



Scrutiny Panel

Item
15

12 March 2024

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| Report of | Chief Operating Officer | Author | Owen Howell Tel. 282518 |
| Title | Annual Scrutiny Report | | |
| Wards affected | 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.

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

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