



Scrutiny Panel

Item
14

12 March 2024

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

1. Executive Summary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. Action Required

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

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

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

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

3. Reason for Scrutiny

- 3.1 Scrutiny has been requested by the Panel.

4. Background Information

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

4.1 Year of Celebration

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

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

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

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

Coronation Street Party and Family Fun Day (May 2023)

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

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

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

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

Siege Spectacular, Castle Park (August)

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

Olly Murs, Castle Park (August)

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

Soapbox Rally, High Street (September)

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

Enlightened, Castle Park (December)

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

'Colchester Through Time' tours

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

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

4.2 Young people

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



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

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

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

Comments included:

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

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

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

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

The Mercury Young Company have produced podcasts:

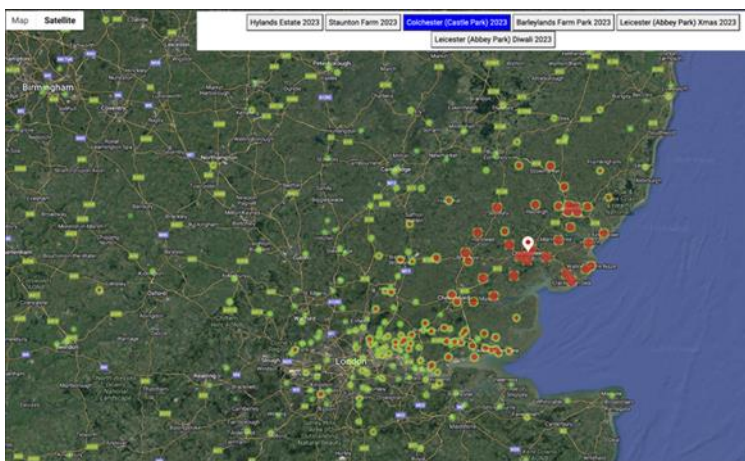
Here they interview Simon Cairns, Colchester City Council's Joint Head of Planning
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OxCjF-BpQbc>

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

4.3 Rural Communities

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

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



Rural England Prosperity Fund

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.4 Longer Term Work

4.4.1 Place marketing

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

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

The city status bid document said:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The recommendations were to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.4.2 **Place accreditations**

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

4.4.3 **Impact Evaluation of City Status**

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

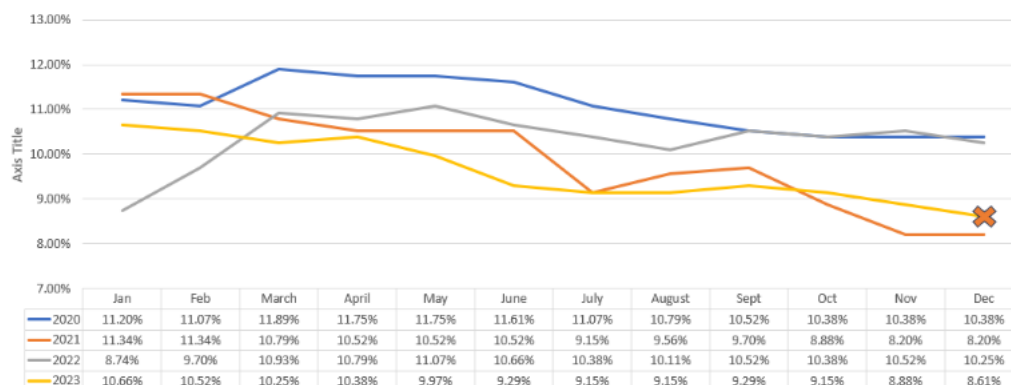
Impacts will be both direct and indirect, take place over time and be difficult to attribute to city status as there is always a lag in the reporting of statistics and we don't know what would have happened anyway. Add to this the current period of significant economic and political uncertainty and the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

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

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

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

City Centre – Vacant Units



BID Vacant Unit Data

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

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

4.5 Future and legacy

Delivering Place-Shaping Projects

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

£19.2m Town Deal

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

£19.6m Levelling Up Fund

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

Colchester Reimagined:

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

Inward investment:

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

Complements and aspirations around city status:

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

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

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

Engagement and Promoting the Year of Celebration:

With businesses

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

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



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

With other cities

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

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

Learning from Other Cities

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

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

Annual Business Opinion Survey 2023

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

5. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

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

as tackling the impacts of climate change and reducing inequalities.

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

6. Standard References

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

7. Strategic Plan References

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

8. Financial implications

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

Appendices

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

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

Appendix C. Youth Takeover film – A City Awakens
[A City Awakens_WIP07_APPROVED_master+audio \(1\).mp4](#)

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

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

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

Appendix G. A full list of promotions and partnerships over the Year of Celebration
[YOC Comms Actions_2023 \(1\).pptx](#)