



Colchester
City Council

Cabinet Meeting

**Grand Jury Room, Town Hall, High Street,
Colchester, CO1 1PJ
Wednesday, 24 January 2024 at 18:00**

The Cabinet deals with the implementation of all Council services, putting into effect the policies agreed by Full Council and making recommendations to Full Council on policy issues and the budget.

Information for Members of the Public

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<https://colchester.cmis.uk.com/colchester/MeetingCalendar.aspx>.

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

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COLCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
Cabinet
Wednesday, 24 January 2024 at 18:00

Leader and Chair Councillor King
 Councillor Burrows
 Councillor Cory
 Councillor Goss
 Councillor Jay
 Councillor Luxford Vaughan
 Councillor Smith
 Councillor Sommers

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

Live Broadcast

Please follow this link to watch the meeting live on YouTube:

[\(107\) ColchesterCBC - YouTube](#)

1 Welcome and Announcements

The Chair will welcome members of the public and Councillors to the meeting and remind those participating to mute their microphones when not talking. The Chair will invite all Councillors and Officers participating in the meeting to introduce themselves.

2 Urgent Items

The Chair will announce if there is any item not on the published agenda which will be considered because it is urgent and will explain the reason for the urgency.

3 Declarations of Interest

Councillors will be asked to say if there are any items on the agenda about which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest which would prevent them from participating in any discussion of the item or participating in any vote upon the item, or any other registerable interest or non-registerable interest.

4 **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Cabinet will be invited to confirm that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2023 are a correct record.

Minutes 19-12-23

9 - 24

5 **Have Your Say! (Hybrid Cabinet Meetings)**

Members of the public may make representations to Cabinet meetings on any item on the agenda or any other matter relating to the business of Cabinet. This can be made either in person at the meeting or by joining the meeting remotely and addressing the Cabinet via Zoom. Each representation may be no more than three minutes. Members of the public wishing to address Cabinet remotely may register their wish to address the meeting by e-mailing democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk by 12.00 noon on the working day before the meeting. In addition, a written copy of the representation should be supplied for use in the event of technical difficulties preventing participation at the meeting itself.

There is no requirement to pre-register for those attending in person.

6 **Decisions Reviewed by the Scrutiny Panel**

Cabinet will consider the outcome of a review of a decision by the Scrutiny Panel under the call-in procedure. At the time of the publication of this agenda, there were none.

7 **Resources/Housing**

7(i) **Draft Budget Proposals 2024/25 (Including General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Revenue and Capital and Updated Medium Term Financial Forecast)** 25 - 74

Cabinet will consider a report which contains the final budget proposals for 2024/25 for consideration by Cabinet.

8 **Resources**

8(i) **Delivery of Colchester Northern Gateway (South) Development** 75 - 84

Cabinet will be invited to consider a report setting out the latest position on the delivery of the Colchester Northern Gateway (South) Development.

8(ii) **Officer Pay Policy Statement 2024-25** 85 - 102

Cabinet will consider a report inviting it to refer the Officer Pay Policy Statement 2024-25, which covers all pay and benefits for all Colchester City Council employees, to Full Council for approval and adoption.

8(iii) **Managed Service Solution for Temporary Workers** 103 - 108

Cabinet will consider a report setting out a proposal to sign up to the Essex County Council managed service solution for temporary worker services.

9 **Economy, Transformation and Performance**

9(i) **Half Year April - September 2023 Performance Report: Key Performance Indicators, Other Performance News and Strategic Plan Action Plan Monitoring Report** 109 - 190

Cabinet will consider a report inviting it to review performance against Key Performance Indicators and, where Key Performance Indicators have not been met, ensure that appropriate corrective action has been taken.

10 **Communities**

10(i) **Asset Based Community Development and Asset Mapping Update** 191 - 192

Cabinet will consider a recommendation from the Policy Panel meeting of 10 January 2024.

11 **General**

11(i) **Progress of Responses to the Public** 193 - 196

Cabinet will consider a report setting out the progress of responses to members of the public who spoken under the Have Your Say provisions at recent meetings of Council, Cabinet and the Council's Committees and Panels.

12 **Exclusion of the Public (Cabinet)**

In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in accordance with The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 to exclude the public, including the press, from the meeting so that any items containing exempt information (for example personal, financial or legal advice), in Part B of this agenda (printed on yellow paper) can be decided. (Exempt information is defined in Section 100I and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

Part B

(not open to the public including the press)

13 Minutes - Part B

Cabinet will be invited to confirm the not for publication extract from the minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2023 is a correct record.

Minutes 19-12-23 - not for publication extract

- This report is not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (financial / business affairs of a particular person, including the authority holding information).

14 Resources/Housing - Part B

14(i) Draft Budget Proposals 2024/25 (Including General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Revenue and Capital and Updated Medium Term Financial Forecast - Part B

Cabinet will consider the not for publication appendix D which supports the report at item 7(i) of the agenda.

15 Economy, Transformation and Performance - Part B

15(i) Delivery of Colchester Northern Gateway (South) Development - Part B

Cabinet is invited to note a not for publication appendix is support of the report in Part A of the agenda.

<p style="text-align: center;">CABINET 19 December 2023</p>

Present: - Councillor King (Chair)
Councillors Burrows, Cory, Jay, Luxford Vaughan,
Smith, Sommers

Also in attendance: Councillors Dundas, Harris*, Law,
Naylor, Scordis, Smalls, Sunnucks, J. Young, T. Young

* Attended remotely

809. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

810. Have Your Say!

David Grocott attended and addressed Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(1) to express his concern about the accessibility of the new adventure playground at Highwoods. Contrary to the publicity at the opening this was not accessible or inclusive. There were several features about the design of the playground that made it inaccessible to wheelchair users. It also gave no consideration to others with accessibility issues. Explanations given relating to tree roots and the design been chosen through a public vote were inadequate. It was for the Council to guide such a vote and ensure its facilities were accessible. Funding could have been sought for the extra costs of making it fully accessible. The creation of advisory panel of disabled people and their advocates could prevent this happening again. None of the feedback given by access groups had been taken on board in the final design.

Councillor King, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, responded and explained that he was aware of the local views on this issue and it was important that the Council learnt from this and see what adjustments could be made. Councillor Burrows, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage emphasised the need for inclusivity to be central to any Council facility or development. She would explore what work had been done with access groups on this project and would look to engage with the speaker and other interested parties to see whether improvements could be made, within the constraints of the budget.

Ian Drew attended and addressed Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(1) to represent Essex Residents Association, which was a group of local volunteers who had come together in response to a number of concerns including lockdown, climate change and vaccines. This was part of a national residents association that had been set up to counter the introduction of 5G across the country. Concern was

expressed about the continued expansion of 5G and how this could be used to create a surveillance state and control citizens through smart cities. These issues had been referenced in a recent planning application. Concerns were also emphasised about the potential health impacts of electromagnetic radiation generated by 5G networks. Monitoring had shown that emissions were in excess of permitted levels. Whilst government guidance prevented Council from taking account of health issues when considering planning applications for telecommunication masts, the Council had a duty of care to its residents which overrode this legislation.

Councillor Luxford Vaughan Portfolio Holder for Planning, Environment and Sustainability, expressed her concerns about the process for determining planning applications for telecommunications masts and the limited grounds Councils could consider when assessing such applications.

Councillor Harris, Councillor Smalls and Councillor Scordis attended and with the consent of the Chair addressed Cabinet raising issues relating to the inclusion of Middlewick in the Local Plan, the marketing of the site by the Ministry of Defence and the opportunity that the review of the Local Plan provided to remove the site from the Plan. Issues raised included the lack of infrastructure to support the development, the value of Middlewick as a green lung for local residents, the feasibility of the proposal to mitigate the impact, particularly in respect of recreating acid grassland, the lack of transparency by the Ministry of Defence, the potential of an adjacent site being incorporated into the development and the potential impact on the delivery of housing numbers should developers choose not to purchase the site due to concerns about its viability.

Councillor King, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, explained that he understood the concerns and passion around this issue. The Local Plan had imposed strict conditions on the development of the site. The issue of viability was for developers and the market to determine. To date no application for the site or the adjacent site had been received. This not an issue for Cabinet, but was a matter for the Local Plan Committee and Full Council, but he would be willing to look at engagement with the Ministry of Defence.

Councillor Luxford Vaughan Portfolio Holder for Planning, Environment and Sustainability, stressed that the Council had no influence on decision making by the Ministry of Defence or Defence Infrastructure Organisation. As Portfolio Holder her role was to ensure policy was properly applied should an application be received. The policy had been strengthened through the inspection process. An independent ecologist had been appointed to do a full year survey of the site which would feed into the review of the Local Plan.

Councillor J. Young attended and with the consent of the Chair addressed Cabinet. In respect of fees and charges, concern was expressed about some proposed pest control charges. The charge for bed bugs treatment seemed particularly high, particularly for those in receipt of benefits. The proposed fees for civic events could make attendance by residents unaffordable with the result that they become elitist events. The possibility of sponsoring the events to reduce costs should be explored. The proposals for the purchase of land to support the Heart of Greenstead project was welcomed. This was an important scheme that would transform the area and bring substantial benefits to residents.

Councillor Sommers, Portfolio Holder for Communities, responded on the issue of pest control charges. Whilst she shared the concerns it was not possible to lower the charges further. Two officers needed to attend for a case of bed bugs and it took on average six visits to complete the treatment. Therefore there was a significant cost involved, and whilst the costs to residents was subsidised, it could not be decreased further.

Councillor Law attended and with the consent of the Chair addressed the Cabinet. A number of community minded residents in Highwoods expended considerable time and effort clearing leaves in Highwoods, particularly in autumn. This saved the Council's Neighbourhoods Team time and money. Under the new garden waste scheme was there scope for the Neighbourhoods Team to make a one off collection of such material? Clarification was also sought about the timescales for the introduction of the new community composting scheme.

Councillor King, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, explained he would arrange for the queries to be passed to Councillor Goss, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services and Waste. Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Housing, drew attention to a scheme run by the Welshwood Park Residents Association who similarly cleared leaf fall in the autumn and had an arrangement whereby they hired a vehicle from the Council but the cost was reduced according to the amount of material collected, which could be a model that would work in Highwoods.

811. 2023 End of Year Update and Forward Look to Reset the Council

The Chief Operating Officer submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor King, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, explained that the report provided an update on how the Council had responded to the challenges it had faced in 2023 and how it was positioning itself for transformation so that it was fit for the future.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The significant progress in preparing the Council for the transformation and cost reduction changes required in 2024 be noted.
- (b) The proposed next steps be noted and Cabinet's commitment to ensuring the Council is fit for the future, living within its means be confirmed.

REASONS

To ensure the Council is ready for the significant structural changes, staff and service changes required in 2024 and that the public and partners have confidence the Council will be able to close the budget gap, unlike others.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

There were no appropriate alternative options.

812. North Essex Councils and Shared Services

The Chief Operating Officer submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor Sunnucks attended and with the consent of the Chair addressed Cabinet. It was noted that the previous report considered by Cabinet had set out the scale of the financial challenge facing the Council and proposed fundamental change. However, he queried whether anything the administration was proposing would deliver the scale of savings required or at the pace required. There was an absence of detailed, costed proposals. The proposals in this report would result in the saving of some senior management costs but would not deliver savings on the scale required. The Council had three years to make the necessary changes. The Conservative Group had some ideas but needed a proper opportunity to put forward their alternative vision.

Councillor King, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, explained that the administration's vision and costed proposals for change would be shared early in the new year and it would welcome hearing alternative visions and proposals at that point. It was accepted that this was a long term process and it would take several years to fully transform the organisation and achieve the necessary savings. Shared services also brought benefits in terms of capacity and resilience and enabled Colchester and its partners to attract a higher calibre of candidate than if they acted independently.

Councillor Cory, Portfolio Holder for Resources, explained that working with other authorities was part of the solution to the challenge facing the Council. There were strategic and operational opportunities from shared services, although the administration recognised the need to maintain the Colchester standard of service. Councillor Smith, Portfolio for Housing, appreciated the concerns expressed about the pace of change, but given that public money was being spent, it was important that due process was followed. The proposals for shared services were not intended to meet all the necessary savings but were just one element of the strategy. It was noted that the two authorities the administration was in partnership with were Conservative led authorities. The Council was not in a position of facing bankruptcy as it had a history of taking the difficult decisions that were necessary.

RESOLVED that:-

(a) Colchester City Council will work in partnership with those Councils set out in paragraph 3.1 of the Chief Operating Officer's report and will be collectively referred to as the North Essex Councils (NEC).

(b) £20,000 be contributed from the Strategic Plan Reserve in 2023/24 to enable resources to be put in place to manage the work of the partnership.

(c) Further funding in 2024/25 of up to £40,000 will be considered as part of the 2024/25 budget process, for the purposes of establishing a team to collectively represent North Essex Councils, establish a detailed terms of reference for NEC and develop a clear programme of work.

(d) The Council should work with Braintree District Council and Epping Forest District Council to develop a full business case and proposed model of delivery for a single shared back office for the corporate services referenced in the Chief Operating Officer's report and to approve the release of £60K from the Strategic Plan Reserve to support development of the business case.

REASONS

To establish a team to collectively represent North Essex Councils, establish detailed terms of reference for NEC and develop a clear programme of work and to ensure resilient and efficient corporate services.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

To not commit to the development of North Essex Councils and/or develop a single shared back office.

813. Local Government Association Peer Challenge Action Plan Progress

The Chief Operating Officer submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The progress in responding to the Peer Challenge recommendations be noted.
- (b) All outstanding work to respond to the Peer Challenge recommendations be reported through the normal performance reporting mechanisms.

REASONS

To ensure the Council responds appropriately to the key recommendations made by the Local Government Association Peer Challenge and in turn support the continuous improvement of how the Council is operated.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

No alternative options were presented to Cabinet.

814. Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2024-25

The Head of Operational Finance submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor T. Young attended and with the consent of the Chair addressed Cabinet to express his support for the changes made to the scheme and in the move to a banded system. However, concern was expressed about the two child limit and that families of three or more children would not receive additional support. The Child Poverty Action

Group had highlighted the impact this would have on larger families. Such a policy was regressive, discriminatory and would accentuate the impacts of the cost of living crisis on large families. This was contrary to national Liberal Democrat policy and should be reconsidered.

Councillor Cory, Portfolio Holder for Resources, and Samantha Preston, Head of Operational Finance, responded and explained that the policy was designed to be consistent with national rules set by government around Universal Credit. In addition, the scheme disregarded child benefit for existing claimants. The Council had an excellent record of supporting families and would look at how new families joining the scheme and were subject to the cap could be supported further. The scheme had been extensively modelled and was designed to be cost neutral.

A banded scheme would be simpler and more efficient to administer and would be more straightforward for recipients. Transitional arrangements would be put in place to protect families and to ensure no one lost out as they moved to the new system. It was suggested that as the scheme would be reviewed in a year's time this issue could be examined at that point.

Cabinet considered that the scheme should be adopted subject to further examination of the two child limit.

RESOLVED that a 'banded' Local Council Tax Support scheme be adopted for 2024/25 subject to further consideration of the two child limit.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that the Local Council Tax Support scheme 2024/25 be approved and adopted.

REASONS

The process of Universal Credit Managed Migration is now underway from July 2023 in East Anglia. This means more people will be moving over to Universal Credit from 2024/25 so it is vital processes are put in place to try and simplify Council Tax payments for the most vulnerable residents.

Some key benefits of adopting a 'banded' LCTS scheme include, but are not limited to:

- Improved Council Tax recovery;
- Quicker decision(s) for our customers;
- Fewer bills sent to customers;
- Back-office admin savings;
- Cost neutral – overall level of support remains the same (£9.31m);
- Reallocating of resource to other areas to maximise savings and concentrate on generating revenue;
- Improved customer journey – simple application form, digitalisation;
- Improves possibilities for shared working;
- Reduced customer contact;
- Protection for those customers who will be worse off.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

That no changes are made to the LCTS scheme for 2024/25.

815. Fees and Charges 2024-25

The Director of Finance submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor Cory, Portfolio Holder for Resources, introduced the report and stressed the need to be prudent whilst maintaining efficient Council services. In particular it was important that non statutory services were largely self-financing through fees and charges. The impact of inflation also needed to be taken into account when setting fees and charges. Council services were still on the whole cheaper than comparable services in the private sector. The fees and charges provided an important source of funding and helped ensure that Council services were sustainable.

Councillor Luxford Vaughan, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Environment and Sustainability, queried why some car parking charges were increasing above inflation and it was explained that this reflected the need to use pricing to promote the use of non-town centre locations to help address issues of congestion and pollution.

Cabinet noted the issues raised by Councillor J. Young during Have Your Say! about the cost of attending civic events and undertook to review the charges for civic events and to look at the possibility of sponsorship to bear some of the costs of the events and to increase charitable income.

RESOLVED that the fees and charges for 2024/25 as set out in the Appendix to the report by the Director of Finance be agreed subject to a review of the charges for civic events.

REASONS

To respond to the significant budget gap created by the coronavirus pandemic and the associated recession and cost of living crisis, and the impact of these on Council income.

To make reasonable increases in fees and charges that help fund and support Council services.

To ensure that the charges for civic events remained sustainable and did not result in the exclusion of Colchester residents.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Not to update fees and charges. This would reduce the funding available for Council services and necessitate additional savings or service reductions.

816. Accuracy in Financial Reporting

Cabinet considered the motion on Accuracy in Financial Reporting approved and adopted by Full Council at its meeting on 7 December 2023, a copy of which had been circulated to

each member.

Cabinet noted that the motion had been fully discussed at the meeting of Full Council and that the administration had demonstrated that it took the issues raised seriously.

RESOLVED that the contents of the motion be noted.

REASONS

The motion had been subject to full debate at the Full Council meeting and therefore did not require further detailed consideration.

817. Purchase of Five Fields Court, St Edmunds House and Two Adjoining Areas of Land in Greenstead

The Associate Director of Alliance Integrated Strategic Partnerships submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor T. Young attended and with the consent of the Chair and addressed Cabinet. The Heart of Greenstead project was a once in a generation opportunity to transform the centre of Greenstead into a hub that would meet the wishes and needs of local residents. Tribute was paid to the work of Rory Doyle and Lindsay Barker in negotiating with Notting Hill Genesis. It was important the Colchester Borough Homes were involved in the scheme going forward and that current staff and tenants were well looked after. They needed to be treated in a respectful and considerate manner. The scheme was well understood by ward councillors.

Councillor Sunnucks attended and with the consent of the Chair addressed the Cabinet and congratulated the team for securing the deal with Notting Hill Genesis. However, the detailed plans for the scheme and the costs involved were not clear. It was noted that building costs had increased by more than 50% since the scheme was put into the capital programme. Once the land was obtained would development begin quickly or would there be a further period of discussion and consultation? Detailed plans for the scheme and its implementation needed to be made available with more focus on the practical elements of the scheme.

Councillor King, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, explained that further details about the scheme would be circulated. It was a fundamental part of the Heart of Greenstead project. This proposal removed a significant risk from the project. The role of the Town Deal Board in overseeing projects funded by the Town Deal provided an extra layer of scrutiny and reassurance.

In discussion, Councillor Luxford Vaughan, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Environment and Sustainability, also considered that there was a need for further information about the scheme and the potential impact of inflation on the costings.

Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Housing, emphasised that the area was in desperate need of renovation. This proposal would enable provide the Council with control of the land needed for the scheme, which was key to the development. If all the details of the scheme had been released this may have had an impact on the negotiations. A full

business plan had been submitted to the Department of Levelling Up and Communities. The scheme would provide an opportunity to build sustainable additional housing and the land would evolve and develop. Some staff would be transferred to the Council under the TUPE arrangements and the housing would be managed by Colchester Borough Homes. This housing would not be available to purchase under the Right to Buy scheme.

Councillor Cory, Portfolio Holder for Resources, emphasised that were a number of parties involved who were also providing funding, which reduced the risk to the Council. The viability of the scheme and what could be delivered would continue to be assessed, in view of the rising costs. There was an Oversight Board for the scheme on which ward councillors sat. The scheme would deliver real social benefits.

Lindsay Barker, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director Place, explained that the Town Deal Programme had been reported to Cabinet and Scrutiny, However the focus had largely been on the Community Hub as there had been some doubt as to whether this land would be secured. Now that the land had been secured the full business case would need to be revisited. The project had been set up to ensure that a long term view was taken and that the local community were involved to ensure it delivered what they needed.

Following further consideration during Part B of the meeting (see minute 825) Cabinet resolved to agree to the recommendations set out in the Associate Director's report.

RESOLVED that:-

(a) The purchase of Five Fields Court, St Edmunds House and two adjoining areas of land outlined in the Appendix to the Associate Director's report from NHG as per the Heads of Terms appended to the Associate Director's report be approved.

(b) Authority be delegated to the Associate Director of Alliance Integrated Strategic Partnerships in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources to negotiate terms, conclude the legal documents or any relevant consequential matters to complete the acquisitions.

(c) Funding for the purchase as follows be agreed - £2.3m funding award from Estate Regeneration Fund, in line with the funding terms plus additional funding from the Council's General Fund which under the proposals within the associate Director's report will see the assets appropriated to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

REASONS

The purchase of these properties and land will facilitate the regeneration of Greenstead in line with the Heart of Greenstead scheme phase two objectives. Phase two will see the development of new affordable homes, new retail, and wider public realm improvement across the site.

This specific part of the Town Deal programme enables a once-in-a-generation investment in this strong and proud community, which now requires renewal of its physical environment.

In the light of the overall Town Deal award received by Colchester being £6.8m smaller than the original Town Investment Plan, the Town Deal Board agreed in June 2021 to the principle that wherever possible, projects would seek other complementary sources of funding to boost their viability and deliverability.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Do not purchase the properties and land as set out in this report. This would be detrimental to regeneration plans for Greenstead and will mean the Council cannot deliver the objectives set out in the business plan submitted to DLUHC for use of Town Deal funds.

The ERF grant was awarded for the purpose of acquiring the land. The Council will likely be required to return the £2.3m fund.

818. Assessment of Colchester's Ability to Develop the Skills the Economy Needs for the Future

Cabinet considered the recommendation in minute 428 of the Scrutiny Panel meeting of 14 November 2023, a copy of which had been circulated to each member.

Councillor Jay, Portfolio Holder for Economy, Transformation and Performance, noted the recommendation from the Scrutiny Panel that the Council seek to collect and publish annual data on skills provisions. Following further discussion with the partners who had attended the Scrutiny Panel meeting, officers had reported that rather than duplicating the work of other organisations and commit further officer resource to data collection, these organisations were best placed to continue to collect this data.

In discussion Cabinet members noted the quality of the debate at the Scrutiny Panel and the time and expertise given by partners. Cabinet members stressed the value of skills development and the potential role of the Council in providing information on the skills provision available. There were real skills shortages in the local economy and the investment in a broader range of skills such as construction was welcomed. There was a particularly strong emphasis on digital skills development in Colchester through initiatives such as the Digital Skills Hub. However, there was also a need to ensure that the needs of those with learning difficulties and autism were not overlooked and to ensure they were given a route into meaningful employment.

Lindsay Barker, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director Place, was invited to contribute and highlighted the Shared Prosperity Fund which was approved in July 2022 to distribute some EU funding. This was now entering its final year and in this period the funding would be directed towards skills development. In addition, one of the Town Deal projects had been the development of the Digital Skills Hub, which was now operational.

Councillor Jay undertook to follow up on the issues raised about harnessing the skills of those with learning difficulties and autism.

RESOLVED that Council will liaise with relevant local partners accessing and aggregating their data to inform the Council's engagement on the skills agenda.

REASONS

Cabinet accepted the spirit of the recommendation from Scrutiny Panel but considered that it needed to avoid duplication of the work of partners and committing officer resource to work already underway.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

It was open to Cabinet to agree the recommendation from the Scrutiny Panel.

819. The Future of Sport and Leisure Strategy

Cabinet considered the recommendation made by the Policy Panel at its meeting on 29 November 2023, a copy of which had been circulated to each member.

Councillor Law attended and with the consent of the Chair addressed the Cabinet, in her capacity as Chair of the Policy Panel to highlight the Panel's recommendations. The Panel had been keen to give input into the future Sport and Leisure Strategy and looked forward to receiving an update to its March meeting. The Panel were particularly keen that members be given an opportunity to feed into the Strategy through briefings and involvement in engagement events. The Panel had also recognised the opportunities for partnership working in this field, particularly with health partners, which could help address cost concerns. There were also potential benefits to other Council services from a focus on sport and leisure. The need to move at pace had also been emphasised by the Panel.

Councillor Sunnucks attended and with the consent of the Chair addressed Cabinet to emphasise his concern at the time it was proposed to take to develop the new strategy. If decisions were not taken quickly the Council would need to continue with the salami slicing of its services.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) A workshop be organised for all members on the future of Sports and Leisure;
- (b) That all members are invited to engagement events for the Future of Sports and Leisure Strategy;
- (c) In the development of the Future of Sports and Leisure Strategy further consideration be given to the interdependencies with other strategies.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

It was open to Cabinet not to approve the recommendation from the Policy Panel.

820. Knife Crime

Cabinet considered the motion on Knife Crime which stood referred direct to Cabinet by Full Council at its meeting on 7 December 2023, a copy of which had been circulated to each member.

Councillor Sommers, Portfolio Holder for Communities, stressed that she fully supported the motion. It was also supported by Essex Police and the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex. The approach taken by the Council and its partners was working and the figures were falling. This was an excellent example of partnership working. The Knife Angel and the associated messaging had been well received.

RESOLVED that the motion on Knife Crime be approved and adopted.

REASONS

The motion highlighted valuable partnership working on Knife Crime, which the Cabinet supported.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

It was open to Cabinet not to approve and adopt the motion.

821. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Cabinet considered the recommendation made by the Policy Panel at its meeting on 29 November 2023, a copy of which had been circulated to each member.

Councillor Law attended and with the consent of the Chair addressed the Cabinet in her capacity as Chair of the Policy Panel, to introduce the recommendations made the Panel. The Panel had been very impressed by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and the work to promote this across the Council. This would have clear benefits and ensure Council staff were best placed to understand the needs of all residents and support them appropriately. However, the Panel felt it was important that the policy apply to all areas of the Council and its companies and also that the importance of the issue be highlighted to Councillors.

In discussion, Cabinet indicated its support for the recommendations. The importance of fully embracing issues of inclusion and accessibility and not approaching it as a tick box exercise was stressed. It was suggested that consideration should be given to including the concept of “belonging” within the title and scope of the policy. The need to ensure that these values were also applied to the Council’s website and to ensure that it was easy for all users to navigate was emphasised.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) That the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy be applied to the entirety of the Council, and its subsidiaries and partners.
- (b) That all Group Leaders be asked to work with the Member Development Group to ensure their Members are trained in EDI.
- (c) That the methods used to provide EDI Training for Members be reviewed with a view to moving from its current online form and other options included lived experience training be explored.

- (d) Consideration be given to the appointment of an EDI Councillor Champion.
- (e) The Council work with its system partners sharing best practice on EDI training.
- (f) The Monitoring Officer be asked to remind Parish Councillors and their staff of their duties under EDI legislation.
- (g) The Portfolio Holder for Communities give further consideration to including the concept of “belonging” within the scope and title of the policy and to ensuring the website was fully accessible.

REASONS

Cabinet fully supported the recommendations made by the Policy Panel which reflected the importance it placed on issues of equality, diversity and inclusion.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

It was open to Cabinet not to agree the recommendation by the Policy Panel.

822. Calendar of Meetings 2024-25

The Head of Governance submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Cabinet expressed concern that the proposed date for the budget setting Council meeting in February 2025 fell in a half term week which could restrict some member availability and asked that this be reviewed. It was noted that the change in the date of the Crime and Disorder Committee meeting to March could leave a gap of one year between meetings and asked that a further meeting be scheduled using one of the reserve dates.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The draft Calendar of Meetings for the next municipal year, from May 2024 to April 2025 be approved, subject to a review of the date of the budget Council meeting in February 2025 and the scheduling of an additional Crime and Disorder Committee meeting.
- (b) Authority to cancel meetings be delegated to the Chair of the relevant Committee/Panel in conjunction with the Head of Governance.

REASONS

The Calendar of Meetings needs to be determined so that decisions for the year can be timetabled into the respective work programmes and the Forward Plan.

Advance notice of the Calendar of Meetings needs to be made available to Councillors and to external organisations, parish councils and other bodies with which the Council works in partnership, and to those members of the public who may wish to attend

meetings of the Council and make representations.

Rooms will also need to be reserved as soon as possible so that room bookings can be made for private functions by private individuals, external organisations and internal Council groups.

A formal arrangement needs to be in place for the cancellation of meetings that no longer need to be held.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

This proposal has been largely devised based on the current meeting structure and frequency. It would be possible to devise alternative proposals using different criteria.

823. Progress of Responses to the Public

The Democratic Services Manager submitted a progress sheet a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Progress Sheet be noted.

REASONS

The progress sheet was a mechanism by which the Cabinet could ensure that public statements and questions were responded to appropriately and promptly.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

No alternative options were presented to the Cabinet.

The Cabinet resolved under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Meetings and Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012 to exclude the public from the meeting for the following item as it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

824. Minutes – Not for Publication Extract

RESOLVED that the not for publication extract from the minutes of the meeting on 22 November 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

The Cabinet resolved under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Meetings and Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012 to exclude the public from the meeting for the following item as it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

825. Purchase of Five Fields Court, St Edmunds House and two adjoining areas of

land in Greenstead

This minute is not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person, including the authority holding the information).

24th January 2024

Report of	The Section 151 Officer	Author	Andrew Small (Andrew.Small@Colchester.gov.uk) Chris Hartgrove (Chris.Hartgrove@Colchester.gov.uk) Darren Brown (Darren.Brown@Colchester.gov.uk)
Title	Draft Budget Proposals 2024/25 (including General Fund & HRA Revenue & Capital, and an updated Medium-Term Financial Forecast)		
Wards affected	Not Applicable		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report contains the final budget proposals for 2024/25 for consideration by Cabinet.
- 1.2 The **Revenue** elements of the draft budget for 2024/25 can be found at ***Appendix A (including CONFIDENTIAL Appendix D)***.
- The General Fund final draft budget proposal for 2024/25 comprises Net Expenditure of £24.959 million, which includes a contribution of £0.153 million to the General Fund Reserve.
 - The provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2024/25 was as expected at “Core Spending Power +3.0%”.
 - A Council Tax increase of 2.99% in accordance with the Government’s Referendum Limit is proposed (which would raise Band D Council Tax from £211.59 to £217.92 if adopted).
 - The HRA final draft budget proposal for 2024/25 anticipates a balanced budget with projected Net Operating Income of £2.459 million.
 - A Housing Rent increase of 7.7% is proposed (in accordance with the Legal Rent Standard); and
 - A total Management Fee of £13,424,200 payable to Colchester Borough Homes is recommended.
- 1.2 The **Capital** elements of the draft budget for 2024/25 can be found at ***Appendix B***.
- The General Fund Capital Programme comprises total expenditure of £57.672 million over the five-year period 2024/25 to 2028/29, including £39.258 million in 2024/25; and
 - The HRA Capital Programme comprises total expenditure of £205.365 million over the five-year period 2024/25 to 2028/29, including £43.655 million in 2024/25.

- 1.3 Looking further ahead, an updated Medium-Term Financial Forecast (MTFF) is included at **Appendix C** covering both the General Fund and the HRA; the numbers reflect the final draft budget proposals for 2024/25. The overall financial profile has weakened slightly in 2025/26 (with a forecast deficit of £1.991 million) compared to the forecast in the Indicative MTFF prepared in October 2023, due to some late budget pressures identified as part of detailed budget preparations. However, the forecast is significantly brighter in 2026/27 (with a forecast surplus of £1.310), reflecting the impact of savings anticipated as part of the emerging three-year "Fit for the Future" Programme.
- 1.3 The Section 151 Officer confirms that the Council has sufficient available to reserves to smooth the transition between the two financial years (2025/26 and 2026/27), which will be a key consideration as part of a forthcoming detailed review of the Council's reserves as part of preparing the 2023/24 financial statements.
- 1.4 In conclusion, the budget sets out a vision to make Colchester City Council 'Fit for the Future', economically, structurally, and culturally. Led by the Council's Administration, much cross-party consultation and work with the former Leaders Alumni group has enabled scrutiny of a demanding transformation programme. This budget addresses the short-term pressures, medium-term challenges, and long-term fundamental organisation change.
- 1.5 The approach has been open and inclusive of both officer expertise and Council-member involvement. With all-member briefings, surveys, and cross-party workshops, helping to shape this most challenging of budget cycles. The aim of the Administration is to deliver the objectives of Colchester's Strategic Vision, with the most efficient and focused Council structure.
- 1.6 Laser focused on utilising Council assets, resources, committed staff, and partners across our town and country, to invest in Colchester's community infrastructure. The budget includes investment to enable economic growth; internally, encouraging income and increased commerciality, and externally, supporting business growth, and community investment, alongside partners in the public and voluntary sectors. All enabling a greener, cleaner, and more equitable and prosperous place for all to live, work and visit.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To consider the final revenue and capital budget proposals for 2024/25 as presented in **Appendices A to D** of this report, together with the comments received from the Scrutiny Committee (23rd January 2024)
- 2.2 Make any amendments that Cabinet considers necessary; and
- 2.3 Recommend to Council:
 - 2.3.1 The budget for 2024/25 (including Revenue and Capital in **Appendices A, B and CONFIDENTIAL Appendix D**)
 - 2.3.2 The updated Medium-Term Financial Forecast (MTFF) 2024/25 to 2028/29 (covering General Fund and HRA in **Appendix C**)
 - 2.3.3 The level of Council Tax increase for 2024/25 (Paragraph 2.6, **Appendix A**)
 - 2.3.4 The level of Housing Rent increase for 2024/25 (Paragraph 3.3, **Appendix A**); and
 - 2.3.5 The Management Fee payable to Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) in 2024/25 (Paragraph 3.4, **Appendix A**).

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 To enable Cabinet to recommend a final budget for 2024/25 to the Council in February 2024.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The proposals in this report represent Cabinet's recommended position on the 2024/25 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account budgets (both Revenue and Capital).

5. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 5.1 Consideration will be given to equality and diversity issues in respect of budget changes proposed as part of the budget process. This will be done in line with agreed policies and procedures including production of Equality Impact Assessments where appropriate.

6. Standard References

- 6.1 There are no direct Publicity, Human Rights, Community Safety or Health and Safety implications because of this report.

7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 The Budget proposals set out here have been developed within the framework of the Council's Strategic Plan ambitions, as set out within the agreed Strategic Plan. These are balanced against the Statutory requirement of presenting a balanced budget and delivering core Statutory Services. The Budget presented here is the considered optimum combination of these factors.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 The proposals contained within this report have been developed through engagement with all members of the Council. If adopted, the savings proposals set out in elements of this paper are likely to impact directly on the Council's workforce, in terms of a reduction in the numbers of posts employed by the Council. This will require Statutory consultation, which has not yet commenced pending the consideration of these proposals.

9. Publicity Considerations

- 9.1 Decisions on Taxation and on the level of services provided, as set out within these Budget proposals, are likely to have direct impact on the majority of the Council's residents. As part of Budget engagement, the Council will use all standard publicity media to ensure that the impact of the agreed Budget is widely communicated and the reasons for the proposals are understood.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1 As set out in the report.
- 10.2 No changes are necessary to the 2020 Financial Regulations.

11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

11.1 Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety consideration have been explored and considered in respect of each key component part of the Budget presented here.

12. Health and Safety Implications

12.1 None.

13. Risk Management Implications

13.1 The consideration of risk formed an integral part of the development of the proposals in this report. In particular, the Budget (and updated MTFF) is based on a series of estimates and assumptions that are informed by a range of intelligence sources (some certain, some uncertain); that process, including any residual risk in the decision-making process, is clearly indicated where appropriate.

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

14.1 All budget measures are assessed for their environmental impact, reflecting the Council's commitment to be 'carbon neutral' by 2030. Environment and Climate Change is an essential cross-cutting theme in the Council's recovery planning and a core theme of the new Strategic Plan.

Appendices

- ***Appendix A - Draft Budget Proposals 2024/25 GENERAL FUND & HRA REVENUE***
- ***Appendix B - Draft Budget Proposals 2024/25 GENERAL FUND & HRA CAPITAL***
- ***Appendix C – Medium-Term Financial Forecast (MTFF) 2024/25 to 2028/29***
- ***Appendix D – Staff Savings Proposals (CONFIDENTIAL)***

Background Papers

None.

Draft Budget Proposals 2024/25

GENERAL FUND & HRA REVENUE

1. Background and Introduction

- 1.1 The Council adopted a General Fund Medium-Term Financial Forecast (MTFF) covering the five-year period 2023/24 through to 2027/28 on 22nd February 2023. In setting the 2023/24 General Fund revenue budget, the MTFF met the balanced budget requirement for the year ahead, whilst projecting a deficit (a 'budget gap') of £0.193 million for 2024/25.
- 1.2 The adopted General Fund MTFF followed on from the approval of a five-year MTFF for 2023/24 through to 2027/28 by Cabinet on 25th January 2023; a balanced position was presented for the duration of the Forecast, including 2024/25.
- 1.3 As previously reported to Members, the delivery of the 2023/24 General Fund revenue budget is proving challenging. As with 2022/23, the economic background has created multiple, unforeseen, budget pressures with the peak in inflation and higher interest rates persisting for longer than predicted by the Treasury at the time the budget was set. This is resulting in higher costs, but also lower income from some services as disposable incomes are reduced and residents adjust their spending patterns. Additionally, the squeeze on incomes and higher housing costs are resulting in higher demands for some Council services, such as Homelessness. The delivery of some savings targets, including staffing costs (in respect of assumed vacancies) especially, has also proved very difficult.
- 1.4 The pressures noted above were reflected in a forecast net overspend of £1.447 million on the General Fund revenue budget for 2023/24 at the Quarter 2 (30th September 2023) stage, which was reported to the Governance & Audit Committee on 28th November 2023.
- 1.5 It is against this backdrop that the adopted General Fund MTFF was revisited and reviewed (and effectively reset) during October 2023. The opportunity was taken to reassess previous savings assumptions embedded within the projections for 2024/25 (especially) and 2025/26. The MTFF was also reviewed in the light of other intelligence including updated inflationary assumptions, interest rates and, most notably, emerging indications from the Government as to the potential Local Government Finance Settlement for 2024/25.
- 1.6 An initial (indicative) MTFF covering the five-year period 2024/25 through to 2028/29 was completed based on factors known as of 31st October 2023. The indicative outcome for 2024/25 was a revised deficit projection (a 'budget gap') of £1.466 million for 2024/25.

1.7 In arriving at the indicative projections in the MTFF, there were some significant alterations made to previous assumptions, most notably including:

- **Savings** - the opportunity was taken to *temporarily* remove previous savings assumptions, thus allowing Cabinet and senior officers to review and reflect on updated intelligence and changing priorities.
- **Capital Financing Costs** – building on the progress of the 2023 Capital Review, the opportunity was also taken to further improve the alignment between revenue and capital spending by exploring the potential impact on revenue costs of extending the Capital Programme to five years to be co-terminus with the MTFF. This allowed the introduction of initial ‘rolling investment programmes’ in key areas such as IT and Major Property Repairs; and
- **Local Government Finance Settlement** – along with many councils nationally, the Council had taken a cautious approach as to future financial settlements from Government, which was embedded in the February 2023 iteration of the MTFF. However, by August 2023, there was gathering sector intelligence to suggest that the Government was committed to providing at least some inflationary increase in the Settlement for 2024/25 (as opposed to the cut previously assumed). Funding projections were therefore uplifted accordingly.

1.8 The indicative MTFF also included the following key assumptions for 2024/25:

- **Pay Award 3.0%** - although – based on blanket annual awards of £1,925 to all staff in 2022/23 and 2023/24 – pay increases have recently exceeded this level, pay increase expectations for 2024/25 were lowered in the context of declining inflation in the economy.
- **Core Inflation 3.5%** - based on declining CPI forecasts as of Autumn 2023 covering the 2024/25 financial year.
- **Interest Rates** – ‘blended’ interest rate assumptions are now utilised as part of early Section 151 (Finance) shared services arrangements with Epping Forest District Council (taking the average forecast of two separate professional Treasury Management advisors). An average interest rate assumption of 4.8% has been included for 2024/25.
- **Council Tax increase 3.0%** - assumed to be the maximum allowable in accordance with the anticipated Referendum Limit.
- **Finance Settlement “Core Spending Power + 3.0%”** – based on emerging sector intelligence; and
- **Fees & Charges increase 6.7%** - reflecting September 2023 CPI.

- 1.9 Further net budget pressure of £0.923 million was identified by Finance officers during November 2023 as the detailed work on the 2024/25 budget progressed. The additional budget pressure increased the forecast General Fund revenue net budget deficit to £2.369 million for 2024/25 (£1.446 million + £0.923 million); this is the deficit that required eliminating in full if the Council were to fulfil its legal obligation to set a balanced budget for the forthcoming financial year.
- 1.10 Acting on the strategic direction provided by Cabinet, the draft Budget has been developed collaboratively over many months, with officers working through their respective Portfolio Holders to develop a set of proposals which address the Budget gap for both the forthcoming and future years. Engagement has included regular liaison with, and the views sought, of each of the main political groups. The objective has been to enable a shared understanding of the financial challenges facing this, and other councils, and the joint design and formulation of an approach to balancing the Budget, without resorting to annual incremental budget cuts.
- 1.11 This report allows Cabinet to consider the final budget proposals for 2024/25 – for both the General Fund and HRA – as presented, whilst taking into consideration the comments of the Scrutiny Panel.

2. Proposed General Fund Revenue Budget 2024/25

SUBJECTIVE ANALYSIS

- 2.1 The proposed General Fund revenue budget for 2024/25 comprises Net Expenditure of £24.959 million and is summarised by subjective heading – including subsequent changes to the October 2023 *Indicative* MTF – in the table below.

2024/25 General Fund Draft Revenue Budget: subjective analysis				
Description	Indicative MTFF (Oct 2023)	Additional Budget Pressures (Nov 2023)	Addressing the Budget Gap (Dec 2023/ Jan 2024)	Draft Budget (Jan 2024)
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
<i>EXPENDITURE</i>				
Employees	30,311	1,404	(253)	31,462
Premises	10,753	(800)	1,492	11,445
Transport	2,124	(80)	73	2,117
Supplies & Services	8,928	193	345	9,466
Third Party Payments	6,199	180	1,002	7,381
Transfer Payments (inc. HB)	32,966	0	7,035	40,001
Financing Costs	10,229	0	2,948	13,177
Gross Expenditure	101,510	897	12,642	115,049
<i>INCOME</i>				
Government Grants	(32,375)	67	(4,146)	(36,454)
Other Grants & Contributions	(4,824)	0	220	(4,604)
Customer & Client Receipts	(27,669)	(41)	(8,222)	(35,932)
Income-Interest	(6,943)	0	(3,013)	(9,956)
Inter-Account Transfers	300	0	250	550
HRA/NEPP Recharges	(3,679)	0	(15)	(3,694)
Net Expenditure	26,320	923	(2,284)	24,959
<i>FUNDING</i>				
Council Tax	(14,597)	0	186	(14,411)
Business Rates	(6,675)	0	(300)	(6,975)
Collection Fund Adjustments	0	0	(584)	(584)
Council Tax Sharing Agreement (CTSA)	(570)	0	(350)	(350)
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	(211)	0	(7)	(218)
New Homes Bonus	(600)	0	(34)	(634)
Funding Guarantee Allocation	(2,100)	0	160	(1,940)
Contribution to/(from) Reserves	(121)	0	274	153
Total Funding	(24,874)	0	(85)	24,959
(Surplus)/Deficit	1,446	923	(2,369)	0
2024/25 Cumulative Position	1,446	2,369	(2,369)	0

NOTE: TRANSITIONAL PRESENTATION

- 2.2 Members are requested to note that this is the first year that the proposed General Fund budget has been presented based on subjective headings (as opposed to service headings). The new approach has been implemented on the basis of Member feedback received from previous years' budget reports and enhances transparency and simplicity.
- 2.3 However, at the time of preparing this report, the Council's underlying management accounting processes (including Ledger coding etc.) remain configured to support the previous reporting approach. This results in some transitional challenges in terms of *presentation*, which are reflected in some large variances in the table above, with some gross figures representing internal transactions in complex areas such as Housing Benefit Subsidy. This is a priority development area, which will be addressed in readiness for the first iteration of the MTF in 2025/26 budget cycle. It should be emphasised that there is no net impact on the budget as demonstrated in the table below, which summarises the impact of three major adjustments.

Material Budget adjustments (excluding Savings)		
Subjective Category	Description	Impact £000's
<i>Homelessness Adjustment</i>		
Premises	Payments to Landlords	1,805
Third Party Payments	Payments to Third Sector Homelessness Providers	438
Transfer Payments	Housing Benefit Subsidy Loss	2,025
Transfer Payments	Rent Allowances	5,010
Government Grants	Homelessness Prevention Grant	(1,286)
Government Grants	DWP Housing Benefit Subsidy	(2,839)
Customer & Client Receipts	Housing Benefit Subsidy Loss	(2,025)
Customer & Client Receipts	Housing Subsidy (Gross)	(3,062)
Net Impact on General Fund Budget		66
<i>HRA Interest Adjustment</i>		
Financing Costs	Increased Interest Payable on HRA Debt	2,694
Income - Interest	Additional Interest Receivable from HRA	(2,694)
Net Impact on General Fund Budget		(0)
<i>Turnstone Adjustment</i>		
Third Party Payments	Lease Payments for Turnstone	1,002
Customer & Client Receipts	Income from Commercial Tenants	(1,319)
Net Impact on General Fund Budget		(317)

EXPENDITURE

2.4 The **Expenditure** highlights included in the table above are as follows:

- **Employee Costs (£31.462 million)** – the core inflationary assumption with regard to a 2024/25 Pay Award of 3.0% remains unchanged compared to the Indicative MTFF prepared in October 2023. However, a back-dated pay settlement for 2023/24 has now been adopted following agreement with the unions; it was a fixed sum increase of £1,925 for all employees, equating to an average pay increase in excess of 5.0%. This has a knock-on impact with the 2024/25 budget for Employee Costs as the base budget for 2023/24 (from which the 2024/25 budget is extrapolated) was originally assumed at 4.0% in the Indicative MTFF. This increases the required budget provision for 2024/25 by circa £600,000, although the full impact has been mitigated through the removal of some posts (impact £479,000). In addition, Employee Costs have also risen as a consequence of bringing all functions relating to maintaining and managing assets back into the back into the Council from Amphora and Colchester Borough Homes (impact £410,000).
- **Premises (£11.445 million)** – there has been a significant increase (£692,000) in the required budget provision for Premises in 2024/25. Most notably, anticipated savings of £800,000 in energy costs were identified in November, with a further £150,000 (making £950,000 in total) added during the more detailed stages of budget preparation. However, these budget reductions were outweighed by an adjustment of £1.805 million required in respect of additional Temporary Accommodation costs (presented above in Paragraph 2.3)
- **Supplies & Services (£9.466 million)** – a core inflation rate of 3.5% was initially applied to Supplies & Services in preparing the Indicative October 2023 MTFF, based on declining CPI forecasts as of late Summer/Autumn 2023. Subsequent events tend to support that assumption with the CPI rate declining to 3.9% in November 2023; at the time of reporting, there is a broad consensus amongst commentators, including the Bank of England, that a further decline in CPI can be expected in the calendar year 2024. A number of small miscellaneous required changes to Supplies and Service budgets have been subsequently identified since November 2023, including further increases in Insurance, ICT and Telephony budgets.
- **Third Party Payments (£7.381 million)** – an increased contractual payment of £1.002 million to Canada Life as part of the Northern Gateway “Turnstone” development has been included within the budget for Third Party Payments, which adds to a pressure of £438,000 on Temporary Homelessness Accommodation payments to Third Sector providers (presented above in Paragraph 2.3). There has also been a partially offsetting reduction in the anticipated Management Fee paid to Amphora (down by £205,000, from £1.749 million to £1.544 million).
- **Transfer Payments (£40.001 million)** – a net increase of £7.035 million is expected in Housing Benefit costs (mainly met by Government grant) in 2024/25, which reflects adjustments in respect of additional Homelessness costs as presented above in Paragraph 2.3 (£5.010 million Rent Allowances, £2.025 million Housing Subsidy Loss).

- **Financing Costs (£13.177 million)** – an increase of £2.948 million in Financing costs since the Indicative October 2023 MTFF was produced, primarily relates to a £2.694 million increase in Interest Payable relating to new HRA borrowing (presented above in Paragraph 2.3). It should be re-emphasised that the cost is fully met by the HRA, rather than the General Fund.

INCOME

2.5 The **Income** highlights included in the table above are as follows:

- **Government Grants (£36.454 million)** – the majority of Government Contributions relate to Housing Benefit Subsidy payments. These have increased by £2.839 million since the Indicative October 2023 MTFF was produced due to the increasing cost of Homelessness (presented above in Paragraph 2.3). The Flexible Homelessness Prevention Grant, which local authorities have been receiving for a number of years now towards the increased cost of Temporary Accommodation has also been built into the base budget for 2024/25; this includes the 2024/25 allocation already announced by DLUHC, plus provision for a further award based on intelligence received from Ministerial Briefings (total impact £1.286 million as presented above in Paragraph 2.3)
- **Customer & Client Receipts (£35.932 million)** – an assumed average increase of 6.7% (September 2023 CPI) was assumed in Fees and Charges for 2024/25 (adopted by Cabinet in December 2023), which was largely achieved. The large increase since the Indicative October 2023 MTFF was produced is mainly due to the combined impact of total adjustments of £5.087 million in respect of Homelessness costs (presented above and Paragraph 2.3), additional income in respect of the “Turnstone” lease of £1.320 million (also covered above in Paragraph 2.3). Additional (gross) income of £1.246 million is also anticipated from the new Garden Waste scheme (presented below in Paragraph 2.12); and
- **Income - Interest (£9.956 million)** – an increase of £3.013 million since the Indicative October 2023 MTFF was prepared primarily reflects an increase in anticipated income of £2.694 million from the HRA (refer to discussion on Financing Costs above).

FUNDING

2.6 The **Funding** highlights included in the table above are as follows:

- **Council Tax (£14.411 million)** – the Indicative MTFF prepared in October 2023 included an overall Council Tax yield (the Colchester City Council share) of £14.597 million, reflecting an assumed Council Tax increase of 3.0%. The *Provisional* Local Government Finance Settlement (announced 18th December 2023) included a 3.0% Referendum Limit (allowing a maximum increase of 2.99% without the need for a Referendum).

A final tax base of 66,132.0 for 2024/25 has now been calculated and the Parish Councils notified accordingly. Although Council Tax collection rates are marginally down at the Quarter 3 stage in 2023/24 compared to the same stage in 2022/23, (consistent with previous years) an eventual collection rate of 99.0% has still been assumed.

These draft budget proposals assume a 2.99% increase which, if accepted, would raise the current Band D charge from £211.59 to £217.92. The additional funding raised from the proposed increase would be £418,616 (compared to a Council Tax freeze). Members of course retain the opportunity to vary this proposal.

It should be noted that the Levelling up and Regeneration Act received royal ascent on 26th October 2023 following significant delays in the progress of the Bill through Parliament. This means that the introduction of (100%) Council Tax premium on Second Homes is no-longer an option for the Council until 2025/26. It had been previously assumed that the Council would benefit from this additional funding source with effect from 2024/25; this is the reason for the small reduction in the assumed Council Tax yield compared to the Indicative MTFP produced in October 2023.

- **Business Rates (£6.975 million)** – the introduction of the Business Rates Retention (BRR) system in April 2013 was designed to incentivise local councils to grow the Business Rates base in their local area through being allowed to retain (subject to a Government levy) a share of the additional income raised above a pre-determined Business Rates Baseline (BRB). Councils were also allowed to reduce the size of the levy payable through forming local Business Rates Pools.

Although the picture has varied nationally, Colchester City Council have benefited significantly from a sustained period of growth in its Business Rates base since BRR was introduced, with the additional funding received further boosted through membership of the Essex Business Rates Pool.

The BRR system is highly complex, and the Council has – for many years – protected itself from volatility in the system through the operation of a Business Rates Reserve, which allows the prudent release of consistent (steadily growing) funding levels from the system to support the annual budget. It is in that context that a technical assessment of the current position and prospects for the Council's funding from the BRR system has been completed in preparing these draft budget proposals. The outcome of that review concludes that there is an opportunity to release some funding from the Reserve to support the Council's wider MTFP and Corporate Plan objectives. It is also possible to assume a further £300,000 to support the base budget for 2024/25 (thus increasing the overall BRR yield assumption from £6.675 million included in the Indicative MTFP in October 2023, to £6.975 million).

Members should note that the Government has indicated from the outset of the BRR system that they intend to periodically reset BRBs (which would remove the growth element from overall BRR yield). It is estimated that, ceteris paribus, and in the absence of any form of transitional support, the total BRR yield for Colchester would reduce to circa £5.7 million (i.e., a fall approaching £1.3 million compared to the 2024/25 budget proposals). It is therefore prudent at this stage not to excessively increase the budget assumption for Business Rates to avoid a sharp reduction in future funding. However, there is currently no indication as to the Government's precise intentions regarding any future reset; the earliest that it could happen would be 2025/26 and, even if it happened without any transitional support (the 'worst case scenario'), the Council has sufficient funds within the Business Rates Reserve to ensure a smooth transition to a new (lower) baseline.

- **Collection Fund Adjustments (£0.584 million)** – forecasting the size of Collection Fund adjustments can be a complex exercise. A (relatively cautious) 'neutral' assumption for 2024/25 was therefore made in preparing the Indicative MTF in October 2023. Since then, Finance officers have completed detailed assessments for both the Council Tax and Business Rates elements of the Collection Fund. Both the Council Tax and the Business Rates elements of the Collection Fund are now expected to be in surplus by 31st March 2024, which releases additional funding for distribution from the Collection Fund in 2024/25 of £583,815 in 2024/25 (comprising Council Tax of £14,545 and Business Rates £569,270). Members should note the encouraging news on the Business Rates element of the Collection Fund, which has shown a particularly strong recovery following the pandemic.
- **Council Tax Sharing Agreement (CTSA) (£0.350 million)** – the Council has benefited from the Essex Council Tax Sharing Agreement (CTSA) for several years now. The CTSA scheme incentivises and rewards billing authorities for increasing Council Tax collection rates (from which all major precepting authorities benefit); this takes the form of an adjustment (a reduction) to the precepts paid to the major preceptors (County, Police and Fire) based on collection rate performance, with the proceeds available to support the Colchester budget. The size of the adjustment is calculated in accordance with a 'graduated percentage rate' (higher performance attracts a higher percentage "share back"). In 2023/24, based on forecasts prior to the start of the financial year, Colchester City Council were expected to receive £731,581 from CTSA driven by a 9% share back rate. However, Council Tax collection rates to date are slightly lower in 2023/24 compared to the same stage in 2022/23; the Quarter 3 (31st December 2023) forecast is now predicting that the Council will receive £312,835 driven by a (reduced) share back rate of 6%. On that basis, it is prudent to reduce the funding expectation for 2024/25 to £350,000. If collection rates improve in 2024/25 (as part of an economic recovery possibly), an in-year funding surplus could emerge, and the opportunity could also be taken to raise budget expectations for 2025/26.

- **Revenue Support Grant (RSG) (£0.218 million)** – the *Provisional* Local Government Settlement for 2024/25 (announced 18th December 2023) included an RSG allocation of £217,978 (compared to £204,437). This was very close to an assumed RSG allocation of £211,000 included in the Indicative MTFP produced in October 2023.
- **New Homes Bonus (NHB) (£0.634 million)** – the Council received an NHB allocation of £575,621 in 2023/24. Based on emerging intelligence received in August 2023, an allocation of £600,000 was assumed within the October 2023 Indicative MTFP for 2024/25. The *Provisional* Local Government Settlement for 2024/25 (announced 18th December 2023) included an allocation of £634,031, thus marginally exceeding expectations.
- **Funding Guarantee Allocation (FGA) (£1.940 million)** – the *Provisional* Local Government Settlement for 2024/25 (announced 18th December 2023) included an FGA allocation of £1,940,455, representing an increase of £255,422 compared to the Council’s allocation of £1,685,033 in 2023/24. Despite the increase, this was slightly lower (by £159,545) than the assumption of £2,100,000 included in the Indicative MTFP in October 2023. However, the FGA is in substance the ‘balancing figure’ (in the wider Settlement) so is subject to fluctuation if other elements of the Settlement change. Most notably in this instance, a September 2023 CPI (6.7%) award within the Business Rates Retention (BRR) system, thus offsetting any reduction in FGA.
- **Contribution to/(from) Reserves (£0.153 million)** – a planned net contribution of £153,000 to Reserves also forms part of these General Fund budget proposals as presented in the table below.

Draft Planned Contributions (from)/to General Fund Reserves 2024/25	
Description	Value (£000's)
General Fund Reserve	335
NEPP Reserve	18
Flexible Homelessness Prevention Grant	(200)
Net Contribution to/(from) Reserves	153

EMBEDDED SAVINGS PROPOSALS

- 2.7 As described in Paragraph 1.9 and presented in the table in Paragraph 2.1 above, as of the end of November 2023, a budget gap of £2.369 million had to be eliminated in order to balance the budget for 2024/25. In completing that task, the final stages of the draft budget development process undertaken by Finance officers identified a wide range of miscellaneous – mainly small – adjustments (both positive and negative), which were supplemented by two major blocks of Savings Proposals; the “Fit for the Future” Programme and additional Staff Savings proposals. The achievement of the full budget gap is summarised in the table below.

Savings/Budget Adjustments (Description)	Impact on 2024/25 Budget
	£000's
Transformation Programme “Fit for the Future”	(1,844)
Staff Savings	(479)
Other Net Expenditure Adjustments	39
Funding Adjustments	(85)
Total	(2,369)

- 2.8 Other Net Expenditure and Funding Adjustments are described in Paragraphs 2.4 to 2.6 above.

Transformation Savings (“Fit for the Future”) (2024/25 to 2026/27)

- 2.9 The financial challenge facing local government has grown since the Covid Pandemic, with multiple financial shocks hitting the sector, including a recent steep rise in inflation, and borrowing costs. This has pushed several councils towards the point of issuing “Section 114” notices (an inability to balance the budget). Colchester City Council is not in this position, having prudently managed its finances over many years, but nevertheless, it has still found itself needing to identify substantial savings over the past two years in order to balance the books.
- 2.10 Annual exercises of identifying additional income, efficiencies and, if all else fails, budget cuts, are unsustainable and lead to reactionary as opposed to strategic decision making. Facing further financial challenges, as laid out in the MTF, the Council is embarking on a strategic programme of review, entitled “Fit for the Future” with the objective of delivering a council with a net operating cost of only three-quarters of what it would have been without this action.
- 2.11 The aim of this programme is to deliver a leaner, fitter organisation, offering improved services to residents, but which operates sensibly within the projected financial resources available to it, avoiding the need for repeated annual cuts exercises.

- 2.12 The projected financial benefits from the “Fit for the Future” Programme are included in the draft 2024/25 Budget and MTFP proposals (*in Appendix C*), but a more expansive explanation of the Programme will be presented to Cabinet in March 2024. The overall Programme is expected to deliver total savings of £4.772 million over three years (2024/25 to 2026/27). The 2024/25 elements of the Programme total £1.844 million and are summarised in the table below.

“Fit for the Future” Savings Programme (2024/25)		
Service Area	Description	Budget Impact (2024/25)
		£000’s
Waste Services	Garden Waste Chargeable Service	955
Waste Service	Business Waste Service Expansion	100
Greening & Street Care	Service Options Appraisal	100
Culture & Heritage	Museums Delivery Model Review	120
Culture & Heritage	Hollytree Admission Charging	100
Active & Wellbeing	Gladstone	20
Active & Wellbeing	Digi Ticket	6
Assets	Corporate Landlord Model	300
Corporate	Channel Experience with Contact Centre (Digital Customer)	100
Corporate	Building Control (Shared Services)	43
Total		1,844

Salary Savings (2024/25)

- 2.13 The Council had extended pay negotiations during 2023/24 as the pay offer made by the Council, in accordance with the budgetary provision included in the 2023/24 Budget, was rejected by UNISON. The provision made in the Budget for 2023/24 was consistent with the Government’s projection for falling inflation, but inflation proved stubborn and stayed higher than forecast. Ultimately, agreement was reached at level which mirrored the National Joint Council (NJC) pay offer of a flat £1,925 per employee.
- 2.14 The agreed offer exceeded the provision made for pay in the 2023/24 budget by £600,000 and therefore resulted in an overspend in the current year and represents a continuing financial strain in every subsequent budget year.
- 2.15 Recognising that funding is finite and therefore the cost of the higher settlement must be accommodated within the overall pay envelope contained within the Budget, options have been developed to reduce the overall pay bill of the Council. Ultimately, this means a reduction in the number of posts employed by the Council, with fewer staff being paid more to balance the equation.

- 2.16 The list of savings proposed as part of this Budget package are included in the ***Confidential Appendix D***, recognising the sensitive nature of the proposals and the need to properly consult before the savings are implemented. It should also be noted these will be in addition to salary savings that arise from the Fit for the Future Programme.

SUBJECTIVE ANALYSIS

- 2.17 A summary of the draft General Fund budget analysed by Subjective Heading (and Service Heading) can be found at **Annex 1**.

COST CENTRE SUMMARY

- 2.18 A detailed summary of the draft General Fund budget analysed by Cost Centre can be found at **Annex 2**.

3. Proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2024/25

- 3.1 The proposed HRA revenue budget for 2024/25 – including a comparison with the Original Budget for 2023/24 – is summarised in the table below. A balanced budget is proposed after adjustments for Contributions to Capital of £2.459 million.

2024/25 HRA Draft Revenue Budget: subjective analysis			
Description	Final Budget 2023/24	Movement	Draft Budget 2024/25
	£000's	£000's	£000's
<i>INCOME</i>			
Dwelling Rents (Gross)	(30,131)	(2,449)	(32,580)
Non-Dwelling Rents (Gross)	(1,189)	(36)	(1,225)
Charges for Services and Facilities	(3,283)	23	(3,260)
Other Contributions	(65)	(5)	(70)
Total Income	(34,668)	(2,467)	(37,135)
<i>EXPENDITURE</i>			
Repairs and Maintenance	6,521	1,402	7,923
CBH Management Fee	4,872	149	5,021
Supervision and Management	7,691	(104)	7,587
Rents, Rates and Other Charges	190	7	197
Provision for Bad Debts	250	0	250
Interest Payable	6,045	2,288	8,333
Depreciation and Impairments	6,000	0	6,000
Debt Management Costs	58	6	64
Total Expenditure	31,627	3,748	35,375
Net Cost of Service	(3,041)	1,281	(1,760)
HRA Investment Income	(263)	(436)	(699)
Net Operating Income	(3,304)	845	(2,459)
<i>Appropriations:</i>			
Contributions to Capital	3,304	(845)	2,459
Total Appropriations	3,304	(845)	2,459
In Year (Surplus)/Deficit	0	0	0

- 3.2 The HRA budget for 2024/25 has been prepared using – where appropriate – a set of assumptions that are consistent with those applied to the General Fund, including an assumed Pay Award of 3.0%. Bespoke assumptions include an interest rate of 4.6% on new HRA borrowing (reflecting the discounted PWLB rates available to the HRA) and inflationary increases on building costs as stipulated in individual repairs and maintenance contracts.
- 3.3 The overall revenue position shows an anticipated reduction in Net Operating Income from £3.304 million in 2023/24 to £2.459 million in 2024/25 (down £0.845 million). The most notable factors behind the reduction are as follows:
- **Total Income - £37.135 million (up £2.467 million)** – an increased income assumption for 2024/25 is primarily driven by a proposed Rent Increase of 7.7% (September 2023 CPI of 6.7% + 1.0%) in accordance with the extant Legal Rent Standard (April 2020); combined with movements in the Housing Stock, it is anticipated that the Gross Rent yield will rise by £2.449 million to £32.580 million. Members of course have the option of choosing a lower rent increase. Non-Dwelling rents are increased in line with agreed increases in Fees and Charges (with the budget adjusted for voids), whereas Tenant and Leaseholder Service Charges are determined on a full cost recovery basis.
 - **Total Expenditure - £35.375 million (up £3.748 million)** – the anticipated increase in income in 2024/25 is expected to be outweighed by a substantial increase in expenditure. There are two dominant items as follows:
 - **Repairs & Maintenance - £7.923 million (up £1.402 million)** – an increase is expected in Repairs & Maintenance costs (up 21.5%) in 2024/25. Most notably there is an anticipated increase of £0.491 million on Responsive Repairs (driven by inflation, and increased health and safety related requirements such as works to alleviate damp and mould), Decorating £0.385 million, Servicing Contracts (including Gas) £0.245 million, and Fencing £0.171 million; and
 - **Interest Payable - £8.333 million (up £2.288 million)** – a major increase in Interest Payable (up 37.8%) is expected, reflecting the new borrowing required to fund the 2024/25 HRA Capital Programme (including anticipated rolled-forward schemes from 2023/24). Interest rate assumptions are also substantially higher than they were in developing the 2023/24 budget.
 - **HRA Investment Income – £0.699 million (up £0.436 million)** – increased income from Investments (up 165.8%) is also expected, reflecting the additional interest earned on HRA Reserves and Balances due to much higher interest rates.

COLCHESTER BOROUGH HOMES MANAGEMENT FEE

- 3.4 Members attention is drawn to an assumed overall Management Fee payable to Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) of £13.424 million in 2024/25. This includes £10,427,700 payable through the HRA above (£5,406,800 in Repairs and Maintenance, including Management Fees + the general CBH Management Fee of £5,020,900). The table below summarises the overall Management Fee proposed by CBH and is recommended for Cabinet approval.

Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) draft Management Fee 2024/25	
Description	Value
	£'s
<i>Housing Revenue Account (HRA) - Revenue</i>	
CBH Management costs	5,020,900
R&M Management Fee	736,000
R&M Works	4,670,800
Sub-Total	10,427,700
<i>Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – Capital</i>	
Capital Fee	1,990,000
Sub-Total	1,990,000
<i>General Fund</i>	
Professional Support Unit	137,000
Housing Options Team	763,500
Housing Systems Team	106,000
Sub-Total	1,006,500
Total CBH Management Fee 2024/25 (Draft)	13,424,200

HRA COST CENTRE SUMMARY

- 3.5 A detailed summary of the draft HRA budget for 2024/25 – analysed by cost centre – can be found at **Annex 3**.

Draft General Fund Budget 2024/25: Subjective Analysis

Income & Expenditure Analysis 2024-25 (@ January 2024)											
Subjective Description	C&DC £000's	Modern City Services £000's	Corporate Services £000's	Enjoy Colchester £000's	Place & Prosperity £000's	Senior Leadership Board £000's	Transformation & Business Improvement £000's	Housing & Wellbeing £000's	Other £000's	HRA Recharges £000's	General Fund Total £000's
Employees	0	10,612	6,481	5,832	3,172	1,918	2,038	1,043	366		31,462
Premises	0	157	1,686	2,437	2,707	0	0	4,458	0		11,445
Transport	0	2,016	23	11	57	4	3	3	0		2,117
Supplies & Services	550	890	3,299	1,562	422	286	1,552	277	628		9,466
Third Party Payments	0	1,211	4,216	112	155	0	127	1,560	0		7,381
Transfer Payments	0	0	37,501	0	0	0	0	2,500	0		40,001
Capital Financing Costs	0	0	111	0	0	0	0	0	13,066		13,177
											0
Total Expenditure	550	14,886	53,317	9,954	6,513	2,208	3,720	9,841	14,060	0	115,049
Government Grant	0	(7)	(35,161)	0	0	0	0	(1,286)	0		(36,454)
Other Grants & Contributions	0	(1,774)	(1,520)	(1,116)	(191)	0	0	(3)	0		(4,604)
Customer & Client Receipts	0	(5,447)	(9,344)	(7,986)	(5,780)	(330)	(670)	(6,375)	0		(35,932)
Income-Interest	0	0	(258)	(15)	0	0	0	0	(9,683)		(9,956)
Inter-Account Transfers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	550		550
HRA/NEPP Recharges										(3,694)	(3,694)
Total Income	0	(7,228)	(46,283)	(9,117)	(5,971)	(330)	(670)	(7,664)	(9,133)	(3,694)	(90,090)
Net Cost Of Services	550	7,658	7,034	837	542	1,878	3,050	2,177	4,927	(3,694)	24,959

Annex 2

Draft General Fund Budget 2024/25: Cost Centre Summary

<i>Service: Corporate & Democratic Core</i>			
Cost Centre Ref.	Description	Budgeted Net Expenditure	
		2023/24 (Final)	2024/25 (Draft)
		£'s	£'s
3544	C D C-DEMOCRATIC REP & MANGMNT	24,500	28,400
3545	C D C-CORPORATE MANAGEMENT	-57,300	521,400
		-32,800	549,800

<i>Service: Modern City Services</i>			
Cost Centre Ref.	Description	Budgeted Net Expenditure	
		2023/24 (Final)	2024/25 (Draft)
		£'s	£'s
2660	LICENSING	-293,100	-315,000
2671	Waste Collections	3,327,600	4,510,100
2672	Trade Collections	-317,100	-421,300
2677	Void Clearance	-41,500	65,200
2680	BRING - GLASS & CANS	-9,900	-2,200
2694	Garden Waste	0	-1,429,000
2719	North and South Zones	1,211,900	1,217,900
2728	Sweepers	236,300	193,500
2732	Town Centre Zone	724,200	835,900
2740	Neighbourhood Services Mngmt	-71,700	-3,800
2747	Business Improvement Team	469,900	504,700
2870	Safety & Protection Mgr (exEH)	13,600	95,200
2871	Environmental Control Team	311,500	321,700
2872	Anti-Social Behaviour Team	7,500	0
2874	PSH Enforcement	308,000	331,100
2876	Food & Safety Team	255,300	260,000
2877	Healthy Homes	68,300	73,200
3503	COMMUNITY SAFETY	66,300	93,000
3504	Community Safety Partnership	3,300	3,300
3510	Safer Streets (ex DARG)	0	-5,000
3535	Safeguarding	30,100	24,600
4650	Animal Control	15,400	22,000
4690	Market & Street Trading	-1,600	500
4820	Building Control	-99,700	-14,700
5565	Bus Interchange Facility	7,500	9,100
5852	FLEET MANAGEMENT	1,024,200	1,098,400
5882	DEPOT	213,900	190,100
		7,460,200	7,658,500

Appendix A

Service: Corporate Services			
Cost Centre Ref.	Description	Budgeted Net Expenditure	
		2023/24 (Final)	2024/25 (Draft)
		£'s	£'s
2533	Street Lighting	48,800	40,300
2534	Engineering Services	62,600	115,300
2665	Watercourses / Drainage	3,000	3,000
2799	Travel Plan	-36,800	-37,800
2886	Purchasing & Control	264,200	296,300
2889	HR Service Centre PSU	284,600	331,100
3530	EMERGENCY PLANNING	30,400	39,700
3546	Health and Safety Officer	69,900	73,400
3603	Central Training	6,000	24,900
3606	Strategic People& Perfmnce Mgr	68,400	128,000
3607	UNISON REPRESENTATIVE	11,500	11,800
3609	Human Resources	190,300	204,400
3610	ELECTIONS	330,100	240,000
3611	ELECTORAL REGISTRATION	64,600	55,100
3620	CIVIC FUND	92,900	107,700
3622	Members Allowances	645,500	654,800
3642	Vending	1,300	0
3700	Director of Finance (s151)	0	122,800
3701	Financial Management	942,500	925,900
3714	Group Manager (Bens & Support)	-3,200	0
3716	Contact & Support	1,030,700	1,040,800
3719	Group Manager Accounts & Debt	19,000	49,900
3758	Technical Services	256,300	283,400
3769	ECC Compliance Contribution	-78,200	-78,200
3770	Council Tax inc LCTS	25,800	-23,800
3771	N N D R	-82,600	-61,200
3775	Income & Corporate Debt	221,900	252,200
3778	Benefits Processing	170,600	238,800
3790	Benefits - Administration	-581,000	-421,300
3791	Benefits - Private Sector	-273,100	-481,000
3793	Benefits - Non HRA Rebate	85,600	45,100
3794	Benefits - Rent Rebates	-111,500	137,200
3800	Members & Staff Car Parks	7,100	26,600
3805	Other Civic Offices	-36,200	13,900
3809	Town Hall	329,800	301,600
3811	Rowan House	306,700	254,500
3814	Corp. Repairs & Maintenance	751,400	834,500
3820	Cleaning Contract	0	210,000
3830	Estates Management Holding a/c	0	419,900
3840	COMML LETTS AGRIC ESTATES	-16,100	-13,900
3841	COMML LETTS IND. ESTATES	-834,400	-851,000
3842	COMML LETTS OTHER PROPERTIES	-1,403,500	-1,147,100
3843	FINANCE LEASE INCOME (COMML)	-258,300	-258,300
3844	Northern G'way Leisure Park	0	-457,100
3851	SERVICE LETTS IND. ESTATES	-3,200	-2,800
3852	SERVICE LETTS OTHER PROPERTIES	-92,200	-249,900
3860	SURPLUS/REDEV. AGRIC. ESTATES	-23,200	-25,900
3862	SURPLUS/REDEV. OTHER PROPERTIES	-360,200	-393,400
3870	Digital Broadband	-100,000	-50,000
3949	Corporate Governance	81,200	82,900
3950	INSURANCE MANAGEMENT	1,052,500	1,348,800
3951	DEBT MANAGEMENT	10,500	11,300
3954	Internal Audit	98,700	102,500
5820	Cleaning	318,500	0
6612	Central Stationery	3,000	3,000
6620	MESSENGER & POST ROOM	34,800	43,200
6622	Hallkeepers	87,900	170,800
6640	ELECTORAL SERVICES	164,100	179,600
6700	COMMITTEE SERVICES	261,700	277,700
6705	Strategic Governance Manager	64,200	80,900
6706	Procurement	124,000	143,600
6720	LEGAL SERVICES	198,200	228,400
6790	RIF Revenue	0	1,200
7071	Corporate Facilities	119,800	126,500
7421	Commercial Client	1,447,100	1,303,000
		6,094,000	7,033,600

<i>Service: Enjoy Colchester</i>			
Cost Centre Ref.	Description	Budgeted Net Expenditure	
		2023/24 (Final)	2024/25 (Draft)
		£'s	£'s
1561	HERITAGE & CONSERVATION	58,200	57,600
1566	Firstsite (ex CADVAT)	112,000	112,000
1568	MERCURY THEATRE	170,900	170,900
1571	COLCHESTER ARTS CENTRE	48,200	48,200
1573	VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE	177,500	192,800
2821	Tour of Britain/Tour Series	27,000	27,000
4710	Administration (Ex Holding)	-934,500	-1,017,100
4712	Colchester Museums Income	-560,500	-803,600
4724	Heckworth Close (Storage)	86,800	99,100
4728	MARKETING	65,100	65,100
4729	Museum Activities - Colchester	-25,500	-24,500
4732	CASTLE MUSEUM	130,500	156,000
4733	HOLLYTREES MUSEUM	35,000	24,100
4734	NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM	8,900	5,300
4737	Colchester Front of House	463,300	502,800
4739	Museum Activites - Ipswich	-1,900	-400
4742	BM Portable Antiquities	15,700	20,000
4765	Exhibitions (ex-Display)	97,700	142,000
4774	Ipswich Front of House	498,300	562,100
4787	Ipswich Collections Storage	10,000	10,000
4900	CIMS Manager	90,700	103,100
4901	Colchester Museums Mangt	60,300	62,400
4902	Ipswich Museums Mangt	55,300	59,300
4908	COL Collect & Lrning Curation	187,100	205,200
4909	IP Collect & Learning Curation	250,700	251,500
4910	Commercial & Business Manager	31,500	33,100
4911	Retail	-23,400	-22,100
4959	Fundraising	0	6,500
5712	Tiptree Sports Centre	55,700	-9,200
5713	Highwoods Sports Centre	34,300	3,400
5725	CLEANING	265,700	291,800
5726	FITNESS CENTRE	18,300	0
5727	WET SIDE COURSES	-390,100	-452,600
5729	BUILDING & PLANT MAINTENANCE	1,914,900	1,438,400
5730	CATERING	-18,200	0
5731	DRY SIDE ACTIVITIES	-176,800	-179,500
5732	AQUA SPRINGS	-359,600	-389,800
5733	Pools	-747,800	-915,900
5739	Welcome Zone (ex Admin)	288,800	291,800
5740	CLW Management	560,700	560,100
5742	Lifestyles	-1,655,200	-1,290,500
5743	LEAP	24,100	33,200
5745	AEROBICS	97,500	97,200
5747	BEAUTY THERAPY	-70,600	-31,300
5750	West End Tennis Centre	-69,500	-21,600
5752	Leisure World Car Park	-115,800	-125,900
5753	CLW Business Development	24,200	29,700
5760	LWN - Operations	640,800	510,200
5761	LWN - Indoor Sports	22,600	31,000
5762	LWN - Outdoor Sports	-121,700	-116,100
5763	LWN - Coffee Shop	52,800	34,700
		1,410,000	837,500

Appendix A

<i>Service: Place & Prosperity</i>			
Cost Centre Ref.	Description	Budgeted Net Expenditure	
		2023/24 (Final)	2024/25 (Draft)
		£'s	£'s
1511	Greening Management	359,700	410,900
1515	ALLOTMENTS	-14,200	-13,100
1521	COUNTRYSIDE MANAGEMENT	215,200	244,100
1522	High Woods Country Park	17,800	1,300
1525	CLOSED CHURCHYARDS	11,700	11,500
1530	CASTLE PARK	468,000	460,800
1531	COMMUNITY LANDSCAPES	522,400	443,400
1534	Tree Maintenance	150,600	160,300
1535	PLAYGROUNDS	137,800	141,000
1540	SPORTS & PLAYING FIELDS	357,600	434,600
1545	MERSEA ISLAND	-131,700	-134,700
1546	RIVER COLNE	132,700	167,600
2521	Energy Manager	54,100	56,200
2525	Head of Sustainability	0	68,100
2541	Transportation Policy	194,800	99,200
2553	Sustainability&Climate Change	0	124,900
2807	Planning,Housing&EcoGrowth Mgr	-7,100	59,500
2810	Planning Policy (was Spatial)	426,200	445,100
2866	Planning	-117,300	-152,700
3522	Colchester2020 Travel Plan	9,000	11,200
3559	Head of Economic Growth	0	80,600
3560	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	239,100	186,400
5550	CBC Off-Street Car Parks	-2,609,700	-2,764,400
7461	Client and Business Manager	96,700	0
		513,400	541,800

<i>Service: Senior Leadership Board</i>			
Cost Centre Ref.	Description	Budgeted Net Expenditure	
		2023/24 (Final)	2024/25 (Draft)
		£'s	£'s
3507	Communications	-128,000	-88,500
3520	E M T	834,400	0
3548	Communications Team	561,200	588,300
3551	Senior Leadership Board	0	1,290,000
3718	Research and Behaviour Change	104,900	88,300
7410	Assistant Director Customers	169,100	0
7430	Assistant Director Enviroment	167,900	0
7440	Assistant Director Communities	174,400	0
7450	Asst. Director Corp&Improvement	24,500	0
7460	Asst. Director Place&Client	163,300	0
		2,071,700	1,878,100

Service: Transformation & Business Improvement			
Cost Centre Ref.	Description	Budgeted Net Expenditure	
		2023/24 (Final)	2024/25 (Draft)
2881	Civica and Northgate support	174,000	158,400
3509	Strategic Change Team	60,800	175,500
3709	Strategic ICT Mgr	36,500	45,300
3711	Corporate I C T	1,330,200	1,487,200
3953	Computer Holding Account	996,800	1,185,300
3960	TELEPHONES HOLDING ACCOUNT	36,600	101,300
6632	Printers and Scanners	16,900	19,800
6710	LAND CHARGES	-151,900	-122,400
		2,499,900	3,050,400

Service: Housing & Wellbeing			
Cost Centre Ref.	Description	Budgeted Net Expenditure	
		2023/24 (Final)	2024/25 (Draft)
		£'s	£'s
1550	Cemetery	-27,300	24,700
1551	Crematorium	-861,600	-681,100
1552	Assisted Funerals	24,000	21,000
1719	Head of Strategic Housing	0	-114,500
1727	Housing Strategy	202,600	215,900
1781	Community Initiatives	214,400	241,200
1783	Community Locality Grants	102,000	102,000
1786	Wellbeing & Prevention Mgr	28,300	78,100
2873	Public Health	600	600
3536	Equality & Diversity	5,600	6,200
3768	The Community Hub	315,800	288,500
4538	G.FUND TEMP ACCOMM PROPERTIES	-86,000	-86,000
4543	Homelessness Initiatives	533,500	1,258,300
4547	Hsg System Business Imprvmts	99,000	106,000
4548	Housing Options PSU (CBH)	133,200	137,000
4549	Housing Options Team (GF)	663,200	578,900
		1,347,300	2,176,800

Service: Other (Technical & Corporate Items)			
Cost Centre Ref.	Description	Budgeted Net Expenditure	
		2023/24 (Final)	2024/25 (Draft)
		£'s	£'s
3570	Non Distributed Costs	1,201,900	365,500
3920	C.L.I.A.	1,126,300	497,300
3921	M.R.P.	2,753,100	2,885,100
3923	Corporate Items	1,419,200	628,200
3923	Contribution to Building Mtce Plan	300,000	300,000
3930	Contribution to RIF Reserve	250,000	250,000
		7,050,500	4,926,100

Annex 3**Draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2024/25: Cost Centre Summary**

<i>Housing Revenue Account</i>			
Cost Centre Ref.	Description	Budgeted Net Expenditure	
		2023/24 (Final)	2024/25 (Draft)
		£'s	£'s
1904	H.R.A. (DELEG) PLAN/CYC MAINT.	298,600	403,800
1905	H.R.A PLANNED REPAIRS	118,400	134,900
1906	H.R.A. PLANNED/CYCLICAL MAINT.	1,359,400	1,899,300
1915	Housing Options Team (HRA)	25,400	29,900
1920	H.R.A GENERAL MANAGEMENT	8,246,900	8,457,500
1922	H.R.A GREENSTEAD CENTRE	27,500	27,200
1929	H.R.A I C T	632,700	813,200
1930	H.R.A SPECIAL MANGEMENT	397,900	437,300
1942	Contracts & Standards	287,400	293,500
1950	H.R.A-Income	-33,819,800	-36,279,900
1960	H.R.A-CAPITAL FINANCING	15,144,000	16,157,300
1980	H.R.A Leasehold Charges	-428,800	-428,800
4552	H.R.A HOMELESS PERSONS UNITS	42,100	55,400
5609	Community Initiatives	46,100	46,200
5610	H.R.A Delgt- Special Managt	322,800	323,400
5611	H.R.A Delgt - General Managt	69,500	81,800
5616	H.R.A PUMPING STATIONS	138,900	149,000
5617	H.R.A Delgt- Grounds Mtce	780,500	679,600
5641	H.R.A RESPONSE REPAIRS	4,645,100	5,417,500
5940	H.R.A SHELTERED GENERAL	1,541,400	1,125,600
5960	H.R.A SHELTERED - GROUNDS MTCE	124,000	176,300
		-	-

Draft Budget Proposals 2024/25

GENERAL FUND & HRA CAPITAL 2024/25 to 2028/29

1. Background and Introduction

- 1.1 The Capital Programme plays a vital part in the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan since long-term investment is required to deliver many of the objectives in the Plan.
- 1.2 In approving additions of £6.198 million on 18th October 2023, the Council's updated General Fund Capital Programme, comprised total capital investment of £118.922 million over the four-year period 2023/24 to 2026/27.
- 1.3 The five-year Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme for 2023/24 to 2027/28 was approved by Cabinet on 25th January 2023, comprising total capital investment of £191.403 million. The delivery of the HRA Programme is shared with Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) under hybrid arrangements covering "Decent Homes", and the acquisition and building of Council homes.
- 1.4 Acting on the strategic direction provided by Cabinet, officers have subsequently refined existing capital commitments (both General Fund and HRA), ensuring that they remain focused around the Council's Strategic Plan objectives, are sufficient and aligned with the Council's wider financial strategy, and at the same time, maintain an appropriate balance with affordability given the difficult revenue budget position (the long-term financial sustainability of the Council being an overriding consideration throughout).
- 1.5 As with the development of the Revenue budget (**Appendix A** above), engagement has been a key priority in developing the Council's Capital proposals, with the Scrutiny Panel tasked with scrutinising the draft Capital budgets on 23rd January 2024.
- 1.6 Now that the detailed budget development work has been completed, this report allows Cabinet to consider final capital investment proposals for 2024/25 to 2028/29 – for both the General Fund and HRA – as set out in the report, whilst taking into consideration the comments of the Scrutiny Panel held on 23rd January 2024.

2. General Fund Capital Investment 2024/25 to 2028/29

2.1 Despite a challenging financial landscape, the continued delivery of the Council's strategic objectives is contingent on carefully targeted capital investment, especially in major schemes such as the Colchester Northern Gateway. It is also prudent for the Council to maintain sufficient and consistent investment in its asset base. The five-year Capital Investment proposals therefore include targeted growth of £28.950 million over the period 2024/25 to 2028/29 on both 'One-Off' Schemes and Rolling Investment.

'One-Off' Capital Investment (£13.142 million)

2.2 The capital investment proposals for one-off capital schemes are summarised in the table below.

General Fund: New Capital Investment 2024/25 to 2028/29 (DRAFT) One-Off Schemes						
Description	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Totals
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
CNG Enabling Infrastructure	7,700	0	0	0	0	7,700
Kingswood Community Centre*	207	1,000	0	0	0	1,207
Fieldgate Quay Phase 2	1,500	0	0	0	0	1,500
Car Parks	425	160	0	0	0	585
Moot Hall	1,000	0	0	0	0	1,000
Castle	400	0	0	0	0	400
Natural History Museum (match funding)	200	300	0	0	0	500
"The Big Switch Off" (ICT)	250	0	0	0	0	250
Totals	11,682	1,460	0	0	0	13,142

*Kingswood Community Centre – 100% Section 106 funded

2.3 The one-off capital investment proposals in the table above can be summarised as follows:

- **CNG Enabling Infrastructure (£7.700 million)** – the capital investment is required to deliver improvements to the A12 junction as required by the planning permission on the wider Colchester Northern Gateway (CNG) site. The completed works will unlock the further development of CNG, which is a key gateway site to the City of Colchester and will deliver on some of the Council's key priorities in the Strategic Plan. It is also a key employment site in the Local Plan.

- **Kingswood Community Centre (£1.207 million)** – the Kingswood scheme is to be funded from Section 106 money. It will deliver a community facility (on the old “Severalls” site), which will serve the growing local community.
- **Fieldgate Quay (Phase 2) (£1.500 million)** – Phase 2 of this project in the Hythe area of the City, links to Phase 1; this entailed the repair of a 15-metre-long section of failed Sheet Piling, which has created a Health & Safety hazard and led to the closure of the public footpath.

The Sheet Piling for the remainder of the Quay is also failing and in danger of collapse within the next 12 months. As a former industrial site, it is also the Council’s ambition to re-naturalise as much of the area as possible, create a more environmentally friendly site, and improve the public footpath. Therefore, the proposal is to remove the failing Sheet Piles, grade the Bank back to a more natural slope and route the footpath along the top to create a pleasing section of the riverbank.

- **Car Parks (£0.585 million)** – the proposed capital investment in Car Parks is required to undertake the first phase of structural works at the St Marys and St Johns multi-storey car parks. This supports the Colchester City Centre Masterplan and the emerging Car Park Strategy for the next 10 years. Waterproofing works is the priority.
- **Moot Hall (£1.000 million)** – it is proposed to earmark capital investment for remedial works required to the Moot Hall, which is an important part of the Town Hall. The Hall is currently closed for health and safety reasons, pending suitable repairs to the ceiling (especially). When fully operational, the Hall generates a significant income stream (in the region of £200,000 annually) for the Council from public rentals (e.g., Weddings and other Social Events).
- **Castle (£0.400 million)** – the Castle allocation relates to emergency works required to ensure public safety following issues with water ingress in the North-West Tower; the Museum service will fundraise for the long-term works required to stabilise and conserve the building to minimise the cost to the Council.
- **Natural History Museum (match funding) (£0.500 million)** – the Museums service is planning to apply for round one support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) in May 2024. It is an NLHF requirement that successful applicants will have significant match funding in place ahead of that process; and
- **“The Big Switch Off” (ICT) (£0.250 million)** – the UK telephony network is shifting from analogue to digital, which requires councils to review and upgrade analogue connections and devices in use within their organisations and communities (e.g., telecare systems, lift alarms, monitoring devices, etc.) to ensure they will continue to function following the switchover.

Rolling Capital Investment (£15.808 million)

- 2.4 Maintaining effective Council operations and the successful delivery of corporate priorities is dependent on ongoing/rolling capital investment in key areas such as ICT and Property. It is therefore proposed to strengthen the alignment between the Council's MTFF (Revenue) and the General Fund Capital Programme in providing significant and stable (or 'rolling') investment in selected areas as summarised in the table below.

General Fund: New Capital Investment 2024/25 to 2028/29 (DRAFT) Rolling Investment						
Description	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Totals
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
ICT Strategy	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	5,000
Asset Management Strategy	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	5,000
Disabled Facilities Grants*	0	1,452	1,452	1,452	1,452	5,808
Totals	2,000	3,452	3,452	3,452	3,452	15,808

*Disabled Facilities Grants – 100% Government Grant funded

- 2.5 The rolling capital investment proposals in the table above can be summarised as follows:

- **ICT Strategy (£5.000 million)** – an annual capital investment commitment of £1.0 million is proposed to support the Council's emerging ICT Strategy. This will enable ongoing targeted investment in digital, data and technology to enable the Council to adapt quickly to technological advancements, which will enhance efficiency, foster innovation, and meet customer needs and expectations in a 'digital age.'
- **Asset Management Strategy (£5.000 million)** – an annual capital investment commitment of £1.0 million is proposed to support the Council's emerging Asset Management Strategy. This will enable ongoing targeted investment in existing property assets that support service delivery and our staff, contribute to new projects that enhance income generation opportunities and reduce risk in relation to health and safety and legislative compliance; and
- **Disabled Facilities Grants (£7.260 million)** – the Council has – for many years – delivered the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Programme. DFGs, which are 100% funded by a General Fund capital grant paid by the Government, contribute to the cost of home adaptations for eligible disabled people (regardless of age or housing tenure) to assist them to continue living safely and independently. The additional capital investment included now extends to the full five years of the General Fund Capital Programme.

3. Capital Schemes Removed

- 3.1 Following the 2023 Capital Review, endorsed by the Audit & Governance Committee and Peer Review, and in the light of the change in economic climate and unprecedented challenges to local authority finances, a comprehensive review of the cost and deliverability of the General Fund Capital Programme has been undertaken. Consequently, some schemes are no longer deemed either deliverable in the short term, affordable, or viable so are being proposed for removal. Some may be revisited in the future following a new business case to ensure that the costs and benefits are fully understood.

General Fund Capital Programme: Schemes Removed (DRAFT)				
Description	Scheme Commenced	Approved Budget	Spend to Date (31/12/23)	Remaining Budget
		£000's	£000's	£000's
Loans to Council Housing Company	2022/23	26,700	0	26,700
CCHL Equity Investment	2022/23	5,800	0	5,800
CAEL Loan Facility	2022/23	1,020	0	1,020
CNG Heat Network	2019/20	6,786	436	6,350
CNG Micro Grid/Solar Farm	2023/24	5,700	2	5,698
CNG St Marks/Mill Road Rugby Club	2019/20	1,966	195	1,771
Smart Locks	2023/24	44	0	44
Totals		48,016	633	47,383

- 3.2 A review of the Colchester Northern Gateway (CNG) Programme is ongoing, brought about due to change in economic climate, cost, deliverability, and consumer needs. Whilst some new capital investment requirements have been identified, existing projects are now in question and require updated feasibility and business planning resulting in a redefined programme and approach which will continue to evolve over the next 12 to 18 months. The Heat Network, Micro Grid / Solar Farm projects included here are therefore paused, as are the delivery vehicles of CHL and CAEL, in the short term. They are therefore recommended for removal from the Capital Programme until full business cases have been agreed. Once current costs are better understood, an updated report identifying revised capital investment requirements will be brought back to Cabinet.

- 3.3 The St Marks/Mill Road scheme is within the CNG area and is also currently under review. The cost of this project has escalated and as such it has been paused for some time. Links to additional community centre provision to go alongside the development of housing on CNG, means that there is unlikely to be any progress within the MTFF period. It is therefore recommended that this scheme be removed from the current Programme.
- 3.4 However, community provision in the area will be revisited as CNG plans mature, and depending on demand, wider provision, the ability to self-sustain and developer contribution. In the meantime, it is proposed to refresh, and life extend, existing facilities in the area in addition to S106 facilities coming on stream at Kingswood and Severalls. Funding options for improvements to the existing Highwoods Community Centre are also being considered.
- 3.5 With regard to Smart Locks, a change to the financial situation of the Council has led to a review of this project. No obvious net financial saving is deliverable therefore it is proposed that this project should not proceed at this time.

4. Proposed General Fund Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2028/29

- The proposed General Fund Capital Programme (following adjustment for the items presented in Sections 2 and 3 above) totals £57.672 million over the five-year period 2024/25 to 2028/29 and is summarised by **service** area in the table below.

Draft General Fund Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2028/29: Service Analysis						
Service	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Economic Growth	28,736	2,035	0	0	0	30,772
Health Partnerships and Wellbeing	259	1,000	0	0	0	1,259
Museums, Culture and Tourism	1,872	300	0	0	0	2,172
Neighbourhood Services	2,083	995	115	0	0	3,194
Sustainability	2,605	160	0	0	0	2,765
ICT Transformation	1,250	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	5,250
Strategic Housing - General Fund	1,452	1,452	1,452	1,452	1,452	7,261
Building Maintenance	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	5,000
Total Expenditure	39,258	7,943	3,567	3,452	3,452	57,672
Capital Financing:						
Grants	19,842	3,357	1,452	1,452	1,452	27,555
Section 106 Contributions	3,163	1,130	0	0	0	4,293
Capital Receipts	0	0	0	0	0	0
Revenue	100	0	0	0	0	100
Borrowing	16,153	3,455	2,115	2,000	2,000	25,724
Total Financing	39,258	7,943	3,567	3,452	3,452	57,672

EXPENDITURE

- The key features of the draft General Fund Capital Programme above are as follows:
 - **Economic Growth (£30.772 million)** – this section of the Programme is all about our future City, enabling a thriving economy, a City Centre that is accessible, vibrant and enhances heritage through Town Deal projects and Levelling Up Funding. It also includes the enabling infrastructure for future improvements of the Northern Gateway area of the city.
 - **Health Partnerships and Wellbeing (£1.259 million)** – the 2024/25 Programme will focus here on two important community venues, including extensive repair of the important and much-loved Anglican Chapel in the grounds of the Cemetery and the development of a new developer funded (through S106) Community facility at Kingswood.
 - **Museums, Culture and Tourism (£2.172 million)** – as custodians to thousands of years of history, looking after our heritage buildings owned by the City Council is critically important. This element of the Programme will focus on essential repairs to Hollytrees, Natural History and the Castle Museum roof along with The Moot Hall, which is within the City's Town Hall.
 - **Neighbourhood Services (£3.194 million)** – Waste and Recycling services delivered to all 192,000 residents of the City include an array of infrastructure and vehicles that regularly need replacing or updating. This year capital investment in the fleet will include a range of vehicles including new Garden Waste vehicle, a new roadside sweeper, and a recycling HGV.
 - **Sustainability (£2.765 million)** – the Sustainability service looks after Colchester's public open spaces and recreation areas, which includes parks, countryside, woodland and car parks and quaysides. In 2024/25, there is a need to invest in repairs at Fieldgate Quay at the Hythe to reopen the footpath and ensure the safety of the Quay wall, along with essential repairs to St Marys Car Park in the City Centre and improvements and repair to the much-loved and used play area within Castle Park.
 - **ICT Transformation (£5.250 million)** – the £5.250 million ICT Transformation draft allocation primarily reflects the needs of the emerging ICT Strategy (as described above in Paragraph 2.5).
 - **General Fund Strategic Housing (7.261 million)** – this investment relates to Disabled Facilities Grants, which contribute to the cost of home adaptations for eligible disabled people to assist them to continue living safely and independently (as described above in Paragraph 2.5); and
 - **Building Maintenance (£5.000 million)** – the £5.0 million Building Maintenance draft allocation reflects the needs of the emerging Asset Management Strategy (as described above in Paragraph 2.5).

FINANCING

- The assumed Capital Financing profile for the proposed General Fund Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2028/29 represents an amalgam of Grants, S106 Contributions, Revenue Contributions and Borrowing. Thus:
 - **Grants (£27.555 million)** – the assumed Grant funding in the Programme is dominated by three major areas; firstly the Levelling Up Fund (£16.025 million) supporting projects including Britannia Yard (£6.743 million) and St Botolph’s Roundabout (£7.186 million); secondly Town Deal Fund (£4.270 million) supporting numerous projects with the largest proportion relating to the Town Centre to Greenstead and University Cycle Path (£2.557 million); and finally Disabled Facilities Grants (£7.260 million).
 - **Revenue Contributions (£0.100 million)** – there is just one scheme funded from Revenue Contributions namely the Castle Park Area Replacement project. This scheme has a total budget of £0.680 million and is funded through a mixture of Revenue contributions (£0.100 million), Section 106 contributions (£0.309 million) and Borrowing (£0.271 million).
 - **Section 106 Contributions (£4.293 million)** – the two dominant projects supported by Section 106 contributions relate to St Botolph’s Roundabout (£2.524 million) and Kingswood Community Centre (£1.207 million); and
 - **Borrowing (£25.724 million)** – there are numerous schemes funded through borrowing within the Capital Programme; the most significant schemes include CNG Enabling Infrastructure (£7.70 million); the ICT strategy (£5.0 million) and finally, the Building Maintenance Programme (£5.0 million).
- 4.4 A more detailed summary of the draft Capital Programme – analysed at an individual **scheme** level (including a “Scheme History”) is included in **Annex 1**.
- 5. Proposed HRA Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2028/29**
- 5.1 The development of the draft HRA Capital Programme has been guided by the overarching principles in the Council’s adopted HRA Asset Management Strategy and, in the case of the Stock Investment Programme, the outputs from the Asset Management System, maintained and operated by Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) on behalf of the Council. Specific work programmes are accordingly recommended by CBH Board and embedded within the Programme presented below. In addition, other work streams, including the Sheltered Accommodation Review, and the New Build and Acquisitions programmes, are based upon the direct decisions of the Council.

5.2 The proposed HRA Capital Programme totals £205.365 million over the five-year period 2024/25 to 2028/29 and is summarised by nature in the table below.

Draft HRA Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2028/29						
Description	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Total
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
<i>HOUSING INVESTMENT</i>						
Stock Investment Programme	19,582	20,004	19,935	21,040	19,773	100,334
Sheltered Accommodation Review	553	2,272	3,021	1,169	5,892	12,907
Adaptations	830	839	855	876	884	4,284
<i>Sub-Total</i>	20,965	23,115	23,811	23,085	26,549	117,525
<i>OTHER WORKS</i>						
New Build	11,830	18,207	14,150	0	0	44,187
Acquisitions	10,800	11,016	11,236	5,094	5,196	43,342
ICT	60	61	62	64	64	311
<i>Sub-Total</i>	22,690	29,284	25,448	5,158	5,260	87,840
Total Expenditure	43,655	52,399	49,259	28,243	31,809	205,365
<i>FINANCING</i>						
Major Repairs Reserve	(6,000)	(6,190)	(6,447)	(6,684)	(6,818)	(32,139)
Revenue Contributions	(2,459)	(3,405)	(2,887)	(3,286)	(3,635)	(15,672)
Grants	0	(3,060)	(3,120)	0	0	(6,180)
RTB Receipts	(5,894)	(3,658)	(1,998)	(2,038)	(2,078)	(15,666)
Borrowing	(29,302)	(36,086)	(34,807)	(16,235)	(19,278)	(135,708)
Total Financing	(43,655)	(52,399)	(49,259)	(28,243)	(31,809)	(205,365)

EXPENDITURE

5.3 The HRA Programme presented above comprises the following:

- **Housing Investment Programme (HIP) (£117.525 million)** – capital investment in the HIP over the period 2024/25 to 2028/29 is focused in three areas as follows:
 - **Stock Investment Programme (£100.334 million)** – this includes capital investment in works to maintain, improve, and refurbish the Housing Stock and its environment. The single largest element relates to works on maintaining the ‘Decency Homes Standard the Housing Stock. Provision is also included for works on areas such as Building Safety, Structural works, Environmental and Estate Works, Asbestos, Legionella and Fire Safety.
 - **Sheltered Accommodation Review (£12.907 million)** – the Cabinet has previously agreed a Refurbishment Programme for the Council’s stock of Sheltered Housing. Completed refurbishments to include Worsnop House, Enoch House and Elfreda House. The capital allocation represents the continuation of that programme of works; and
 - **Adaptations (£4.284 million)** – the proposed allocation maintains the Adaptations budget at historic levels. Funds are utilised to adapt Dwellings to meet the special needs of Councils tenants.
- **Other Works (87.840 million)** – other capital investment priorities over the next five-years is primarily focused in two areas as follows:
 - **New Build (£44.187 million)** – the allocation reflects the funds required to deliver planned new Council housing units across the City over the next three years (with further sites yet to be confirmed in years four and five at this stage). The largest individual scheme relates to the planned delivery of 136 accommodation units as part of the “Heart of Greenstead” project. Other schemes include Military Road and Phase 3 Garage Sites; and
 - **Acquisitions (£43.342 million)** – provision has been made to acquire 100 properties at Social Rent over the five-year span of the Capital Programme; the Council is able to utilise retained ‘1-4-1 Right to Buy (RTB) receipts’ to partly fund such acquisitions at Social Rent. Provision is also included to acquire a further 60 properties at Affordable Rent.

FINANCING

5.4 The assumed capital financing profile for the proposed HRA Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2028/29 represents an amalgam of Major Repairs Reserve Contributions, Revenue Contributions, Grants, “Right to Buy” (RTB) Receipts, and Borrowing. Thus:

- **Major Repairs Reserve (MRR) (£32.139 million)** – the MRR is a mandatory reserve that contains funds set aside to maintain the Housing Stock in its current form and condition. The annual contribution *into* the reserve mirrors the HRA Depreciation charge. Allocations out of the MRR are determined in accordance with the HRA Business Plan.
- **Revenue Contributions (£15.672 million)** – the Council is set to continue with substantial revenue contributions to capital; this has been a major source of financing for the HRA Capital Programme for many years and is predominantly driven by the availability of annual Net Operating Surpluses, within the framework of the HRA Business Plan (which balances long-term affordability and sustainability, including the strategy to maintain a minimum balance of £1.6 million within the HRA Reserve).
- **Grants (£6.180 million)** – the assumed Grant funding in the Capital Programme relates exclusively to funding from Homes England to support the Heart of Greenstead project.
- **“Right to Buy” (RTB) Receipts (£15.666 million)** – the HRA Business Plan assumes RTB sales of 30 properties per annum over the next five years. The proportion of RTB receipts retained by the Council (for funding replacement properties and debt redemption) is determined by formulae included in the RTB Retention Agreement between local authorities and Government, and there are strict rules regarding how the retained share can be used to fund new housing; and
- **Borrowing (£135.708 million)** – as with the General Fund, further long-term HRA borrowing is anticipated. Likewise, precise details on lenders and other details will be determined in consultation with our Treasury Management advisors (Link) nearer the time.

5.5 Members should note that the proposed five-year HRA Capital Programme presented above reflects current assumptions in the Council’s 30-Year HRA Business Plan. However, a detailed review of the Housing Revenue Account, including the assumptions contained within the 30-Year Business Plan, is scheduled for the spring/summer of 2024. Specific emphasis will be placed on the long-term deliverability and financial sustainability of the Business Plan, in the light of changing circumstances and updated intelligence on key variables such as changing housing needs, rents and interest rates. The outcome of the review, including its potential impact on the HRA Capital Programme, will be reported to Members during 2024/25; this will allow sufficient time to develop, and scrutinise, updated five-year HRA capital investment proposals for 2025/26 to 2029/30.

Draft General Fund Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2028/29 Summary of Schemes

GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 to 2028/29 (DRAFT)							Scheme History		
Scheme	2024/25 Updated	2025/26 Updated	2026/27 Updated	2027/28 Proposed	2028/29 Proposed	Total MTFF 24/25 to 28/29	Total Approved Budget	Spend to Date (31 December 2023)	Remaining Budget
	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s
ECONOMIC GROWTH									
LEVELLING UP									
Britannia Yard	6,742,635	0	0	0	0	6,742,635	7,692,635	0	7,692,635
Vineyard Street	1,846,115	0	0	0	0	1,846,115	2,284,397	0	2,284,397
St Botolph's Roundabout	9,700,000	0	0	0	0	9,700,000	11,800,000	0	11,800,000
Kerbless and Green Streets (combination with Town Deal Funding)	250,000	0	0	0	0	250,000	1,107,295	28,615	1,078,680
	18,538,750	0	0	0	0	18,538,750			
TOWN DEAL									
Jumbo	445,000	445,000	0	0	0	890,000	1,059,000	120,532	938,468
5G	198,200	35,000	0	0	0	233,200	977,414	73,014	904,400
Development work and Fees - Town Deal	205,537	205,537	0	0	0	411,074	411,074	0	411,074
Town Centre to Greenstead and University Cycle Path	1,505,787	1,314,649	0	0	0	2,820,436	3,146,369	325,933	2,820,436
Multi use community centre - Greenstead	143,223	35,000	0	0	0	178,223	6,007,704	50,398	5,957,306
	2,497,747	2,035,186	0	0	0	4,532,933			
CNG Enabling Infrastructure	7,700,000	0	0	0	0	7,700,000	(24/25 Growth)	(24/25 Growth)	(24/25 Growth)
Sub Totals	28,736,497	2,035,186	0	0	0	30,771,683			
HEALTH PARTNERSHIPS AND WELLBEING									
Anglian Chapel Repairs	52,000	0	0	0	0	52,000	270,000	135,722	134,278
Kingswood CC	206,781	1,000,000	0	0	0	1,206,781	(24/25 Growth)	(24/25 Growth)	(24/25 Growth)
Sub Totals	258,781	1,000,000	0	0	0	1,258,781			
MUSEUMS, CULTURE AND TOURISM									
Hollytrees essential repairs	272,000	0	0	0	0	272,000	500,000	0	500,000
Natural History Museum	200,000	300,000	0	0	0	500,000	(24/25 Growth)	(24/25 Growth)	(24/25 Growth)
Moot Hall	1,000,000	0	0	0	0	1,000,000	(24/25 Growth)	(24/25 Growth)	(24/25 Growth)
Colchester Castle	400,000	0	0	0	0	400,000	(24/25 Growth)	(24/25 Growth)	(24/25 Growth)
Sub Totals	1,872,000	300,000	0	0	0	2,172,000			
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES									
To launch a paid for garden service (3 vehicles)	556,800	515,000	0	0	0	1,071,800	1,654,600	22,308	1,632,292
New sweeper	320,000	0	0	0	0	320,000	320,000	0	320,000
2 x 50:50 split RCVs	460,000	0	0	0	0	460,000	460,000	0	460,000
Hard 2 Reach	200,000	0	0	0	0	200,000	200,000	0	200,000
HGV split triple lift - recycling	230,000	0	0	0	0	230,000	230,000	0	230,000
Bin Lift	316,400	480,400	115,200	0	0	912,000	912,000	0	912,000
Sub-Totals	2,083,200	995,400	115,200	0	0	3,193,800			
SUSTAINABILITY									
Castle Park Area replacement	680,000	0	0	0	0	680,000	700,000	0	700,000
Fieldgate Quay (Phase 2)	1,500,000	0	0	0	0	1,500,000	(24/25 Growth)	(24/25 Growth)	(24/25 Growth)
Car Parks	425,000	160,000	0	0	0	585,000	(24/25 Growth)	(24/25 Growth)	(24/25 Growth)
Sub-Totals	2,605,000	160,000	0	0	0	2,765,000			
ICT TRANSFORMATION									
The Big Switch Off (ICT)	250,000	0	0	0	0	250,000	(24/25 Growth)	(24/25 Growth)	(24/25 Growth)
ICT Strategy	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	5,000,000	(24/25 Growth)	(24/25 Growth)	(24/25 Growth)
Sub-Totals	1,250,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	5,250,000			
STRATEGIC HOUSING - GENERAL FUND									
Disabled Facilities Grant	1,452,105	1,452,105	1,452,105	1,452,105	1,452,105	7,260,525	(24/25 Growth)	(24/25 Growth)	(24/25 Growth)
Sub-Totals	1,452,105	1,452,105	1,452,105	1,452,105	1,452,105	7,260,525			
BUILDING MAINTENANCE									
Building Maintenance Programme (Capital)	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	5,000,000	(24/25 Growth)	(24/25 Growth)	(24/25 Growth)
Sub-Totals	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	5,000,000			
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	39,257,583	7,942,691	3,567,305	3,452,105	3,452,105	57,671,789			
CAPITAL FINANCING									
Grants	19,841,633	3,357,291	1,452,105	1,452,105	1,452,105	27,555,239			
Section 106 Contributions	3,162,991	1,130,000	0	0	0	4,292,991			
Capital Receipts	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Revenue	100,000	0	0	0	0	100,000			
Borrowing	16,152,959	3,455,400	2,115,200	2,000,000	2,000,000	25,723,559			
TOTAL CAPITAL FINANCING	39,257,583	7,942,691	3,567,305	3,452,105	3,452,105	57,671,789			

Medium-Term Financial Forecast (MTFF) 2024/25 to 2028/29

Updated January 2024

1. Background

- 1.1 The preparation of a Medium-Term Financial Forecast (MTFF) provides the cornerstone on which the Council can build and deliver services in accordance with the aims and objectives outlined in the Corporate Plan 2023-2026 (“A City fit for the Future”), which is focussed on six priority themes:
- Respond to the climate emergency
 - Deliver modern services for a modern city
 - Improve health, wellbeing, and happiness
 - Deliver homes for those most in need
 - Grow our economy so everyone benefits; and
 - Celebrate our city, heritage, and culture.
- 1.2 Through ‘horizon scanning’ and anticipating necessary change at the earliest opportunity, providing resilience, and the ability to react to and withstand ‘major shocks’ is achieved.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The MTFF is a forward-looking document that provides a tentative look at the Council’s General Fund and HRA financial picture over the next five years (2024/25 through to 2028/29) and re-evaluates the position in the light of the development and completion of the draft 2024/25 budgets.
- 2.2 This is the second iteration of the General Fund element of MTFF within the 2024/25 budget cycle following the *Indicative* version prepared in October 2023, which effectively reset the MTFF to reflect changed circumstances, especially in the light of progress against savings assumptions included in the 2023/24 budget and in response to feedback on the presentation of previous iterations.
- 2.3 The HRA element of the MTFF presented here updates the previous iteration adopted by the Cabinet in January 2023.

3. Updated General Fund MTFF 2024/25 to 2028/29

- 3.1 The *Indicative* October 2023 MTFF revealed a projected General Fund deficit of £1.446 million for 2024/25, which reflected a range of inflationary pressures, the inclusion of emerging intelligence on the Local Government Finance Settlement, the removal of previously assumed savings targets and updated longer-term capital financing assumptions. Estimated net expenditure was £26.320 million, compared to funding of just £24.874 million.

- 3.2 Members should note that, although the *Indicative* October 2023 General Fund MTFF provided an essential building block in the development of the 2024/25 budget, it was prepared prior to the announcement of the *provisional* 2024/25 Local Government Finance Settlement, before the 2023/24 Pay Settlement had been agreed, and during the early stages of the detailed budget preparation process. The October 2023 MTFF projections can be summarised as follows:

General Fund Indicative MTFF (@ October 2023)		
Financial Year	(Surplus)/Deficit	Comment
	£000's	
2024/25	1,446	Assumed Local Government Finance Settlement of "Core Spending Power +3.0%", 2023/24 Pay Settlement of 4.0%, Net Contributions <i>from</i> Reserves of £0.121 million. No Savings assumed. General Fund Capital Programme extended to five-years (to align with MTFF) with indicative revenue consequences of likely 'rolling capital investment' requirements added.
2025/26	2,327	Stepped increase in Deficit – to a large extent – reflecting likely increase in Capital Financing Costs (up £2.311 million in 2025/26).
2026/27	1,566	
2027/28	1,271	
2028/29	897	

- 3.3 A Pay Settlement for 2023/24 (a fixed sum of £1,925 for all pay grades) has now been reached and the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2024/25 was announced by the Government in December 2023 and further – more detailed – work has been completed by Finance officers on a range of issues (discussed in detail in **Appendix A**). The budget development process has been further aided by extensive engagement across the Council's political spectrum. A balanced budget is therefore presented for consideration by Cabinet at this meeting.

3.4 The updated MTFF (2024/25 through to 2028/29), reflecting the final draft General Fund budget for 2024/25, is illustrated in the table below.

2024/25 Budget: GENERAL FUND (Base Budget only)						
	Opening Budget (2023/24)	Estimated Budget Requirement 2024/25	Estimated Budget Requirement 2025/26	Estimated Budget Requirement 2026/27	Estimated Budget Requirement 2027/28	Estimated Budget Requirement 2028/29
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Employees	29,505	31,462	32,298	32,897	34,065	35,256
Premises	9,493	11,445	11,113	10,026	10,577	10,788
Transport	2,064	2,117	2,006	2,046	2,087	2,129
Supplies & Services	9,594	9,466	9,427	9,719	9,913	10,112
Third Party Payments	5,909	7,381	7,529	7,679	7,833	7,989
Transfer Payments	32,966	40,001	40,001	40,001	40,001	40,001
Capital Financing Costs	10,659	13,177	15,488	16,083	16,025	16,134
Gross Expenditure	100,190	115,049	117,862	118,452	120,501	122,410
Government Grant	(32,375)	(36,454)	(36,454)	(36,454)	(36,454)	(36,454)
Other Grants & Contributions	(5,896)	(4,604)	(4,804)	(5,004)	(5,004)	(5,004)
Customer & Client Receipts	(27,112)	(35,932)	(36,445)	(37,397)	(37,640)	(37,885)
Income-Interest	(6,943)	(9,956)	(9,956)	(9,956)	(9,956)	(9,956)
Inter-Account Transfers	550	550	550	550	550	550
HRA/NEPP Recharges	(3,679)	(3,694)	(3,694)	(3,694)	(3,694)	(3,694)
Net Expenditure	24,735	24,959	27,059	26,497	28,303	29,967
Funding:						
Council Tax	(13,936)	(14,411)	(15,249)	(15,859)	(16,494)	(17,154)
Business Rates	(6,456)	(6,975)	(7,111)	(7,249)	(7,390)	(7,534)
Collection Fund Adjustments	323	(584)	0	0	0	0
Council Tax Sharing Agreement (CTSA)	0	(350)	(350)	(350)	(350)	(350)
<i>Non-Specific Grants:</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus	(576)	(634)	0	0	0	0
Funding Guarantee Allocation	(1,685)	(1,940)	(1,940)	(1,940)	(1,940)	(1,940)
2023-24 Services Grant	(175)	0	0	0	0	0
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	0	(218)	(218)	(218)	(218)	(218)
Contribution to/(from) Reserves	(2,230)	153	(200)	(200)	0	0
Total Funding	(24,735)	(24,959)	(25,068)	(25,816)	(26,392)	(27,196)
In-Year (Surplus)/Deficit	0	0	1,991	(1,310)	1,230	859
Cumulative (Surplus)/Deficit	0	0	1,991	681	1,912	2,771

- 3.5 As presented in **Appendix A**, the initially identified deficit for 2024/25 in the *Indicative* MTFF in October 2023 (as well as subsequent budget pressures identified in November 2023) has now been addressed and the budget balanced. It is a very complex exercise to draw detailed comparisons between the different iterations of the MTFF; there are multiple variables that ‘roll up’ cumulatively as the years progress. However, it is possible to highlight the key influences in Years 2 (2025/26) and 3 (2026/27) as follows:
- **2025/26 (£1.991 million deficit)** – this is a reduced deficit compared to the Indicative October 2023 MTFF (which was a deficit of £2.327 million) as can be expected. However, given the elimination of the of the originally anticipated deficit (£1.446 million) from the base budget in 2024/25, this would normally be expected to reduce to around £900,000. However, as explained in **Appendix A** (Paragraphs 1.9 and 2.1), further budget pressures of £923,000 were identified in November 2023, which exerted immediate budget pressure on the 2024/25 budget, so is therefore included in the base budget (from which the forecast for 2025/26 is extrapolated). This pushes the forecast deficit back up again and closer to £2.0 million; and
 - **2026/27 (£1.310 million surplus)** – in contrast, this represents an improved position compared to the Indicative October 2023 MTFF (which was a deficit of £1.566 million) i.e. there has been a positive swing of £2.876 million, which primarily reflects the inclusion of £2.675 million in assumed in new savings as part of the “Fit for the Future” Programme (covered in detail below in Section 4).
- 3.6 The key assumptions included in the Indicative October MTFF 2023 remain virtually unaltered. Thus:
- **Pay Award** - although – based on blanket annual awards of £1,925 to all staff in 2022/23 and 2023/24 – pay increases have recently exceeded the budgetary provision, pay increase expectations for 2024/25 have been lowered in the context of forecast declining inflation in the economy. Therefore 3.0% has been assumed for 2024/25, with 2.0% thereafter.
 - **Core Inflation** based on declining CPI forecasts as of Autumn 2023, 3.5% has been assumed for 2024/25, with 2.0% thereafter.
 - **Interest Rates** – ‘blended’ interest rate assumptions are now utilised as part of early Section 151 (Finance) shared services arrangements with Epping Forest District Council (taking the average forecast of two separate professional Treasury Management advisors). An average interest rate assumption of 4.8% has been included for 2024/25, 3.4% for 2025/26, 2.8% for 2026/27, 2.8% for 2027/28, 2.8% for 2028/29.
 - **Council Tax increase** – 2.99% recommended for 2024/25 followed by 3.0% thereafter.

- **Settlement** - “Core Spending Power + 3.0%” in 2024/25, and frozen thereafter.
- **New Homes Bonus** – discontinued from 2025/26; and
- **Fees & Charges** – increased 6.7% 2024/25 and 2% thereafter.

4. Transformation Savings (“Fit for the Future”) (2024/25 to 2026/27)

- 4.1 As explained in **Appendix A** (Paragraphs 1.9 to 2.1), the Council is embarking on a strategic programme of review, entitled “Fit for the Future” with the objective of delivering a council with a net operating cost of only three-quarters of what it would have been without this action.
- 4.2 The aim of this programme is to deliver a leaner, fitter organisation, offering improved services to residents, but which operates sensibly within the projected financial resources available to it, avoiding the need for repeated annual cuts exercises.

- 4.3 The projected financial benefits from the “Fit for the Future” Programme are expected to deliver total savings of £4.772 million over three years (2024/25 to 2026/27). These are now embedded in the updated MTFP presented above in Paragraph 3.4 and are summarised in the table below.

“Fit for the Future” Savings Programme (2024/25)				
Service Area	Description	Budget Impact		
		2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
		£000's	£000's	£000's
Waste Services	Garden Waste Chargeable Service	955	103	0
Waste Service	Waste Strategy	0	0	1,000
Waste Service	Business Waste Service Expansion	100	0	0
Greening & Street Care	Service Options Appraisal	100	150	750
Culture & Heritage	Museums Delivery Model Review	120	0	0
Culture & Heritage	Hollytree Admission Charging	100	0	0
Active & Wellbeing	Interim Transition	0	0	725
Active & Wellbeing	Gladstone	20	0	0
Active & Wellbeing	Digi Ticket	6	0	0
Assets	Corporate Landlord Model	300	0	0
Housing	Homelessness Prevention	0	0	200
Corporate	Channel Experience with Contact Centre (Digital Customer)	100	0	0
Corporate	Building Control (Shared Services)	43	0	0
Total		1,844	253	2,675

4.4 The table below provides further details on the individual elements of the “Fit for the Future” Programme.

Description of Saving	Details of how the saving will be achieved	Budget Impact 2024/2025 £000's
Garden Waste Chargeable Service	High levels of uptake of the new garden waste scheme have been experienced, and this is the revised forecast income from the scheme for 24/25	955
Business Waste Expansion	A revised 3-year business plan for the business waste collection service has been produced underpinned by customer surveys. This will result in net income growth in 24/25.	100
Greening and Street Care Programme	This will involve reviewing the model of delivery of both Street Care Services and Grounds Maintenance to secure efficiencies across both services. As a first stage all tasks are being reviewed to identify opportunities to reduce cost with the least impact resulting in a budget saving for 24/25.	100
Museums Delivery Model Review	New delivery models are being considered that can result in a more entrepreneurial Museums Service. This includes new service offers and income opportunities such as a partnership with Suffolk University to deliver university courses and a review of the VAT on income associated with the service.	120
Holytrees Admission Charging	By introducing a charge for entry an additional income stream can be developed to support the continued operation of the museum.	100
Gladstone	Efficiencies can be delivered against the contract for the main Sport and Leisure management system.	20
Digi Ticket	Efficiencies can be delivered as a result of the main online booking system for Sport and Leisure.	6
Corporate Landlord Model	By developing a new approach and the new corporate landlord approach a more efficient staffing structure can be created. This will then allow the new assets strategy to be delivered to ensure property is maintained effectively and commercial and income generation opportunities are maximised.	300
Channel Experience with Contact Centre	A review of the customer contact centre was initiated in 22/23 to maximise channel shift requiring less staff resource which creates further budget savings in 24/25.	100
Building Control	A review of the service and revised staffing structure creates a budget saving in 24/25	43

4.5 Further details on the “Fit for the Future” Programme will be presented to Cabinet in March 2024, explaining in more detail how the targets committed to here will be delivered.

5. Updated Housing Revenue Account (HRA) MTFF 2024/25 to 2028/29

- 5.1 The January 2023 MTFF revealed a projected HRA breakeven position over the five-year period, including the (now forthcoming) 2024/25 financial year. However, in terms of presentation, the HRA does not have a such a strict (annual) balanced budget requirement and budgeted surpluses and deficits are allowed within the controlled framework of its (30-Year) Business Plan. For example, the Council's HRA Business Plan assumes the maintenance of a minimum reserve level of £1.6 million as a contingency against *unplanned* overspends.
- 5.2 The Council's established MTFF approach to balance the HRA after adjustment is made for Revenue Contributions to Capital (with the size of such contributions mirroring forecast Net Operating Income). Revenue Contributions to Capital are therefore subject to fluctuations as presented in the table below.

Housing Revenue Account MTFF (@ February 2023)				
Financial Year	Revenue Contributions to Capital	Increase/ (Decrease) in Net Operating Income	(Surplus)/ Deficit	Comment
	£000's	%	£000's	
2023/24	3,304	N/A	0	
2024/25	3,603	9.0%	0	
2025/26	4,450	23.5%	0	53 Week Rent Year
2026/27	3,915	(12.0%)	0	
2027/28	4,449	13.6%	0	
2028/29	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

5.3 The updated MTFP (2024/25 through to 2028/29), reflecting the final draft HRA budget for 2024/25, is illustrated in the table below.

COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL						
Housing Revenue Account - Medium Term Financial Forecast Summary						
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Income & Expenditure Analysis	Original	Original	Original	Original	Original	Original
	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
INCOME						
Dwelling Rents (Gross)	(30,131)	(32,580)	(34,425)	(35,320)	(36,682)	(37,663)
Non-Dwelling Rents (Gross)	(1,189)	(1,225)	(1,249)	(1,274)	(1,300)	(1,326)
Charges for Services and Facilities	(3,283)	(3,260)	(3,273)	(3,336)	(3,400)	(3,466)
Contributions towards Expenditure	(65)	(70)	(71)	(73)	(74)	(76)
Total Income	(34,668)	(37,135)	(39,018)	(40,003)	(41,456)	(42,531)
EXPENDITURE						
Repairs and Maintenance	6,521	7,923	7,993	8,292	8,942	8,721
CB Homes Ltd Management Fee	4,872	5,021	5,121	5,224	5,328	5,435
Supervision and Management	7,691	7,587	7,740	7,947	8,110	8,275
Rents, Rates and Other Charges	190	197	201	205	209	213
Negative Subsidy - payment to Secretary of State	0	0	0	0	0	0
Increased provision for Bad or Doubtful Debts	250	250	263	268	281	302
Interest Payable	6,045	8,333	8,515	9,077	8,967	9,491
Cost of Capital Charge	0	0	0	0	0	0
Depreciation and Impairments of Fixed Assets	6,000	6,000	6,190	6,447	6,684	6,818
Amortisation of Deferred Charges	0	0	0	0	0	0
Debt Management Costs	58	64	66	67	68	70
Gross Expenditure	31,627	35,375	36,089	37,527	38,589	39,325
Net Cost of Services	(3,041)	(1,760)	(2,929)	(2,476)	(2,867)	(3,206)
Net HRA Income from the Asset Management Account	0	0	0	0	0	0
Amortised Premiums and Discounts	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disposal of Fixed Assets	0	0	0	0	0	0
HRA Investment Income (including mortgage interest and interest on Notional Cash Balances)	(263)	(699)	(475)	(411)	(419)	(427)
Net Operating Expenditure	(3,304)	(2,459)	(3,404)	(2,887)	(3,286)	(3,633)
Revenue Contributions to Capital Expenditure	3,304	2,459	3,404	2,887	3,286	3,633
Transfer from Capital Financing Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transfer to/(from) Major Repairs Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Surplus) / Deficit for the Year	0	0	0	0	0	0

5.4 The overall revenue position for 2024/25 shows anticipated Net Operating Income of £2.459 million (as presented in **Appendix A**, Paragraph 3.1 and explained in Paragraph 3.3). As explained in **Appendix A**, in keeping with the established strategy, a balanced budget is achieved through the adjustment of Contributions to Capital thereby protecting the £1.6 million contingency Balance in accordance with the 30-Year HRA Business Plan. The 53-week rent year peak in 2025/26 still occurs in 2025/26 as identified in January 2023 and presented above in Paragraph 4.2.

24 January 2024

Report of	Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director Place	Author	Lindsay Barker
Title	Delivery of Colchester Northern Gateway (South) Development		
Wards affected	Mile End		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Colchester Northern Gateway (South) (CNGS) is a significant development site owned by Colchester City Council (CCC). Since 2016 the development of the Northern Gateway has been managed by Colchester Commercial Holdings Limited (CCHL) on behalf of CCC. A hybrid planning consent number 190665 for the site was obtained in December 2022 with several planning conditions needing to be satisfied before development could occur. The main condition is the completion of the Section 278 (S278) highways works to Junction 28 of the A12, Via Urbis Romanae (VUR), Axial Way and United Way to increase capacity at peak periods before any part of the site can be occupied.
- 1.2 The planning consent allows for:
- 45,100m2 employment use
 - Healthcare hub
 - private hospital 4,300m2
 - medical centre 1,200m2
 - 75 bed care home 3,600m2
 - 300 older people’s homes
 - 350 homes (30% social Housing)
 - Heat network energy centre
 - Delivery of key infrastructure
 - Ancillary Retail/food and drink 1,500m2
 - Digital Network – ultra fast broadband
 - Pedestrian boulevard (The Walk)
 - Community Green 4.5ha
- 1.3 The original delivery strategy developed in conjunction with CCHL was to:
- Develop the employment land including extensive office accommodation having pre-let it to occupiers.
 - Dispose of the Health Hub site (including older people housing) to a master developer to lease to end users. A developer was selected in 2022 but did not proceed due to the change in the economic conditions and property investor confidence during 2023.
 - Sell the housing land to Colchester Amphora Housing Ltd (the subsidiary housing company of CCHL) and lend the company the money to develop the housing and dispose of it.
 - Develop and run the Heat Network through Colchester Amphora Energy Limited (the subsidiary energy company).
- 1.4 CCC was successful in securing Housing Infrastructure Funding (HIF) for infrastructure improvements of £5.5m in 2019. This has been spent to facilitate the relocation of the

Sports Park and enable the development of the site to provide up to 350 homes. The requirement to deliver the housing element of the scheme has been varied in terms of timescales to deliver but remains and is reported on regularly to Homes England.

CCC also successfully secured a Heat Network Investment Project Grant of £3.5m from the then Government Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy towards the development of the CNG Heat Network. Part of this funding has been invested in the early stages of delivering the heat network infrastructure and part remains to be invested.

- 1.5 The team at CCHL has been working with Essex County Highways and National Highways to satisfy the planning condition to complete the S278 works at Junction 28. Agreement has now been reached on scheme design and a programme slot was reserved with National Highways and Essex County Highways for the highways works to be carried out within 2024/25. To progress, CCC now needs to procure a construction partner to complete the detailed scheme design and deliver the works and, in order to commence the procurement process, funding for the works needs to be included in CCC's Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Framework.
- 1.6 The review of CCHL commissioned by CCC early in 2023, and which has now reported to Cabinet and Governance and Audit Committee, has recommended that:
 - CCC needs to bring this programme of work in house from CCHL, the leadership and responsibility for delivery of the site alongside establishing the new Corporate Landlord Team.
 - A CNGS Programme Board be set up to oversee the review and the reset of the delivery strategy. There are a number of reasons for this outlined in section 3.4 of this report.
- 1.7 As part of taking on the leadership responsibility and to enable the progression of the site to a full delivery option, CCC needs to make funding available for project management capacity within the Corporate Landlord Team, due diligence, feasibility and viability work and a review of development delivery strategies.

2. Recommended Decisions

- 2.1 To approve the inclusion of £7.7 million in CCC's capital programme for 2024/25 to fund the enabling works and some construction works required to Junction 28 of the A12.
- 2.2 To agree to revisit the delivery strategy for CNGS acknowledging that CCC has taken on the leadership and responsibility for delivery from CCHL and needs to review the development strategy and retest the market and site options both within the context of the current planning permission and potentially a new planning approach. It is intended this work will be completed by summer 2024 culminating in a new delivery strategy for the site.
- 2.3 To delegate to the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources, the drawdown of the earmarked reserve – the Revolving Investment Fund (RIF) to fund resourcing within the emerging Corporate Landlord Team, which is being established as part of the Fit for the Future transformation project on Assets to progress the necessary due diligence, a review of the development strategy, market and potential delivery options and to fund any viability and feasibility work needed to progress the delivery of the site.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

3.1 CNGS is a key site in delivering on some of CCC's priorities in the Strategic Plan.

It will directly contribute to the improvement of health, wellbeing, and happiness:

- With a key new active travel route through the site: The Walk, already delivered and enabling a high-quality walking, cycling, and wheeling option.
- A new health hub providing a private hospital, GP surgery, and a care home.

As a key employment site in the Local Plan, it will support growing the local economy so everyone benefits.

It will also make a significant contribution to delivering homes for those most in need with a minimum of 30% affordable, as well as supported housing options.

In addition, the whole Northern Gateway is a key gateway to the City of Colchester, and it will also be a community hub providing access and services to residents across the city area and beyond.

3.2 The CCHL review recommended the delivery strategy for CNGS needs to be reviewed for the following reasons:–

- A change in CCC's appetite for financial risk given the financial context and significant financial challenges facing Councils across the Country.
- Change in the property market since it was originally approved, for example the significantly reduced market demand for office space following the Covid Pandemic.
- The economic slow-down, cost of living crisis, inflationary pressures and increased interest rates affecting developer, investor, and occupier confidence during 2023.
- Master developer approach to the site has not progressed due to the investment challenges and significant cost escalation on build and infrastructure costs. The market is starting to show signs of returning to some normality as the latest BCIS forecast for 2024 projects a 2% increase (compared to 10.7% annual increase in previous years). Therefore, from a high-level perspective, the confidence in the market is expected to start to improve as prices settle and risk exposure to build costs reduce.
- The CCHL review recommended hibernation of Colchester Amphora Housing Ltd and Colchester Amphora Energy Ltd which were both delivery vehicles for elements of the site.

3.3 CNGS is a strategic site of significant socio-economic and financial value which will facilitate delivery of some of CCC's key Strategic Plan priorities. As a key employment site in the Local Plan, it will support growing the local economy, so everyone benefits as well as providing inward investment. It will also make a significant contribution to delivering homes for those most in need with a minimum of 30% affordable housing. As well as the improvement of health, wellbeing, and happiness with the facilitation of active travel options, the site also has designated community open space. A key strategic gateway site into the City of Colchester, CNGS is also of great financial significance and value (please see Part B for assumptions around value of the site).

- 3.4 Delivery of the whole of the CNGS consented scheme is predicated (via Condition 8 of the planning consent 190665) around the physical completion of the offsite highway works. A cost estimate was prepared in 2019 associated with the highway works and therefore given the market material and labour costs, alongside the development of the highways detailed design works now requires a refresh. The refresh will capture both legal and technical due diligence to feed into the cost plan estimate to provide a robust and complete analysis of the highway works project. Until this work is completed it is proposed the latest working assumption detail in Part B will be included in the Capital Programme.

The technical due diligence will also identify location, issues and solutions relating to existing utilities within the sites which are a significant risk and a key dependency upon time and cost to the delivery of CNG.

- 3.5 It is recognised specialist advice will be needed to review and develop delivery strategy options to meet the strategic objectives of CCC, access the occupier, developer, and investor markets, ensure the delivery of high-quality developments, facilitate infrastructure works and explore options to leverage potential third party investment.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Do nothing – if the S278 highways work is not completed then it will not be possible for any part of the development to be occupied. It is also highly unlikely that any developer would be willing to purchase the site, or part thereof, without this work being completed.

If we do not review the delivery strategy, in light of the significant social and economic changes that have occurred in the last 5 years, any development is less likely to meet current needs or deliver the maximum benefits for residents or CCC and will increase risk to CCC in relation to its investment and successful delivery of the expected outcomes.

- 4.2 Dispose of the site “as is”. This option is likely to prove very difficult without the completion of the S278 highways work as market interest will reduce due to increased cost and risk for developers and, if achievable, will return significantly less capital than if the work is completed. It will also mean that CCC will lose control over the development of the site and the outcomes that can be achieved.

5. Background Information

5.1 Introduction

Colchester’s Northern Gateway (CNG) development is a strategic employment site comprising 19.6 acres (6.7ha) with its own site allocation policy in the adopted Local Plan.

CNG is also included within the boundary of [Freeport East](#). Freeports are designated areas within the UK’s borders where different regulations apply including tax reliefs, customs incentives, business rates retention, planning, regeneration, innovation, and trade and investment support. Freeports aim to create new high-quality jobs in disadvantaged communities.

There is an ambitious growth strategy for new homes but, in tandem, there is a need to deliver well paid and skilled jobs to support and grow the local economy and improve discretionary spend in the city centre.

5.2 Overview of the history of the site and rationale for development

The site has been developed over the past 10 years as packages of land with different legal agreements applying under a Masterplan. This was prepared to enable the relocation of Colchester Rugby Club, the development of a new Sports Hub, and a mixed-use development south of the A12.

The planning policy brief for 'Colchester Northern Gateway' is leisure and wellbeing, commercial office space, residential, recreation, and energy production. Retail is not part of the Planning policy for this development.

As a CCC asset, it provides the opportunity for lease agreements providing rental income, direct income generation from land sales, and development partnership arrangements where the financial and other benefits may be shared, and a variety of service and amenity provisions for a growing place and necessary associated job provision.

5.3 The Current Policy Framework for Planning Decisions

The adopted Local Plan defines CNG as a Strategic Economic Area.

There is nothing apparent in the Local Plan text for CNG or site allocation policy to suggest a threshold for job creation at CNG, but this has been factored into the relevant employment policies.

5.4 Development completed to date and land in current, or, approved for development

The CNG Masterplan designates three discreet zones, please see Appendix A for CNG site map and Appendix B for a map of CNGS.

The western side of the A12 South (NG zone 2, i.e. to the west of VUR) area is a mixture of fully built and operational sites (the Football Stadium and David Lloyd), under construction (CNG Leisure Scheme; the 'Turnstone' development, consisting of a Hotel, Cinema, active leisure, restaurants and drive through units) and undeveloped sites providing future development opportunities (the area to the South of Axial Way and West of Via Urban Romanis). A vacant site remains on the east side of Lloyd Tennis facing the VUR.

The A12 North (NG zone 3) area is now largely built out with the Sports Park, Rugby Club and Park & Ride complete. Smaller in-fill opportunities are currently being explored including leisure (swimming) and roadside service uses. These sites could be unlocked if required highways works are undertaken.

The eastern side of the A12 South (NG zone 1, i.e. to the East of VUR) site is undeveloped at this time (with the exception of The Walk).

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has not been completed at this stage. This will be completed once the due diligence and strategy delivery work currently in hand has been completed. This will be included when we return to Cabinet in the summer with further detail.

7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 CNGS is a key site in delivering on some of CCC's key priorities in the Strategic Plan.

It will directly contribute to the improvement of health, wellbeing, and happiness:

- With a key new active travel route through the site: The Walk, already delivered and enabling a high-quality walking, cycling, and wheeling option.
- A new health hub providing a private hospital, GP surgery, and a care home.

As a key employment site in the Local Plan, it will support growing the local economy so everyone benefits.

It will also make a significant contribution to delivering homes for those most in need with a minimum of 30% affordable, as well as supported housing options.

In addition, the whole Northern Gateway is a key gateway to the City of Colchester, and it will also be a key community hub providing access and services to residents across the city area and beyond.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 Consultation has been carried out extensively as part of securing the hybrid planning consent. Further consultation will be required as detailed planning applications come forward following the refresh of the delivery strategy by the summer.

9. Publicity Considerations

- 9.1 There is significant public interest in the development of the wider Northern Gateway as it provides many services and opportunities for activities for Colchester residents and visitors. It is also a key access route to the A12 and used by many residents and visitors. It will be important to communicate what the decisions mean in terms of the junction works and how the reset of the delivery strategy will impact locally in terms of timescales and managing expectations.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1 To approve the inclusion of £7.7 million in CCC's capital programme for 2024/25 to fund the enabling works and some construction works required to Junction 28 of the A12.
- 10.2 The drawdown of the earmarked reserve – the Revolving Investment Fund (RIF) to fund resourcing within the emerging Corporate Landlord Team, which is being established as part of the Fit for the Future transformation project on Assets to progress the necessary due diligence, a review of the development strategy, market and potential delivery options and to fund any viability and feasibility work needed to progress the delivery of the site.

Due to commercial sensitivity, please see part B of this paper for further financial considerations.

11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 As outlined above Health and Wellbeing is at the core of the Northern Gateway as a Health and Leisure Gateway development. Active travel routes, green spaces and alleviating congestion are all central to the planning approach. In addition, the development will deliver health facilities to increase the health capacity for Colchester.
- 11.2 The development has been planned to design out Crime and Disorder implications to ensure that new residents, workers, or people visiting and using facilities can do so safely.

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 There are no health and safety implications.

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 Current risks have been identified and are understood. In summary these include:
- The timing of the S278 highways enabling works – CCC will be reliant on National Highways as well as Essex County Council for agreement to start and complete the works within existing programmes of highways work. To mitigate this risk we will work closely with National Highways and ECC to seek to secure dates for delivery alongside the refreshed delivery strategy.
 - Securing a contractor to complete detailed design and deliver the works – we are managing this risk by engaging with the market early and exploring the most effective procurement options including frameworks.
 - Clear cost information – at present we are working on latest estimates and will need to secure more up to date information on all the enabling costs as part of revisiting the delivery strategy. We are also reviewing all spend to date and all committed spend to understand the financial requirements of the project. It is important to note though that until the procurement has been carried out actual costs for S278 works will not be known.
 - In addition, project risks are identified and being managed:

High Level Risk Analysis	Mitigation
Market fluctuations	Quarterly cost plan review supported with monthly monitoring
Statutory Utilities diversions	Ensure all stat utilities diversion works are scoped & completed ahead of the main contractor
Project Structure and Personnel changes	Handover meetings and secure data monitoring
Road Opening Licences x 2 (Both National Highways and Essex Highways)	Hierarchy for responsibility to be established between ECC and Highways England - scoping a second booking as a fall back
ECC technical approval and legal agreements	No regulatory measures for performance and ECC team understaffed

Insurance Bonding (Highways Works)	CCC to confirm mechanism for bonding vs deposit
Insurance Bonding - nuisance claims	Risks analysis to be completed to establish weighting and insurance quotes to be considered (cost vs benefit)
Cost Projection Confidence	Technical and Legal due diligence to be completed to inform the cost plan

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

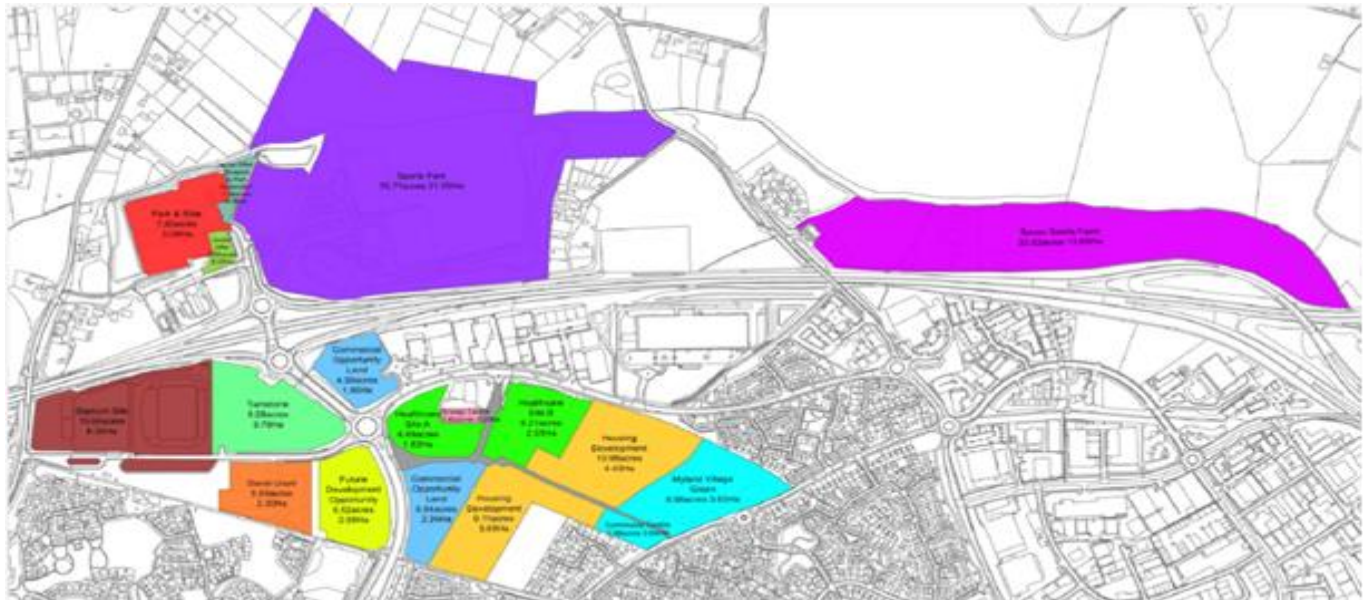
- 14.1 Full consideration of the Environmental and Sustainability implications has not been completed at this stage. This will be completed once the due diligence and strategy delivery work currently in hand has been completed. This will be included when we return to Cabinet in the summer with further detail.

Appendices

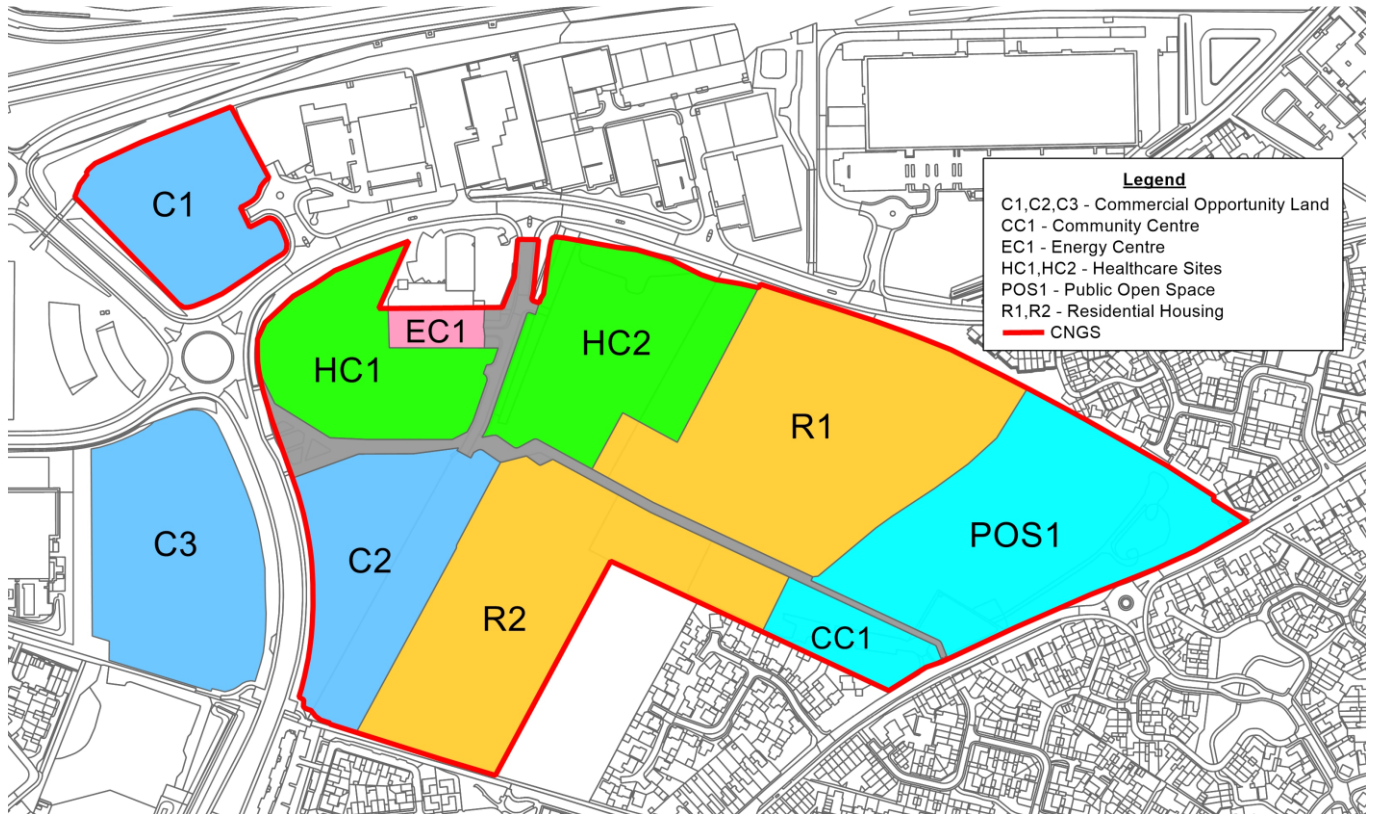
- Appendix A – CNG Site Map
- Appendix B – CNGS Site Map

Background Papers

Appendix A – CNG Site Map



Appendix B – CNGS Site Map





Cabinet

Item
8(ii)

24 January 2024

Report of	Head of People	Author	Jessica Douglas ☎ 282239
Title	Officer Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Local authorities must publish an officer pay policy statement each year. The statement must be approved by Full Council.
- 1.2 The statement covers all pay and benefits for all Colchester City Council employees.
- 1.3 The draft statement for 2024/25 is attached, with the detailed rates in the appendix.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To recommend the approval and adoption of the Officer Pay Statement for 2024/25 by Full Council.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 The Localism Act requires “authorities to prepare, approve and publish pay policy statements articulating their policies towards a range of issues relating to the pay of its workforce, which must be approved by full Council annually. An authority’s pay policy statement must be approved by a resolution of that authority before it comes into force”.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The only alternative would be to not recommend the approval of the Pay Policy Statement, but that would be contrary to the requirements of the Localism Act.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 Local authorities must publish a pay policy statement for the financial year. The Officer Pay Policy for 2023/24 was approved by [Full Council on 1 December 2022](#).

The Localism Act specifies items that must be covered by the statement including the level and elements of remuneration for each chief officer, remuneration of chief officers on recruitment, increases and additions to remuneration for each chief officer, the use of performance-related pay and bonuses for chief officers, the approach to the payment of chief officers on their ceasing to hold office under or to be employed by the authority, and the publication of and access to information relating to remuneration of chief officers.

- 5.2 The Council’s pay policy statement extends beyond the statutory requirements relating to chief officers as shown in 5.1 above to include all officers employed by the Council, in the interests of openness and transparency.

- 5.3 Please see the attached Officer Pay Policy. Appendix 1 of the policy contains the mostly numerical data which sits behind it, and the definitions of terms such as 'chief officer'. These two documents form the Council's officer pay policy statement.
- 5.4 The statement covers all pay and benefits for every employee of Colchester City Council. There are no financial allowances or bonuses other than those mentioned.
- 5.5 The Colchester Commercial (Holdings) Ltd holding company (CCH) and Amphora trading companies set up in January 2018 are not covered by this statement.
- 5.6 Mandatory requirements for data publication under the [Local government transparency code 2015](#), and for the Council's [Statement of Accounts](#) under the [Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015](#) have also been taken into account when preparing this year's update of the pay policy to ensure that the published data is complete and consistent.

6. Living Wage

- 6.1 The Council has chosen to pay the [Living Wage](#), set independently by the [Living Wage Foundation](#), since 2013 as part of its commitment to being a good employer, and its approach to [Social Value](#). The Council will continue to pay the Living Wage as a minimum standard for all its employees. Around 400 permanent/casual Council staff and 60 third-party contracted employees receive the Living Wage.
- 6.2 The Living Wage is calculated annually according to the basic cost of living in the UK. The new Living Wage rate is usually announced each November but was brought forward this year due to the cost-of-living situation. The increase from £10.90 an hour to £12.00 (10.1%) was announced by the Living Wage Foundation on 24 October 2023. The Council implemented the new rate from 1 November 2023. For staff on the national living wage, the new rate means £1.10 an hour/£177 a month/£2,122 a year more if full-time. Updated pay scales are shown in the policy's appendix, and on the [Council's website](#).
- 6.3 This Living Wage hourly rate, paid by the Council and set by the Living Wage Foundation, is higher than the statutory [National Living Wage](#) set by central government for workers who are 23 years or over (currently £10.42) or the [National Minimum Wage](#) (£10.18 if 21-22, £7.49 if 18-20, £5.28 if under 18 or an apprentice).
- 6.4 The Council signed a 'Living Wage Employer' licence with the Living Wage Foundation in February 2016. This means that as well as paying the Living Wage Foundation's recommended hourly rate to staff, this requirement has been included in new third-party contracts from that date for contracted staff and suppliers working on Council business.
- 6.5 The Living Wage uplift is included in the overall budget setting process each year, and is part of the budget set aside for the annual pay award.

7. Changes since the last report and looking ahead to 2024/25

- 7.1 The 2023-24 pay deal was agreed by Cabinet on 22 November 2023 which represented an increase of £1925 on the 2022-23 pay scales, on all spinal column points for permanent and fixed term employees. This will be paid in January 2024 and backdated to April 2023.
- 7.2 The agreement was reached and agreed by Cabinet in December. The £1925 increase matches the National Joint Council (NJC) 2023-24 pay award. This is the second year the council has aligned the pay award with the NJC. Included in section 2.3 of the Pay Policy is a new commitment to aim to match future NJC pay awards.

7.3 The £12 per hour Living Wage uplift announced on 24 October was implemented on the 1 November 2023. Staff who received the living wage increase on 1 November will receive the £1925 per annum uplift backdated from 1 April 2023 up to 31 October and then receive the living wage increase from 1 November.

7.4 New Senior Management arrangements have been implemented with the appointment of the Senior Leadership Board and new Heads of Service. The revised pay is within the current grading system.

7.5 Included in section 10.2 is the requirement for any redundancy or severance package of £100,000 to be approved by Full Council. This is not a new requirement but has been included in the Officer Pay Policy to reflect the position.

8. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

8.1 The Equality Impact Assessment is on the Council's website [here](#) or by following the path: www.colchester.gov.uk > Equality and Diversity > Equality Impact Assessments

9. Strategic Plan References

9.1 The performance, remuneration and motivation of employees are key to delivering effective, efficient public services and the Strategic Plan's aspirations and priorities.

10. Publicity Considerations

10.1 The statistical data within the Officer Pay Policy is publicly available on the Council's [Council Data](#) web resource so that it is all in one place, helping to improve openness and transparency. Employee benefits including pay scales are also published on the website [here](#). Gender pay gap information is published [here](#), including our supporting narrative and a link to the Government's [gender pay gap portal](#) where the results can be compared with those of other organisations.

11. Financial implications

11.1 The pay policy statement provides transparency about the Council's pay and benefits.

12. Other Implications

12.1 There are no particular consultation; health, wellbeing and community safety; health and safety; risk management or environmental and sustainability implications.



Colchester
City Council

Officer Pay Policy

www.colchester.gov.uk

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Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide an open and transparent framework that ensures clarity, fairness and consistency in the remuneration of officers.

The Council will comply with this policy which covers all officers. It ensures that employees are paid on a fair and equitable basis in accordance with equality legislation.

Colchester City Council recognises the importance of administering pay in a way that:

- attracts, motivates and retains appropriately talented people needed to maintain and improve the Council's performance and meet future challenges
- reflects the market for comparable jobs, with skills and competencies required to meet agreed delivery and performance outcomes
- allows for a proportion of remuneration to be at risk, depending upon the delivery of agreed outcomes and results
- delivers the required levels of competence within an overall workforce strategy within approved budget parameters
- is affordable and transparent.

1. Pay strategy and framework

- 1.1 The Council determines the level of annual salary for employees, including chief officers, using an established job evaluation scheme. Jobs are independently evaluated, using this scheme, by experienced Human Resources staff and all employees have the right of appeal against their pay grade.
- 1.2 The pay grades and salary spinal points are shown on the Council's website [here](#), and in Appendix 1 along with other definitions such 'chief officer'. Each pay grade has a number of incremental points and employees normally progress up their pay grade by one increment on an annual basis, subject to satisfactory levels of performance (see also section 5 - rewarding performance).
- 1.3 The exception to this principle is where employees have transferred their employment to the Council and salary protection exists under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) legislation commonly known as TUPE.
- 1.4 The pay policy incorporates the Council's Equality and Diversity policy (website link [Equality and Diversity in employment - Colchester City Council](#)), and periodic equal pay audits will be conducted.
- 1.5 From April 2017, [Equality Act regulations](#) require public organisations with more than 250 employees to publish a range of gender pay gap figures to show whether there are any differences in pay between male and female employees. The annual gender pay 'snapshot' is published on the Council's website [here](#), with a link to the Government's website where figures from other public and private organisations can also be seen/searched to help with openness and transparency.
- 1.6 The Council implemented the '[Living Wage](#)', which is independently calculated by the [Living Wage Foundation](#), from April 2013 and became an accredited Living Wage Employer in February 2016.

2. Pay review and annual increases

- 2.1 The Council supports the principle of collective bargaining and has a recognition agreement with the trade union 'Unison'. Negotiation and consultation are conducted at a local level in relation to levels of pay and benefits for all employees including Chief / Senior Officers (see definitions in Appendix 1) using 'Colchester Managed Grades' (CMG) pay grades. The Council is therefore not part of any national terms and conditions for local government employees.
- 2.2 Local negotiations around a pay review are conducted on an annual basis, and any increase is agreed taking into account inflationary factors, local salary levels and affordability.
- 2.3 Although the pay award is negotiated locally, the council will aim to match the National Joint Council (NJC) pay award.
- 2.4 Any decision to increase salary levels for all employees has to be approved by the Portfolio Holder under delegated powers set in the Council's [Constitution](#).
- 2.5 The Council publishes its pay multiple (the ratio between the highest and lowest paid employees) and does not currently set a target for this.

3. Remuneration of Chief Officers

- 3.1 The remuneration of all officers is determined using the Council's job evaluation and performance management schemes.
- 3.2 The median average value of Chief Officers' pay is shown in Appendix 1 together with the relationship to the lowest paid staff and other staff (referred to in the legislation as "the pay multiple").
- 3.3 The remuneration of all Chief Officers and Senior Officers is published in the Council's [Annual Statement of Accounts](#), which also includes a wide range of financial information.

4. Other items in addition to salary

The Council pays the following additions to annual salary:

- 4.1 **Overtime:**
This is paid to employees who are required to work in excess of their contracted weekly hours. All overtime is paid at plain-time rate derived from annual salary, and enhancements are not normally paid for working at weekends or public holidays. Employees on pay grade CMG5 or above do not receive overtime pay.
- 4.2 **Unsocial hours working:**
The Council pays an allowance to employees who work unsocial hours which cover 24-hour shift working. Allowances are also paid to employees who undertake standby and call out duties. A small payment can also be made to 'front-line' employees who are required to work over the Christmas and New Year period.

OFFICER PAY POLICY

4.3 **Maternity, paternity and shared parental arrangements:**

The Council has a policy that supports parents and provides some enhancement to the statutory maternity, paternity and shared parental provisions. These enhancements are shown in Appendix 1.

4.4 **Recruitment and retention payments:**

Where the Council is faced with difficulties in recruitment to and retention of specific jobs, as a result of market pressures and skills shortages, the Chief Operating Officer is able to sanction the use of a temporary recruitment/retention supplement, reviewed on a regular basis. This may include a non-consolidated payment on appointment and/or a retention payment to reflect the employment market and the needs of the business. Any such payment is to be authorised by the Chief Operating Officer. If the employee leaves the Council voluntarily within a year, they will be required to pay back this non-consolidated payment.

Where an individual is being recruited and has significant experience or skills in the role for which they are being employed, Heads of Service and above have discretion to appoint at any scale point (within the grade) above the lowest level.

Where an employee is upgraded using the Council's job evaluation scheme, the employee will move to the lowest point of the new pay grade such that they receive at least one increment. Any proposal to move the employee to a higher point on the pay grade has to be authorised by Heads of Service and above.

4.5 **Market Supplements:**

Market supplements are an additional method of tackling recruitment and retention issues by temporarily increasing pay awarded to specific post(s) without altering the job evaluation determined grade for the role.

A market supplement may be agreed when it can be shown that the salary attached to the grade for the 'hard-to-fill' role is significantly lower than the salary offered elsewhere and that this is having an adverse impact on the ability to recruit and retain staff in specific post(s).

A 'hard-to-fill' post is one where there are proven recruitment and/or retention difficulties and/or there are known significant national shortages. The value of any market supplement is determined by a comparison of the remuneration for a council role against relevant market rates for similar roles.

A market supplement will be applied to all employees undertaking the role.

Market supplements have to be authorised by the Chief Operating Officer.

4.6 **Increases in responsibility:**

Temporary or permanent payments can be paid at the discretion of the Heads of Service and above to reflect operational needs, the level of additional responsibility and the Council's increment/acting-up policies.

4.7 **Other items:**

The Council only reimburses reasonable business expenses actually incurred and in line with the Council's travel and subsistence policy.

OFFICER PAY POLICY

Professional membership fees are reimbursed to employees at the rate of 50% of fees incurred and only one membership per employee is reimbursed.

External training costs are paid where they form part of agreed learning and development, and in line with the post-entry training policy.

There are no expense allowances or bonuses other than those mentioned within this pay policy.

5. Rewarding performance

- 5.1 The Council uses a performance management scheme to appraise the performance of all employees, including Chief / Senior Officers. Issues of poor performance can result in any annual increment being withheld.
- 5.3 The Council also recognises the need to incentivise specific jobs whose role involves a proportion of sales or income generation. In such cases a reward package will be developed, which needs approval by Senior Leadership Team. The annual salary and incentive payment will be determined outside of the job evaluation scheme and will be risk-assured in relation to equal pay.
- 5.4 The Council incentivises and recognises employees for their individual contribution towards its organisational goals through a non-salary rewards scheme. Where an employee's contribution is deemed to be excellent, they can be nominated for a non-consolidated payment up to the maximum value if authorised by the Deputy Chief Executive or Chief Operating Officer. See Appendix 1 for the value of these incentives.

6. Pension

- 6.1 In accordance with statutory provisions, employees are offered membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme. The Council has a published pension policy, and this policy applies to all employees including Chief / Senior Officers. It sets out the Council's decisions relating to discretionary powers allowed within the scheme. The pension contribution rates are shown in Appendix 1.
- 6.2 The Council also supports the principle of flexible retirement whereby employees are able to gain access to their pension whilst continuing in employment, subject to the restrictions laid down within the scheme and in the Council's Pension policy. This approach allows the Council to retain skilled employees and to assist individuals in managing the transition to retirement.

7. Other financial benefits

The Council currently offers the following financial benefits to employees, with the value of these charges and benefits shown in Appendix 1:

7.1 [Travel Plan incentives/charges:](#)

In order to encourage employees to use 'greener' travel modes, which also help to reduce town centre congestion, the Council has developed a package of travel plan measures. These measures include a charge for car parking for employees based in the town centre, and discounts for 'home to work' use of bus and rail travel.

OFFICER PAY POLICY

7.2 Salary sacrifice schemes:

The Council has adopted approved government salary sacrifice schemes which enable employees to have deductions from pay to purchase childcare vouchers (closed to new applicants in October 2018) cycles for travel to work and AVC for the LGPS pension. These schemes are tax efficient for the employee and are cost-neutral to the Council.

7.3 Long Service Awards:

The Council recognises the commitment of employees to public service and provides a gift to employees for 25 years' service with the Council.

7.4 Other allowances:

An allowance is paid for employees who volunteer to be designated First Aiders in the workplace.

8. Recruitment

8.1 In accordance with the Council's [Constitution](#), appointments to Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive), Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer, Strategic Directors, Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer are required to be approved by the Full Council.

8.2 All appointments are made in line with this Pay Policy.

8.3 The appointment of other Chief Officers and starting salaries within the grade must be approved by the Chief Executive.

8.4 The appointment of employees other than Chief Officers is delegated to the appropriate management level, relevant to the vacant job. The starting salary within the pay grade range is determined taking into account the skills and experience of the applicant and market pressures.

8.5 The Council does not restrict the re-employment of employees previously made redundant by either the Council or other Local Government. All applicants for vacancies are considered equally, based on their knowledge, skills and experience.

8.6 Full Council will be offered the opportunity to vote before large salary packages are offered in respect of new appointments. This level is set out in statutory guidance, and the current level is shown at Appendix 1 along with definitions of roles/posts.

9. Sick Pay

The Council applies the following sick pay scheme for all employees.

Service (years)	Full Pay (months)	Half Pay (months)
During first year	1	*2
During second year	2	2
During third year	4	4
During fourth/fifth years	5	5
After five years	6	6

* After completing 4 months' service

10. Payments when employment status changes

10.1 Redundancy:

The Council operates a redundancy payment scheme which applies to all employees including Chief / Senior Officers. The scheme is based on the employee's rate of pay and on the number of weeks paid under the statutory scheme, with an enhancement of 50% subject to a maximum of 45 weeks' pay.

10.2 Any redundancy or severance packages of £100,000 or more will be approved by Full Council. In presenting the information to Full Council the components of any such severance package will be set out including salary paid in lieu; redundancy compensation; pension entitlements; holiday pay; and fees or allowances paid.

10.3 Pay Protection:

The Council operates pay protection for a limited time period, within the terms of its change management and redundancy policy. This applies when staff have their pay reduced as part of a process of re-deployment or job evaluation.

10.4 Agreements:

Where the Council is in dispute with an employee, the Council will make use of legally binding agreements to settle disputes in appropriate circumstances. The use of these agreements and the value of any settlement will be determined by a consideration of factors such as the potential costs of litigation, the degree of risk at employment tribunal adjudications and any reputational impact. The decision to agree a legally binding agreement will rest with the Chief Executive or, in the case of the Chief Executive, will rest with the Cabinet.

11. Election duties

11.1 The Council has determined that the Returning Officer is the Chief Executive, and the remuneration is separate from the Chief Executive's salary. Remuneration levels for employees who assist with election duties on a secondary employment basis are set by Colchester City Council for City Council elections, Essex County Council for County Council elections and by central government for national elections.

11.2 The amount paid for election duties will vary depending on the number and type of elections which take place. The amount paid to the Returning Officer in the previous year is shown in Appendix 1.

12. Temporary staff and interim arrangements

12.1 The Council occasionally uses temporary agency or interim staff where it meets specific business needs and delivers best value. Levels of reward are determined by market rates. However, the Council will not use payment arrangements that could be perceived to be designed to deliberately avoid personal taxation.

13. Supporting Information

The following references have been used in producing this Pay Policy, along with the Council's existing Human Resource policies:

OFFICER PAY POLICY

Legislation and best practice guidelines

- The Localism Act 2011 - [chapter 8 - pay accountability](#).
- The Equality Act 2010
- Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) Regulations 2006
- Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2008
- [Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015](#).

Home Office and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government:

- [Openness and accountability in local pay: Guidance under section 40 of the Localism Act](#) and [Local government transparency code](#)
- [Openness and accountability in local pay: Supplementary Guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy:

- [Code of Practice in Local Authority Accounting](#)

Local Government Association

- [Pay Policy Statements - guidance](#).

Our website

The Council's website www.colchester.gov.uk has a [section with more information about employment](#) and [gender pay gap statistics](#) for Colchester City Council.

The following policies and forms should be taken into account alongside this document:

Policies	
Equality and Diversity policy	Increment policy
Maternity and Paternity policies	Acting up policy
Pensions policy	Overtime policy/Standby and Call-out Policy
Local Government Pension Scheme (Administration) Regulations 2013 Discretionary Decisions by Colchester City Council	Performance management scheme
Post-entry training policy	Change Management and Redundancy policy
Travel and subsistence policy	Travel Plan

The policies are on the Intranet in the HR section: [A to Z of HR Policies and Procedures](#)

Document Information

Title :	Officer Pay Policy
Status :	Annual update of existing policy
Version :	Draft for Cabinet/Council approval
Consultation :	Cabinet 24 January 2024
Approved By :	Full Council
Approval Date :	21 February 2024
EQIA :	click here
Review Frequency :	Annual
Next Review :	November / December 2024

This policy applies to you if you are working under the Terms and Conditions of Colchester City Council.

OFFICER PAY POLICY

Pay Data – Appendix 1

1. [Annual Salary scales](#). The last pay award increase was in April 2023 – £1925 on all spinal column points.
2. The pay scales include the Real Living Wage uplift applied from 1 November 2023.

Salary spine

point	Annual salary (£.p)	point	Annual salary (£.p)
4*	23,151.49	32	40,918.75
5*	23,151.49	33	41,384.03
6*	23,151.49	34	42,742.42
7*	23,151.49	35	44,100.82
8*	23,151.49	36	45,459.21
9*	23,151.49	37	46,871.64
10*	23,151.49	38	48,284.09
11*	23,151.49	39	49,696.49
12*	23,151.49	40	53,207.84
13*	23,151.49	41	56,719.21
14*	23,151.49	42	60,230.55
15	23,499.45	43	64,909.00
16	23,902.73	44	69,587.39
17	24,305.99	45	74,265.83
18	24,703.60	46	78,944.21
19	25,307.78	47	83,622.63
20	25,912.01	48	88,108.23
21	26,516.18	49	92,593.86
22	27,120.38	50	97,079.43
23	27,724.58	51	101,565.06
24	28,377.24	52	106,050.64
25	30,322.38	53	110,536.27
26	32,315.96	54	115,578.94
27	34,309.55	55	120,617.57
28	35,560.73	56	125,658.22
29	36,811.89	57	130,698.85
30	38,063.04	58	135,739.51
31	39,490.89	59	138,444.59

* these salary points are 'Living Wage'.

The Living Wage rate, as set independently/annually by the Living Wage Foundation, was uplifted to £12 an hour/£23,151.49 a year on 1 November 2023. (previously £10.90 / £21,029.27 – so increase of 10.1%/£2,122 a year, and uplifted pay for SCP 4-18).

Pay Grade range – Colchester Managed Grades (CMG)

Pay Grade (CMG)	Salary spinal column point (SCP) range	Pay Grade (CMG)	Salary spinal column point (SCP) range
14	4 to 7	6	35 to 39
13	7 to 12	5	38 to 42
12	11 to 18	5 GMT	38 to 45
11	18 to 24	4 CCC	42 to 46
10	23 to 27	4 + 1	42 to 47
9	26 to 30	3	46 to 50
8	29 to 33	2	51 to 55
7	32 to 36	1	54 to 59

[Apprentices](#)

OFFICER PAY POLICY

The national Apprenticeship Levy was introduced from April 2017. Employers operating in the UK with a pay bill over £3 million each year are required to invest in apprenticeships via an apprenticeship levy charged at a rate of 0.5% of the annual pay bill.

The Council's first intake of apprentices joined in September 2017. The Council agreed that its apprenticeship pay rate would be the [National Minimum Wage \(NMW\) by age](#) - this is more than the NMW rate for apprentices which is £4.81 an hour, and Council apprentices get the [NMW for their age](#) straight away without having to complete the first year of an apprenticeship or be 19.

2. [Pay relationship for Chief Officers](#)

	2023/24
Median average pay for Chief Officers	£95,154.43
Median average pay for staff other than Chief Officers	£26,452.24
Median average pay for lowest paid staff	£21,029.27
Pay multiple of Chief Officer (Chief Executive) pay to staff other than this Chief Officer	5.16
Pay multiple of Chief Officers' pay to staff other than Chief Officers	3.6
Pay multiple of Chief Officers' pay to lowest paid staff	4.52 ¹

Notes – please also see definitions of officers at section 8 below:

- Median average pay is based on full-time equivalent annual salary plus additional payments for Chief Officers. It excludes election fees.
- 'Lowest paid staff' is defined as those paid the 'Living Wage' - see chart of 'Colchester Managed Grades (CMG) pay grades on page 8.
- ¹The ratio would be 4.72 if the definition included apprentices.
- Pay multiple - the ratio between the highest and lowest paid staff.

3. Additional payments for Chief Officers

[Returning Officer election fees paid to the Chief Executive](#)

Elections held	Amount paid	Year
City and Parish	£11,888	2023/24

4. Other pay additions and allowances – see pages 2 and 4 for eligibility

[Unsocial hours working:](#)

Where an employee is required to be on call "out of hours" as part of their duties:

Standby allowance from 1 April 2023:

- higher rate – immediate response must be made – day rate £20.20
- standard rate - non-immediate response – day rate £10.10

Call-out from 1 April 2023: £50.37.

[Maternity, Paternity and Shared Parental pay:](#)

In addition to the statutory provisions, the Council pays 20 weeks at half-pay for mothers who go on maternity leave and subsequently return to work. Up to two weeks' paid paternity leave is granted to eligible employees.

OFFICER PAY POLICY

Non-salary rewards scheme:

Quarterly – 1,500 loyalty points (£15 in value) can be redeemed on activities or products within Colchester Leisure World. Maximum of 42 staff across all services each quarter.
Annually – incentive is sourced via reciprocal marketing and voucher schemes.

Exceptional performance:

Non-consolidated payment/honorarium to a maximum of £1,000 if authorised by an Executive Director.

6. Pension contribution rate

Employer rate is 21.2% for 2023/24 (increased from 19% for 2022/23). Employee rates are:

LGPS Contribution Bands April 2023		
Actual Pay (includes overtime, additional hours and so on)	Main section rate	50/50 section rate
Up to £15,000	5.5%	2.75%
£15,001 - £23,600	5.8%	2.90%
£23,601 - £38,300	6.5%	3.25%
£38,301 - £48,500	6.8%	3.40%
£48,501 - £67,900	8.5%	4.25%
£67,901 - £96,200	9.9%	4.95%
£96,201 - £113,400	10.5%	5.25%
£113,401 - £170,100	11.4%	5.70%
More than £170,101	12.5%	6.25%

7. Other financial benefits – see page 5 for eligibility

Travel Plan benefits and charges:

Car parking charge – for employees using designated Council car parks whilst at work:

- £2.50 per day.

Home to work travel, in line with Travel Plan policy:

- Bus season ticket discount 50% / train season ticket or 'bulk buy' discount 35%.

Long Service award:

- Maximum value of £250 for 25 years' service with the Council.

First Aid allowance - for employees designated as First Aiders in the workplace:

- £173.88 a year (pro rata for part-time staff).

8. Definition of terms used in the Officer Pay Policy and Pay Data documents

- Chief Officers – posts requiring appointment by councillors - designated as Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer and Strategic Directors within the Council's constitutional arrangements. It also includes the Head of Paid Service, Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer where those roles are not performed by the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer and Strategic Directors. These posts meet the Chief Officer definition in section 43 of the Localism Act 2011.
- Senior Officers – any post with a salary of £50,000 and above ([Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015](#))
- Senior Leadership Team – Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer, Strategic Directors and Heads of Service.

OFFICER PAY POLICY

- Large salary package – this is defined in statutory guidance and the current threshold is £100,000 ([section 14 Localism Act guidance](#)).



Cabinet

Item
8(iii)

24 January 2024

Report of	Head of People	Author	Jessica Douglas ☎ 222229
Title	Managed Service Solution for Temporary Workers (Ref: 0197)		
Wards affected	'Not applicable		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposal to sign up to the Essex County Council managed service solution for temporary worker services.
- 1.2 The provision of cost effective and quality agency workers is critical to enabling the Council to use resources effectively alongside its existing permanent and fixed-term staff. The use of agency and temporary staff, although kept to a minimum is often unavoidable, enabling the council to fill resource gaps due to sickness and other leave requirements in front line services and covering short term interim assignments in professional services.
- 1.3 The Council does not have a formal arrangement or contract in place for the provision of temporary workers. Currently managers liaise directly with individual agencies for the sourcing of temporary and interim workers mainly through a preferred suppliers list. This arrangement may not provide best value as fees are negotiated on an ad-hoc basis and have not been market tested for some time. In addition, the administrative burden of timesheet and invoice processing for temporary workers across several agencies is high.
- 1.4 Essex County Council (ECC) has established a Dynamic Purchasing System (“DPS”) that allows it to quickly place job roles with external agency worker providers within set role rate bands and with set percentage mark-ups paid by ECC. This arrangement has the benefit of allowing access to providers through a route that is compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR15), is flexible to allow additional providers to join the DPS on application and provides consistency and visibility of rates and mark-ups.
- 1.5 Colchester City Council can utilise the DPS set up by ECC as the system is available for use by all Local Authorities within the County of Essex and is totally compliant with CCC’s contract procedure rules and meets the current PCR 2015 regulations, ensuring the council is signing up to a competitively procured process which will bring additional benefit and cost reductions to the council, which we would be unlikely to replicate if we issued our own tender process.
- 1.6 The level of expenditure supports the proposal to review current arrangements and put in place a solution that enables the Council gets best value for money, make tangible cost reductions, keeps the process of procuring agency workers as streamlined as possible and fully complies with procurement regulations.

2. Recommended Decision

2.1 To sign up to the Essex County Council Managed Service Solution framework for temporary workers for 3 years from 1 April 2024.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

3.1 This report is provided to Cabinet in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure rules to seek approval to proceed to tender for a contract with a whole life cost valued above £500k.

3.2 Signing up to the ECC Managed Service Solution framework for temporary workers will ensure:

- Compliance with procurement regulations
- Best value is achieved, giving the Council the cost reduction opportunities
- Quality agency worker resources are easily available
- Simplify oversight and control of spend through management information
- Council resources to engage agency workers and to manage the contract are minimised.

4. Alternative Options

4.1 Consideration has been given to use the Eastern Shires Procurement Organisation (ESPO) agency framework, owned, and governed by a consortium of six-member local authorities including Leicestershire, Norfolk, Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire and Warwickshire County Councils and Peterborough City Council. This procurement process would be more complex and lengthier and would not offer any additional benefit to the ECC solution.

4.2 In addition, signing up to the managed service solution will promote closer partnership working with Essex County Council and supports business development within the Essex council family.

5. Background Information

5.1 The current arrangements for the sourcing of temporary workers have been in place for years and possibly does not offer best value. The council is committing high levels of spend on agency workers without a procurement process. In 2022-23 £1.1 million was spent on temporary staff through 11 agencies. Under the proposed arrangement, all the council's temporary and interim staff sourcing will be managed through the ECC managed service solution.

5.2 ECC have 250 agencies on the framework and have signed up many of the council's agencies on negotiated reduced rates enabling the council to realise immediate savings. If specialist agency support is required ECC will access through its own direct supply chain of agencies. Essex CC have partnered with Matrix SCM who will engage the temporary worker, manage the time sheet, payroll, and billing, and invoice the council directly.

5.3 Appendix 1 sets out the percentage charge that ECC will apply to pay rates. There is a percentage differential between different tiers depending on how ECC sources the

temporary worker. The rates offer a significant reduction on current rates paid to agencies if temporary workers are sourced directly, particularly in tier 1. The percentage fee charged by agencies is between 12-30% depending on the role.

- 5.4 In addition to the reduced agency fees, the managed solution also provides savings for the conversion of temporary workers to permanent staff. Under the current arrangements agencies charge between 15-20% of the annual salary for a temporary to permanent conversion. Under the ECC managed service, no fees will be payable if the temporary worker is recruited to a permanent post through a recruitment exercise.
- 5.5 If the council appoints a temporary worker to a permanent position without a recruitment exercise, the following fees will apply which are significantly lower than the current temporary to permanent conversion fee.

Temporary Worker's Length of Assignment	Temp to Perm Fee Payable (agency hire)	Temp to Perm Fee Payable (direct hire)
0 – 4 weeks	12.5%	0%
5 – 9 weeks	7.5%	0%
10 – 14 weeks	2.5%	0%
After 14 weeks	0%	0%

- 5.6 The managed service will also enable the council to advertise the temporary roles on the ECC Careers site www.workingforessex.com, post jobs on national job boards for a minimal fee of £200 and provide access to ECC's talent pool.
- 5.7 In addition to the general temporary worker services, ECC have established the Essex Waste Framework which brings together temporary recruitment agencies into one place, operating at pre-negotiated and set rates and provides a single point of contact for agency staff. ECC charge a small percentage fee for administration costs lower than accessing from agencies directly. There are no set up costs and is ready for the council to access. Basildon District Council have signed up to the Waste Service framework and other councils within the North Essex Partnership Braintree, Harlow and Maldon are considering signing up too.
- 5.8 The Council's Recycling and Waste Service have trialled the ECC Waste framework in advance of signing up to the full managed service solution to resource drivers for the delivery of the garden waste wheeled bins to residents. The cost saving of the ECC managed solution compared to going directly to the agency for two drivers for the 3-month assignment is £1500.
- 5.9 In addition to the cost savings of the managed solution, the arrangement will offer more transparency on total council agency spend as there will be one provider. It will also allow for management information and KPIs to be put in place to evaluate the service provided by ECC which is a currently a challenge with agency spend being distributed across service budgets.
- 5.10 The percentage agency charge applied to pay rates under the managed service should provide a 9% saving on current rates. Based on 2022/23 spend of £1.1 million this equates to a saving of £99k. This saving will be built into future budgets.
- 5.11 The proposal to sign up to the Essex CC managed service solution for temporary workers is recommended to Cabinet. In addition to the cost savings the proposal provides the following:

- Clear transparency on agreed agency fees set out in the table in appendix 1

- Ability to monitor and control agency spend across the council
- Minimising agency margins for ongoing agency worker placements
- Compliance with procurement legislation and ceasing agency spend outside a formal arrangement and contract
- Supports partnership working with Essex CC

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 6.1 ECC is subject to the same public sector duties under the 2010 Equality Act as the council. ECC promotes diversity and inclusion through attraction channels specific to diverse talent applied to all roles.

7. Standard References

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

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 The managed service will provide significant savings on temporary staff. The provision of temporary and agency staff through a managed service and contract following a competitive tender process will ensure that the Council receives best value.

- 8.2 The commissioning of temporary and staff through a managed service will provide process efficiencies in the engagement of agency staff including invoicing and payments particularly within Neighbourhood services.

9. Health and Safety Implications

- 9.1 The provision of staff through a managed service will ensure a more consistent approach to training and induction of temporary staff.

10. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 10.1 Manual and paper processing will be more efficient and digitalised under the managed service.

Appendix 1

ECC will apply a % charge for these services, differentiated by direct or agency hire.

The tables below show the full % charge that will be applied to pay rates and invoiced to Colchester City Council, via Matrix SCM.

Job Categories	Examples	Direct Hire Sourced by ECC	Tier 1 ECC Supply Chain	Tier 2 ECC Supply Chain	Tier 3 ECC Supply Chain
Administration	Business Support Assistant	4.50%	8.25%	8.75%	9.75%
Business Continuity	Business Continuity Manager	6%	10.25%	11.25%	11.75%
Customer Services	Customer Specialist	4.50%	8.25%	8.75%	9.75%
Economic Development	Commissioning Officer Skills Development Economic Growth	8%	11.25%	11.75%	12.75%
Environments and Public Services	Independent Living Housing Advisor Development and Flood Risk Officer	8%	11.25%	11.75%	12.75%
Finance (unqualified)	Providing finance support Finance Assistant Credit Controller	5.50%	9.25%	10.25%	11.25%
Finance (qualified)	Finance Business Partner Accountant	8%	10.75%	11.75%	12.75%
Highways and Waste (technical)	Highways Engineer & Technical Business Analyst	8%	11.25%	11.75%	12.75%
Human Resources (qualified)	HR Business Partner People Technology Analyst	6.50%	10.25%	11.25%	13.25%
Information Services	TS Business Analyst	5.50%	9.25%	10.25%	11.25%
Legal and Governance (qualified)	Solicitor	8.50%	12.25%	13.25%	16.25%
Legal and Governance (un-qualified)	Paralegal	5.50%	9.25%	9.75%	10.25%
Marketing and Communications	Content advisor	4.50%	8.25%	8.75%	9.25%
Operations/Industrial	Canteen Assistant Chef / Catering Lead Assistant Manager – Essex Outdoors Refuse Recycling Centres	5.50%	9.25%	9.75%	10.25%
Procurement (qualified)	Category and Contract Manager Category and Contract Assistant Manager	7%	10.25%	11.25%	12.25%
Property	Engineer Planner	8%	10.75%	11.25%	14.25%
Public Health	Development and Flood Risk Officer	8%	11.75%	12.25%	13.25%
Strategy and Policy	Analyst – Data & Analytics Performance and Business Intelligence Analyst	8%	11.25%	11.75%	13.25%
Executive Interim	Pay rate of £451 per day + (or hourly equivalent)	8%	12.25%	14.25%	19.25%

A three- tiered pricing system is in use for agency supplied workers.

Tier 1 – First point of call for suppliers services for all job categories.

Tier 2 - second point of call for supplier services for all job categories (to be called upon after 48 hours of live role requirement)

Tier 3 – third point of call for supplier services for all job categories (to be called upon after 96 hours of live role requirement)

24 January 2024

Report of	Chief Operating Officer	Author	Charlotte Holl/Simon Thorp ☎ 506949/ 03300 538049
Title	Half Year April – September 2023 Performance Report Key Performance Indicators (KPI), Other Performance News, and Strategic Plan Delivery Plan Monitoring Report		
Wards affected	All wards		

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides details of performance against Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) at half year point 2023 - 2024. The report also includes other performance news, benchmarking data, and Strategic Plan Delivery Plan Monitoring Report for October 2023.

2. Recommended Decisions

2.1 To review performance against Key Performance Indicators and, where Key Performance Indicators have not been met, ensure that appropriate corrective action has been taken.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

3.1 To review half year performance for 2023 – 2024 and ensure robust performance management of key Council services.

4. Alternative Options

4.1 No alternative options have been presented to Cabinet.

5. Background Information

5.1 The Council has agreed twenty-six key performance indicators grouped under five themes, which it uses as part of its Performance Management Framework to help monitor progress and improvement. This report provides an update on the Council's Key Performance Indicators and a review of other performance achieved throughout the reporting period. We have reviewed the set of corporate KPIs for 2023 – 2024 to align them with the new Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026.

- Financial
- Respond to the Climate Emergency
- Deliver Homes for those Most in Need
- Improve Health, Well Being and Happiness
- Grow our Economy So Everyone Benefits

5.2 The table at Appendix A features half year performance April – September 2023 and targets.

5.3 At the half year point for April - September 2023, the overall position is that twelve targets were achieved (or 'green'), and seven did not meet the target in full ('red').

5.4 Of the twelve KPIs that have been achieved ('green' KPI's), it is worth noting that some have been exceeded. This is particularly the case in relation to Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Scheme where residents are receiving benefits after an average of 2.91 days for Housing Benefit and 2.45 days for Local Council Tax Scheme. It should also be noted that a KPI of 2,000 Trees Planted is currently 'amber', however this is because trees are planted during the planting season (November 2023 to March 2024).

5.5 Targets have not been met for seven indicators ('red' KPIs) due to a range of impacts. These are:

- Rent collected
- Bereavement Services Income
- Household waste reused, recycled, and composted
- Number of households in temporary accommodation per 1,000 households
- Average time to re-let council homes
- Repairs completed within target timescale
- Customer satisfaction with latest repair

5.6 **Rent collected.** Collection is restricted as the number of tenants in receipt of Universal Credit increases. At the end of Q2 923 direct payments from Universal Credit were in place, paid in arrears, 74% of all arrears are now owed by Universal Credit claimants. The number of tenants in arrears has increased to 2299 with 247 owing more than £900. Additional resource recruited to the Financial Support team is focussed on supporting those with high debts to prevent eviction, other work by the team has included 80 new Discretionary Housing Payment awards totalling £45,368 and 54 new Welfare Rights cases opened in year have been awarded £85,176 of benefits. This indicator may achieve year end expected performance as two rent free weeks in the second half of the year reduce the impact of arrears. The impact of changes to Universal Credit on the rent collection KPI will be reported at year end.

- 5.7 **Bereavement Services Income.** Cremation volume this year is considerably lower than previous years, our volume this year is a return to our pre-Pandemic volume. In the 5-year period 2015-2019 our average annual cremation number was 1553. In the 3-year period 2020-2022 the average annual cremation number jumped to 1771. 2020 and 2021 were greatly affected by Covid and last year, Weeley Crematorium (Tendring) was closed for several months. Given the above income of £2m will not be achieved. There is a rolling 12 month figure for cremations of 1571 which is in line with 2015-2019. There will be an anticipated £200k deficit after implemented fee increases set to raise an additional £43k.
- 5.8 **Household waste reused, recycled, and composted.** The percentage recycled is tracking under target but slightly ahead of the 22/23 outturn at P4. This in part reflects the Cost of Living Crisis which is reducing discretionary spend. The data available is as of P4 July 2023 due to delays in receipt of base data from Essex County Council.
- 5.9 **Number of households in temporary accommodation per 1,000 households.** This demonstrates the high levels of households living in temporary accommodation (319) increased, for example, by the closure of the Asylum Bridging hotel in Colchester. The Council and Colchester Borough Homes continue to deliver against the Temporary Accommodation action plan and explore opportunities to reduce the numbers wherever possible.
- 5.10 **Average time to re-let council homes.** The new contract is not delivering as anticipated due to resources, from staff TUPE'd across and access to additional sub-contractor labour. They are working to resource the contract and staffing levels are on the increase. Housemark benchmark indicates this is a national issue and our performance remains within the best performing when benchmarked with a median re-let time of 67 days.
- 5.11 **Repairs completed within target timescale.** The demand for more complex repairs continues to increase which puts a strain on in house and contractor resources to deliver on target. Pressures remain with Tenant no access and contractor and in house resource.
- 5.12 **Customer satisfaction with latest repair.** In house delivery is above target at 92.88%, however, contractor performance is at 75.14% meaning the combined in house and contractor performance year to date is below target. The impact on resources to deliver repairs within timescales is likely to impact satisfaction performance.
- 5.13 In addition to the performance described above, the Council has again received numerous awards and accreditations, and these are highlighted in Appendix B.
- 5.14 KPI benchmarking data is provided in Appendix C. It has been noted that where possible, more granular insight into comparative year-on-year benchmarking data may be provided in future. Benchmarking uses the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Nearest Neighbours model, a collection of 15 local authorities with the most similar statistical characteristics in terms of social and economic features to Colchester based on 41 different metrics.
- 5.15 Monitoring of activities for the new Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026 has commenced, and the Strategic Plan Delivery Plan Monitoring Report for October 2023 is provided in Appendix D.

5.16 A review is also being undertaken by Officers to help ensure corporate KPIs for 2024-25 are as relevant as possible on a quantitative and qualitative basis. Any recommended changes will be brought forward in due course, including Leisure Services and Museums KPI – visitor/user numbers.

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

6.1 Robust performance management of key Council Services supports the aims of improving both services and the lives of everyone in the borough. Where required, specific Equality Impact Assessments will exist for policies and activities rather than for individual performance indicators or actions.

7. Strategic Plan References

7.1 The new set of corporate KPIs for 2023 – 2024 is aligned with the new Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026.

8. Consultation

8.1 The report's contents do not have any direct implications regarding consultation.

9. Publicity Considerations

9.1 The performance report contains measures for our key performance indicators. Many of these are used to monitor the performance of our services, and as such these may be of public interest. The report and related information are published on the Performance and Improvement section of the Council's website.

10. Financial implications

10.1 The financial implications of the action plans to deliver the indicators form part of the budget setting process.

11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

11.1 Many of the KPI targets reported above ensure that Council Services that have a positive impact on Health and Wellbeing are delivered effectively.

12. Health and Safety Implications

12.1 There are no direct health and safety implications associated with this report.

13. Risk Management Implications

13.1 There are no direct risk management implications associated with this report.

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

14.1 The KPI's relating to recycling and the levels of residual waste collected are the key indicators that contribute to Environment and Sustainability.

Appendices

Appendix A. [KPI Half Year Report covering April – September 2023](#)

- Appendix B. [Awards and Other Performance News covering April – September 2023](#)
- Appendix C. [KPI benchmarking data](#)
- Appendix D. [Strategic Plan Delivery Plan Monitoring Report October 2023](#)

Strategic Plan - Financial theme					
KPI Description	Frequency	Target	Half Year Actual (P6 September 2023)	Status	Supporting narrative
Council Tax collected	Monthly	97.65% Indicative path at P6: 48.83%	55.86%	Green	Council Tax collection is on track to achieve target by Year End. The team have also been working on a full Single Person Discount review which should increase the overall tax base.
Business Rates (NNDR) collected	Monthly	98% Indicative path at P6: 49.00%	57.64%	Green	Business Rates collection is on track to achieve target by Year End. Benchmarking across Essex has shown CCC to have the highest collection rate for the first 6 months of the year.
HRA Rent collected	Monthly	98%	95.74%	Red	Collection is restricted as the number of tenants in receipt of Universal Credit increases. At the end of Q2 923 direct payments from Universal Credit were in place, paid in arrears, 74% of all arrears are now owed by Universal Credit claimants. The number of tenants in arrears has increased to 2299 with 247 owing more than £900. Additional resource recruited to the Financial Support team is focussed on supporting those with high debts to prevent eviction, other work by the team has included 80 new Discretionary Housing Payment awards totalling £45,368 and 54 new Welfare Rights cases opened in year have been awarded £85,176 of benefits. This indicator may achieve year end expected performance as two rent free weeks in the second half of the year reduce the impact of arrears.
Leisure Centre income	Monthly	£6,645,000	£3,434,060	Green	Improved performance on car park. Positive work from the Events team partnership at Leisure World has seen increase in visitors.

		Indicative path at P6: £3,316,500			
Colchester Museums income	Monthly	£448,000 admissions income and £88,900 schools income Indicative path at P6: £224,000 admissions income Indicative path at P6: £44,450 schools income	£260,900 admissions income £45,400 schools income	Green	The exhibition, 'Gladiators; a Day at the Roman Games' has achieved its admission target, with a further income gain from price rises. However, there is some evidence of price resistance as inflation pressures persist. School figures are also being sustained despite issues in terms of the cost of transport.
Bereavement services income	Monthly	£2,017,000 Indicative path at P6: £1,008,500	£880,720	Red	Cremation volume this year is considerably lower than previous years, our volume this year is a return to our pre-Pandemic volume. In the 5-year period 2015-2019 our average annual cremation number was 1553. In the 3-year period 2020-2022 the average annual cremation number jumped to 1771. 2020 & 2021 were greatly affected by Covid and last year, Weeley Crematorium (Tendring) was closed for several months. Given the above it is unlikely that income of £2m is going to be achieved.
Garden Waste	Quarterly	Number of active subscribers 7053 (Q4 23-24 only)			This is a new indicator which measures the number of Garden Waste subscribers for 2023-2024. It is only measured in Q4 (Jan – Mar 2024) in line with the scheme going live in January 2024.
Capital Programme	Annually	70% of forecast against spend in the current financial year			This indicator is measured annually and will be included in the Year End report.

Strategic Plan – Respond to climate emergency theme					
KPI Description	Frequency	Target	Half Year Actual (P6 September 2023)	Status	Supporting narrative
Residual household waste per household	Monthly	354 kg Indicative path at P4: 118 kg	P4: 115.67 kg	Green	Our Residual Household waste per household KPI is ahead of target at P4. This reflects ongoing effort in Neighbourhoods to enforce the three bag / 1 wheeled bin limit and to some extent the Cost of Living Crisis.
Household waste reused, recycled, and composted	Monthly	53%	P4: 52.38%	Red	The percentage recycled is tracking under target but slightly ahead of the 22/23 outturn at P4. This in part reflects the Cost of Living Crisis which is reducing discretionary spend.
Fly tipping incidents	Quarterly	2262 Indicative path at P6: 1131	529	Green	Fly tipping incidents have continued to fall on a quarterly basis. It has fallen by eleven and a half percent since the same period of last year.
Trees planted	Quarterly	2000	0	Amber	Trees will only be planted during the planting season (November 2023 to March 2024)
Improving biodiversity	Annually	Increase Grassland Wilding from 7.4 hectares to 8 hectares			This indicator is measured annually and will be included in the Year End report.
Achieving “Pathway to Carbon Neutral” targets to 2030	Twice per year	Reduce our emissions to 5200 tonnes by October 2023 and to 5100	The actual figures are not yet available however an estimate of 5300 can be used.	Amber	The Council has continued along the pathway to carbon neutral by 2023. The actual emissions for 2022/23 were 5531 tonnes. A Carbon Reduction Management Plan is currently being drafted and will provide a detailed and

		tonnes by March 2024			costed overview of the measures the Council will need to implement to meet the 2030 target.
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Strategic Plan – Deliver homes for the most in need theme					
KPI Description	Frequency	Target	Half Year Actual (P6 September 2023)	Status	Supporting narrative
Affordable homes delivered (gross)	Quarterly	380 homes over three years (2023-2026)	89 affordable homes have been delivered over the first two quarters of the 23/24 period.	Green	Affordable housing delivery is ahead of schedule for the 380 homes target. On average 31 homes need to be delivered per quarter to achieve the predicted target.
Monitoring the number of households in temporary accommodation per 1,000 households.	Monthly	3.0	3.84	Red	This demonstrates the high levels of households living in temporary accommodation (319) increased, for example, by the closure of the Asylum Bridging hotel in Colchester. The Council and Colchester Borough Homes continue to deliver against the Temporary Accommodation action plan and explore opportunities to reduce the numbers wherever possible.
Average time to re-let council homes	Monthly	28 days	42.17	Red	The new contract is not delivering as anticipated due to resources, from staff TUPE'd across and access to additional sub-contractor labour. They are working to resource the contract and staffing levels are on the increase. Housemark benchmark indicates this is a national issue and our performance remains within the best performing when benchmarked with a median re-let time of 67 days.
Repairs completed within target timescale	Monthly	95%	83.50%	Red	The demand for more complex repairs continues to increase which puts a strain on in house and contractor

					resources to deliver on target. Pressures remain with Tenant no access and contractor and in house resource.
Percentage of homes that do not meet the decent homes standard	Annually	0%			This indicator is measured annually and will be included in the Year End report.
Customer satisfaction with latest repair	Monthly	90.5%	83.77% average at P6	Red	In house delivery is above target at 92.88%, however, contractor performance is at 75.14% meaning the combined in house and contractor performance year to date is below target. The impact on resources to deliver repairs within timescales is likely to impact satisfaction performance.

Strategic Plan – Improve health, well-being, and happiness theme					
KPI Description	Frequency	Target	Half Year Actual (P6 September 2023)	Status	Supporting narrative
Time to process housing benefit and local council tax support new claims and changes	Monthly	HB – 4 days LCTS – 5 days	HB – 2.91 days LCTS - 2.45 days	Green	The Benefits team continue to deliver eligible benefit in an efficient and timely manner, exceeding their targets in the process. The team are currently progressing a change to the LCTS scheme which will make application processing quicker and easier for customers.
Cost of living	Quarterly	DHP – £309,000 EHP – £37,000 Indicative path DHP at P6: £154,500	DHP - £182,800 EHP - £20,400	Green	The Employment & Finance Support Team continue to award DHP & EHP's in a timely manner as part of their more holistic support to residents.

		Indicative path EHP at P6: £18,500			
Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	Quarterly	<p>Total spend year to date DFG spend £1,100,000 indicative path at P6: £550,000</p> <p>100 completed applications. Indicative path at P6: 50</p> <p>Approved amount Approved applications spend £350,000. Indicative path at P6: £175,000</p> <p>35 applications. Indicative path at P6: 18</p>	<p>DFG spend £617,000</p> <p>Completed applications 49</p> <p>Approved applications spend £369,000</p> <p>Approved applications 43</p>	Green	A positive Q1 and Q2 for completed applications and DFG spend. Approvals are slightly lower than desired at present but still on track for target. A targeted Comms plan is being formulated to ensure DFG awareness is maximised with appropriate professionals/recipients. Additional resource is being sought to provide resilience within the team and manage future increases in demand following Comms plan.
Sickness rate in working days	Monthly	Rolling 8 days	7.93 days	Green	The sickness rates have continued to decline in Q1 and Q2, continuing the trend seen in 2022/23. The overall sickness rate is now 7.93 days which is now below the target figure and is almost 25% lower than at the same time last year. The reduction continues to be driven by improved absence management and reduction in sickness levels in our operational areas such as the recycling and waste service and our sport and leisure services.

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Strategic Plan – Grow our economy so everyone benefits theme					
KPI Description	Frequency	Target	Half Year Actual (P6 September 2023)	Status	Supporting narrative
Additional Homes	Quarterly	920 homes Indicative path at P6: 460	804	Green	A strong first half of 23/24 was predicted due to the completion of a large student development at the University of Essex. The forecast for the year is 1050 homes which we anticipate will be met or exceed slightly. A delivery exceeding the 920 homes target will address the shortfall from 22/23 (711 homes).
Social value in procurement	Twice per year	70% of all (non-framework) contracts over £100k awarded to include social value benefits	58%	Amber	During this period 12 non-framework contracts over £100k have been awarded, with 7 including social value.

Other Performance News

- **Awards and accreditations**

The highlights are summarised here.

Achieved April 2023 to September 2023 – Half Year	
<u>Colchester Awarded Multiple Green Flags</u>	Castle Park, High Woods Country Park and Colchester Cemetery and Crematorium have once again received Green Flag Award from Keep Britain Tidy - the mark of a quality park or green space. As well as receiving its 21st Green Flag award, Castle Park again received the Green Heritage award, supported by Historic England, which recognises its work to promote its historic surroundings. July 2023
<u>Finalist in Street Cleaning Awards</u>	The Council has been shortlisted as a finalist by the <u>Association for Public Sector Excellence (APSE)</u> for the Best Service: Team Street Cleaning and Streetscene Service (Public Realm) 2023. July 2023
<u>Colchester Sports Park Quest Accreditation</u>	Colchester Sports Park has retained its <u>Quest Accreditation</u> for the second year, the detailed report highlighted the facilities as “Very Good”. The report particularly highlighted the excellent and knowledgeable customer service provided and the high quality and accessible facilities on site. Quest is the Sport England recommended continuous improvement tool for leisure facilities and sports development teams, designed to measure how effective organisations are at providing customer service, and is the industry’s recognised barometer of success. August 2023
<u>Customer Service Excellence standard</u>	The Council’s Customer Contact and Support Centre has once again achieved the prestigious national Customer Service Excellence Standard (CSES). The CSES quality mark, awarded by Customer Service Excellence (<u>CSE</u>), aims to promote excellence in customer service. To be awarded the CSES, organisations must meet a rigorous set of criteria, including demonstrating a commitment to customer-focused values, providing excellent customer service, and measuring and improving customer satisfaction. The Customer Contact and Support Centre excelled in several key performance areas, including Customer Insight, Culture of the Organisation, Information and Access, Delivery, and Timeliness and Quality of Service. September 2023

Other sources of performance data

Statistics and data – the way we collate and publish a range of council statistics, performance indicators, datasets and information has been updated. Pulling all this together will help us to maintain open and accessible information for customers, businesses, and other interested parties.

The [Council Data](http://colchester.gov.uk/council-data) section at colchester.gov.uk/council-data is designed so that people can easily find out information we hold, our obligations on open data and transparency, as well as how to make a freedom of information request.

Categories include spending, business rates, democracy, housing, land, parking, planning and licensing, recycling and waste.

Annual reports – the Council produces annual reports on its performance in various areas. These are brought into one place on the Council's website [here](#) for ease of reference, and to make it easier for the public to find which annual reports are available.

Single Data List -this is a list of all the datasets that local government must submit to central government. The list is reviewed and updated annually. Local authorities are not obliged to provide any data which is not on the list without extra funding.



KPI Benchmarking

Charlotte Holl - PMO

November 2023

This report presents KPI benchmarking data for Colchester, compared to Colchester CIPFA nearest neighbours, for the following KPIs. Data currently available is indicated next to each KPI. The grey line indicates the median.

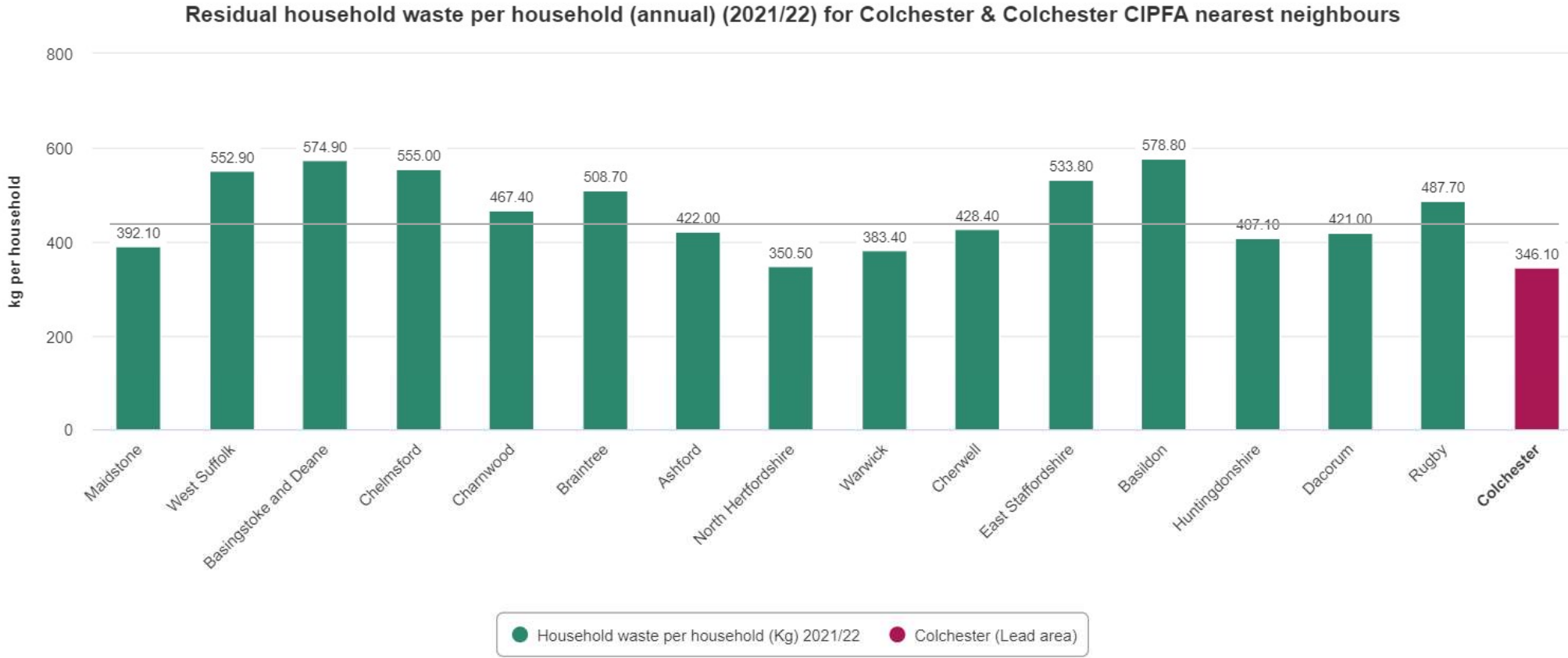
Data for 2021/22 has been provided where there are gaps in data for 2022/23 or data for 2022/23 is not yet available.

- Waste – residual (2021/22 annual data)
- Waste - recycled (2021/22 annual data)
- Housing Benefit (2021/22 and 2022/23 annual data)
- Council Tax collections (2021/22 annual data)
- NNDR collections (2021/22 annual data)

Collated annual data is not yet available for the Homelessness and Sickness KPIs. Comparative data is not yet available on LG Inform for Repairs and Local Council Tax Scheme.

Source: LG Inform, November 2023

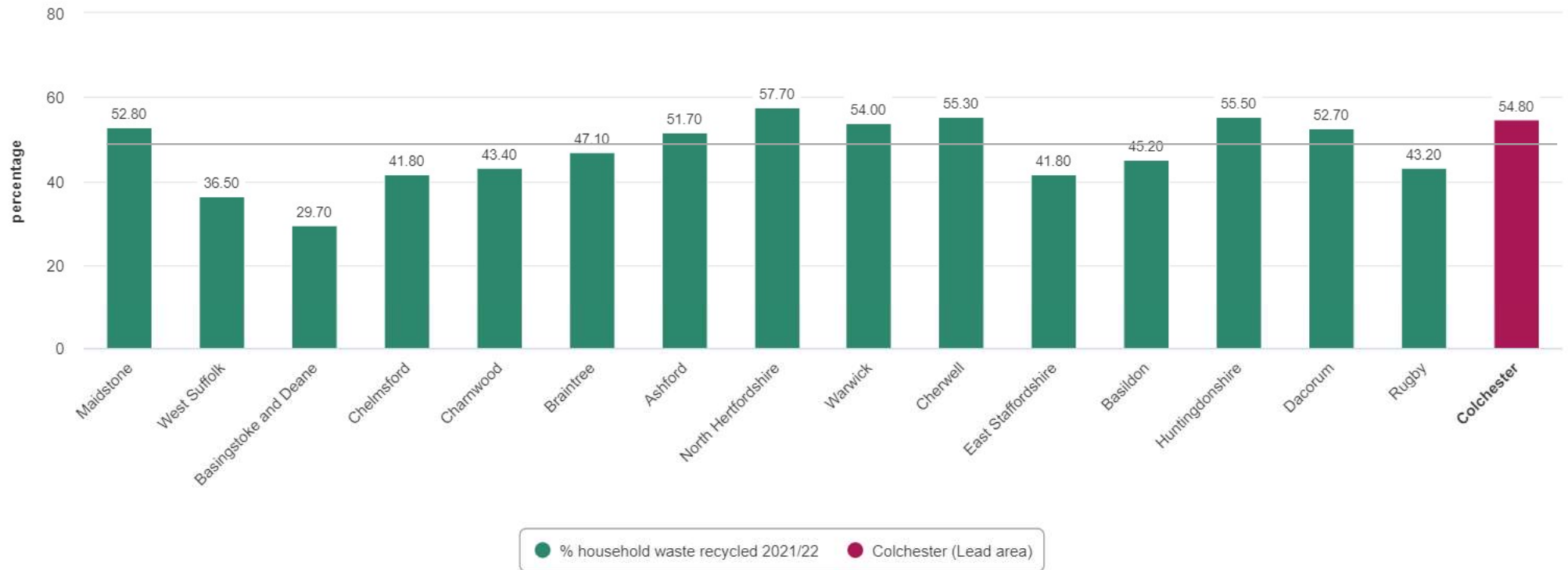
Waste – residual per household (2021/22)



Source: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Local authority collected waste management, [Residual household waste per household \(annual\)](#), **Data updated:** 24 Mar 2023

Waste - percentage of waste recycled, composted, reused (2021/22)

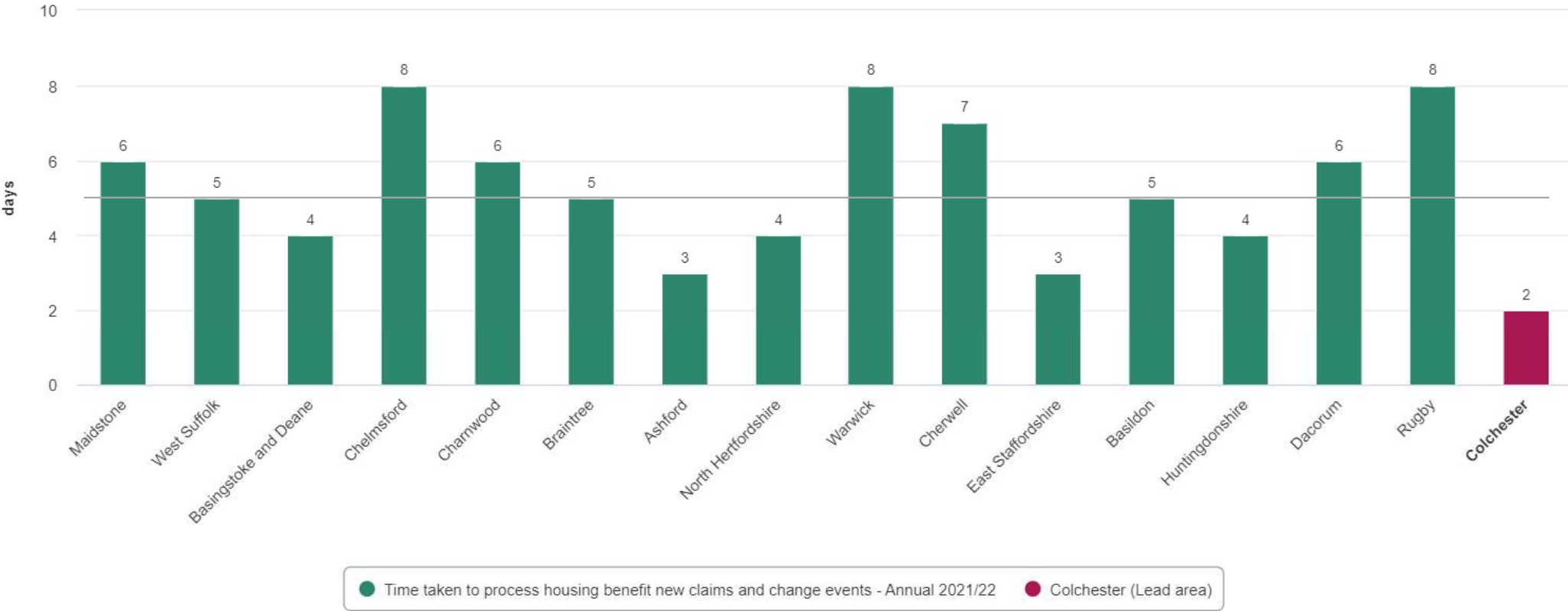
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (annual) (2021/22) for Colchester & Colchester CIPFA nearest neighbours



Source: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Local authority collected waste management, [Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting \(annual\)](#) , Data updated: 24 Mar 2023

Housing Benefit (2021/22)

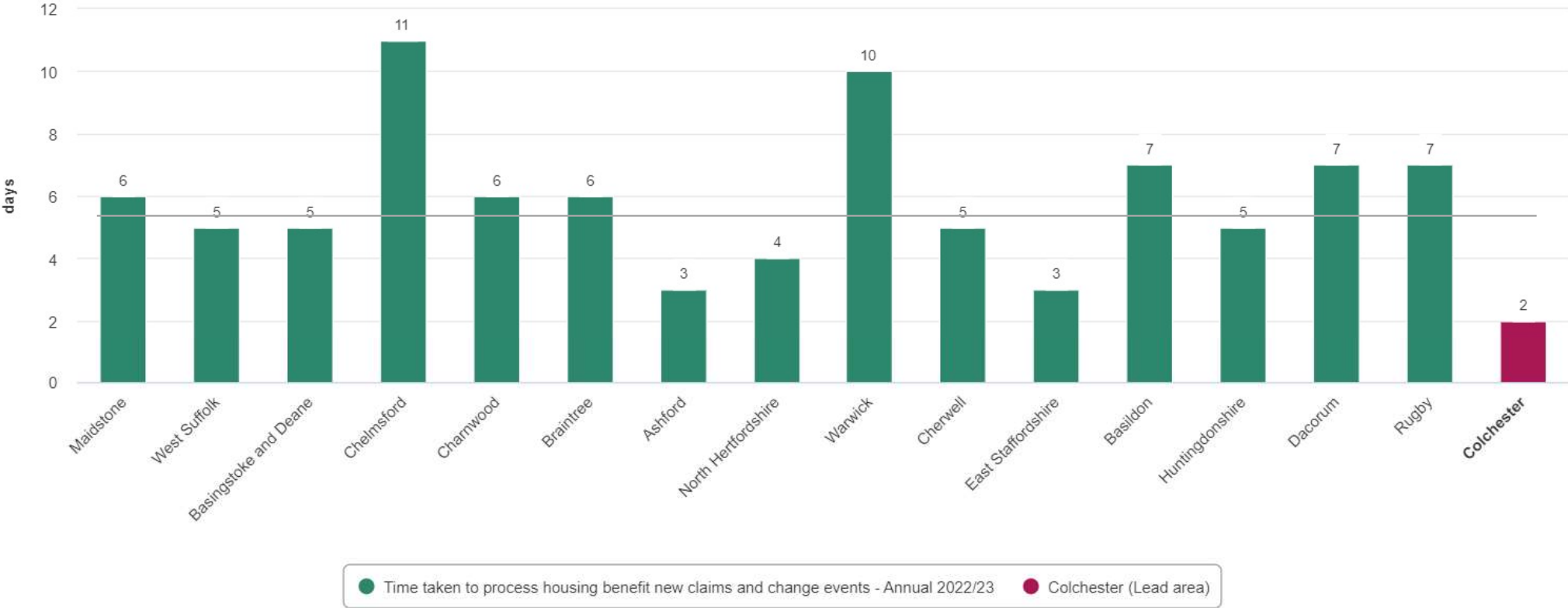
Time taken to process housing benefit new claims and change events - Annual (2021/22) for Colchester & Colchester CIPFA nearest neighbours



Source: Department for Work and Pensions, Housing Benefit: statistics on speed of processing (SoP), [Time taken to process housing benefit new claims and change events - Annual](#) , Data updated: 01 Aug 2023

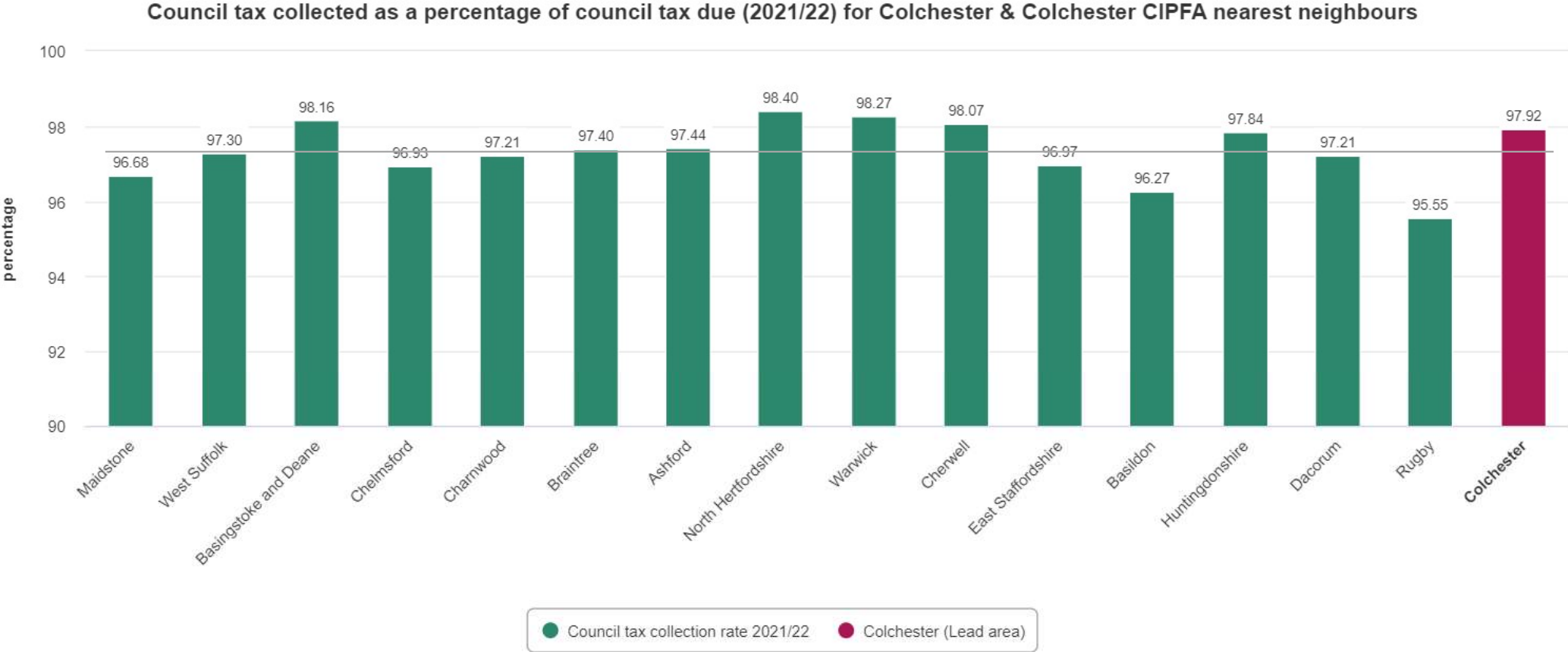
Housing Benefit (2022/23)

Time taken to process housing benefit new claims and change events - Annual (2022/23) for Colchester & Colchester CIPFA nearest neighbours



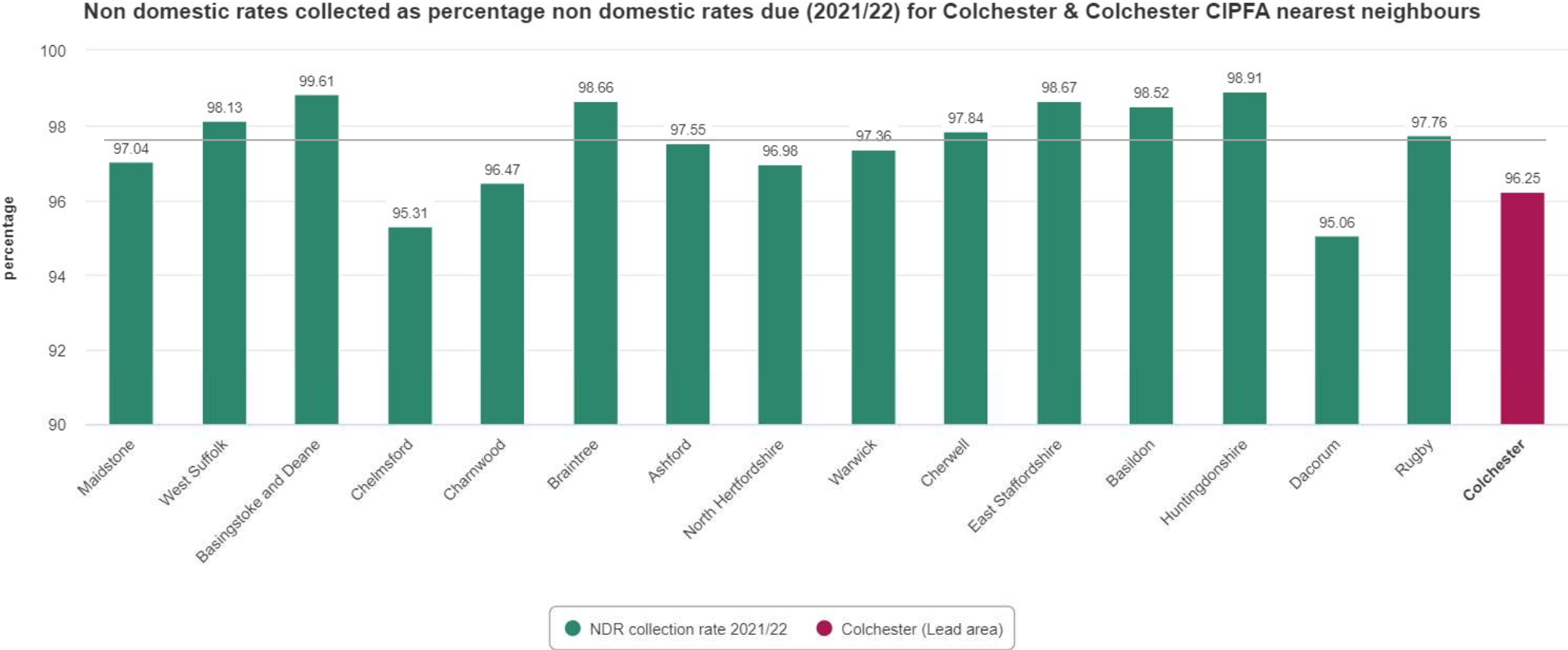
Source: Department for Work and Pensions, Housing Benefit: statistics on speed of processing (SoP), [Time taken to process housing benefit new claims and change events - Annual](#), Data updated: 01 Aug 2023

Council Tax collections (2021/22)



Source: Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, Council tax collection rates, [Council tax collected as a percentage of council tax due](#), **Data updated:** 22 Jun 2023

NNDR collections (2021/22)



Source: Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, Council tax collection rates, [Non domestic rates collected as percentage non domestic rates due](#) , **Data updated:** 22 Jun 2023

Report No 6 – Completed activity covering October 2023

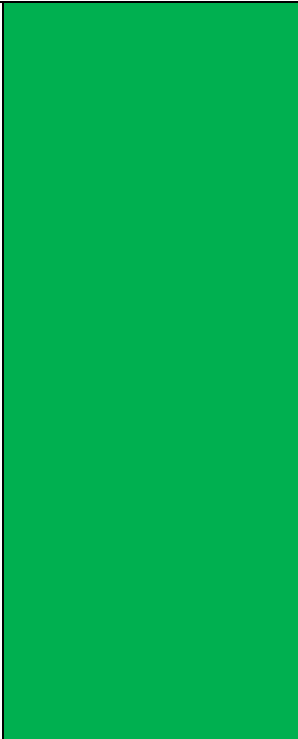
Respond to the Climate Emergency							
Goal	Action	Lead	Project Manager	Completed activity for October	Planned Activity for November	Previous month RAG Status	Current RAG Status

Reduce our carbon footprint	Deliver the “Our Climate Emergency Action Plan - Colchester City Council (CEAP)” initiatives to reduce emissions across the city and produce positive environmental impacts.	Mel Rundle, Head of Sustainability	Essex County Council/John Kellett	<p>Water filtration system. Business case has been reviewed by the PDG and will be looked at for inclusion in the capital programme if the Sport England Fund is no successful.</p> <p>Sport England bid being finalised ready for submission on the 17th of October.</p> <p>Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund bid for heating system for the</p>	<p>Sport England bid being finalised ready for submission on the 17th of October’ which needs to read Sport England bid for £750,000 was submitted on the 17th of October. We will hear If we are successful by mid-December’.</p> <p>Awaiting outcome of PSDF Bid.</p> <p>Food waste recycling campaign data evaluation to be received, to assess impact, both at a local level and with other partner authorities</p>		AMBER
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				<p>Natural History Museum submitted on the 10th of October.</p> <p>Food waste recycling campaign data evaluation to be undertaken to assess impact, both at a local level and with other partner authorities</p>			
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	Initiate an “Offsetting or Insetting Strategy” to start tackling the remaining carbon emissions in 2030	Mel Rundle, Head of Sustainability		Works has begun with Anthesis (Consultants). Meetings are being scheduled between key staff and Anthesis to give an overview of offsetting and potential involvement from the Council. Anthesis will also provide a briefing session to the Climate Anchors Action Working Group in November / December	Works has begun with Anthesis (Consultants). Meetings are being scheduled between key staff and Anthesis to give an overview of offsetting and potential involvement from the Council. Anthesis will also provide a briefing session to the Climate Anchors Action Working Group in November / December	GREEN	GREEN
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	Production of a Climate Change and Active Travel Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)	Karen Syrett, Head of Planning		Consultation ends on 4 th October. Analysis of responses and revisions to the SPD as required.	Reports being prepared for Local Plan Committee in December	GREEN	GREEN
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<p>Conserve and enhance our biodiversity</p>	<p>Continue the Woodland and Biodiversity Project</p> <p>Work with communities and grant funders to pursue the ongoing development of Cymbeline Meadow into a nature reserve.</p>	<p>Mel Rundle Head of Sustainability</p>		<p>Archaeological dig now complete and press release issued regarding findings.</p>	<p>Awaiting Archaeological dig report to determine if any plans need to be amended.</p>	<p>GREEN</p>	<p>GREEN</p>
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	Production of a Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to ensure new developments create space for nature	Karen Syrett, Head of Planning	Completed	None - completed	Completed	GREEN	GREEN
Continue to be a leading council in our waste and recycling collections	Introduce a new waste and recycling strategy in collaboration with the Environment and Sustainability Panel.	Rosa Tanfield Head of Neighbourhood Services	Rosa Tanfield	Third workshop of the Environment & Sustainability Panel to consider evaluation criteria and long list of options.	Feedback from workshop received on strategy vision and options to be evaluated. Options now to be modelled and evaluated.	GREEN	GREEN
Deliver Modern Services for a Modern City							

Goal	Action	Lead	Project Manager	Completed activity for October	Planned Activity for November	Previous month RAG Status	Current RAG Status
Colchester Council and supporting organisations work together to a shared and ambitious vision for the future of our city	Act on the recommendations of the reviews of Colchester Commercial Holdings and Colchester Borough Homes to ensure funding is in place to continue investment in the homes the council owns and commercial opportunities to increase income to support services for residents.	Lindsay Barker, Executive Director Place/Deputy CEO		Recommendations for CCHL and its subsidiary companies are due to go to G&A on 17 Oct and Cabinet on 22 Nov	Recommendations for CCHL and its subsidiary companies are due to go to Cabinet on 22 Nov	AMBER	GREEN

	Work across CBH and CCHL to produce a Strategic Asset Management Plan for the Council and supporting delivery plan to ensure best use of our assets.	Mandy Jones, Strategic Director	PMO	Awaiting update. Draft report (no.6 as a collaborative process) has been sent to Cllrs King and Cory and report is nearing completion. Final commission sign off this month (following feedback from S151 officer and SLB).	Report on Corporate Landlord Team model going to Cabinet on 22 Nov	GREEN	GREEN

				<p>Report will be checked and signed off September.</p> <p>Working with PMO to plan adoption of strategy and policy at Leadership, pre-Scrutiny session and Cabinet, alongside a timeline for establishment of the Corporate Landlord Model to ensure successful delivery of the strategy which needs planning as part of Council Transformation programme.</p>			
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	Review the Buildings Maintenance programme to ensure our corporate and heritage buildings remain safe and well maintained and help to deliver services in the most efficient and effective way.	Matthew Armstrong		Awaiting update. Awaiting sign off and budget for the 2023/24 BMP (which includes the additional works to Town Hall and backlog maintenance (Roman Walls, Castle and Closed Church yards). Good progress being made on	Awaiting update	RED	RED

				<p>initial BMP work (£410k), agreed verbally.</p> <p>Structural issues identified with the Moot Hall ceiling. Moot Hall closed and pre-works begun to make safe and protect paintings etc.</p> <p>New project management tool established to log, monitor and plan capital works to corporate buildings.</p> <p>Further work being planned to establish</p>			
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				<p>a fully effective cyclical maintenance programme for corporate buildings.</p> <p>Authorisation process for high costs works to be established and agreed.</p>			
	<p>Complete the capital programme review and reset the capital programme including a revised medium term investment programme.</p>	<p>Lucie Breadman, Strategic Director</p>		<p>Cabinet paper in October needs to then be signed off by Full Council. More work on CNG review to feed into 2024/25 reset. Work on Capital</p>	<p>Mid-year reset complete following papers to Cabinet and Full Council. New schemes added and some projects removed following review of capital programme. Work ongoing to review capital requirements for CNG, ICT Strategy going forward and Capitalised BMP to feed into</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Green</p>

				requirements from BMP to feed into 2024/25 reset and business cases for any o/s bids for PDG. Draft considerations for Feb Budget Paper on Capital.	2024/25 reset. Late September Workshop with Cross Party representation took place. Work ongoing to prepare for Cabinet and Full Council budget papers in the new year.		
Put communities, and their needs, at the heart of our vision and supporting local areas as they help shape and deliver the	Actively use the Communities Can approach (Asset Based Community Development) to ensure Communities are involved and included in all future plans. This includes the	Michelle Tarbun Head of Health Partnerships and Wellbeing	Tom Taylor Community & Partnerships Manager	The Community Partnerships team continue to talk to all Communities and key Community Leaders to include Residents in decision making and engagement.	The Community Partnerships team continue to talk to all Communities and key Community Leaders to include Residents in decision making and engagement. C360 have recruited to a System funded post that is solely focussed on	GREEN	GREEN

<p>services which are most important to them</p>	<p>continued roll out of training to teams & members</p>			<p>C360 have recruited to a System funded post that is solely focussed on Communities Can.... ABCD. Emily has started her induction and is already involved in projects. Her role will embed ABCD in System partners and key Community Organisations to ensure the resident voice is heard.</p> <p>ABCD training plan was being presented to SLT in</p>	<p>Communities Can.... ABCD. Emily has started her induction and is already involved in projects. Her role will embed ABCD in System partners and key Community Organisations to ensure the resident voice is heard.</p> <p>ABCD training plan was being presented to SLT in to discuss new activity for Teams, Managers and members and we are awaiting feedback.</p> <p>We have also run a nipple mapping exercise on 1 November with partners looking at the benefits and</p>		
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				to discuss new activity for Teams, Managers and members and we are awaiting feedback	successes of our ABCD approach as far		
	Undertake an Infrastructure Audit and involve Parish and Town Councils in identifying local infrastructure requirements	Karen Syrett, Head of Planning,		Awaiting update. Meeting held and work continues with Officers and Myland CC	Awaiting confirmation of funding from carry forward	GREEN	AMBER
	Launch a new citizens panel to ensure communities can help shape future service provision.	Research Team	Jess Douglas/Mariana Brown	Next meetings 10 th /19 th October to update panel. Following this, meetings' themes will cover;	Awaiting update	GREEN	

				<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Town Deal/LUF and Masterplan 2. Open spaces 3. What constitutes good engagement. 			
	Support Parish and Town Councils to produce their own neighbourhood plans.	Sandra Scott, Planning Policy Manager		Following a successful referendum Report going to Council on 18 th October to ratify Adoption of Copford and Easthorpe NHP as well as for the	Work continues with a number of Parish councils	GREEN	GREEN

				Review of the Myland and Braiswick NHP			
Work closely with local partners, charities and organisations to add value (including but not only; Essex County Council, the NHS, the Garrison, and the University of Essex)	Work with partners to develop and implement proposals for transformation of key services including Sport and Leisure, Grounds Maintenance, Countryside Sites and Museums.	Frank H, Adam & Fiona Shipp		<p>Awaiting update: Agreement with Colchester Cricket Club has been met for the current financial year. Discussions ongoing about future arrangements.</p> <p>Amendments to grounds maintenance to be updated on website</p>	<p>Discussion with Cricket club on going in relation to increased contribution towards grounds maintenance costs.</p> <p>Completed</p>	RED	AMBER

				and other communications. Legal advice for Museums transfer to alternative model received. High level VAT analysis commissioned	High level VAT analysis for possible Museums move to Trust anticipated. Frank H to outline completed options appraisal to SLB at end of November		
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Improve Health, Well-Being, and Happiness

Goal	Action	Lead	Project Manager	Completed activity for October	Planned Activity for November	Previous month RAG Status	Current RAG Status
Tackle the causes of inequality and support the most vulnerable people in Colchester	Invest time into relationships to influence decision and make joint strategic changes based on lived	Michelle Tarbun Head of Health Partnerships and Wellbeing	Michelle Tarbun & Tom Tayler	Continuing work to optimise the Alliance relationships and Partnership working to ensure best outcomes and decision are made	Continuing work to optimise the Alliance relationships and Partnership working to ensure best outcomes and decision are made for the People of Colchester. Council posts are embedded in system working	GREEN	GREEN

	experience and data			<p>for the People of Colchester. Council posts are embedded in system working to shape and influence from the inside.</p> <p>A joint funded CCC & Alliance Strategic role has been appointed to and started in early October. Some of their focus will be leading on a review of the current set up and Place Based Plans.</p>	<p>to shape and influence from the inside.</p> <p>A joint funded CCC & Alliance Strategic role started in early October. Some of their focus will be leading on a review of the current set up and Place Based Plans.</p> <p>The Colchester Place Based Plan strategic lead will be announced soon and a timetable of activity agreed</p>		
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	<p>Support Development of the Colchester Neighbourhood Model including Council staff alongside partners in Local Neighbourhood Teams/wellbeing hubs to enable and support people in the local community to live well</p>	<p>Michelle Tarbun Head of Health Partnerships and Wellbeing</p>	<p>Michelle Tarbun & Tom Tayler</p>	<p>Continue to play a lead role in the important review and changes to the Neighbourhood model and Livewell Domains to ensure it is fit for purpose and using joint resources in the best way to maximise People impact and improvement.</p> <p>Contribute to the Health Alliance audit process and review with Laura Taylor-Green, Alliance Director</p>	<p>Continue to play a lead role in the important review and changes to the Neighbourhood model and Livewell Domains to ensure it is fit for purpose and using joint resources in the best way to maximise People impact and improvement.</p> <p>Contribute to the Health Alliance audit process and review with Laura Taylor-Green, Alliance Director</p>	<p>GREEN</p>	<p>GREEN</p>
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	<p>Work within the Health & Wellbeing Alliance to agree new joint priorities focused on the wider determinants of health including housing conditions/warm homes, hospital admission avoidance and hospital discharge, physical activity, mental health, skills and employment, cost of Living Support</p>	<p>Michelle Tarbun Head of Health Partnerships and Wellbeing</p>	<p>Michelle Tarbun</p>	<p>Continue as Be Well Domin lead and key Alliance influencer play a lead role in the importance of joint prioritise, resource to reduce inequalities in Colchester and increase the healthy years age of our People.</p> <p>Maintain a focus on strategic change to improve the wider determinates of health and avoid a pure clinic approach to inequalities</p>	<p>Continue as Be Well Domin lead and key Alliance influencer play a lead role in the importance of joint prioritise, resource to reduce inequalities in Colchester and increase the healthy years age of our People.</p> <p>Maintain a focus on strategic change to improve the wider determinates of health and avoid a pure clinic approach to inequalities</p> <p>A full review of the inequalities funding has been carried out and reported back to Alliance Executive Group. A more flexible approach to remaining funds has been agreed and a new plan is being pulled</p>	<p>GREEN</p>	<p>GREEN</p>
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				<p>A full review of the inequalities funding has been carried out and reported back to Alliance Executive Group. A more flexible approach to remaining funds has been agreed and a new plan is being pulled together that builds on known, successful projects and will go back to the Alliance for approval in the Autumn.</p>	<p>together that builds on known, successful projects and will go back to the Alliance for approval in the Autumn.</p>		
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	<p>Work with partners to provide a supportive and inclusive Community for all those moving into the area through one of the Resettlement schemes</p>	<p>Michelle Tarbun Head of Health Partnerships and Wellbeing</p>	<p>Michelle Tarbun & Yovone Cook</p>	<p>Lead the System management of all resettlement schemes.</p> <p>Marks Tey Hotel closed on 4 August leaving 6 families homeless and in temporary accommodation at a large cost. Some families have housing offers and will be moving out soon.</p> <p>Families in 10 MOD properties that also need housing are also a high priority</p>	<p>Lead the System management of all resettlement schemes.</p> <p>Marks Tey Hotel closed on 4 August leaving 1 family without a home at the moment.</p> <p>Families in 10 MOD properties that also need housing are also a high priority</p> <p>Colchester Asylum Seeker Hotel is due to close on 12 December. CCC do not lead this work but will support partners and Asylum Seekers with their resettlement elsewhere</p> <p>Homing all resettlement scheme families in TA remains</p>	<p>RED</p>	<p>RED</p>
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				<p>Homing all resettlement scheme families in TA remains our highest priority. Working with System Partners.</p> <p>Ensure all importance issues, pressures & costs are raise at the appropriate meetings and forums</p> <p>Utilise all available funding streams to maximise our proactive work and finding solutions to complex issues</p>	<p>our highest priority. Working with System Partners.</p> <p>Ensure all importance issues, pressures & costs are raise at the appropriate meetings and forums</p> <p>Utilise all available funding streams to maximise our proactive work and finding solutions to complex issues</p> <p>Add in A Seeker hotel info</p>		
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	Review services and ensure compliance with the public sector equalities framework	Jess Douglas, Head of People	Stephen Kane	<p>EDI Policy has been shared with SLB, SUN Group and EDI Group and Champions. The Policy and EDI update is going to November Policy Panel.</p> <p>A new EDI page is being created on COLIN (intranet).</p> <p>A programme of a further 4 lunch and learn sessions are</p>	<p>Work against the EDI Action Plan is on-going. Draft Policy is being considered by UNISON. Presentation for Policy Panel on 29 November being prepared.</p> <p>Training for SLB and Heads of Service on Public Sector Equality Duty is being commissioned.</p> <p>Training for EDI Champions in development.</p>	AMBER	

				being organised for the year.			
Work with residents and partners to address quality of life and issues of happiness	Continue with and enhance existing cost of living programme of advice and assistance including outreach work	Michelle Tarbun, Head of Health Partnerships and Wellbeing	Zoe Raven	Continued System cost of living activity including outreach and ongoing monitoring of query types to improve our pro-active support. This includes maximise the impact of all energy efficiency funding & initiatives and our outreach advice activities	Continued System cost of living activity including outreach and ongoing monitoring of query types to improve our pro-active support. This includes maximise the impact of all energy efficiency funding & initiatives and our outreach advice activities A pro-active project being undertaken to promote Pension Credits and assist residents where necessary	AMBER	AMBER

				<p>A pro-active project being undertaken to promote Pension Credits and assist residents where necessary</p> <p>Winter planning system meetings underway and plans are in place</p> <p>Expecting increased pressure on resource in Winter 23/24</p>	<p>Winter planning system meetings underway and plans are in place</p> <p>Expecting increased pressure on resource in Winter 23/24</p>		
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	Use the new citizens panel to further understand how to respond effectively to issues of happiness	Research	Libby Britcher (taken over from Tricia Smith)	<p>Work is being undertaken to identify wellbeing indexes which could be used for tracking / understanding Colchester 'Happiness' i.e <u>Thriving Places Index Centre for Thriving Places</u></p> <p>Once identified they will be considered by the residents panel.</p>	<p>Work continues on identifying the wellbeing indexes. The ONS release personal well-being data every year, which we can use, and we are looking into that further.</p> <p>The Research team advised Mandy Jones and Karen Turnbull in August 2023 that the Residents Panel would not be the best way to understand resident happiness. It was advised that national, well thought</p>	AMBER	GREEN
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				<p>Officer is due to leave the Research Team in October. This will leave a part time post only.</p>	<p>through, existing indexes would be most useful for tracking/understanding Colchester's 'Happiness', like the above ONS data or the Thriving Place Index.</p> <p>A proactive approach has been to integrate happiness indicator questions into recent surveys, which can be used to benchmark for future years, if the same questions are asked again.</p>		
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					<p>In the 2023 'Future of Colchester' survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I enjoy living/working in Colchester • I feel a sense of community in the area of Colchester • I would recommend other people to live or work in Colchester <p>In the 2023 'Colchester City Centre: A Blueprint for the Future' survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel positive about the future of Colchester 		
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	Increasing everyday activity and participation of all sectors of the community in active lifestyles as a legacy of the Local Delivery Pilot	Michelle Tarbun, Head of Health Partnerships and Wellbeing	Tom Tayler	Using an ABCD approach, Alliance Be Well Domain and external funding is used to support projects and initiatives to allow residents to move more and keep active. The Community participation enables projects to be more sustainable in the future and to be legacy of the end of	Using an ABCD approach, Alliance Be Well Domain and external funding is used to support projects and initiatives to allow residents to move more and keep active. The Community participation enables projects to be more sustainable in the future and to be legacy of the end of the Local Delivery Pilot in 2025 Increased movement improves Physical and mental health and reduces social isolation	GREEN	Green

				<p>the Local Delivery Pilot in 2025</p> <p>Increased movement improves Physical and mental health and reduces social isolation</p> <p>Linking into the the ongoing wider Sport & Leisure Review</p>	<p>Linking into the the ongoing wider Sport & Leisure Review</p> <p>Colchester showcase at a national Sport Engand event on 6 November to try and secure more external funding to increase activity in our most deprived areas.</p>		
	Develop and implement a programme of repair and renewal of our play parks.	Fiona Shipp		Schedule circulated to all members and work programme underway.	Awaiting update	AMBER	
Deliver Homes for those most in need							

Goal	Action	Lead	Project Manager	Completed activity for September	Planned Activity for October	Previous month RAG Status	Current RAG Status
Increase the number, quality and types of homes on offer	Ensure there is a sufficient supply of suitable sites in sustainable locations to facilitate delivery of new homes, of varying size and type across all tenures.	Karen Syrett, Head of Planning		Planning officers will continue to determine applications favourably where they accord with adopted policies to ensure a sufficient supply of new homes of the right type in the right places.	Planning officers will continue to determine applications favourably where they accord with adopted policies to ensure a sufficient supply of new homes of the right type in the right places.	GREEN	GREEN
	Work in partnership with Developers and Housing	Karen Paton Housing Strategy Co-ordinator		We continue to seek 30% affordable housing on all qualifying sites (10	We continue to seek 30% affordable housing on all qualifying sites (10 or more	GREEN	GREEN

	Associations to implement Colchester's Local Plan seeking 30% of all new homes to be affordable.			or more units; 5 or more units in designated rural areas) Registered Provider Forum set up for November to encourage better communication with our RP partners and to provide better insight into development issues.	units; 5 or more units in designated rural areas) Registered Provider Forum set up for November to encourage better communication with our RP partners and to provide better insight into development issues.		
	Influence the allocation of S106 (or similar) contributions to ensure the	Karen Paton Housing Strategy Co-ordinator		The team continue to look for opportunities to influence the allocation of S106 contributions to	The team continue to look for opportunities to influence the allocation of S106 contributions to increase the supply of affordable housing by	GREEN	GREEN

	delivery of affordable housing is maximised.			increase the supply of affordable housing by working closely with planning colleagues and developers.	working closely with planning colleagues and developers. During quarters 1 and 2 of 2023-24 the total number of affordable homes delivered (including acquisitions) was 84 including 12 acquisitions.		
	Increase the amount of guidance available to developers to help inform new housing design and make it beautiful and sustainable.	Karen Syrett, Head of Planning		Work continues with assessment of consultation responses	No new guidance but team continues to ensure housing design is appropriate	GREEN	GREEN

	Continue with private sector housing support, advice & enforcement to improve the condition of housing in the private and social rented sector	Anna Watson, Private Sector Housing Manager	Anna Watson, Private Sector Housing Manager	<p>During October 2023:</p> <p>55 inspections, visits and assessments were undertaken of privately rented homes, including 7 assessments of homes to be occupied under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, 3 Planning consultations were responded to and 13 inspections of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).</p>	<p>Continue to regulate and take enforcement action where required to ensure the safety of properties for Colchester residents living in the private and social rented sector.</p> <p>Continue with Recruitment process for 2 x Technical Officer vacancies in the team.</p> <p>Attend: Colchester Neighbourhoods MDT. Colchester Central Livewell Neighbourhoods Team. North Essex Hoarding MDT. Essex Private Sector Housing Officers Group.</p>	GREEN	GREEN
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				<p>28 dwellings were improved through our action.</p> <p>6 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) were improved through our action.</p> <p>7 serious housing were hazards removed through our action.</p> <p>8 HMO licences issued.</p> <p>An appeal has been received against a Financial Penalty Notice served in September for £5K on a property manager who failed</p>	<p>Be-Well Steering Group.</p> <p>Meet: ECC Commissioner re Semi-independent accommodation housing schemes in Colchester.</p>		
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				<p>to belong to a Government approved Scheme.</p> <p>Recruitment process for 2 x Technical Officer vacancies in the team ongoing, closing date in November.</p> <p>Attended:</p> <p>Essex County Fire and Rescue Service partnership event. Colchester Neighbourhoods MDT.</p>			
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				<p>Colchester Central Livewell Neighbourhoods Team. North Essex Hoarding MDT. Colchester Anti Modern Slavery (CAM) Partnership Group. Demo of Frontline app.</p> <p>Met with:</p> <p>Partnership Delivery Lead for ECC Social Care to increase collaborative working.</p>			
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Prevent or assist those facing homelessness	Work with partners to deliver the priorities in Colchester's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020 – 25	Karen Paton Housing Strategy co-ordinator		<p>Project Group meeting set up for November to look at progress made on the actions in the Delivery Plan of the strategy during the last year.</p> <p>A Temporary Accommodation Delivery Plan has been put in place and officers across CCC and CBH meet monthly to track progress against the actions.</p>	<p>A Project Group meeting has been set up for November to look at progress made on the actions in the Delivery Plan of the strategy during the last year.</p> <p>A Temporary Accommodation Delivery Plan has been put in place and officers across CCC and CBH meet monthly to track progress against the actions.</p> <p>We continue to progress the LAHF 2 project and have acquired and let 2 properties through our Acquisition</p>	GREEN	GREEN

				We continue to progress the LAHF project and are acquiring 2 properties through our Acquisition programme and 4 properties off the shelf from a developer for Afghan families.	programme and are purchasing 4 properties off the shelf from a developer for Afghan families currently living in MOD accommodation.		
	Provide assistance, support and an accommodation pathway for Rough Sleepers through the governments	Karen Paton		The Rough Sleeper Team continue to provide support and accommodation to rough sleepers and currently have a small cohort (4 or 5) of entrenched rough sleepers that they are working with to	The Rough Sleeper Team continue to provide support and accommodation to rough sleepers and currently have a small cohort (4 or 5) of entrenched rough sleepers that they are working with to support them into accommodation. CCC have been awarded additional	GREEN	GREEN

	Rough Sleeper Initiative			support them into accommodation.	DLUHC funding (on top of RSI funding) of £22,500. for 2023-24 to provide support and emergency accommodation for this group during the winter months.		
	Continue with and enhance existing cost of living programme of advice and assistance including outreach	Michelle Tarbun, Head of Health Partnerships & Wellbeing	Zoe Raven	Continue current activity including focussed outreach events supporting residents, partners and employees Ongoing comms and social media campaign to residents and partners	Continue current activity including focussed outreach events supporting residents, partners and employees Ongoing comms and social media campaign to residents and partners Optimise the energy efficiency funding and advice on offer Work over all the resettlement schemes to help ensure benefits are maximised and	GREEN	Amber

				<p>Optimise the energy efficiency funding and advice on offer</p> <p>Work over all the resettlement schemes to help ensure benefits are maximised and employment opportunities are explored</p>	<p>employment opportunities are explored</p> <p>Recent resignations in the team have reduced resource and will impact the level of assistance we can give residents</p>		
Increase affordable housing using buildings or land the council own	Continue delivering the New Council Housing Programme and building to	Terri Hamilton		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase 3 garage sites progressing well, Retendering for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to progress Phase 3 garage sites Retender period for 5th. Continue with feasibility works and planning for 	GREEN	GREEN

	Future Homes 2025 standards			<p>5th due to end 20.11.23.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasibility works and planning for acquired sites and accessible homes project continuing. • Process PFH decision to acquire one 3 bed unit at Chesterwell. • Process PFH decision to acquire 11 family homes within Chesterwell development 	<p>acquired sites and accessible homes project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with developers to seek agreements for acquiring off the shelf units. • Continue to seek viable options for more units • , 		
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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process Cabinet report on Affordable rent to increase viable options for more affordable housing delivery. 			
Grow our Economy so everyone benefits							
Goal	Action	Lead	Project Manager	Completed activity for October	Planned Activity for November	Previous month RAG Status	Current RAG Status
Work with partners to create a vibrant city which people want to live in and visit, whilst attracting investment	Work with System Leaders to define a 2040 Vision for Colchester.	Lindsay Barker, Executive Director Place and Deputy CEO	Matt Sterling	Analysis of Masterplan consultation feedback now completed, with a timetable for adoption drafted	Make revisions to Masterplan following consultation feedback ahead of January formal adoption. Further engagement activity.	GREEN	GREEN

				<p>ready for Team Colchester approval.</p> <p>Team Colchester approved changes to St Botolph's design in response to consultation feedback.</p>	<p>Appoint consultants to advise Team Colchester on creating a joint development vehicle for the city centre.</p>		
	<p>Deliver the Town Deal projects to improve the lives of residents and support businesses</p>	<p>Matt Sterling Head of Economic Growth</p>		<p>Launch event for completed Digital Skills Hub held. Work underway on Colne Causeway section of cycling route. Test holes started at St Nics to</p>	<p>Announcement of Heritage Lottery Fud decision re Holy Trinity Church round 1 application. Completion of test holes at St Nics. Tenders for management of Digital Working Hub.</p>	RED	AMBER

				check utilities locations ahead of technical assurance being approved.			
	Support the continued success of "Our Colchester Business Improvement District" through it's board and partnering on projects.	Matt Sterling		City Centre Programmes Coordinator as started in post and is already developing our ties with the BID including developing a detailed understanding of city centres works to avoid business disruption.	Hold liaison session in Nov about the Masterplan and St Botolph's changes.	GREEN	GREEN

	Work with partners from North Essex Economic Board to use Shared Prosperity Funding to provide business support.	Matt Sterling		Current Business Support scheme continues delivery. Members have now developed a delivery action plan for the new strategy.	Consider the role NEEB might play in a devolution settlement.	GREEN	GREEN
	Ensure the Tendring and Colchester Borders Garden Community is plan led and policies are drafted to ensure the City benefits from	Karen Syrett, Head of Planning	Amy Lester Planning Manager TCBGC	Development Plan Document submitted to PINS following consultation in preparation for Examination in Public	Topic papers and statements of common ground being produced ahead of hearing sessions	GREEN	GREEN

	the development						
	Review options for Colchester market and street trading and agree the future model.	Rosa Tanfield, Head of Neighbourhood Services	Samantha Lancaster, Operations Manager	Options paper in development	Options paper in development	GREEN	GREEN
	Create and deliver a new plan for the neighbourhood, Street Care and Safety services, including service improvements	Rosa Tanfield, Head of Neighbourhood Services	Samantha Lancaster, Operations Manager	Interim Operations Manager in post. Review of proposals in line with ongoing budget pressures.	Review of proposals in line with ongoing budget pressures.	GREEN	GREEN

	to maintain the quality of public spaces.						
Celebrate our City, Heritage and Culture							
Goal	Action	Lead	Project Manager	Completed activity for October	Planned Activity for November	Previous month RAG Status	Current RAG Status
Strengthen Colchester's tourism sector and welcome more visitors each year	Have a Year of Celebration through 2023 including coronation celebration engagement with City Status in all areas, Gladiators Exhibition at	Frank Hargrave Head of Museums, Culture and Tourism	Claire Taylor Visitor and Cultural Services Manager/Colchester Events Claire Taylor/Comms	Promotion of Year of Celebration through central CCC Comms and Visit Colchester channels continues – YoC events taking place in October included Colchester Fringe Festival.	Promotion of Year of Celebration through central CCC Comms and Visit Colchester channels continues – YoC events taking place in November include the Castle Park Fireworks and the the start of Christmas in Colchester celebrations with the Festive Light Parade and Switch on Nov 15 th .	GREEN	GREEN

	the Castle and Siege Spectacular re-enactment						
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	<p>Enhance marketing of Colchester as a destination including a refresh of Visit Colchester Website, 3-year successive marketing campaign and collaborative marketing with the Business Improvement District</p>	<p>Claire Taylor, Visitor and Cultural Services Manager</p>	<p>Claire Taylor</p>	<p>Website contract was let will be let work on new site started</p> <p>Comms were unable to provide the staff resource to deliver the marketing campaign due to vacancies and a restructure and the funds for yr 1 have now been taken to help with the budget gap</p>	<p>Work on website will progress towards launch in March 2024</p> <p>As Oct in the campaign will not continue as funds are no longer available.</p>	<p>AMBER</p>	<p>AMBER</p>
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<p>To make our city a better place in which to live and work and visit</p>	<p>Work with Essex County Council to develop and adopt a new City Centre Masterplan to guide and direct future development in the City Centre so it is transformed, attractive and more accessible.</p>	<p>Matt Sterling Head of Economic Growth</p>		<p>Analysis of Masterplan consultation feedback now completed, with a timetable for adoption drafted ready for Team Colchester approval.</p>	<p>Make revisions to Masterplan following consultation feedback ahead of January formal adoption.</p> <p>Further engagement activity.</p> <p>Appoint consultants to advise Team Colchester on creating a joint development vehicle for the city centre</p>	<p>GREEN</p>	<p>GREEN</p>
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	Delivery of an annual small grants scheme annually for 3 years to support Cultural and Creative Events.	Claire Taylor	Claire Taylor	The Alliance have confirmed a £10K match funding contribution to the Fund pot for 2024	Preparations of for launch of scheme in early Jan	GREEN	GREEN
	Continue existing multiyear grant support to key Arts partners and create additional small pot to support Creative Colchester.	Claire Taylor	Claire Taylor	Third Quarter Grants Paid	Arrange Annual Funding Agreement Review Meetings between PFH and Strategic Arts Partners.	GREEN	GREEN

	Celebrate the historic Coronation of King Charles III	Michelle Tarbun Head of Health Partnerships & Wellbeing	Michelle Tarbun	Coronation plaque now fixed in the Town Hall entrance.	Coronation plaque now fixed in the Town Hall entrance.	GREEN	GREEN and closed
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Assigning a RAG Status

	 Time	 Cost	 Resource	 Risk	 Issue	 Overall	So what?
	Delays against Timebox Plan	Overspend against Budget	Key Resource unavailable	Risks cannot be mitigated	Issues cannot be mitigated	Red/Amber Time and Cost will affect Features	Project Owner cannot resolve (Escalate to PDB)
	Potential Delays against Timebox Plan	Budget Under/Over spend against Forecast	Key Resource unavailable during key milestones	Risks are being Flagged	Issues are being Flagged	Red/Amber Time and Cost may affect Features	Project Manager cannot resolve (Speak to Project Owner)
	Timebox Plan available	Within Budget and spend on track against Forecast	Fully Resourced	Risks Register Available	Issues Log Available	Features will be delivered	Project Manager demonstrating Full Control

Appendix A

Recommendation made by the Policy Panel at its meeting on 10 January 2024

91. Asset Based Community Development and Asset Mapping Update

RECOMMENDED to CABINET that; -

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

PETITIONS, PUBLIC STATEMENTS, QUESTIONS

(i) Have Your Say submissions from members of the public

Date of Meeting	Details of Members of the Public	Subject Matter	Form of Response	Date Completed
Policy Panel, 29 November 2023	Nick Chilvers	Issues relating to Council provision of sport and leisure facilities	Verbal response provided at this meeting by Rory Doyle, Associate Director of Alliance Integrated Strategic Partnerships	29 November 2023
Environment and Sustainability Panel 6 December 2023	Steven Vince	Village Green 241, Mersea Island	Verbal response provided by the Head of Sustainability	6 December 2023
Environment and Sustainability Panel 6 December 2023	Stuart Johnson	When would the Council publish air quality data obtained in Colchester	Officers to advise Mr Johnson of when action would be taken. Written response sent to Mr Johnson.	16 January 2024
Environment and Sustainability Panel 6 December 2023	Elia Valentini	Progress which had been made by the Panel in terms of supporting its Terms of Reference	Officers to provide a report to the Panel summarising actions or initiatives which had been implemented.	6 December 2023
Environment and Sustainability	Alan Short	Concerns about the environmental impact of	The Head of Sustainability to examine the possibility of commissioning a further report	6 December 2023

Panel 6 December 2023		development on Middlewick Ranges.	examining the environmental impact of proposed development on Middlewick.	
Environment and Sustainability Panel 6 December 2023	Martin Pugh	Concerns about the environmental impact of development on Middlewick Ranges.	The Head of Sustainability to examine the possibility of commissioning a further report examining the environmental impact of proposed development on Middlewick.	6 December 2023
Council, 7 December 2023	Sir Bob Russell	Anti-social Behaviour in the City Centre, Town Board proposals for Holy Trinity Church,	Verbal response provided at the meeting by Councillor King, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy.	7 December 2023
Council, 7 December 2023	Richard Martin	Middlewick issues	Verbal response provided at the meeting by Cllr Luxford Vaughan, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Environment and Sustainability.	7 December 2023
Council, 7 December 2023	Rachel Mathews, Carrina Cooper, Lance Peatling	Issues relating to Council policies to address climate change and arrangements for a public meeting to address these issues, carbon literacy training	Verbal response provided at the meeting by Councillor King, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy.	7 December 2023
Council, 7 December 2023	Gordon Kerr		Contribution terminated by the Deputy Mayor pursuant to the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 6(8).	-
Council, 7 December 2023	Simon Collis	Housing and homelessness issues	Verbal response provided at the meeting by Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Housing.	7 December 2023
Council, 7 December 2023	Angel Kalyan	Issues relating to the flooding of her home	Verbal response provided at the meeting by Councillor King, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy.	7 December 2023

Council, 7 December 2023	Imran Hussiany, Fauzia Farrukh, Abi Wilkin	Motions on the Impact of the Conflict in the Middle East and City of Sanctuary.	Issues raised addressed in the discussion on the motions.	7 December 2023
Local Plan Committee, 11 December 2023	Liz Austin	Issues relating to current state of the Riverside Development Site on North Station Road/ Causton Road and that work had stopped on the site and was in disarray.	Verbal response provided by Joint Head of Planning (Simon Cairns.)	11 December 2023
Local Plan Committee, 11 December 2023	Sir Bob Russell	Issues relating to the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community Joint Committee (TCBGCJC) and the details for Salary Brook allocation.	Verbal response provided by the Place Strategy Manager regarding the role of the TCBGCJC.	11 December 2023
Local Plan Committee, 11 December 2023	Dr Jeremy Dagley Richard Martin Dougal Urquhart David Smith Andrew Wilkinson Ted Benton Lisa Cross	Issues relating to proposed development on Middlewick Ranges following publication of document from developer being larger than the allocation in the Local Plan.	Verbal response provided by the Place Strategy Manager detailing the status of the allocation as well as the review of the Local Plan.	11 December 2023
Scrutiny Panel, 12 December 2023	Lance Peatling, Carinna Cooper	Issues regarding security measures at meetings of the Council.	Verbal response from Councillor Laws, Chairman, and pledge to write to Chief Executive to seek a response. Written response sent by the Chair of the Scrutiny Panel.	20 December 2023
Cabinet, 19 December 2023	David Grocott	The accessibility of the new playground at Highwoods	Verbal responses provided by Councillor King, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Councillor Burrows,	19 December 2023

			Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage.	
Cabinet, 19 December 2023	Ian Drew	Essex Residents Association and concerns about the impact of the 5G network.	Verbal response provided at the meeting by Cllr Luxford Vaughan, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Environment and Sustainability.	19 December 2023

(ii) Petitions

Date petition received	Lead Petitioner	Subject Matter	Form of Response	Date Completed
No valid petitions received in this period.				