

Policy Review and Development Panel

Grand Jury Room, Town Hall
14 January 2013 at 6.00pm

The Policy Review Panel deals with reviewing policies and issues at the request of the Cabinet or Portfolio Holder, or pro-actively identifying issues that may require review; dealing with those issues either directly or by establishing Task and Finish Groups, monitoring progress of these Groups and assessing their final reports.

Information for Members of the Public

Access to information and meetings

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Terms of Reference

Policy Review and Development Panel

- To review strategies and policies at the request of the Cabinet either directly or by establishing Task and Finish Groups, and to make recommendations back to Cabinet for decision.
- To review issues at the request of a Portfolio Holder either directly or by establishing Task and Finish Groups and to make recommendations back to the Portfolio Holder for decision.
- To monitor progress of Task and Finish Groups and assess their final reports prior to their submission to either the Cabinet or the Portfolio Holder.
- To proactively identify issues that may require review and improvement and to seek Cabinet's agreement as to whether and how they should be examined.

COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL
POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL
14 January 2013 at 6:00pm

Members

Chairman : Councillor Julie Young.
Deputy Chairman : Councillor Mark Cory.
Councillors Nigel Chapman, Mark Cable, Barrie Cook,
Margaret Fairley-Crowe and Jo Hayes.

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

Agenda - Part A

(open to the public including the media)

Members of the public may wish to note that Agenda items 1 to 6 are normally brief and the last Agenda Item is a standard one for which there may be no business to consider.

Pages

1. Welcome and Announcements

(a) The Chairman to welcome members of the public and Councillors and to remind all speakers of the requirement for microphones to be used at all times.

(b) At the Chairman's discretion, to announce information on:

- action in the event of an emergency;
- mobile phones switched off or to silent;
- location of toilets;
- introduction of members of the meeting.

2. Substitutions

Members may arrange for a substitute councillor to attend a meeting on their behalf, subject to prior notice being given. The attendance of substitute councillors must be recorded.

3. Urgent Items

To announce any items not on the agenda which the Chairman has agreed to consider because they are urgent and to give reasons for the urgency.

4. Declarations of Interest

The Chairman to invite Councillors to declare individually any interests they may have in the items on the agenda. Councillors should consult Meetings General Procedure Rule 7 for full guidance on the registration and declaration of interests. However Councillors may wish to note the following:-

- Where a Councillor has a disclosable pecuniary interest, other pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary interest in any business of the authority and he/she is present at a meeting of the authority at which the business is considered, the Councillor must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest, whether or not such interest is registered on his/her register of Interests or if he/she has made a pending notification.
- If a Councillor has a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at a meeting, he/she must not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter at the meeting. The Councillor must withdraw from the room where the meeting is being held unless he/she has received a dispensation from the Monitoring Officer.
- Where a Councillor has another pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at a meeting and where the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgment of the public interest, the Councillor must disclose the existence and nature of the interest and withdraw from the room where the meeting is being held unless he/she has received a dispensation from the Monitoring Officer.
- Failure to comply with the arrangements regarding disclosable pecuniary interests without reasonable excuse is a criminal offence, with a penalty of up to £5,000 and disqualification from office for up to 5 years.

5. Have Your Say!

(a) The Chairman to invite members of the public to indicate if they wish to speak or present a petition at this meeting – either on an item on the agenda or on a general matter not on this agenda. You should indicate your wish to speak at this point if your name has not been noted by Council staff.

(b) The Chairman to invite contributions from members of the public who wish to Have Your Say! on a general matter not on this agenda.

6. Minutes

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 5

and 20 November 2012.

7. Better Town Centre Programme // Update

16 - 26

See report by the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration

The following guests have been invited to attend the meeting to assist Councillors in their discussions:

- Hugo Fenwick, Director at Fenwick Ltd, representing Williams and Griffin Ltd;
- Alan Lindsay, Principal Area Transportation Co-ordinator, representing Essex County Council;
- Ron Levy, on behalf of CORBA, contributing on the Walls / Lanes Project;
- Graham Carrington, Chairman of the Castle Ward Neighbourhood Action Panel;
- Cassandra Clements representing Colchester Borough Council's Zone Teams;
- Jayne Knowles, Head of School at Colchester Institute.

8. Work Programme 2012/13

27 - 30

See report by the Head of Corporate Management

9. Exclusion of the public

In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in accordance with The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (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).

POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL

5 NOVEMBER 2012

Present :- Councillor Julie Young (Chairman)
Councillors Mark Cable, Nigel Chapman, Barrie Cook,
Mark Cory, Margaret Fairley-Crowe and Jo Hayes

11. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 10 September 2012 were confirmed as a correct record.

12. Invited Guests

The Chairman welcomed four guests who had been invited to the meeting in order to broaden the Panel's discussion on Localism:

- Richard Aldridge, Citizens Advice Bureau Manager
- Tracey Rudling, Colchester Community Voluntary Service
- Katharine Evans, Messing cum Inworth Parish Council
- Sareena Cobdon, Hythe Community Centre

13. Localism // Colchester Localism

Councillors Cook and J Young (in respect of their Board Membership of the St Anne's Community Centre and the Greenstead Community Association respectively) each declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).

Councillor Cory (in respect of his involvement in the part funding of a project for the Hythe Community Centre in his capacity as a Board Member of Cory Environmental Trust) declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).

Councillor Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure Services attended the meeting and, with the consent of the Chairman addressed the Panel. Councillor Feltham explained that Localism encompassed a huge agenda, part of which included responsibilities in her portfolio. It was one of the reasons she had entered local politics as it asked questions of Governments and individuals and provided opportunities to do things differently and challenged the relationship between Whitehall, Local Councils and Communities. However it also raised questions as to what currently constituted a community. She was interested to hear how the discussions would progress, especially in terms of whether residents were interested in taking on new powers and the tension between doing new things at a time of spending cuts.

Executive Director, Ian Vipond presented a report suggesting what localism initiatives

the Council could develop as part of a wider localism approach following the implementation of the Localism Act.

Mr Vipond explained that the report focused on the appropriate response to the philosophy of localism in Colchester. Much was already being done locally, and the report recommended the development of five initiatives to enhance the development of a comprehensive approach in Colchester.

The Government had described the philosophy behind the Act as:

“We will push power downwards and outwards to the lowest possible level, including individuals, neighbourhoods, professionals and communities as well as local councils and other local institutions.”

However, the report concentrated more on the role that the Council could take in enabling and encouraging communities to take an even more active role in taking decisions and engaging in activities which affect their area. It was acknowledged that an element of capacity building would be required to enable existing and potential communities to engage to a greater extent than they currently do and the role of voluntary and community sector organisations would be crucial.

A number of projects were provided as examples in terms of:

- High Woods Country Park, Colchester's Countryside Volunteer Rangers;
- Mile End ward/ Myland Community Council attracting external funding for localised tree planting on Colchester Borough Council land;
- West Mersea Town Council taking on (playing fields) The Glebe extension and play area, with developer's maintenance contributions;
- Ward Projects funded in 2010/11 include allotments at Mile End; in total £76,976 was spent on 12 schemes;
- Big Lottery Children's Play programme used to support voluntary sector projects such as the Toy Library and Ormiston Trust Touring Top Tots' programme;
- Council grants investing £330,000 in third sector organisations to provide service through the voluntary welfare and preventing homelessness grant programmes;
- Use of planning gain as well as direct Council funding to lease or transfer assets to community groups for them to operate independently for community benefit;
- Community projects officers to develop community groups, building their capacity to serve their communities and achieve sustainability (Harbour Task group, Domestic Violence Forum);
- Service to 15 Neighbourhood Action Panels to give people an opportunity to influence service provision by the Police and Council in their communities;
- Engagement approach to building the capacity of community organisations to deliver the principles of community development;
- The Council has adopted eight Village Design Statements and Parish Plans to date and in partnership with the Rural Community Council of Essex, has a system for supporting Parish Councils interested in producing neighbourhood plans;
- Colchester in Bloom - business and resident engagement to encourage more planting around the town now run by Destination Colchester and Pam Schomberg.

The whole philosophy of Localism is that it must come from individuals and communities who must decide what they wish to engage with and they bring the main resource to the table in their own commitment and the hours they are prepared to volunteer. It is for this reason that what is now being explored is how the Council can help build capacity in communities by means of a spectrum of opportunities:

1. We continue to do what we are doing using a localism or Big Society label. We are always looking for opportunities to support communities and it could be argued that we are doing enough;
2. We look for an increasing range of opportunities and divert some resource;
3. We continue to do what we are doing and add to it, using ward Councillors as a key conduit, perhaps continuing to give them access to budgets that can be used for local projects;
4. We connect more directly with the communities, through a range of partners, particularly the Voluntary Sector and community groups to directly enable them to take more decisions.

Furthermore a series of specific options had also been worked up as follows:

- **Councillors' role in Localism:**

Councillors constitute a significant and diverse resource, and as such there is potential to consider how they can be supported in their leadership role.

- **Enabling Community Capacity:**

The issue in this case is the local partner. The obvious local partner within the Borough which could undertake this work is CCVS. If they would be willing to put their name forward then we would need to be confident that they could undertake this assignment given their existing commitments.

- **Enable improved digital infrastructure to facilitate the delivery of virtual communities:**

Considerable work is already underway to substantially improve the digital infrastructure in the Town and Borough, and the question is whether this opportunity can be used to create a community resource.

- **Participatory Budgeting:**

In principle the merits of the project are being considered through the establishment of the Jubilee Fund/Locality Budget which has given each councillor £2,000 to spend in their wards in 2012/13.

- **Increasing Community influence through Zone-Based working:**

This concept identifies one of the main pillars to Localism: local commitment - that the

residents support the principle, see clear opportunities in their locality and are prepared to get involved to identify and deliver “social goods” valued by all.

Councillor Hogg attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Panel. He referred to the problem of sustainability in terms of people’s willingness to volunteer for specific issues meaning that was very little cross over and it was very rare to find individuals who were willing to take on a wider community role. He was of the view that ward councilors continued to be the focal point for projects in local areas.

Councillor G Oxford attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Panel. He spoke against any proposal to move Locality Budgets to Zones rather than Borough ward areas. He explained how he and his fellow ward councilors had worked together to identify community groups with whom they could develop projects for funding.

Katharine Evans explained that Localism was in its early stages for Parish Councils especially given the context of the recent discontinuance of the Revenue Support Grant in Colchester. She agreed with the concern about individuals willing to get involved, given the recent trend in co-opting Parish Councillors rather than the need for elections to select from a number of candidates. She spoke in glowing terms of the benefits brought by the Zone wardens who were given authority to work with communities and had the ability to initiate projects to the benefit of the Parishes.

Tracey Rudling explained that one of the roles of CCVS was to help local groups to access funding opportunities. The availability of funding sources was becoming more restricted but the mechanisms to access available funds was becoming easier.

Sareena Cobdon regretted that she had been unaware of the Councillor Locality Budget opportunities but explained that she intended contacting the ward councilors in her area to seek their assistance.

Particular discussion from the Panel members was in relation to:

- The problem of identifying funding for projects and the need for advice and assistance in making funding applications;
- The need for Councillors to commit to utilizing their Locality Budget despite difficulties in identifying appropriate recipients;
- The importance to the rural communities of the forthcoming broadband improvements associated with the digital infrastructure project;
- The potential risk to Localism initiatives given the commencement of the latest Council Fundamental Service Review of Customer Contact

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that:-

(i) The approach to Localism in Colchester identified in the report by Executive Director Ian Vipond be approved;

(ii) The list of initiatives contained in the Project Initiation Documents attached to the report by Executive Director Ian Vipond be progressed with a view to implementation by their relevant Portfolio Holders;

(iii) The benefits of the Councillor Locality Budgets be acknowledged and the allocation of these funds to individual councillors be continued;

(iv) The building of capacity in communities be explored further by means of the fourth option identified in the report by Executive Director Ian Vipond, namely to connect more directly with the communities, through a range of partners, particularly the Voluntary Sector and community groups to directly enable them to take more decisions.

14. Localism // Implementation

Chris Reed, Policy and Projects Officer presented a report about the progress being made by the Council in implementing the measures within the Localism Act.

The Localism Act received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011. Certain provisions came into effect immediately or through the first Commencement Order on 3 December 2011. As at October 2012, there had been nine Commencement Orders and there were still aspects of the Act which were not fully in force or where the detailed guidance was awaited. A 'working summary' document has been produced to provide an overview of the many different items and timescales within the Act which enabled the required actions to be assessed and allocated to lead officers for implementation.

The Government described the 'five key measures which put new rights and powers in the hands of local people to take charge of their future' as:

- Community rights - including right to challenge, right to bid and right to build
- Neighbourhood planning
- Housing
- Community empowerment
- Competence

A website had been launched by the Department for Communities and Local Government as part of a £30 million programme which included support and funding for communities wanting to bid to run local services or buy their local shop or building to find out more about these new rights and powers.

A Localism section on the Council's website had also been set up as a resource for the public which could be updated as needed and where links to related information could be made 'all in one place'.

RESOLVED that the progress being made by the Council in implementing the measures within the Localism Act be noted.

15. Localism // Assets of Community Value - Right to Bid

James Firth, Planning Policy Officer and Karen Syrett, Spatial Policy Manager presented a report setting out the legislative requirements concerning assets of community value, considering the implications and make a recommendation to Cabinet on the arrangements to be adopted by the Council, including any necessary changes to the constitution.

The report explained that the Localism Act 2011 had introduced a right for Parish Councils, and other local groups such as community and voluntary bodies to nominate a building or other land as an 'asset of community value'. Local authorities are required to consider such applications, and maintain and publish a 'list of assets of community value'. The owner of any land or buildings on the list is required to give notice and comply with a moratorium period before they sell or dispose of the land/building in order to give community groups an opportunity to bid for the land/building should they wish to do so (the Community Right to Bid).

The legislation also set out the processes and procedures which the Council was required to follow which came into force on the 21 September 2012. The assessment of community nominations must be carried out on the basis of whether the land meets the definition of an asset of community value as defined in the legislation. Applications to dispose of land, listing reviews and compensation reviews must also be carried out as set out in the legislation. These technical processes are functions that it is appropriate to carry out at officer level. The regulations also specify that listing and compensation reviews must be carried out by an officer of appropriate seniority rather than at member level.

This report provided further information on the legislative requirements and proposed arrangements to be adopted by the Council regarding assets of community value (Community Right to Bid).

The report proposed that authority be given to the Spatial Policy Manager to decide whether nominated land should be considered to be an asset of community value on the basis that this work tied in with the responsibilities already being carried out within that team as a whole and authority be given to the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration to carry out and make decisions on listing reviews.

The provisions would not restrict who the owner of a listed asset could sell the property to, or at what price, so even if a community organisation puts forward a bid the owner would not have to sell to them. However, the owner of listed land would be entitled to compensation from the Council where they had incurred loss or expense which would not have been incurred if the land were not listed and payments of over £20,000 would be met by the Government.

The report further proposed that authority be given to the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration to carry out and make decisions on compensation reviews.

Mr John Wallett, a resident representing the Community Cinema Project in Wivenhoe addressed the Panel, pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5 (1). He explained that the Community Cinema Project in Wivenhoe may consider nominating a building in the future and he sought further advice regarding:

- Whether the Council would assist in guiding community organizations through the process;
- The provision of advice to community groups as to which nominations would be potentially viable;
- Whether the Council could assist in advising how different groups could work together towards a common objective;
- Whether advice could be obtained prior to the submission of nominations regarding planning policies and associated potential obstacles.

It was confirmed that the council had the ability and expertise to offer certain types of technical advice to community groups but work would need to be undertaken to ensure that a clear differentiation existed between those parts of the organisation offering advice and those involved in determination of nominations. In terms of the 'first port of call' for these types of enquiries, it was likely that this would rest with the Council's Community Development Team managed by Bridget Tighe.

Councillor Hazell attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Panel seeking clarification regarding a community group's rights in respect of the purchase of an asset.

Tracey Rudling explained that CCVS was able to assist in partnership working in order to help in the submission of applications. Other types of training related to this type of work were also available and it was likely that there may be issues in terms of capacity building.

Particular discussion from the Panel members was in relation to:

- The implications for the Council of the compensation issues;
- Potential Equality and Diversity implications in the light of competing local groups bidding for assets;
- The appropriateness of the Spatial Policy Team being given authority to administer the new arrangements

RESOLVED that the legislative requirements concerning assets of community value (also known as 'community right to bid'), as set out in the report by the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration, be noted.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that:-

(i) The Council's functions relating to assets of community value (community right to bid) be carried out by the Spatial Policy team in Strategic Policy and Regeneration, to include:

- maintenance and publication of the list of assets of community value;
- maintenance and publication of the list of land nominated by unsuccessful community nominations;
- consideration of community nominations;
- processing of notices of disposal and correspondence relating to the moratorium period;

- applications for compensation.
- (ii) Officers from other departments be involved in the decision making process including the Community Development Team and Sport and Leisure Services.
- (iii) Authority be given to the Spatial Planning Manager to make decisions on community nominations and compensation awards, following consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder, as necessary, and dependent on the circumstances of the case.
- (iv) Authority be given to the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration or Executive Director to make decisions on listing and compensation reviews, following consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder, as necessary, and dependent on the circumstances of the case.
- (v) The Monitoring Officer be requested to make any necessary changes to the Constitution.

16. Localism // Community Right to Challenge

Andrew Weavers, Monitoring Officer, presented a report informing the Panel of the Community Right to Challenge.

The Localism Act 2011 introduced with effect from 27 June 2012 a right for Parish Councils, community and voluntary bodies, charitable trusts and two or more local authority employees to submit an expression of interest in taking over the provision of a service on behalf of the local authority. Where a valid expression of interest is received, the Council is required to undertake a procurement exercise for that service, which may lead to a contract for the provision of the service being awarded.

The Monitoring Officer's report provided information on the legislation and recommended the arrangements which the Borough Council should adopt in order to operate the new Community Right to Challenge which was an Executive Function.

There was no requirement for a Voluntary or Community Body to have any local connection, and any of these bodies could submit an expression of interest in partnership with any other organisation, including a commercial organisation, or propose to sub-contract the work to a commercial organisation. Providing that this is done, there is no requirement for the relevant body to undertake the majority of, or any particular share of the work.

The expression of interest must relate to the provision of, or assisting in the provision of, a "relevant service", which means any service which was currently provided by or on behalf of the Council. "Excluded services" cannot be the subject of an expression of interest and are those which include the exercise of a statutory power which cannot be delegated, such as the determination of a planning application.

The expression of interest had to meet certain requirements including the provision

of :-

- Information about the financial resources of the “relevant body”;
- Evidence demonstrating that by the time of any procurement exercise, the relevant body will be capable of providing or assisting in providing the relevant service;
- Information about the outcomes to be achieved by the relevant body, in particular how the provision would promote or improve the social, economic or environmental well-being and how it will meet the needs of the users;

The report also gave details of:

- What happened when an expression of interest was received;
- The grounds on which the Council could reject a valid Expression of Interest;
- The ability to specify periods during which expressions of interest may be submitted for services;
- Arrangements for expressions of interest for services which are provided on a joint arrangement with other authorities;
- Publication requirements for the timescales between receipt of an expression of interest and notification of acceptance or rejection;
- The conduct of the procurement exercise;
- Arrangements regarding in-house bids.

The report explained that, once the statutory process had been activated, there was no guarantee that the community or voluntary organisation which initiated the process would be successful in the procurement exercise. Indeed, such an organisation could be at a considerable disadvantage by reason of its smaller size, limited track record of service provision and lack of funds for bid preparation. The formal procurement process could also lead to a formal service contract rather than a genuine partnership for local service delivery.

In order to encourage community involvement in service provision, it would be preferable to encourage direct negotiation with community and voluntary bodies instead of a formal procurement exercise. This policy of being approachable demonstrates that the Council and other sectors should not require the use of the legislative provisions but to work together in the first instance. So, for example, the Council has the ability to enter an agency arrangement with a Parish Council, or to grant a lease of local community facilities to such a community or voluntary body, and to enter a grant agreement, without having to undertake a competitive procurement. This will only be possible where the grant agreement does no more than cover costs (rather than control of services) and where there is no developed commercial market for the services.

Particular discussion from the Panel members was in relation to:

- The three month for expressions of interest each year and the need to provide for adequate budgetary planning procedures;
- The implications of potential commercial bids being submitted as a consequence of the requirement to undertake a full procurement exercise.

RESOLVED that Cabinet be informed of this Panel’s concerns in respect of the

Community Right to Challenge in terms of the implications of potential commercial bids being submitted as a consequence of the requirement for the Council to undertake a full procurement exercise upon receipt of an expression of interest.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that:-

(i) The period specified for the receipt of expression of the interest and timescales, as set out in Appendix 1 to the Monitoring Officer's report be agreed.

(ii) Any expressions of interest received be reported to Cabinet once the validation process has been undertaken by Legal Services and any decision to undertake a procurement process be managed by the relevant Service area in consultation with the Council's procurement team.

17. Work Programme 2012 - 2013

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Corporate Management giving details of the Panel's current work programme. The programme has been updated since the previous meeting of the Panel to reflect the decisions that were made and current circumstances.

The review by the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Panel of the consultation response on Setting Local Speed Limits had prompted further discussion of the work undertaken by the 20mph speed limit Task and Finish Group and the Essex County Council Colchester Local Highways Panel had recently indicated its support for the demand for the implementation of 20mph speed limits within local communities to be discussed by the Borough's Task and Finish Group and, with the assistance of a Highways Officer.

The vacancy on the Technology and Improvements in Community Engagement Task and Finish Group has now been filled and the first meeting is due to take place on 7 November 2012.

RESOLVED that –

(i) The contents of the report and the current situation regarding the work programme be noted.

(II) That, in view of recent developments and in order to again move forward with this issue, arrangements be made for the 20mph Speed Limit Task and Finish Group to be reconvened with a newly appointed membership.

POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL 20 NOVEMBER 2012

Present :- Councillor Julie Young (Chairman)
Councillors Mark Cable, Nigel Chapman, Barrie Cook,
Mark Cory and Jo Hayes

Substitute Member :- Councillor Richard Martin
for Councillor Margaret Fairley-Crowe

18. Equality and Diversity // Annual Update

Councillors J Young (in respect of her spouses Chairmanship of Colne Housing Association Board) declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).

Lucie Breadman, Interim Head of Life Opportunities, assisted by Andrew Harley, Equality and Safeguarding Co-ordinator, presented a report asking the Panel to review progress made in meeting the Council's statutory duties and achieving its Equality and Diversity objectives, and also to endorse the proposed approach going forward.

Mrs Breadman explained that, since the last annual report, the Council had met the new specific duties, publishing information and setting equality objectives, continued to address the general duty of 'integrating consideration of the advancement of equality into the day-to-day business of public bodies, and across all its functions' and made clear in the Strategic Plan its commitment to creating better local communities with opportunities for all residents.

With this in mind, all councils, including their councillors and staff, were required to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not;
- foster good relations between people who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not.

The 'protected characteristics' were age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The duty also covered marriage and civil partnership, but not for all aspects of the duty.

The period covered by this annual report is the first full year during which the general and specific duties have been in force. The Council needed to maintain a responsive and flexible approach during 2011/12 while it awaited the results of national consultation and policy developments, and the subsequent issuing of statutory or non-statutory guidance.

Beyond meeting the requirements of the specific duties and general duty, it is left up to public bodies to decide how they will go about ensuring compliance.

We have used our best endeavours to keep informed and up-to-date with the changing policy picture at national level, and to interpret this into what we need to do and publish locally. We believe that this has enabled us to meet our obligations under the Act to date.

In practical terms, in order to meet the Council's obligations, the following evidence had been published on the Council's website and includes:

- Equality Impact Assessments;
- The Council's Strategic Plan and Strategic Plan Action Plan;
- The Council's website pages on Equality and Diversity;
- The Council's equality information section contains all required information;
- Workforce statistics: Equality monitoring information;
- Work undertaken by the Council's Research and Engagement team about service users, customers and the borough's population;
- The Council's independent, external accreditation as an 'achieving' organisation under the Equality Framework for local government.

The report proposed that, going forward, the following approach be adopted:

- Continue to gather evidence and assess our approach in meeting our statutory obligations;
- Encourage and support Council services in the delivery of the practical steps they are taking to improve accessibility to our services. The Universal Customer Contact Fundamental Service Review will embed a customer-centric approach that will have the different needs of our customers at its heart;
- Further develop the use and content of Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs), especially with our politicians and scrutiny groups;
- Make more systematic the use of the Council's surveys, consultations and equality monitoring data when equality impacts are being assessed by Services;
- Use the Council's Forward Plan to help allocate due priority to the key decisions listed there in order to better 'integrate consideration of the advancement of equality into the day-to-day business of public bodies, and across all its functions';
- Develop internal learning and development tools, especially online and ask our Member Development Group to focus on how to help councillors develop their understanding and awareness of this important area of work.

Particular discussion from the Panel members was in relation to:

- The work undertaken by the Equality and Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the impact of the additional safeguarding responsibilities on the equality role;
- The mechanism for Councillors to continue their involvement following the discontinuance of the Members Liaison Group;
- The purpose and outcomes of the 'Removing Barriers to Council Services' workshop;
- A request for the Equality and Safeguarding Co-ordinator to investigate further the issue of A boards which the Fair Access to Colchester Group had been trying to address for a considerable time;

- The valuable work undertaken by the Street Angels project;
- The need for a solution for the storage of mobility scooters within Sheltered Housing Schemes;
- The need for greater awareness within the cycling community of the potential for greater care for pedestrians with visual or hearing impairment;
- The current proposal regarding the removal of vehicles from the High Street but the retention of buses, taxis, motorcycles and cycles and the potential safety issues;
- The Council's current relationships with TACMEP;
- The importance of the Council's role generally in tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

It was explained that the Equality and Safeguarding Co-ordinator's role had been extended from two to three days in order to adequately incorporate the two areas of responsibility and that there were areas of overlap and connections with the two roles such as in respect of vulnerability and disability as well as age and young people.

Mrs Breadman was of the view that the Council was now in a better position than before. The Equality Impact Assessments work schedule was regularly monitored to ensure any assessments due for review were prioritised and there was far greater awareness with officers across all service areas.

It was intended that the Member Liaison Group would have an ongoing role but on a topic by topic basis. Additionally Councillor involvement had taken place separately in the context of the Budget savings exercises.

The Equality and Safeguarding Co-ordinator indicated he would respond to the Panel members on the outcome of his investigation of the A board issue and he confirmed that TACMEP continued to flourish and the Council was working with the Group and the relationship was a useful one.

RESOLVED that the progress made in meeting the Council's statutory duties and achieving its Equality and Diversity objectives be noted and the proposed approach going forward, as set out in the report be approved.

19. Older Persons Accommodation Task and Finish Group // Recommendations

Councillor Laura Sykes, Chairman of the Older Persons Accommodation Task and Finish Group, presented the final report of the Task and Finish Group which had been set up at the request of the Portfolio Holder for Housing to:

'Undertake a comprehensive review of the issues relating to accommodation for older people in order to assist in the determination of a Strategy and action plan which will assist older people in Colchester find housing solutions which meet their needs.'

The Task and Finish Group had initially considered a number of particular topics:

- What do we know about need, demand and current provision and what are the

gaps?

- What are the key national and local policy drivers?
- What do older people want and what do they think of current provision? What does the next generation of older people want? What should the Council's key strategic objectives be for its strategy?
- What actions should be undertaken to meet these objectives?
- What resources are available?

The Group had undertaken a number of tasks including:

- Assembling an evidence base of information to determine need, demand and current provision from research and information already available
- Considered the national key policy drivers
- Considered the key strategic documents of other key organizations
- Looked at existing consultation with older people undertaken locally
- Looked at the existing Housing Strategy for Colchester and considered relevant objectives and actions from that document and those identified by the group from the research undertaken

The Group also undertook visits to different types of accommodation which had been provided for older people:

- Winnocks and Kendalls Almshouse provided by a voluntary group (rented accommodation)
- Meadow Park Retirement village (owner-occupied accommodation)
- Balkerne Gardens Trust (Privately owned Sheltered accommodation)
- Wenham View (Social rented/Shared Ownership Sheltered accommodation)
- Elfreda House and Walnut Tree House (Colchester Borough Council's Sheltered Accommodation)

The group felt that the Council needed a strategy to set out the Council's ambitions for meeting the housing needs of older people in Colchester over the next five years which would be a key driver for close working with the Council's partners to ensure Colchester remained a place where older people flourish and could make an important contribution to the life of the borough.

The strategic priorities for the strategy which was set out in full in an appendix to the report, were:

- To deliver a choice of good quality housing for older people in the borough.
- To enable older people to live independently in their own homes for longer.
- To make the best use of technology to enhance the quality of life for older people.
- To provide better access to information and housing advice for older people.

Councillor Sykes thanked the other members of the Task and Finish Group for their hard work and the officers who had supported and assisted the Group in its work.

Councillor Lewis attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Panel. She was a member of the Task and Finish Group and considered that the report was a

fully comprehensive one. However, she was of the view that the Group should have undertaken more visits to Sheltered Schemes in Colchester, taken the opportunity to look into the issues relating to Sheltered Housing in Colchester in more detail and considered that the Group still had more work that it could do to continue to assist the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities. She also felt it was important for the Council to acknowledge the need for a particular category of Social Housing for Older People.

Particular discussion from the Panel members was in relation to:

- The need for a great deal of sensitivity to be adopted in relation to older people who were in situations of over- occupation and potentially fearful of losing their home
- Equity Release Schemes and concern around the suitability of schemes for residents;
- The potential need for more work to be undertaken in relation to dementia, given the predicted significant increase in its incidence in the coming years;
- The need for consideration to be given to the installation of domestic sprinkler systems in Lifetime Homes, as the devices provided opportunities for people with disabilities to survive a fire in their homes.

It was explained that the review of Sheltered Housing was being undertaken by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities and that it had not been included in the remit of the Task and Finish Group. It was important for the Group's work in terms of its current remit to be concluded and it would be for the portfolio holder to consider any further work to be undertaken by a Task and Finish Group at an appropriate time.

The Group's recommendations on Equity Release Schemes was in relation to the registered schemes which had been very successful nationally in enabling people to release funds to undertaken valuable repairs and maintenance and in the availability of adequate advice about the Schemes which were nationally recognized ones.

RESOLVED that:-

- (i) The members of the Older Persons Accommodation Task and Finish Group be thanked for the work they had undertaken;
- (ii) The recommendations of the Task and Finish Group be agreed;
- (iii) Subject to the action on downsizing being amended to refer to 'sensitively encourage', the contents of the draft Older Persons Accommodation Strategy be agreed;
- (iv) The draft strategy, as amended, be referred back to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities for a decision on the adoption of the Older Persons Accommodation Strategy.

14 January 2013

Report of	Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration	Author	Gareth Mitchell ☎ 506972
Title	Update on Better Town Centre Programme		
Wards affected	All Wards		

This report provides the Panel with an update on the Council's Better Town Centre Programme as part of its review of "Town Issues".

1. Action Required

- 1.1 To review progress with the Council's Better Town Centre Programme.

2. Reasons for Action

- 2.1 In 2010 the Council launched the Better Town Centre Programme (www.bettertowncentre.co.uk) to improve communication and coordination across the many and varied activities and projects in Colchester town centre. As part of its themed review of "Town Issues", the Panel is invited to consider progress with the programme over the last two years and the connections between the work of the programme and other related town centre issues.

3. Supporting Information on the Better Town Centre Programme

- 3.1 The Better Town Centre Programme was created in recognition of the fact that helping the Town Centre to flourish in challenging times would require co-ordinated action and is a cross-council programme delivered in partnership with Essex County Council based on the nine interconnecting themes set out below:-

1. Improving Colchester for You and Your Family

Colchester is a hub for leisure, entertainment, services and shopping. But a growing population needs more shops, easier ways to get around and more choice of things to do and see. The aim is for the town centre to be a welcoming place at all times of the day and night; making the town centre a social place as well as a place for business; a place where people meet and become involved in their town.

2. Creating Quality Public Places and Spaces

To deliver new and develop existing public spaces as places people want to be and spend time and to increase the levels of activity and interest taking place in these spaces. The quality of these spaces and the connections between them all contribute importantly to the variety and feel of the place.

3. Bringing New Buildings and Street Scenes

Some areas of Colchester's town centre are run down and need investment and with a growing population people need more facilities and more choice in their town centres. These new buildings also need to deliver high quality design which enhance and complement the existing collections of buildings which are a key part of Colchester's heritage and character.

4. Supporting Business and Retailers

Times are tough for business right now but Colchester's diverse business scene is proving to be impressively resilient. The task now is to develop the town centre by creating the right spaces and places for businesses to survive and thrive, for new enterprises to take off and for Colchester to keep its skilled people working locally. The aim of this approach is to boost Colchester's competitive position, create a place where people want to be, satisfy the growing demand for town centre services from a rapidly growing population and enhance the town's distinctiveness.

5. Making it easier to get to and around Colchester

A range of approaches are being considered which are intended to make it easier to get to and move around Colchester town centre including improving access for buses, making it easier to cycle, more attractive to walk around and improving air quality by reducing unnecessary traffic in the town centre.

6. Promoting Colchester

Promoting Colchester is a complex task. Competition from other towns and people's rising expectations are just two hurdles to overcome. We all have a part to play in 'talking up the place' to improve the town's image and perception among two key groups: potential visitors and business investors.

7. New Things to See, Do and Visit

There are few destinations, especially in the East of England Region, which can claim to have as much tourism potential as Colchester. With new attractions and hotels in development there will be more on offer to attract the anticipated additional 500,000 visitor trips to the Borough in future years. Leisure time is increasingly precious to people and it is important that they have a choice of quality places to spend their time and hard-earned money. Colchester's great range of places to stay, visit, eat and drink makes a significant contribution to the quality of life here and will help to make Colchester a destination of choice to live, work and visit.

8. Ensuring Clean, Safe Places and Spaces

Colchester remains one of the safest towns of its size but there is more that can be done to make it more attractive for residents and visitors. Improving and maintaining confidence is also important as well as providing a clean environment in which business and enterprise can flourish without the expense and disruption of criminal activity and anti social behaviour.

9. Changing Colchester after Dark

Like many towns centres in this country, Colchester suffers from a perception that in the evening and into the night it can sometimes feel an unwelcoming place. The aim is for improvement not perfection; effectively managing the night-time experience which may help to overcome negative public perceptions which may exist.

- 3.2 A "Better Town Centre" brand and website were created and the programme was described visually through the use of the following "jigsaw" graphic, which aims to portray a programme of interconnected themes and projects:-



Improving Colchester for you and your family

Creating quality public places and spaces

Bringing new buildings and street scenes

Supporting business and retailers

Making it easier to get to and around Colchester

Promoting Colchester

New things to see, do and visit

Ensuring clean and safe places and spaces

Changing Colchester after dark

3.3 The programme is coordinated by a Better Town Centre Steering Group which meets monthly and is made up of officers from across Colchester Borough Council and colleagues from the Highways and Transportation and Economic Growth teams at Essex County Council

4. Progress with the Better Town Centre Programme

4.1 Since the launch of the Better Town Centre Programme a great deal of progress has been made with projects and initiatives, all coordinated and through the Better Town Centre Steering Group. The Panel is invited to review progress to date as set out in Appendix 1.

4.2 The Panel is also invited to review the current list of “live” Better Town Centre projects and their status at Appendix 2.

5. Better Town Centre Plan – Supplementary Planning Document

5.1 As part of the natural development of the Better Town Centre approach, the “Better Town Centre Plan – Supplementary Planning Document” has been developed, consulted upon and adopted. This Plan sits alongside the Better Town Centre Programme, and is intended to provide a guiding framework in planning policy terms for the achievement of

the Council's town centre aspirations. It takes the form of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which provides detailed planning guidance building on Colchester's general policies as set out in its adopted Local Plan (previously known as the Local Development Framework).

- 5.2 In keeping with the Better Town Centre approach, the Better Town Centre Plan SPD provides detailed guidance on the delivery of the vision set out in the Core Strategy for the future direction of Colchester's town centre. It provides a holistic approach to the reinvigoration of spaces, uses and activity in Colchester's historic centre during the day, evening and at night that will ensure its continued vitality in a 21st Century context of economic challenges, climate change and new ways of spending leisure time.
- 5.3 The Local Plan Committee adopted this Plan at its meeting on 17 December 2012. The adopted version of the Better Town Centre Plan SPD can be found on the Council's website under "Planning and Building/Planning and Transportation Policy/Adopted Guidance".
- 5.4 Work on the Better Town Centre Plan SPD has also involved a significant degree of inter-departmental working through the Better Town Centre Steering Group.
- 5.5 The Plan proposes the following four main inter-linked themes based on policy, consultation responses and discussion of objectives at the Town Centre Steering Group:

Sustainability

Changes to Town Centre traffic will have a positive impact on sustainability by promoting alternative modes of transport, encouraging more pedestrian activity.

The BTC programme also seeks to prioritise reductions of the Town Centre carbon footprint through regeneration of existing buildings and spaces

Sustainability in its widest sense is addressed through support of commercial activities and promotion of social inclusion

Activity

The Programme seeks to monitor, promote and maintain a wide range of Town Centre activities which support a lively 21st century town

Heritage and Design

The Programme seeks to monitor the relationship between preserving existing heritage and encouraging new and exciting development in the Town.

Movement

The Better Town Centre programme is working to achieve a safe and accessible Town Centre through a range of projects.

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 The Council's Strategic Plan 2012 to 2015 identifies a number of priority areas which are strongly aligned to the Better Town Centre Programme. Both emphasise the critical importance of:-
 - Regenerating our borough through buildings, employment, leisure and infrastructure
 - Improving opportunities for local business to thrive including retail
 - Promoting sustainability and reducing congestion
 - Showing tolerance and changing behaviours to create better local communities
 - Supporting tourism, heritage and the arts
 - Bringing investment to the borough

- Working in partnerships to help tackle health and crime issues.
- Improving our streets and local environment
- Enabling local communities to help themselves
- Providing sport and leisure for all, alongside good quality green spaces and play areas

7. Consultation

- 7.1 A range of consultation has been carried out both on the Better Town Centre Programme and the Better Town Centre Plan SPD. The most recent consultation events were held from 22 June to 27 July 2012 and included drop-in sessions attended by 643 people at St. Nicholas House in Colchester town centre.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 There is a Communications plan for the Better Town Centre Programme and a member of the Council's Communications and Marketing team is a member of the Better Town Centre Steering Group to ensure publicity opportunities are maximised.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 The Better Town Centre Programme is a method of coordinating and communicating town centre projects and initiatives and as such does not have any specific financial implications. All projects included in the programme are subject to the usual financial approval processes in accordance with the Council's Constitution and are financially managed by the relevant service managers.

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 10.1 The Better Town Centre Programme is an administration process, as stated in the report intro, "In 2010 the Council launched the Better Town Centre Programme (www.bettertowncentre.co.uk) to improve communication and coordination across the many and varied activities and projects in Colchester town centre." As such Council guidance states that an EQIA is not required if the policy, strategy or service does not impact on people - whether residents, visitors or staff. This may be the case for an internal technical or administrative function." On this basis the co-ordination of the programme does not have an EQIA but the individual activities and projects need their own EqlAs.

11. Community Safety and Health and Safety Implications

- 11.1 Community Safety and Health and Safety considerations are an important part of the delivery of projects and initiatives in the town centre. However there are no implications that relate specifically to the Better Town Centre Programme.

12. Risk Management Implications

- 12.1 All projects included in the Better Town Centre Programme are included in service-based operational risk registers and as such are managed by the relevant service area.



COLCHESTER
We believe in a better town centre

APPENDIX 1

Colchester Better Town Centre Improvement Programme Progress Report

Stylish cultural offerings
Must-have shopping opportunities
More space to breathe and just be
Great new places to live
Smart new facilities
Revived old favourites

Since the town centre improvement programme was launched in 2010 a great deal of progress has been made. Here are the highlights shown under the 9 themes:

Improving Colchester for you and your family

- Colchester has hosted major national cycle races over the past four years to encourage more cycling and also to showcase the town internationally and nationally on ITV4. Colchester will again host the Tour Series town centre race in May 2013.
- Colchester welcomed the Olympic Torch Relay in the lead up to
- the 2012 Olympic Games, a once-in-a-lifetime event for the people of Colchester and the surrounding area
- Spring 2011 saw the opening of a new play area in Castle Park. This was an instant hit and the play area welcomed high numbers of children right through the summer.

Creating quality public spaces and places

- A new public space was opened outside firstsite in September 2011 and is already proving popular for people to meet and relax. Though in its infancy, this new public space will provide an open space for activities and events for people to enjoy. It also provides a great setting to compliment the exciting new developments taking place in St. Botolph's.
- Plans are also progressing to develop a new public square outside Colchester's Town Railway Station. Artists have been engaged to celebrate the history of the station, including its use by the old Britannia Works and the Army to enhance this important gateway into the town.
- In partnership with Colchester Garrison the Council arranged for soldiers from the Military Corrective Training Centre to clear the grounds of St Peter's Church, North Hill in 2009. The work tidied and restored this area to its former glory.

- Work to improve the grounds of St Botolph's Priory was also completed in 2010. The work included new seats, landscaping, improved access and security and has refreshed an existing public space where people can better appreciate one of the most important historic buildings in the town centre.
- 2010 also saw the first year of a new three year Christmas lighting scheme which has been met with approval from local people, visitors to the town as well as town centre retailers. The scheme also illuminated the iconic Town Hall with new festive light too.

Bringing new buildings and street scenes

- firstsite, Colchester's innovative new contemporary art gallery, opened in September 2011. Designed by award-winning architect Rafael Viñoly, the landmark firstsite building offers a great range of things for people to do and is a landmark addition to Colchester's tourism offer.
- The building has been the catalyst for regeneration in the St Botolph's area, with three new hotels, a Creative Business Centre and numerous retail opportunities already planned in the surrounding area.
- The new Magistrates' Court also opened in April 2012, creating much more striking and inviting gateway to the town centre. Her Majesty's Court Service (HMCS) led the delivery of this £30m project.
- A full refurbishment of the historic Essex and Suffolk Fire Office in the High Street was completed in 2010 which has enhanced the western end of the High Street

Supporting business and retailers

- The Council purchased the old Police Station in St Botolph's Street with the help of £500,000 funding from the Haven Gateway Partnership (HGP) and EEDA. The aim is to develop a Creative Business Centre which will help boost Colchester's burgeoning creative sector, providing work space and creating new job opportunities alongside networking, training and mentoring opportunities for smaller firms.
- The HGP has also funded a study to help kick-start a project to showcase Colchester's independent retailers. Colchester has all the ingredients to develop a 'Lanes-style' retail experience (similar to those in Brighton and Norwich) and it is hoped that this study will help the Council with external funding applications to bring about physical changes as well as inspire traders in the town's streets and lanes.
- June 2012 saw the completion of a multi-million refurbishment of Debenhams department store

Making it easier to get to and around Colchester

- Colchester was awarded Cycle Town status in 2009 along with £4.2m funding. This three year project brought new routes and cycle parking facilities as well as raising awareness of cycling through the hosting of major cycling events in the town centre.
- There are plans to restrict traffic in the High Street and the Council has been working in partnership with ECC to bring forward proposals which take unnecessary vehicles from the Town Centre core during the day.

- The new bus station opened in Osborne Street in November 2012. High quality passenger facilities have been provided there as well as an upgrade to the Vineyard Street lift ensuring the new facility is fully accessible from the main shopping areas in the town centre.
- Access to the town centre from North Colchester will be improved with the opening of a new access road by the end of 2013 which will provide a direct route from the new junction onto the A12 to the railway station. A recent funding bid has been approved which will seek to deliver the Park and Ride at North Colchester by the end of 2013.

Promoting Colchester

- The opening of firstsite provided a major new story for Colchester and attracted much national and international media coverage.
- Similarly, the Tour Series and Tour of Britain cycle races also featured a considerable amount of media coverage, particularly on TV.
- Christmas 2010 saw Colchester's first ever TV advertising campaign to promote Christmas shopping in Britain's oldest recorded town. This £14,000 campaign was in partnership with Lion Walk, Williams & Griffin and Culver Square as well as CBC.
- 2011 saw the re-launch of the next generation of the official tourism website: www.visitcolchester.com This website welcomes tens of thousands of visitors every month and is a major resource for people and visitors alike. The website was redesigned and has new functionality behind it including Google Translate.
- 2012 saw the launch of a mobile version of the VisitColchester.com website. This new service recognises the devices people are using and welcomed more than 3000 users in its first month. It now averages 8000 users and continues to grow month on month.
- Colchester continues to visit tourism exhibitions, publish an official Visitor Guide and Discover leaflet as well as offering an award-winning service from the VisitColchester Information Centre on the corner of Queen Street. The tourism team also has a wide following on social media.

New things to see, do and visit

- Much of this has been covered in themes above but in addition 2008 saw Colchester Castle Museum host its first international exhibition in partnership with a museum in China. More than 25,000 people visited the 'Guardians to the King' exhibition.
- This paved the way for another international exhibition which opened in June 2012 called 'Treasures from China'. This exhibition featured exquisite gold and jade suits from the Han Dynasty and is the first time these artefacts have left China. This key project to celebrated the national Cultural Olympiad.
- June 2012 also saw the 'Sparks Will Fly' event in Castle Park which also celebrated the 2012 Games. The Carnival also took place at the same time making it the biggest day in Colchester's Year of Celebration.
- Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service is currently delivering a £4.2m project to improve Colchester Castle and to interpret the town's wider heritage. This means that the Castle will be closed during 2013 and will reopen again in Spring 2014.

Ensuring clean and safe places and spaces

- Zone working was introduced last October and is making a positive contribution towards ensuring that Colchester Town Centre has clean, safe places and spaces.
- Litter: Zone Wardens provide the education and enforcement required to address the root causes of the problem.
- Graffiti: efforts are being made to remove the graffiti in most of the inaccessible locations and other incidents of graffiti are dealt with on an almost daily basis.
- Partnerships in improvement. We work with the following groups, organisations and projects below to foster a sense of community ownership: GO4 Enterprises, Love the Place you Live, Colchester Community Volunteer Services, Churches Together, COLBAC – Pride Campaign
- We are also working with partners to improve Air Quality in the town centre. This improvement will be achieved through reduced congestion and vehicle emissions and by encouraging behavioural change; to have a positive impact on health for all who use the town centre.

Changing Colchester after dark

- 2012 sees changes to national Licensing legislation. This is an opportunity to manage the night-time economy more closely in partnership with the Police.
- In order to understand the dynamics in more detail research on Colchester's night time economy was commissioned which showed the value of the night time economy to be £39.9m and it supports an estimated 2900 jobs.
- An application for Purple Flag accreditation for Colchester's night time economy has been submitted and a decision is anticipated in Spring 2013. Purple Flag status recognises well-managed town centres at night.

Future Plans

- Confidence in Colchester is high despite the recession with regeneration also taking place worth a total of around £3bn in North Colchester, East Colchester, the Garrison and the emerging Knowledge Gateway project at the University of Essex.
- Clearly Colchester is an investment hotspot and it is good to see recent announcements of further private sector investment to expand Williams & Griffin department store;; a new boutique hotel currently in development in Greyfriars at the top of East Hill as well as new plans currently coming forward for the Vineyard Gate shopping centre.
- This is also just a snapshot of activity taking place. Future phases will address transportation around St Botolph's roundabout, further development plans around firstsite including an extension to the Berryfield Park as well as encouraging pavement cafes.
- If you would like to keep up to date on what's happening in and around the town visit www.bettertowncentre.co.uk

January 2013

Better Town Centre Programme Plan

ITEM	ACTIVITY	PROJECT	Delivery Bodies	Status
1		Colchester Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document	CBC	Adopted 17/12/12
2		Improving Colchester for You & Your Family		
3		Regular programme of events	CBC, Event organisers	Ongoing
4		Cultural Olympiad – Treasures of China	Museum Services	Ends Jan 13
5		Creating Quality Public Places and Spaces		
6		Berryfield Phase 2	CBC	Design
7		Lion Walk refurbishment Phase 3 (St. Nicholas Sq. to O2 shop)	Lion Walk owners	Pending
8		Town Station Square	CBC/Greater Anglia/Magistrates Court	Design Review
9		Pavement Cafes and 'A' boards	CBC/ECC	Review of enforcement control
10		Priory Street car park	CBC	Design review
11		Bringing Quality Buildings		
12		East Hill House	Developer	Pending planning application
13		Vineyard Gate	Developer/CBC	Awaiting legal completion
14		St. Botolph's Quarter Phase 1		
15		Hotel and retail units	Developers/CBC	Pending marketing
16		St. Botolph's Quarter Phase 2		
17		Magdalen Street bus depot	Developers/CBC	Pending marketing
18		Britannia Car Park	Developers/CBC	On hold
19		Greyfriars - to hotel use	Developer	Due Autumn 2013
20		Tymperleys	Developer/CBC	Open spring 2013
21		Opportunity Sites		
22		Town Hall Magistrates Courts	Developer/CBC	Marketing
23		Crouch Street cinema redevelopment	Developers	Pending
24		Jumbo Water Tower	Developer/CBC	Pending
25		Supporting Business & Retailers		
26		Creative Business Centre	CBC	Funding applied for
27		Market Strategy	CBC	Pending review
28		Town Centre Next Generation Broadband / Digital Strategy mobile roll out	Digital partners/CBC	Anticipating full deployment early 2013
29		The Walls	Walls working group	Working group established
30		Choose Colchester car park campaign	CBC	Ongoing

ITEM	ACTIVITY	PROJECT	Delivery Bodies	Status
31		Making it easier to get to and around Colchester		
32		Town Centre Traffic	ECC	Start early 2013
33		Colchester Station Travel Plan implementation	Greater Anglia/ECC/CBC	Ongoing project.
34		Northern Approaches Road 3 (NAR3)	ECC	Scheme has been to tender.
35		North Colchester Park and Ride	ECC	Planning permission gained.
36		North Colchester Rapid Transit Route	ECC	Scheme Design
37		St. Botolph's roundabout	ECC	Pending

38		Promoting Colchester		
39		Promoting Tourism	CBC	Ongoing events

40		New Things to see, do and Visit		
41		Castle refurbishment	CBC	Start early 2013
42		Interpretation / Wayfinding		Linked to Walls Project
43		Roman Circus	Friends of the Roman Wall, CBC	Ongoing
44		Roman Walls	Friends of the Roman Wall, CBC	Ongoing
45		Creative Engagement Programme	CBC/Slackspace/University/15 Queen St/Mercury/Colchester Arts Centre/Alpha Print/Stone Productions Creative	Ongoing programme of events

46		Ensuring Clean, Safe Places & Spaces		
47		Crime Reduction	Essex Police	Linked to Purple Flag
48		Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAS)	CBC	Ongoing
49		Focus on town centre litter	CBC	Enforcement and education ongoing

50		Changing Colchester After Dark		
51		Purple Flag	CBC	Application submitted



Policy Review and Development Panel

Item

8

14 January 2013

Report of	Head of Corporate Management	Author	Amanda Chidgey
Title	Work Programme 2012/13		☎ 282227
Wards affected	Not applicable		

This report sets out the current Work Programme 2012/2013 for the Policy Review and Development Panel.

1. Decisions Required

- 1.1 The Policy Review and Development Panel is asked to note the current situation regarding the Panel's work programme for 2012/13.

2. Alternative options

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

3. Introduction

- 3.1 The terms of reference for the Panel involve reviewing and making recommendations on strategies and policies at the request of the Cabinet or a portfolio holder and making recommendations back to Cabinet for decision. In addition the panel can proactively identify issues requiring review and, accordingly, seek Cabinet's agreement as to whether and how they should be examined.
- 3.2 The Panel's work programme will evolve as the Municipal Year progresses and items of business are commenced and concluded. At each meeting of the Panel, the opportunity is taken for the work programme to be reviewed and, if necessary, amended according to current circumstances.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The Work Programme has been updated since the meetings of the Panel held on 5 and 20 November 2012 to reflect the decisions that were made at the meeting and current circumstances.
- 4.2 As a result of the Panel's decision to reconvene the 20mph Task and Finish Group the following nominations have been confirmed:
- Councillor Mike Lilley
 - Councillor Gerard Oxford
 - Councillor Laura Sykes
 - Parish Councillor Gili-Ross

A nomination from The Conservative is awaited.

- 4.3 The Technology and Improvements in Community Engagement Task and Finish Group has met on two occasions, on 7 November and 10 December 2012, and is due to meet again on 21 January 2013.
- 4.4 The Waste Prevention and Recycling Options Appraisal Task and Finish Group had met on 22 November 2012 and the members had agreed that the Group should continue to meet to assist with the implementation arrangements for the Borough wide food waste collection service. The Group is due to meet again on a date to be agreed in February 2013 and for this reason the scheduling of the submission of the Group's final recommendations to this Panel has also been deferred to February 2013.

5. Strategic Plan References

- 5.1 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, of which the review and development of policy are parts, underpins the implementation and application of all aspects of the Council's work.

7. Standard References

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

**Policy Review and Development Panel
WORK PROGRAMME 2012/13**

<u>18 June 2012</u>		<u>6 August 2012</u> <i>Meeting theme 'Localism'</i>	<u>10 September 2012</u> <i>Meeting theme 'Encouraging Enterprise'</i>
Policy Initiatives		Localising Council Tax // Support from Government – Initial Outline of Options	
Review of Corporate Policies			Economic Development Strategy 2010-2015
Task and Finish Groups			

<u>5 November 2012</u>		<u>20 November 2012</u>	<u>14 January 2013</u> <i>Meeting theme 'Town Issues'</i>
Policy Initiatives			
Review of Corporate Policies	Localism	Equality and Diversity // Annual Report	Better Town Centre Programme // Update
Task and Finish Groups		Older Persons' Accommodation Task and Finish Group //Final Recommendations	

	25 February 2013 <i>Meeting theme 'Rural Issues'</i>		
Policy Initiatives			
Review of Corporate Policies			
Task and Finish Groups	Waste Prevention and Recycling Options Appraisal // Final Recommendations		

Task and Finish Groups	Membership 2012-13
Future of the Magistrates' Courts	Councillors Davies, Frame, G. Oxford, Sutton, L. Sykes J. Young
Waste Prevention and Recycling Options Appraisal	Councillors Cope, Cory, Lissimore, B. Oxford, Willetts and J Young
Older Persons Accommodation	Councillors Kimberley, Lewis, Lilley, Mudie, B Oxford and L Sykes
Technology and Improvements in Community Engagement	Councillors Cope, Davies, Hazell, T Higgins, Lilley and G Oxford
20mph Task and Finish Group	Councillors Lilley, G. Oxford, L Sykes, Parish Councillor Gili-Ross, one Conservative nomination awaited.

