willetts (Deputy Chairman),  
Councillor Arnold, Councillor McCarthy, Councillor S. McLean, Councillor Smalls.

<b>6 June 2023</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Key Performance Indicator Targets for 2023-24</li> <li>• Work Programme 2023-24</li> </ul>
<b>4 July 2023</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year End 2022/23 Performance Report and Strategic Plan Action Plan</li> <li>• Capita data breach</li> <li>• Work Programme 2023-24</li> </ul>
<b>19 September 2023 (Crime and Disorder Committee)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safer Colchester Partnership (Crime and Disorder Committee)</li> </ul>
<b>9 August 2023</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garden Waste Charging Scheme</li> </ul>
<b>3 October 2023</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portfolio Holder Briefing [Neighbourhood Services and Waste]</li> <li>• Portfolio Holder Briefing [Housing]</li> <li>• Work Programme 2023-24</li> </ul>
<b>14 November 2023</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portfolio Holder Briefing [Leader of the Council/Strategy]</li> <li>• Budget Strategy for 2024-25</li> <li>• Skills: How Able is Colchester to Develop the Skills Needed for the Future?</li> <li>• Work Programme 2023-24</li> </ul>
<b>12 December 2023</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portfolio Holder Briefing [Economy, Transformation and Performance]</li> <li>• Half Year 2023-24 Performance Report</li> <li>• Key Performance Indicators Benchmarking Report</li> <li>• Strategic Plan Action Plan progress</li> <li>• Work Programme 2023-24</li> </ul>

<b>23 January 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portfolio Holder Briefing [Resources]</li> <li>• 2024-25 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme, Medium Term Financial Forecast, Treasury Management Investment Strategy, Housing Revenue Accounts Estimate and Housing Investment Programme</li> <li>• Business case for charging for the kerbside collection of garden waste</li> <li>• Work Programme 2023-24</li> </ul>
<b>13 February 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portfolio Holder Briefing [Leisure, Culture and Heritage]</li> <li>• Corporate Key Performance Indicator Targets for 2024-25.</li> <li>• Arts Organisations receiving Council funding</li> <li>• Middle Mill Weir: repair and future [Interim report]</li> <li>• 'Fit for the Future' programme</li> <li>• Council's approach and policy towards the use of owned community assets and whether to charge for use</li> <li>• Asset Management Strategy</li> <li>• Work Programme 2023-24</li> </ul>
<b>26 February 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Fit for the Future' programme</li> </ul>
<b>12 March 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portfolio Holder Briefing [Communities]</li> <li>• Portfolio Holder Briefing [Planning, Environment and Sustainability]</li> <li>• Local Highways Panel</li> <li>• Town Deal projects progress report</li> <li>• Impact Evaluation of City Status</li> <li>• Scrutiny Panel Annual Report</li> <li>• Work Programme 2023-24</li> </ul>
<b>18 March 2024 (Crime and Disorder Committee)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safer Colchester Partnership (Crime and Disorder Committee)</li> </ul>