

Cabinet

**Grand Jury Room, Town Hall
5 March 2014 at 6.00pm**

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

COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL CABINET

5 March 2014 at 6:00pm

Leader (& Chairman): Councillor Anne Turrell (Liberal Democrats)
Deputy Chairman: Councillor Martin Hunt (Liberal Democrats)
Councillor Nick Barlow (Liberal Democrats)
Councillor Tina Bourne (Labour)
Councillor Annie Feltham (Liberal Democrats)
Councillor Beverley Oxford (The Highwoods Group)
Councillor Paul Smith (Liberal Democrats)
Councillor Tim Young (Labour)

AGENDA - Part A

(open to the public including the media)

	Pages
1. Welcome and Announcements	1
<p>(a) The Chairman to welcome members of the public and Councillors and to remind all speakers of the requirement for microphones to be used at all times.</p> <p>(b) At the Chairman's discretion, to announce information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• action in the event of an emergency;• mobile phones switched to silent;• the audio-recording of meetings;• location of toilets;• introduction of members of the meeting.	
2. Urgent Items	
<p>To announce any items not on the agenda which the Chairman has agreed to consider because they are urgent and to give reasons for the urgency.</p>	
3. Declarations of Interest	
<p>The Chairman to invite Councillors to declare individually any interests they may have in the items on the agenda. Councillors should consult Meetings General Procedure Rule 7 for full guidance on the registration and declaration of interests. However Councillors may wish to note the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where a Councillor has a disclosable pecuniary interest, other pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary interest in any business of the authority and he/she is present at a meeting of the authority at	

which the business is considered, the Councillor must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest, whether or not such interest is registered on his/her register of Interests or if he/she has made a pending notification.

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

4. Have Your Say!

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

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

5. Minutes

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To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2014.

6. Call-in Procedure

To consider any items referred by the Scrutiny Panel under the Call-In Procedure. At the time of the publication of this Agenda there were none.

7. Housing	
i. Colchester's Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018	17 - 84
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9. Business and Resources	
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ii. Restoration of the Moot Hall Organ, Colchester Town Hall	95 - 99
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10. General	
i. Progress of Responses to the Public	100
To note the contents of the Progress Sheet.	

11. Exclusion of the Public

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

COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL CABINET

5 March 2014 at 6:00pm

AGENDA - Part B

(not open to the public or the media)

Pages

12. Regeneration

- i. **St. Botolph's Quarter – Approval of Draft Heads Of Terms for St. Botolph's Quarter site, comprising former remainder of Bus Station site, St. James House, Bus Depot and ticket office**

The following report contains exempt information (financial/business affairs of a particular person, including the authority holding information) as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

See appendices to the report by the Head of Commercial Services

13. Business and Resources

- i. **Depot and Offices, 123, Gosbecks Road, Colchester – Supermarket Proposal**

The following report contains exempt information (financial/business affairs of a particular person, including the authority holding information) as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

See appendices to the report by the Head of Commercial Services

- ii. **Restoration of the Moot Hall Organ, Colchester Town Hall**

The following report contains exempt information (financial/business affairs of a particular person, including the authority holding information) as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

See report by the Assistant Chief Executive

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CABINET

29 JANUARY 2014

Present :- Councillor Anne Turrell (the Leader of the Council)
(Chairman)
Councillors Nick Barlow, Tina Bourne, Annie Feltham,
Martin Hunt (Deputy Leader) , Beverley Oxford,
Paul Smith and Tim Young

Also in Attendance :- Councillor Nigel Chapman
Councillor Beverly Davies
Councillor Sue Lissimore
Councillor Will Quince
Councillor Colin Sykes
Councillor Laura Sykes
Councillor Dennis Willetts

69. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 Novmber 2013 were confirmed as a correct record.

70. Have Your Say!

Nick Chilvers addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(2) to ask whether Leisure World was meeting income targets by September 2013. He also explained that he believed that the information provided on the Creative Hub was not clear. He noted the assurances given that it would be given no ongoing revenue support. However, he believed that the creative industries had diverse needs and asked whether their views had been sought on issues such as rents or parking costs and queried who would manage the Hub. Further information about the proposals needed to be put in the public domain and the project needed firm handling. He also suggested that the walls project would be a better use for section 106 funding.

Councillor Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure Services, explained that Leisure World was on target to break even. Whilst income was 7.7% below that projected, expenditure was 12.5 % below that expected. It was acknowledged that the targets set for Leisure World were challenging but there had been an increase in business usage and financial returns. Income from Lifestyles memberships and the pools was down, but that from swimming lessons, Aquasprings and beauty threapy was above projected levels. Overall there had been 45,000 extra visits to key areas of the business than in the previous year. There had been an increase in Lifestyles membership income of £91,000,swimming lessons were at their highest level since 2011and 95,000 tickets had been issued to customers using self service. She stressed that she was proud of the work staff had put into improving Leisure World.

Councillor Barlow, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, explained that he was continuously working with partners on the Creative Hub and was working with the

creative industries to ascertain their needs. He also explained that section 106 funding was ring fenced for particular projects and could not be allocated to other projects.

71. 2014/15 General Fund Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Forecast

The Assistant Chief Executive submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member together with minute 45 of the Scrutiny Panel meeting of 28 January 2014.

Councillor Willetts attended and, with the consent of the Chairman addressed the Cabinet. He stressed that the Conservative Group supported most of the proposals in the budget and had supported the process of Fundamental Service Reviews that had delivered savings in a structured way. However, the budget did not contain any exciting, big ideas that would rejuvenate Colchester, such as proposals for a late night levy or for the restoration of the Jumbo water tower. He noted also that no provision had been made for the Tour series, which brought trade and publicity to the borough. He noted also the Council's revenue spending power was only being reduced by 2% and needed to be seen in the context of falls in income from car parking and community alarms. Staffing levels remained stubbornly high in contrast with some neighbouring authorities. The New Homes Bonus should be used to a greater extent to support infrastructure projects. He supported a freeze in Council Tax and noted that a rise of 1.95% would only generate an additional £89,000, which was poor value for the residents of the borough.

Councillor Davies, Chairman of the Scrutiny Panel, attended and with the consent of the Chairman addressed the Cabinet. She stressed the need for the Scrutiny Panel to be given more time and more detailed information in order to be able to scrutinise the budget proposals properly. The main concern of the Panel was the process for the approval of projects to be funded via the New Homes Bonus. Councillor Turrell, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, explained that the late receipt of information on which the budget was based made it difficult to finalise the budget any earlier.

Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, introduced the proposed budget and responded to the points made. The cut in government funding of £1.3 million made it difficult to present an "exciting" budget. Savings of £2.6 million had been identified, 60% of which was being met through Fundamental Services Reviews and through channel shift initiatives. Only 20% was being met through cuts to services and frontline services were being protected as far as possible. He noted Essex County Council was proposing a rise of 1.49% but no criticisms had been made about the value of that rise. In respect of the New Homes Bonus, it was anticipated that bids in excess of the available funding would be submitted, but proposals would be judged on their merits and funding would only be granted where it was justified. He recommended the budget proposals to the Cabinet.

Councillor Bourne, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Councillor Barlow, Portfolio for

Regeneration, Councillor T. Young, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Community Safety and Culture, and Councillor Hunt, Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services, expressed their support for the budget. In the course of the debate the following points were made:-

- That to those who were vulnerable and relied upon Council services, the budget proposals, which maintained frontline services as far as possible, would be exciting;
- The inconsistency of the opposition's position on the funding of the Tour Series and the lack of detail provided about how they would reduce staffing levels;
- The scale of the cuts in government funding;
- A number of other Conservative authorities in the region were proposing Council Tax increases;
- The need for further savings to be found in future years as government funding reduced further and the scope for increasing income through Council Tax was reduced.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The outturn for the current financial year, forecast to be on budget, be noted (see paragraph 3.4 of the Assistant Chief Executive's report).
- (b) The cost pressures, growth items, savings and increased income options identified during the budget forecast process as set out at Appendices B, C and D of the Assistant Chief Executive's report be approved.
- (c) The 2014/15 Revenue Budget requirement of £22,006k (paragraph 6.8 of the Assistant Chief Executive's report) and the underlying detailed budgets set out in summary at Appendix E and Background Papers, subject to the final proposal to be made in respect of Council Tax, be agreed and *RECOMMENDED to COUNCIL*.
- (d) A proposal to Council on Colchester's element of the Council Tax for 2014/15 be made in consultation with the Leader of the Council following the formal Finance Settlement announcement and confirmation of Council Tax referendum threshold. The formal resolution to Council will also include the Parish, Police, Fire and County Council elements (paragraph 12.2 of the Assistant Chief Executive's report).
- (e) Revenue Balances for the financial year 2014/15 be set at a minimum of £1,800k and that £74k of balances be applied to finance items in the 2014/15 revenue budget.
- (f) The provisional Finance Settlement figures set out in Section 7 of the Assistant Chief Executive's report including the figures for the business rates retention scheme and the arrangements for completion of the required return of estimated business rates income as set out at paragraph 7.11 of the Assistant Chief Executive's report be noted.
- (g) The following releases be agreed (paragraph 10.7 of the Assistant Chief Executive's report):-

- £100k from the Capital Expenditure Reserve in 2014/15 to meet costs including the community stadium.
- £30k from the section 106 monitoring reserve

(h) It be agreed and *RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL* that £100k of Revenue Balances be earmarked for potential unplanned expenditure within the guidelines set out at paragraph 11.3 of the Assistant Chief Executive's report.

(i) The Medium Term Financial Forecast for the financial years 2014/15 to 2017/18 be noted.

(j) The position on the Capital Programme shown at section 14 of the Assistant Chief Executive's report and the release of £100k as set out be agreed.

(k) The comments made on the robustness of budget estimates at section 15 of the Assistant Chief executive's report be noted.

(l) The 2014/15 Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy as set out in the background paper at Appendix H of the Assistant Chief Executive's report be approved and *RECOMMENDED to COUNCIL*.

REASONS

The reasons for the decisions were set out in detail in the Assistant Chief Executive's report.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Various options were investigated at every stage of the budget setting process.

72. Housing Revenue Account Estimates 2014/15

The Head of Commercial Services submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member together with minute 45 of the Scrutiny Panel meeting of 28 January 2014.

Councillor Bourne, Portfolio Holder for Housing, introduced the proposals and highlighted the fact that staff had been transferred to CBH under the new housing arrangements and that the changes would enable the delivery of improved services to Council tenants and residents. The management fee paid to Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) had been increased to reflect these new responsibilities and also the delegation of responsibility for the responsive repairs budget. She also stressed that the underspend referred to in the Head of Commercial Services report would be reinvested as part of the Housing Improvement Programme in the Sheltered Housing Review and the project to bring forward Council housing on garage sites.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The 2014/15 HRA revenue estimates as set out in Appendix A of the Head of Commercial Services report be approved.
- (b) The dwelling rents as calculated in accordance with the rent restructuring formula be approved as set out in paragraph 4.7 of the Head of Commercial Services report.
- (c) The rents for garages be approved as set out in paragraph 4.11 of the Commercial Services report.
- (d) The HRA revenue funded element of £6,960,200 included within the total management fee for Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) be approved (set out in paragraph 4.14 of the Head of Commercial Services report).
- (e) The inclusion in the budget of a revenue contribution of £6,900,000 to the Housing Investment Programme be noted (see paragraph 4.29 of the Head of Commercial Services report).
- (f) The HRA balances position in Appendix B of the Head of Commercial Services report be noted.
- (g) The Medium Term Financial Forecast (MTFF) set out at Appendix C of the Head of Commercial Services report and the 30 Year HRA financial position set out at Appendix E of the Head of Commercial Services report be noted.

REASONS

Financial Procedures require the Head of Commercial Services to prepare detailed HRA estimates for approval by the Cabinet, setting the new rent levels for the new financial year.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

No alternative options were proposed.

73. Housing Investment Programme 2014/15

The Head of Commercial Services submitted a report a copy of which was circulated to Members together with minute 46 of the Scrutiny Panel meeting of 28 January 2014.

Councillor Bourne, Portfolio Holder for Housing, introduced the proposals and highlighted the proposal at paragraph 8 of the Head of Commercial Services report. These projects and programmes would make a real difference to tenants' lives. Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, expressed his delight that the Council was addressing the housing shortage by building Council homes again for the first time in many years.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The Housing Investment Programme for 2014/15 be approved.
- (b) The Capital Medium Term Financial Forecast (CMTFF) as set out at Appendix A of the Head of Commercial Services report be approved.

REASONS

Each year as part of the process to agree the Council's revenue and capital estimates the Cabinet is required to agree the allocations to the Housing Stock Investment Programme. These allow for work to be undertaken to maintain, improve, and refurbish the housing stock and its environment.

Following the Cabinet meeting on the 30 November 2011 it was agreed in principle to accept a proposed 5 year Housing Investment Programme (HIP) as the framework for procuring housing related planned works, improvements, responsive and void works and cyclical maintenance, subject to overall budget decisions in January 2012 and annually thereafter.

It was also agreed that the proposed 5 year investment programme would be linked to the Asset Management Strategy and reviewed annually in the light of available resources and for each annual allocation to continue to be brought to Cabinet for approval as part of the overall HIP report.

The Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) Board has been apprised of the content of the Cabinet report submitted on the 30 November 2011 and is now seeking approval for the 2014/15 Capital programme being the third year of the HIP.

This report seeks the release of funds under grouped headings as described in the Asset Management Strategy and supported by the Management Agreement dated 9th August 2013, which governs the contractual relationship between Colchester Borough Council (CBC) and CBH.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

No alternative options were proposed.

74. Request for Delegated Authority for the Portfolio Holder for Housing to Approve the Award of a Construction Contract for the Development of New Council Homes

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

Councillor Bourne, Portfolio Holder for Housing, indicated that it was proposed to build 34 new Council Homes, which would be the first Council housing built in the Borough for over two decades. In view of the timescales, delegated authority was sought from the Cabinet to enable the Portfolio Holder to award the construction contract to the successful tenderer.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet delegate authority to the Portfolio Holder for Housing to approve the award of the contract for the procurement of construction contractors to deliver 34 new Council homes across the borough.

REASONS

To enable the Council to extend the tender period to ensure that the tenders received are best value. The contractors have requested more time as some have a greater volume of work than expected and require additional time to receive costings from sub contractors and suppliers.

Originally it was planned that the decision would be taken at the 5th March Cabinet, however the contractors who were invited to tender have requested an extension of 3 weeks to allow them to submit full and complete tenders. Our consultants advised that a five week period would be sufficient when the programme was written, however the market is telling us that this is insufficient time to be able to submit a tender.

Due to the timing of the 2014 elections there will not be another Cabinet meeting until the

25th June and this would mean that the appointment of contractors would be sufficiently delayed to impact on the timing of construction works. This would have a negative impact on the delivery of new affordable homes.

If we are unable to extend the tender period for contractors this may mean that no tenders are returned or tenders are returned that are outside of the budget allocated for the project. This would mean having to re-tender and thus significantly delaying the progress of the project.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

(a) To progress the approval through the normal channels, and ask Cabinet to consider the contract award at its 25th June meeting. This would significantly delay the overall project.

(b) To progress the approval through the normal channels, and ask Cabinet to consider the award of the contract at its 5th March meeting. This would mean a five week tender period and this could introduce higher risk in terms of not receiving tenders back and that contractors may price increased risk into their tender figures, meaning that the cost for the project exceeds the budget allocated.

75. Commercial Review of Community Alarms Service - Business Plan

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

Councillor Turrell, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, and

Councillor Bourne, Portfolio Holder for Housing highlighted the value of the Community Alarms Service, which supported many of the Council's strategic priorities. They were pleased to note that such a valuable service was the first to be the subject of a completed commercial review by the Trading Board.

RESOLVED that the contents of report by the Head of Commercial Services be noted and that a decision be made under Part B of the agenda on the recommendations from the Trading Board to approve the Business Plan for the Community Alarms Service and to decide how the revenue investment required by this Business Plan will be funded.

REASONS

The Council established a Trading Board at the beginning of this municipal year to review commercial opportunities and make recommendations to Cabinet. The Terms of

Reference for the Trading Board includes the following:-

- a) Consider and review the activities performed by the commercial services arm of the Council;
- b) Identify and develop any new commercial agreements generating significant income for the Council for approval by Cabinet or Council.

The Trading Board has reviewed commercial proposals for the Community Alarms service and has recommended the Business Plan on Part B of the agenda to Cabinet for approval.

The report is for information purposes and to provide context to members of the public about the decisions to be taken under Part B of the Agenda.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

No alternative options were proposed.

76. Installation of Photovoltaic Systems Upon Non-Housing Council Owned Properties

The Assistant Chief Executive circulated a report a copy of which had been circulated to members together with a copy of the high level business case produced by Eco-Langley on behalf of Blue Sky Peterborough.

Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, introduced the proposals and stressed that were both environmental and economic benefits from the scheme.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Photovoltaic (PV) systems be installed on ten of the Council's commercially sized, non-housing, owned properties.
- (b) The existing carbon management capital programme allocation be increased by £0.8m and that this be provisionally funded through borrowing.
- (c) The Council enter into a contract with Peterborough City Council via its Blue Sky Peterborough (BSP) Framework for the design, supply and installation of the PV systems.
- (d) The charging of tenants within four of the shortlisted properties and Colchester and

Ipswich Museums Service (CIMS) for use of the electricity generated by the PV systems be agreed.

REASONS

Cabinet agreed an allocation in the budget to investigate the feasibility and cost of installing PV systems on a number of the Council's non-housing properties.

Following the completion of initial feasibility work, ten properties have been shortlisted as being suitable for the installation of PV systems and it is estimated that revenue savings can be made from this work

The BSP Framework established by Peterborough City Council for the supply and installation of PV systems has been proven by a process of "soft" market testing to be competitive and well resourced.

If PV systems are to be installed ahead of the predicted change in feed in tariff (FiT) due at the end of March 2014, then Cabinet needs to agree to enter into a contract with BSP by the end of January 2014.

Four of the shortlisted properties currently house tenants and one property is operated by CIMS. As the tenants and CIMS will benefit from the free electricity generated by the

PV systems to be installed on their properties, it is proposed to charge them for the electricity generated and used by each property, thereby producing some additional income to the Council.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- (a) Decide not to proceed with the proposed project. However, this would mean that the Council would miss the opportunity to generate a net potential annual saving after allowing for financing costs.
- (b) Decide not to proceed with the BSP Framework and thereby postpone the project pending a further tender exercise. However, the next review of the FiT at the end of March 2014 is likely to see the FiT value reduce again meaning that the potential income generated by the project will also be reduced if delivered post March 2014.

(c) Decide not to charge the four tenants and CIMS for the use of the free electricity generated by the PV systems to be installed upon their properties.

77. Officer Pay Policy

The Assistant Chief Executive submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

RECOMMENDED to COUNCIL that the Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2014-15 be adopted.

REASONS

The Localism Act requires "relevant authorities (including Colchester Borough Council) to prepare, approve and publish pay policy statements articulating their policies towards a range of issues relating to the pay of its workforce." The Pay Policy for 2013/14 was approved by Full Council on 6 March 2013. These statements must be prepared and approved by Full Council for each financial year.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

The only alternative would be not to approve the pay policy statement, but that would be contrary to the requirements of the Localism Act.

78. Half Yearly Performance Report including Progress on Strategic Plan Action Plan

The Assistant Chief Executive submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member together with minute 42 of the Scrutiny Panel meeting of 10 December 2013.

Councillor Davies, Chairman of the Scrutiny Panel, attended and with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Cabinet. The main area of concern for the Scrutiny Panel had been the increase in sickness absence attributed to mental health issues. It had been explained that this was an issue in a few pockets around the Council. She hoped that the issue was being investigated and addressed.

Councillor Turrell, Portfolio Holder for Strategy, explained that the administration took the issue very seriously and offered Councillor Davies a briefing with the relevant officers to explore the issue in more detail. Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, indicated that a programme of emotional resilience was being offered to staff, and those in particularly affected areas were being signposted towards this support.

Adrian Pritchard, Chief Executive and Head of the Paid Service, was invited to address Cabinet. Whilst it was the case that this was an issue in pockets of the Council, these

pockets were not static. This tended to be an issue in areas which were subject to Fundamental Service Reviews as staff were put at risk of redundancy. Emotional resilience support was being offered to staff to help them through the review process. Where staff were on long term sickness this was actively managed to help them return to work.

RESOLVED that:-

(a) The Performance Summary for the period up to the end of September 2013 at Appendix 1 of the Assistant Chief Executive's report be noted.

(b) The progress on the Strategic Plan Action Plan at Appendix 2 of the Assistant Chief Executive's report be noted.

REASONS

Part of the Council's performance management framework includes the commitment to report the Council's half yearly performance progress to Cabinet.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

No alternative options were presented to the Cabinet in the light of the nature of the report.

79. Member Development Group Policy and Councillor Role Profiles

The Assistant Chief Executive submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

RESOLVED that the Member Development Policy and Member Role Profiles be approved.

RECOMMENDED to COUNCIL that the revised Member Development Policy and Role Profiles be adopted.

REASONS

The Member Development Policy and Member Role Profiles were approved in February

2010. In view of the time that has elapsed it is good practice to look again at the policy and see if it is still fit for purpose, particularly in view of the forthcoming reassessment for Charter Status. Since the Member Role Profiles were approved, the structure of Council has changed and new responsibilities have emerged. Therefore this is an opportune point to review the profiles and check that they accurately reflect members' roles and responsibilities.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

It was open to the Cabinet to suggest amendments to the policy and the role profiles or not to approve them.

80. Transportation Review

Minute 19 of the Policy Review and Development Panel meeting of 4 November 2013 was referred to the Cabinet.

Council Barlow, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, thanked the Policy Review and Development Panel and the guests that attended the meeting on 4 November 2013, for their helpful suggestions.

RESOLVED that the following issues be borne in mind when considering the Council's future transportation policy:

- (i) The need for the Local Development Framework to consider how to attract funding for developers to create sustainable developments;
- (ii) To investigate further the high percentage of car usage for journeys of one mile or less and the possible measures to reduce these short journeys;
- (iii) To consider ways in which Essex County Council and the local rail operators could work more closely to provide a more integrated transport solution;
- (iv) To look into the ways in which freight is moved around with a view to reducing the number of van movements around the Borough for a more sustainable solution;
- (v) To investigate the possibility of utilising the Council's Licensing role in order to encourage the development of a demand led transport solution, similar to that being delivered in Maldon District;
- (vi) The need for the signage system in the Borough to be reviewed to ensure that it appropriately directs motorists through the town centre without exacerbating congestion problems;
- (vii) To initiate a public transport summit with a view to identifying a more sustainable, collaborative future provision;
- (viii) The need for local employers to be encouraged to provide home working solutions for their employees as a means to assist in the peak rush hour congestion problems;
- (ix) Bearing in mind transport poverty issues, the investigation of a moped hire type scheme for young people to access education and employment opportunities.

REASONS

Cabinet welcomed the recommendation from the Policy Review and Development

Panel and considered that the identified issues would strengthen the Council's transportation policies. The recommendations were in line with the approach already being taken by the Cabinet.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

It was open to the Cabinet not to agree the recommendation from the Policy Review and Development Panel or to agree with some of the issues put forward by the Panel.

81. Introduction of 20 mph Speed Limits in Colchester

Minute 20 of the Policy Review and Development Panel meeting of 4 November 2013 was referred to the Cabinet.

Councillor Hunt, Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services noted that whilst the Local Highway Panel would now deal with requests for 20 mph speed limits, no additional funding had been made available to support this work.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The work of the Task and Finish Group be noted.
- (b) It be noted that a local request based approach, via the Local Highway Panel, is to be pursued to introduce 20mph limits in Colchester.

REASONS

Cabinet noted the recommendation from the Policy Review and Development Panel.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

No alternative options were put forward to Cabinet.

82. Appointments to External Organisations

The Assistant Chief Executive submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

RESOLVED that the contents of the reports from those Councillors appointed to external organisations which are of strategic importance be noted.

REASONS

The Council makes a number of appointments to external organisations and Council Groups. These are normally made at the first Cabinet meeting of the municipal year. As a matter of good governance, those who are appointed to external organisations are

invited to report on the work of the organisation to the Cabinet. This enables Cabinet to see the value of the appointments it makes and the contribution that those appointed to external organisations make.

A number of appointments are made to organisations of strategic importance to the Borough. In view of their importance, it is appropriate that appointees to these organisations report on a six monthly basis.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

No alternative options were proposed.

83. Progress of Responses to the Public

The Assistant Chief Executive 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/Panel resolved under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended) 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.

84. Commercial Review of Community Alarms Service – Business Plan

Minute 22 of the Trading Board meeting on the 8 January 2014 was referred to Cabinet, including the Business Plan.

Councillor Turrell, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, reported that Councillor Greenhill, Chairman of the Trading Board, was unable to attend the meeting but had written to Cabinet members to express his support for the business plan and recommending its approval. Councillor Turrell and Councillor Bourne, Portfolio for Housing, indicated their support for the business case.

Cabinet thanked the Trading Board for its work in bringing forward the proposals.

RESOLVED that:-

(a) The Business Plan for the Commercial Review of Community Alarms Service be approved.

(b) The revenue investment required by the Business Plan be funded via the New Homes Bonus.

REASONS

The Trading Board has reviewed commercial proposals for the Community Alarms service and has recommended the Business Plan to Cabinet for approval. Cabinet considered that the Business Plan was sound.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

It was open to Cabinet not to approve the Business Plan or to approve it subject to amendments.



Cabinet

Item
7(i)

5th March 2014

Report of	Head of Commercial Services	Author	Karen Paton
Title	Colchester's Homelessness Strategy 2014-2019		
Wards affected	All wards		

This report concerns the adoption of a new Homelessness Strategy for Colchester

1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To adopt a new Homelessness Strategy for Colchester for 2014 to 2019
- 1.2 To recommend to full Council that the strategy be adopted as part of the Council's Policy Framework.

2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility to produce and publish a Homelessness Strategy based on a homelessness review every five years.
- 2.2 The new Homelessness Strategy for Colchester takes account of national guidance and local priorities arising from the homelessness review and consultation responses received. A corporate commitment to preventing homelessness is fundamental to achieving the main objectives of the Homelessness Strategy.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 To not adopt the Homelessness Strategy. However it is a legal requirement to have a Homelessness Strategy and no alternatives exist to a review of homelessness and the development of a new strategy and delivery plan.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires all local authorities to carry out a homelessness review, develop a Homelessness Strategy for their area to prevent homelessness, and provide accommodation and/or support for people who are or may become homeless.
- 4.2 To develop the Strategy a toolkit produced by Homeless Link, (a national charity supporting people and organisations working directly with homeless people in England) was used. The toolkit was designed to help support local authorities develop preventing homelessness strategies that are fit for purpose. These are strategies that seek to deliver improved and improving services to anyone in the local area that is homeless or threatened with homelessness, regardless of whether they may be owed the main statutory homelessness duty.

The toolkit incorporates the Ten 'Local Authority Challenges' set out in the government report 'Making every contact count; A Joint Approach to Preventing Homelessness', and also how local homelessness strategies can contribute to local authorities achieving 'Gold Standard' housing options services. Local authorities are encouraged to work in partnership to deliver robust homelessness strategies. A representative from the Specialist Advisor Team from Homeless Link (a group of advisors that work with Local Authorities providing support and good practice guidance) is a member of the project group.

Working in Partnership to deliver a homelessness strategy for Colchester

4.3 Based on the recommendations from the Developing Homelessness Strategies Toolkit, a project Group of Key Stakeholders was set up in March 2013 to look at the ways in which the Council and its partner organisations could work together to tackle homelessness in the borough. In order to fulfil this remit the project group:

- Looked at the achievements from the previous strategy and ways to build on these.
- Took into account changes that have impacted on homelessness as a result of the Localism Act and Welfare Reform.
- Identified key priorities to help tackle homelessness in the borough.
- Produced an evidence base to include data and commentary on the current and predicted future levels of homelessness and homelessness prevention in the Borough.
- Conducted a review of homelessness which included service user consultation, service mapping and the resources available to tackle homelessness including:
 - Funding
 - Advice
 - Support.

Members of the Homelessness Strategy Project Group included:

- Colchester Borough Council – Strategic Housing Team, Community Initiatives Team and the Customer Service Centre.
- Colchester Borough Homes – Housing Services Team, Housing Options Team and Tenancy Services Team.
- Voluntary organisations that support and/or provide accommodation for homeless people including; The April Centre, Beacon House, Colchester Emergency Night Shelter.
- Youth Enquiry Service – support and advice specifically for under 25's.
- One Support - Floating support service.
- Family Mosaic – Housing with support representatives.
- Colne Housing Association.
- Essex Probation Service.
- Regional representative Homeless Link.
- Job Centre Plus.

Information was also shared with other groups that meet regularly and who also had the opportunity to feed into the strategy and action plan. These groups included:

- The Housing Forum
- The Young Persons Housing Forum
- The Supported Housing Network Meeting.

- 4.4 The review of homelessness in Colchester identified 4 key priorities to reduce and prevent homelessness which form the basis of the strategy and delivery plan. These are:
- Preventing homelessness by sustaining tenancies.
 - Mitigating the impacts of welfare reform.
 - Improving the health and wellbeing of homeless people.
 - Changing the culture and perception of social housing through education and managing expectations.

Additionally because of the significant rise in people sleeping rough across the borough since 2010, there is also a section that focuses on Rough Sleepers. This section also includes single homeless people that the Council does not owe a duty to house under homelessness legislation.

- 4.5 The Homelessness Strategy demonstrates how Colchester Borough Council and its partner organisations are committed to preventing homelessness in the borough. The Strategy is a concise document that links to other strategies. The Homelessness Strategy will continue to be a sub document of the Housing Strategy which is due to be rewritten in 2014. To avoid duplication, the objectives in the Homelessness Strategy do not include priorities that are covered by the Housing Strategy.
- 4.6 The Strategy will be a live document that will achieve its aims and objectives through the implementation of a 5 year Delivery Plan that will tackle the levels of homelessness in the Borough by working closely with partner organisations and focusing on early interventions that prevent homelessness.

4.7 **Monitoring and review**

The Homelessness Strategy is intended to be a working document with actions being implemented throughout the life of the strategy. Therefore the Delivery Plan will be updated by the Place Strategy Team on a regular basis.

A report on the progress of the Strategy and Delivery Plan will be produced on an annual basis and circulated to the relevant stakeholders and presented to the Portfolio Holder for Housing or the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Housing.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Cabinet adopt the Homelessness Strategy 2014 - 2019 and in doing so support the implementation of the delivery plan, which will deliver the strategy, within the timescales set out.

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 Colchester's Homelessness Strategy has several links to the Strategic Plan including:
- Providing more affordable homes across the borough.
 - Enabling local communities to help themselves.
 - Supporting more vulnerable groups.
 - Engaging with the voluntary sector.
 - Working in partnerships to help tackle health and crime issues.

- Showing tolerance and changing behaviours to create better local communities.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 Service user consultation took place in July and August 2013. It was agreed by the project group that two methods of consultation would be used to capture as much information as possible from people that are currently homeless or have been homeless previously. The two methods used were questionnaire and focus groups.
- 7.2 Questionnaires were distributed by organisations that provide accommodation, advice and support to homeless people in Colchester to people that used these services. The questionnaire sought views on the experience of being homeless in Colchester which included; reasons for becoming homeless, use of services, help and support provision and health. The number of questionnaires completed was 33 out of 200.
- 7.3 The questionnaire was used as the basis for Focus Groups that were held at Beacon House, in the form of a drop in session for over 25's, and at the Youth Enquiry Service for under 25's. It was agreed by the project group that separate sessions would be held as the experience of homelessness could differ depending on age. The venues were carefully chosen as they were familiar to the relevant service users.
- 7.4 Over 20 service users attended the drop in sessions at Beacon House and 8 attended the session at the Youth Enquiry Service This gave a valuable insight into the issues and challenges that homeless people face. The comments and suggestions provided by the service users have been fed into the strategy and delivery plan to help identify and meet the priorities.
- 7.5 Consultation was also held with key stakeholders on the draft Homelessness Strategy, the evidence base and delivery plan. Some changes were identified and the documents were updated to reflect these.
- 7.6 Colchester Borough Homes Board were also consulted and invited to give their views on the Homelessness Strategy at their meeting in February. The board gave very positive feedback on the strategy and delivery Plan and recognised the importance of a strategic approach to preventing homelessness for the Housing Options Team, which has recently been transferred to Colchester Borough Homes.
- 7.7 The Tenants and Leaseholders Consultative Committee (TLCC) have also been given the opportunity to comment on the strategy, which was well received by the group. A small amendment has been added to the Introduction as a result of the meeting.
- 7.8 The Homelessness Strategy, Delivery Plan and Evidence Base were also considered by Scrutiny Panel on 11th February 2014. The minutes from the panel are attached to the report as appendix 1.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 The Homelessness Strategy documents will be published on the Council's website. A communications plan is being developed to publicise the Strategy and generate interest and commitment to the Delivery Plan.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1 Any resources required to implement the actions in the Homelessness Strategy will be delivered from existing budgets. We will work to encourage our partners to commit their resources to meeting the priorities set out in the strategy. As many of the organisations are members of the Homelessness Strategy Project Group they have already helped to shape the strategy and shown their commitment to its delivery.
- 9.2 Colchester Borough Council receives a yearly grant from the Department of Communities and Local Government to work with partner organisations to prevent homelessness in the borough. This will help towards the implementation of some of the actions identified in the strategy.
- 9.3 In February 2012 The Greater Haven Gateway sub region was awarded £362,000 to bolster front line provision to prevent single homelessness and rough sleeping and support the roll out of 'No Second Night Out'. The money was allocated to deliver services across the sub region and not on an individual Local Authority basis. This will also help to implement actions identified in the relevant section of the Homelessness Strategy

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment on the Homelessness Strategy has been completed and a link to the document can be found [here](#) or by following the pathway from the homepage of the Council's website, www.colchester.gov.uk : Council and Democracy/Policies, Strategies and Performance/Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessments/Commercial Services.

11. Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 It is anticipated that with the implementation of the Homelessness Strategy Delivery Plan there will be a positive benefit for Community Safety.

12. Health and Safety Implications

There are no health and safety implications

13. Risk Management Implications

There are no risk management implications

Attachments:-

Colchester's Homelessness Strategy 2014-2019
Delivery Plan 2014-2019
Evidence Base

Appendix 1 –Extract from the minutes of the Scrutiny Panel meeting on 11th February 2014



Colchester's Draft Homelessness Strategy 2014 – 2019

Draft Homelessness Strategy and Review to be considered in conjunction
with the draft Delivery Plan and Evidence Base

Foreword

I am proud to introduce this strategy for preventing and addressing homelessness in Colchester.

This is Colchester Borough Council's third Homelessness Strategy and follows the last Strategy which was published in 2008.

Since the publication of the 2008 Strategy significant achievements have been made in the prevention of homelessness in Colchester.

Having successfully reduced the number of households in temporary accommodation and achieved the Government's target in December 2010, we have also improved the accommodation that we offer to homeless households whilst they wait for a permanent home to become available.

By working together with our partner organisations there have been significant improvements in the services that are provided for young people in the borough, including the introduction of the Joint referral panel for 16-25 year olds.

We have increased the supply of available accommodation for people in housing need and have continued to work closely with Landlords in the private rented sector to improve access to accommodation.

Due to the increase in the number of street homeless people in Colchester we have used government funding to increase the provision of resettlement services to help homeless people into accommodation.

Whilst the new Homelessness Strategy looks to build on these successes it has been developed against fresh and bigger challenges that threaten to increase homelessness and make it more difficult for people to meet their housing need. People become and stay homeless for a whole range of complex and overlapping reasons and solving homelessness is now about much more than finding a home for people.

However, by continuing to work in partnership with organisations in Colchester to prevent homelessness, we will focus on our key priorities to; help people sustain their tenancies, mitigate the negative impacts of welfare reform, improve the health and wellbeing of homeless people and manage expectations by changing the perception and culture of social housing through education.

I would like to thank all our partner organisations that continue to work with us to prevent homelessness in Colchester.

Councillor Tina Bourne
Portfolio Holder for Housing

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DRAFT

Introduction

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a statutory obligation on all local authorities to undertake a review of homelessness in their area and, based on the findings of this review, to develop and publish a strategy to tackle and prevent homelessness.

This is Colchester's third Homelessness Strategy. It has been developed by Colchester Borough Council and its partner organisations, all of whom are strongly committed to reducing and preventing homelessness in the borough.

The new Homelessness Strategy has looked back at the achievements since the last strategy in 2008, reviewed the current homelessness situation in Colchester and based on this, set out the priorities for the next five years.

During the last five years, the emphasis has been on preventing homelessness amongst hard to reach groups, offering advice and support to help people maintain their tenancies, working with partners and housing providers to increase housing options and to ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing.

The aim of the strategy over the next five years is to build on the progress already made in meeting these priorities and set out our plan to work in partnership to meet the new challenges that we face in the future.

The main causes of homelessness predominately remain the same; family and friends no longer willing or able to accommodate, loss of private sector or tied accommodation and relationship breakdown. However, it is recognised that welfare reform and the Localism Act 2011 will also have a significant impact on the way that services are delivered, and options needed to prevent and relieve homelessness.

What we have achieved so far...

Summary of the main achievements from the Homelessness Strategy 2008 – 2013

We have reduced and improved the temporary accommodation we offer:

- ▶ Colchester Borough Council (CBC) achieved the Government target to halve the number of households in temporary accommodation by December 2010. The target for Colchester was 170 and as at the end of December there were 166 households in temporary accommodation.
- ▶ CBC's temporary accommodation scheme Ascott House, has been demolished and new accommodation built in its place to provide self contained supported accommodation. It is now owned and managed by Family Mosaic. The new scheme is called Hargood House. Bardfield House and Friars Court have also been transferred to Family Mosaic from the Council and improvements will be made to the accommodation

We have improved the services we provide for young people:

- ▶ The Colchester Young Persons Housing Forum has been re-launched and regular information days have been held for agencies and organisations in Colchester on homelessness prevention.
- ▶ A Joint Referral Panel (JRP) for 16 – 25 year olds has been established which has streamlined referrals into supported accommodation units.
- ▶ The Passport to Independence, which is an accredited course for tenants in temporary accommodation and/or supported housing on managing a tenancy, has been rolled out across the Greater Haven Gateway sub – region after the scheme was successfully piloted in Suffolk.

We have increased the supply of available housing for people in housing need:

- ▶ The number of affordable housing units delivered in the last 3 years excluding shared/low cost home ownership schemes was 560.

- ▶ A pilot project on empty homes was completed in January 2012. As a result 14 properties were returned to use.
- ▶ In 2013 a Lodgings Scheme was set up with grant funding from the Department of Communities and Local Government under 'no second night out'. The scheme is being run by Solo Housing, a registered housing charity working across East Anglia.

We have continued to work closely with Landlords in the private rented sector to improve access to accommodation:

- ▶ A Landlords Day was held in May 2011 which replaced the traditional Landlords Forum held annually and was organised with input from three national landlord organisations. The event consisted of trade and council stands and a programme of talks and was attended by 45 to 50 landlords.
- ▶ A Landlords Forum was held in January 2013. The forum was well attended by 80 landlords and offered seminars on Welfare Reform, landlord responsibilities, and the benefits of having tenants that claim HB.
- ▶ A landlord learning event held on 29th October 2013 which was attended by 27 landlords and included information on legal matters around possession proceedings and notices seeking possession.
- ▶ The Private Sector Project Board has been established since November 2010 with regular monthly meetings to co-ordinate the Council's action in working with the Private Sector.
- ▶ In September 2013 CBC joined a partnership with six other local authorities across Essex to procure a provider for the Essex Landlord Accreditation Scheme. The scheme is due to be launched in May 2014.

We have increased the provision of resettlement services to help homeless people:

- ▶ The Greater Haven Gateway (GHG) was awarded £40k grant from the DCLG in 2011 to set up outreach and resettlement services for rough sleepers. Colchester BC and Tendring DC were awarded £18,500 for the April Centre to provide an outreach and resettlement programme across both areas. The scheme

successfully supported 27 street homeless people in Colchester into accommodation.

- ▶ As part of the roll out of 'no second night out' the DCLG awarded additional funding in February 2012 to the GHG of £362,000. Some of this funding was awarded to the April Centre to continue to provide an Outreach and resettlement service to prevent single homelessness and rough sleeping.

The Strategic Context

To put the Homelessness Strategy in perspective, this section focuses on the legal, national and local context.

The legal framework

The Housing Act 1996

Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 continues to be the overarching piece of legislation that relates to homelessness and informs the way in which local authorities respond to homelessness.

The Act has since been amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2011. These subsequent pieces of legislation have placed a requirement on Local Authorities to adopt a strategic approach to managing and preventing homelessness.

The Localism Act 2011

Section 153 of the Localism Act 2011 prescribes the relationship between schemes and strategies that local authorities must have regard to in developing or modifying their local preventing homelessness strategies:

'In formulating or modifying a homelessness strategy, a local housing authority in England shall have regard to—
(a) its current allocation scheme under section 166A of the Housing Act 1996,
(b) its current tenancy strategy under section 150 of the Localism Act 2011'

National Context

Laying the foundations: a Housing Strategy for England 2011

The strategy set out the government's new approach for housing by giving local communities a greater say over decisions on housing in order to provide a stable, long term increase in housing supply.

The government's vision for social housing outlined in the strategy is to make better use of social housing to support those who need it most.

Laying the foundations sets out a package of reforms to:

- ▶ get the housing market moving again
- ▶ lay the foundations for a more responsive, effective and stable housing market in the future
- ▶ support choice and quality for tenants
- ▶ improve environmental standards and design quality

The main aims of the strategy are to address concerns across the housing market by:

- ▶ Making it easier to secure mortgages on new homes.
- ▶ Improving fairness in social housing.
- ▶ Ensuring homes that have been left empty for years are lived in again.

Vision to end rough sleeping: No Second Night Out nationwide July 2011

This is the first report produced by the ministerial working group. The group worked with local government and voluntary sector partners to produce the report which focused on ending rough sleeping.

The Ministerial Working Group on Homelessness brought together 8 government departments to tackle the complex causes of homelessness. This included health, work and training as well as housing.

The report, 'No Second Night Out nationwide', set out 6 joint commitments:

- ▶ Helping people off the streets.
- ▶ Helping people access healthcare.
- ▶ Helping people into work.
- ▶ Reducing bureaucratic burdens.
- ▶ Increasing local control over investment in services.
- ▶ Developing responsibility in tackling homelessness.

The commitments set out the aim of the group to work across government to give local people the tools to tackle rough sleeping and put an end to second nights out on the street.

Making Every Contact Count: A joint approach to preventing homelessness August 2012

The second report by the Ministerial Working Group was produced to build on the progress made since 'no second night out' by ensuring that agencies worked together to support those at risk of homelessness.

The report sets out how services can be managed in a way that prevents all households from reaching a crisis point where they are faced with homelessness.

The aim of the report is to ensure that every contact local agencies make with vulnerable people and families really counts.

The report brings together government commitments to:

- ▶ tackle troubled childhoods and adolescence
- ▶ improve health
- ▶ reduce involvement in crime
- ▶ improve skills; employment; and financial
- ▶ pioneer social funding for homelessness

The report poses ten local challenges to the sector which it is hoped will lead to all local homelessness teams delivering a gold standard service.

The ten local challenges are to:

- ▶ adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services
- ▶ actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs
- ▶ offer a Housing Options prevention service, including written advice, to all clients
- ▶ adopt a *No Second Night Out* model or an effective local alternative
- ▶ have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that includes appropriate accommodation and support
- ▶ develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both clients and landlords
- ▶ actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme
- ▶ have a homelessness strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually so that it is responsive to emerging needs
- ▶ not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in Bed and Breakfast accommodation

- ▶ not place any families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and then for no longer than 6 weeks

Improving outcomes and supporting transparency – A Public Health Outcomes Framework for England 2013 – 2016 Part 1 January 2012

The document sets out the new framework for public health and recognises the factors that influence public health over the course of a lifetime including poverty, education, housing, employment, crime and pollution.

The document outlines how the NHS, social care, the voluntary sector and communities will work together to plan and deliver services to improve health inequalities.

The new Public Health Outcomes Framework is in three parts. Part 1 introduces the two overarching outcomes that set the vision for the whole public health system.

These two outcomes are:

- ▶ Increased healthy life expectancy.
- ▶ Reduced differences in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy between communities.

The document recognises the important link between health inequality and homelessness and sets out key indicators under Domain 1 'improving the wider detriments of health' to meet the outcomes.

Local and Sub regional context

Essex Health and Wellbeing Board – Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Essex October 2012

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy has been developed and is being implemented by the Health and Wellbeing Board, which brings together key partners to improve the health and wellbeing for the communities of Essex.

The main source of evidence that has fed into the strategy has been the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). The JSNA has provided information on the health and wellbeing of the population of Essex; the wider determinants of health; and the quality of life in the county. The JSNA has also provided the basis for the key priorities for the strategy. The priorities are:

- ▶ Starting and developing well.
- ▶ Living and working well.
- ▶ Ageing well.

The main focus of the strategy is to reduce health inequalities and tackle the wider determinants of health to increase life expectancy and reduce inequalities between areas and groups.

The strategy acknowledged that one of the main health and wellbeing issues for Colchester was the high level of statutory homelessness. Homeless people are more likely to experience a poorer quality of life across all the wider determinants of ill-health.

The Greater Haven Gateway Housing Strategy 2011

The Greater Haven Gateway (GHG) Housing Strategy sets out the key ideas and plans for strategic housing in the sub region. The partnership works across eight Local Authorities (LAs) in north east Essex and south east Suffolk including; Babergh, Braintree, Colchester, Ipswich, Maldon, Mid Suffolk, Suffolk Coastal and Tendring.

The vision for the strategy *is' to build on the maturity of the GHG strategic housing partnership to work together on issues that benefit from a collaborative approach'.*

The main 5 objectives of the strategy that were agreed by the Local Authority partnership are to:

- ▶ Enable the development of high quality and sustainable affordable housing.
- ▶ Improve the condition and use of existing housing.
- ▶ Maximise customers' housing choices and mobility.
- ▶ Provide enhanced housing options based on an understanding of the links between health, well being, training, employment and housing to help prevent homelessness and support vulnerable people.
- ▶ Increase the capacity and skills of the GHG partnership.

The Strategic Tenancy Strategy

The Localism Act required Local Housing Authorities in England to prepare and publish a strategic tenancy strategy that set out the principles to which the registered providers of social housing are to have regard when formulating policies that relate to:

- ▶ The types of tenancies that are granted.
- ▶ The circumstances in which a particular tenancy will be granted.
- ▶ Where tenancies are granted for a certain term, the length of the term.
- ▶ Circumstances in which a further tenancy will be granted when an existing tenancy comes to an end.

The Council worked with sub-regional partners to develop a sub-regional Strategic Tenancy Strategy to which all registered providers across the Greater Haven Gateway should have regard to.

The Council's Strategic Plan 2012-15

Colchester Borough Council's Strategic Plan sets out how the Council will play its part in making Colchester a place where people want to live, learn, work and visit.

The Council's priorities are placed under two categories:

- ▶ Leading our communities.
- ▶ Delivering high quality assessable services.

The Homelessness Strategy meets the following key priorities from the strategic plan by:

- ▶ Supporting more vulnerable groups.
- ▶ Providing more affordable homes across the borough.
- ▶ Engaging with the voluntary sector.
- ▶ Working in partnerships to help tackle health and crime issues.

A Housing Strategy for Colchester

Whilst the Homelessness Strategy is a document in its own right, it also forms part of Colchester's overarching Housing Strategy. Therefore to avoid duplication the key priorities proposed in the Homelessness Strategy will not include priorities that have historically been covered by the Housing Strategy.

The current housing strategy was developed in 2008 to cover the five years from July 2008 to June 2013. The housing strategy has an accompanying action plan to direct the work of the council and its partners. The action plan has been refreshed in 2012 and 2013 to:

- ▶ Enable work to build on achievements already made.
- ▶ Reflect changes in the economy and the housing sector.
- ▶ Reflect changes resulting from the Housing Fundamental Service Review.

The current action plan covers the period 2013 -14.

A new five year Housing Strategy for Colchester will be developed in 2014/2015 in conjunction with the Housing Strategy partnership with representatives from the Colchester Borough Council, private developers, Colchester Borough Homes and other Registered Providers.

The overall vision for the Council and its partners is to:

*'Make Colchester a place where people choose to live in a decent, safe home which; meets their needs, at a price they can afford and in locations and neighbourhoods that are sustainable and desirable.
Work to improve the quality of life of local residents'.*

The Review

Homelessness in Colchester – The Local Picture

Key messages from the evidence base:

- ▶ As at 31st March 2012 there were 75,945 dwellings in Colchester borough of which 6257 are owned by the Local Authority.
- ▶ A total of 1012 homes were built in Colchester between April 2011 and March 2012 of which 366 were recorded affordable housing completions.
- ▶ The average household price across the borough in April 2012 was £214,573.
- ▶ There has been an increase in minority ethnic groups in Colchester from 2001-2011 from 3.8% - 8.0%.
- ▶ 18% of Homeless applications to Colchester Borough Council in 2012-2013 were from minority ethnic groups.
- ▶ During the financial year 2012- 2013 there were 342 homeless decisions made by Colchester Borough Council of which 251 households were accepted as being owed a homelessness duty.
- ▶ A third of all households accepted became homeless because they were asked to leave by a parent, family or friends; 21% had their private sector or tied accommodation brought to an end and 15% were households where a relationship had broken down.
- ▶ Of the households accepted 50% had dependent children, 20% were single vulnerable adults and 11% were 16/17 year olds.
- ▶ As at March 31st 2013 there were 168 households in Temporary Accommodation which was a slight reduction than at the same time the previous year.
- ▶ During 2012-2013 there were 411 households prevented from becoming homeless in Colchester of which 328 cases were prevented by Colchester Borough Council.
- ▶ The number of social housing lettings in Colchester in 2012 - 2013 was 624 of which 29% were let to homeless households.

- ▶ In July 2013 information from the Department of Work and Pensions showed that 98 households in Colchester would potentially be affected by the benefit cap.
- ▶ The number of under occupied households in the social rented sector (by 1 bedroom or more) in Colchester as at July 2013 was 904.
- ▶ Since 2010 the estimated figure for rough sleeping in Colchester has significantly increased from 10 people in 2010 to 25 people in 2012 and 35 people in 2013.

How the strategy was developed

A project Group of Key Stakeholders was set up to look at the ways in which the Council and its partner organisations can work together to prevent and reduce homelessness and provide services that meet the needs of homeless people in the borough.

The project group identified key priorities for the new Homelessness Strategy and developed the Delivery Plan to meet these priorities. In order to fulfil its remit the group:

- ▶ Conducted a review of homelessness in Colchester which included service user consultation, service mapping and identifying resources available to tackle homelessness including; funding advice and support.
- ▶ Looked at the achievements from the current strategy and ways to build on these.
- ▶ Considered the challenges that have impacted on homelessness with the Localism Act and Welfare Reform.
- ▶ Produced an evidence base to include data and commentary on the current and predicted future levels of homelessness and homelessness prevention in the Borough.

The organisations that were represented on the project group are:

Colchester Borough Council – Strategic Housing Team, Housing Options Team and Community Initiatives Team, Customer Service Centre
 Colchester Borough Homes
 The April Centre
 Beacon House
 Colchester Emergency Night Shelter
 One Support
 Family Mosaic

Colne Housing
Essex Probation
Regional representative Homeless Link
The Job Centre Plus

Other groups that meet regularly have also been involved in the development of the strategy and information from these groups has fed into the strategy and delivery plan. These groups include:

- The Housing Forum
- The Young Persons Housing Forum
- The Supported Housing Network Meeting

The Scope of the Homelessness Strategy

The review of homelessness in Colchester has identified 4 key priorities to reduce and prevent homelessness which will form the basis of the strategy and delivery plan. These are:

- ▶ Preventing homelessness by sustaining tenancies.
- ▶ Mitigating the impacts of welfare reform.
- ▶ Improving the health and wellbeing of homeless people.
- ▶ Changing the culture and perception of social housing through education and managing expectations.

Additionally because of the significant rise in people sleeping rough across the borough since 2010, there is also a section that focuses on Rough Sleepers. This section will also include single homeless people that the Council does not owe a duty to house under homelessness legislation.

Consultation

Service user consultation took place in July and August 2013. It was agreed by the project group that two methods of consultation would be used to capture as much information as possible from people that are currently homeless or have been homeless previously.

Questionnaires were distributed to organisations that provide accommodation, advice and support to homeless people in Colchester who were able to hand out the questionnaires to people that used the service. The questionnaire sought views on the experience of being homeless in Colchester which included; reasons for becoming homeless, use of services, help and support provision and Health. The number of questionnaires completed was 33 out of 200.

The questionnaire was used as the basis for Focus Groups that were held at Beacon House, in the form of a drop in session for over 25's, and at the Youth Enquiry Service for under 25's.

It was agreed by the project group that separate sessions would be held as the experience of homelessness could differ depending on age. The venues were carefully chosen as they were familiar to the relevant service users.

The sessions were well attended and gave a valuable insight into the issues and challenges that homeless people face.

The key messages that came out of the consultation are:

The people that responded to the questionnaire and attended the focus groups were mainly white British and between the age of 36-59 years

The main reason for becoming homeless was friend/family eviction and relationship breakdown

In order to lead a more settled life, people most need help with emotional and mental health problems and managing a tenancy

The main problem for people who do not have a settled home is finding employment

The main health problems are depression and mental health

The help and support provided by the voluntary sector agencies in Colchester was much appreciated by homeless people

There is no where for homeless people to go during a large part of the day

There is a general lack of understanding of welfare benefits and homelessness law

The comments and suggestions provided by service users have been fed into the strategy and delivery plan to help meet the priorities.

The Key Priorities for the Strategy

The review of homelessness in Colchester including the findings from the consultation identified 4 key priorities for the strategy:

- ▶ Preventing homelessness by sustaining tenancies.
- ▶ Mitigating the negative impacts of welfare reform.
- ▶ Improving the Health and Wellbeing of homeless people.
- ▶ Changing the perception and culture of social housing through education – managing expectations.
- ▶ A separate section in the strategy on rough sleepers has also been included.

Priority 1: Preventing homelessness by sustaining tenancies

The review highlighted the need for the Council and its partner organisations to continue to prevent homelessness and help people sustain their tenancies by early intervention and providing good quality advice and support services.

We recognise the importance of a multi agency approach to tenancy sustainment and we will look for new and innovative ways to prevent homelessness and help tenants remain in their homes.

To meet this aim we will need to:

- ▶ Increase provision of tenancy support (including floating support) and debt advice to tenants in the social rented sector.
- ▶ Prevent Homelessness by helping people sustain their tenancies, through the increased provision of debt and welfare rights advice – to include work being done on this by the Night Shelter and the April Centre for single homeless people.
- ▶ Reduce the number of owner occupiers losing their properties through mortgage arrears – to include Mortgage Rescue Schemes and other government initiatives.
- ▶ Provide services that will support young tenants to maintain their tenancy and prevent unnecessary evictions through pre eviction panels – to include temporary accommodation and supported housing schemes.

- ▶ Increase prevention of homelessness caused by domestic violence – including raising awareness and breaking the cycle through generations.
- ▶ Improve release programmes for people leaving Care and Institutions’ such as Prison and Armed Forces – including more information needed about people leaving institutions, planned discharge procedures.

Priority 2: Mitigating the negative impacts of welfare reform

The change to the benefit system brought about by welfare reform has already started to impact on the lives of homeless people in Colchester. In 2012 the Council set up a project group of key stakeholders to respond to these changes.

The impacts to housing customers mainly arise from four policy areas:

- The Benefit Cap.
- The removal of the spare room subsidy in the social rented sector – under occupation.
- Introduction of Local Council Tax Support.
- Universal credit.

We have developed a proactive approach to support a number of our residents to ensure that the impact of the changes is minimised.

Colchester Borough Council and Jobcentre Plus have been working in partnership to support claimants potentially affected by the welfare reform. Together we have developed a framework of advice and support to help residents.

A joint Customer Support Team has been formed based in the Customer Service Centre which has been contacting residents to provide advice on housing options, welfare benefits, money management and support in finding employment.

The table below shows the expected impact of the key reforms affecting homelessness and how Colchester Borough Council will work in partnership to mitigate these impacts:

Welfare Reform	Expected Impact	Mitigation	Work already being undertaken
Household Benefit Caps: total maximum benefit of £500pw for couple/single	- More households likely to fall into rent arrears. - Potential for	- Promote the availability of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)	- Residents potentially affected by the benefit cap contacted in July 2012 to give support and advice - launch of online DHP

<p>parent households, £350pw for single people</p>	<p>increased levels of homelessness, particularly amongst larger households.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide advice and support to tenants potentially affected - help to assist tenants into employment 	<p>applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data exchange with Registered Providers (RP's) to share potentially affected customers - mixed media communications to residents and partners
<p>The removal of the spare room subsidy in the social rented sector – under occupation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More households looking to move to smaller accommodation – increase in demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote mutual exchange to encourage tenants to move - Review existing policies to encourage tenants to move and make better use of housing stock - help to assist tenants into employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two Mutual exchange fairs have taken place in conjunction with other RP's. Numbers of mutual exchanges have increased since January 2013. - targeted advice and support provided to tenants potentially affected - mixed media communications to residents and partners - launch of online DHP applications - Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) have made visits to tenants to offer support in finding employment, applying for benefits and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) or moving to a smaller property
<p>Council Tax Benefit replaced by Local Council Tax Support scheme (LCTS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased demand on finances of low-income households - increase in rent arrears and evictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify and support residents affected especially vulnerable clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - targeted advice and support provided to residents potentially affected especially vulnerable clients - To date 2200 customers have been contacted 2200 and 186 face to face interviews conducted - mixed media communications to residents and partners
<p>Universal Credit Single monthly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase in number of households with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify and support tenants with managing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CBC and DWP working in partnership to prepare for the change

<p>payment, paid in arrears - new claims to Universal Credit are expected in Essex from February 2014</p>	<p>rent arrears due to lack of financial management - Fewer PRS landlords willing to rent to households in receipt of benefits</p>	<p>budgets</p>	<p>- CBC working with other Local Authorities across Essex - CBH have recruited a Financial Assistance Officer to offer tenants support with budgeting and financial advice</p>
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Priority 3: Improving the Health and Wellbeing of homeless people

The review recognised the impact that homelessness is having on health. Homeless people experience some of the poorest health in our communities and without good health it can be difficult for people to move on and secure and maintain accommodation.

Homeless link have highlighted that improving the health of people who are homeless is central to reducing health inequalities and achieving the goal of ending homelessness.

A study of the healthcare of single homeless people by the Department of Health found that because of their higher levels of need, homeless people use acute health services disproportionately to the general population. The study estimated that this group used hospital services at a rate of 4 to 8 times more than the general population.

In Colchester the voluntary sector organisations already support homeless people to access health services and manage their health problems. However, further action is required to improve the suitability, access and take up of health services.

To meet this aim we will need to:

- ▶ Work in partnership with the Public Health Team at Essex County Council (ECC) on the Homelessness Health Needs Audit to gather local information on the health needs of homeless people.
- ▶ Collate the information from the Health Needs Audit to identify services to meet the health needs of homeless people in Colchester. The results will inform ECC's Joint Strategic Needs assessment.

- ▶ Promote the integration between health and housing to meet the actions identified in the Public Health Outcomes Framework.
- ▶ Continue to work on the relationship between the Housing Options Team and the Mental Health Team to improve the hospital discharge process.

Priority 4: Changing the perception and culture of social housing through education – managing expectations

Due to the increasing demand for social housing and the reduction in the number of properties available through the Council's Housing Register, the review identified the need to manage the expectations of people who apply for social housing.

With more young people becoming homeless in Colchester, educating families on the reality of homelessness is key to changing the perception and culture of social housing.

A multi agency approach is needed to identify and support alternative housing solutions to give young people move-on options.

To meet this aim we will need to:

- ▶ Provide wider communication of Colchester Borough Council's Housing and Homelessness Services.
- ▶ Develop early intervention and prevention options for Young People at risk of becoming homeless in the Borough – to work with the ECC Homeless Youth Specialists to raise awareness of family breakdown and provide basic strategies and signposting to support families to resolve conflict.
- ▶ Increase and support housing options for single people and vulnerable groups including: Solo Housing Scheme, YMCA Supported Lodgings Scheme.

Rough Sleepers

Since 2010 there have been an increasing number of single homeless and rough sleepers in the borough. In 2012 the estimated number of rough sleepers in Colchester was 25. It was agreed by the council and partner organisations in Colchester that an estimate rather than a count would be returned to the Department of Communities and Local Government for 2013. The estimate revealed that there were 35 rough sleepers in Colchester.

In 2011 The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) made a one off payment of £40,000 to a group of local authorities in Essex and the Greater Haven Gateway. The funding was used for the purposes of supporting work to prevent and tackle rough sleeping.

Colchester and Tendring were awarded £18,750 of the funding which was provided to the April Centre (based in both local authority areas) to carry out outreach work which included making contact with rough sleepers, helping them find and secure accommodation, introducing them to other support agencies and helping to facilitate a more settled lifestyle.

The success of the project highlighted the need to build on the outreach work by statutory and voluntary organisations working together to provide the right help in the right place at the right time.

The consultation identified the issues that single homeless people and rough sleepers face day to day in Colchester and specific actions that are needed to prevent homelessness for this group. These actions include:

- ▶ Establish a multi agency group of support services for single homeless and rough sleepers in Colchester to identify gaps in service provision and to avoid duplication of services.
- ▶ Set up a protocol between voluntary sector organisations to enable data on rough sleepers to be shared.
- ▶ Identify the support needs of different types of rough sleepers including entrenched rough sleepers, young people that are 'new' to the streets, people suffering from mental health to help engage with different groups.
- ▶ Explore the possibility of extending the opening times of agencies to reduce the amount of time that rough sleepers spend on the street.
- ▶ Identify move-on opportunities for rough sleepers to help with transition from living on the street.

How the Homelessness Strategy and Delivery Plan will be monitored

The Homelessness Strategy is intended to be a working document with actions being implemented throughout the life of the strategy. Therefore the Delivery Plan will be updated on a regular basis.

A report on the progress of the Strategy and Delivery Plan will be produced on an annual basis and circulated to the relevant stakeholders.

Homelessness Strategy Delivery Plan 2014 – 2019

Priority 1: Preventing homelessness by sustaining tenancies				
How this priority will be achieved	Key Actions	Smart target	By When	By Whom
Increase the provision of tenancy support including floating support to tenants in social rented sector	<p>1.1 Encourage the take up of tenancy floating support through One support to vulnerable tenants moving into accommodation</p> <p>1.2 Tenancy support Officers to identify and support clients in accommodation</p>	Increased take up of One support service – increase in tenants sustaining their tenancy – reduction in number of evictions for rent arrears and ASB	Throughout the lifetime of the strategy	<p>Customer Service Centre/Colchester Borough Homes/Registered Providers</p> <p>Colchester Borough Homes – Tenancy Support Officers</p>
Prevent Homelessness by helping people sustain their tenancies, through the increased provision of debt and welfare rights advice	<p>1.3 Provide support and advice to tenants on managing debt and welfare benefits including organisations working with single homeless</p> <p>1.4 Increase the availability and provision of debt advice in the Borough and promote existing</p>	<p>Reduction in the number of evictions for rent arrears</p> <p>Increase take up of welfare benefits</p> <p>Increase in number of people using the Credit Union</p>	Throughout the lifetime of the strategy	<p>Colchester Borough Homes – Financial Inclusion Officer/CAB/Credit Union/April Centre/Beacon House/Night Shelter</p>

Priority 1: Preventing homelessness by sustaining tenancies					
How this priority will be achieved	Key Actions	Smart target	By When	By Whom	
	<p>services including the CAB</p> <p>1.5 Continue to raise awareness of the Credit Union to avoid clients using expensive doorstep credit providers</p>				
Reduce the number of owner occupiers losing their properties through mortgage arrears	<p>1.6 Provide advice and support services to home owners threatened with repossession at an early stage so that homelessness can be prevented in a sustainable way</p> <p>1.7 Promote the Governments Mortgage Rescue Scheme</p>	Reduction in homeless applications due to repossession	Throughout the lifetime of the strategy	Colchester Borough Homes - Housing Options Team	
Provide services that will support young tenants to maintain their tenancy and prevent unnecessary	1.8 Develop early intervention programmes for young people under 25 including pre eviction	Reduction in Young People being evicted from their tenancy including Temporary Accommodation and	October 2014	Colchester Borough Homes – Housing Options Team/Supported Housing Network,	

Priority 1: Preventing homelessness by sustaining tenancies					
How this priority will be achieved	Key Actions	Smart target	By When	By Whom	
evictions through ASB and Arrears	panels/pre tenancy workshops 1.9 Joint working with Supported Housing Schemes for under 25's on Notice to Quit Panels to prevent evictions	Supported Housing		CBH TSO's	
Improve release programmes for people leaving Care and Institutions' such as Prison and Armed Forces	1.10 Set up monitoring of release programmes from Prisons and Armed Forces 1.11 Work with Prisons, Armed Forces and Social Services on planned move-on routes - The April Centre is conducting visits to prisons to help those ready to be released	Data collected to inform policy Release programmes in place	Monitoring set up by April 2015 October 2015	Colchester Borough Homes/The April Centre	
Increase prevention of homelessness caused by domestic violence	1.12 continue to support the multi-agency partnership work with local	A reduction in homelessness caused by domestic violence	Throughout the lifetime of the strategy	Community Initiatives Team/Housing Options Team	

Priority 1: Preventing homelessness by sustaining tenancies				
How this priority will be achieved	Key Actions	Smart target	By When	By Whom
	domestic abuse agencies through the Domestic Violence Forum 1.13 Monitor the take up of the Sanctuary Scheme			

Priority 2: Mitigating the negative impacts of welfare reform				
How this priority will be achieved	Key Actions	Smart target	By When	By Whom
Provide advice and support to tenants/residents potentially affected by the welfare reforms	2.1 Promote the availability of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) 2.2 Work with the Job Centre Plus to help assist tenants to access employment 2.3 Promote mutual exchange to encourage tenants to move	Reduction in tenants /residents affected by welfare reforms	April 2017	Colchester Borough Council/Colchester Borough Homes/Job Centre Plus

Priority 2: Mitigating the negative impacts of welfare reform				
How this priority will be achieved	Key Actions	Smart target	By When	By Whom
	including via Mutual Exchange fairs 2.4 Review existing policies to encourage tenants to move and make better use of housing stock 2.5 Identify and support tenants with managing budgets – Financial Inclusion officer			

Priority 3: Improving the Health and Wellbeing of homeless people				
How this priority will be achieved	Key Actions	Smart target	By When	By Whom
Work in partnership with the Public Health Team at Essex County Council (ECC) on the Homelessness Health	3.1 Work with ECC and other Local Authorities in North Essex to progress the Health Needs Audit – Project	Meetings set up and work plan agreed Representatives for Project Group agreed	October 2013	ECC/CBC/One Support/Beacon House

Priority 3: Improving the Health and Wellbeing of homeless people					
How this priority will be achieved	Key Actions	Smart target	By When	By Whom	
Needs Audit to gather local information on the health needs of homeless people.	Group set up for Colchester to complete audit - CBC, One Support and Beacon House				
Collate the information from the Health Needs Audit to identify services to meet the health needs of homeless people in Colchester. The results will inform ECC's Joint Strategic Needs assessment	3.2 ECC and Colchester Project Group to work in partnership to collate information from the audit	Information Collated Services to meet the health needs of homeless people identified	April 2014	ECC/CBC/One Support/Beacon House	
Promote the integration between health and housing to meet the actions identified in the Public Health Outcomes Framework Improving the wider determinants of Health for homeless acceptances and	3.3 Work in partnership with ECC Public Health Team to progress the actions in the framework	Identified outcomes in the framework met	April 2016		

Priority 3: Improving the Health and Wellbeing of homeless people				
How this priority will be achieved	Key Actions	Smart target	By When	By Whom
households in temporary accommodation				
Progress work with ECC and North and Mid Essex on the actions from the ECC Mental Health Accommodation Strategy including the hospital discharge process	3.4 Colchester represented at meetings with North and mid Essex Locality Group. 3.5 Priorities identified Project groups set up to progress actions.	Actions from strategy implemented Hospital discharge process in place	November 2015	ECC/CBC/CBH

Priority 4: Changing the perception and culture of social housing through education – managing expectations				
How this priority will be achieved	Key Actions	Smart target	By When	By Whom
Provide wider communication of Colchester Borough	4.1 Improve communication of services provided by	Statutory and Voluntary organisations and Service Users more	Throughout the lifetime of the strategy	Community Initiatives/Housing Options –Young

Priority 4: Changing the perception and culture of social housing through education – managing expectations				
How this priority will be achieved	Key Actions	Smart target	By When	By Whom
Council's Housing and Homelessness services	<p>the Council to statutory and voluntary sector organisations through Information days</p> <p>4.2 Identify gaps in information and publish and promote leaflets on the Council's homelessness and housing service for partner organisations and young people, and distribute widely at key Service Locations.</p>	<p>aware of services provided by Colchester Borough Council</p>		<p>Persons Housing Forum</p>
<p>Develop early intervention and prevention options for Young People at risk of becoming homeless in the Borough through the Young Persons Housing Forum</p>	<p>4.3 Work with the Homeless Response Team to raise awareness of family breakdown and provide basic strategies and signposting to support families to resolve conflict</p> <p>4.4 Continue to work in partnership with Schools in the Borough</p>	<p>An increase in homelessness prevention for young people</p> <p>A decrease in homeless applications for young people</p>	<p>Throughout the lifetime of the strategy</p>	<p>Community Initiatives/Housing Options – Young Persons Housing Forum</p>

Priority 4: Changing the perception and culture of social housing through education – managing expectations				
How this priority will be achieved	Key Actions	Smart target	By When	By Whom
	in educate young people and their parents of the risks of leaving home in an unplanned way.			
Increase and support housing options for single people and vulnerable groups including Move-on options from supported Housing	4.5 Identify, support and promote alternative housing options including Solo Housing Scheme, YMCA Supported Lodgings Scheme and Genesis Leasing Scheme	Increase in alternative housing options and planned move on routes	Throughout the lifetime of the strategy	Young Persons Housing Forum/Supported Housing Network

5: Rough Sleepers				
How this priority will be achieved	Key Actions		By When	By Whom
Establish a multi agency group of support services for single homeless and rough sleepers	5.1 Re establish the Co-ordinated Welfare Meeting with organisations that support single homeless and rough	Multi Agency Group established	April 2014	Beacon House

5: Rough Sleepers					
How this priority will be achieved	Key Actions		By When	By Whom	
	sleepers – will help to identify duplication in services				
Set up a protocol between voluntary sector organisations to enable data on rough sleepers to be shared	5.2 Set up protocol through the Co-ordinated Welfare meeting	Protocol established	November 2014	Co-ordinated Welfare Meeting	
Identify the support needs of different types of rough sleepers including entrenched rough sleepers, young people that are 'new' to the streets and people suffering from mental health to help engage with different groups	5.3 Work to be progressed through the Street Outreach Service set up for 2 years from November 2013 with funding from the DCLG and provided by the April Centre	Support needs identified	November 2015	April Centre	
Explore the possibility of extending the opening times of agencies to reduce the amount of time that rough sleepers spend on the street	5.4 To be progressed through the Co-ordinated Welfare meeting	Opening times extended – more places for rough sleepers to go during the day	November 2014	Beacon House/April Centre/Night Shelter – Co-ordinated Welfare Meeting	
Identify move-on	5.5 To be progressed	Move-on options	November 2015	April Centre/Solo	

5: Rough Sleepers How this priority will be achieved	Key Actions	By When	By Whom
opportunities for rough sleepers to help with transition from living on the street	through the Street Outreach Service 5.6 Monitor and promote the Solo Lodgings Scheme set up in July 2013 with funding from the DCLG	identified Increase in number of Landlords signing up to the scheme Decrease in number of rough sleepers	Monitored quarterly Housing

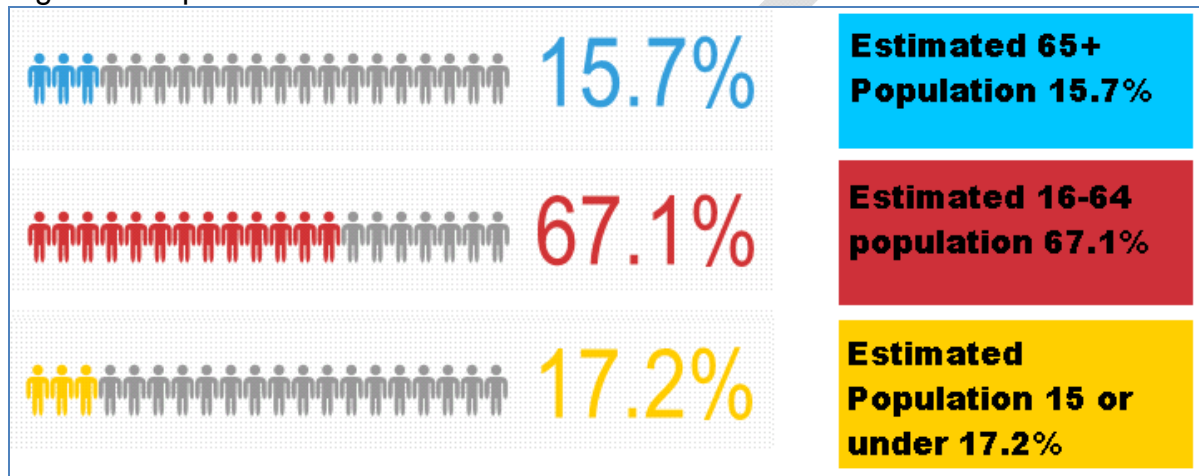
Colchester's Homelessness Strategy Evidence Base 2014

Background and Demographics

Population

Data taken from the 2011 census estimated the boroughs population at 173,000. This is an increase of 11% from the mid year estimate of 156,000 in 2001. The estimated total number of households in the borough is 71,600. Figure 1 below shows the make up of the population in Colchester by age category.

Figure 1: Population Breakdown:



Source; Census data 2011

The population of Colchester is estimated to continue to grow over the next ten years by 14.3% to 206,000 between 2012 and 2022. This is an increase of 25,700 people over a 10 year period.

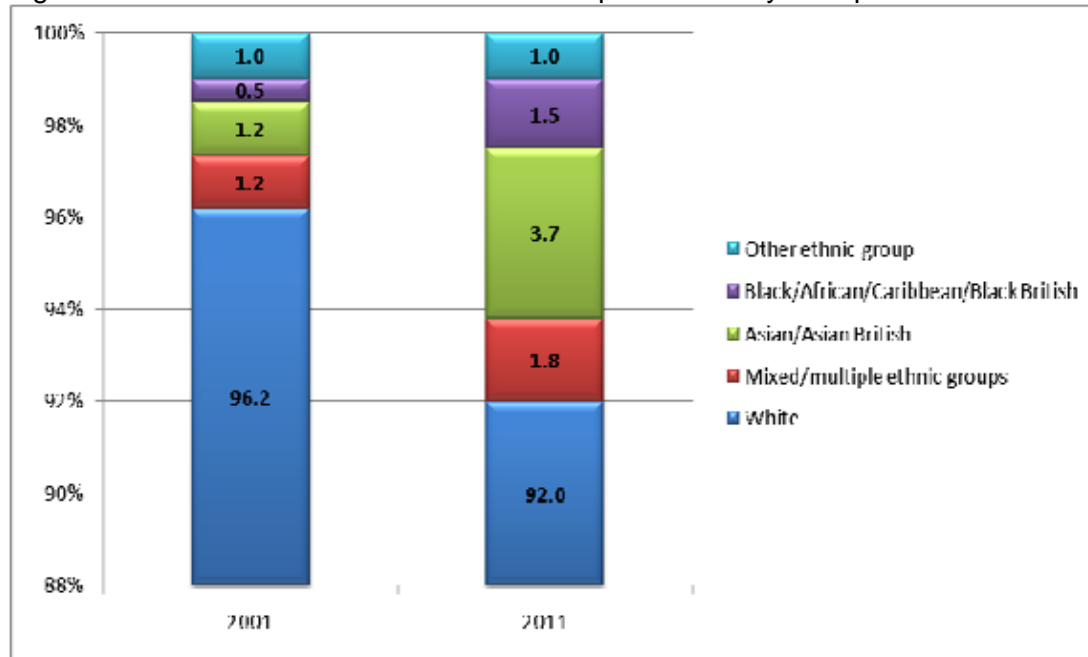
The health of people in Colchester is generally better than the average across England and the deprivation is lower than the average. However although life expectancy is higher than the average in England there are inequalities across the borough. Life expectancy is 8.4 years lower for men and 4.4 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Colchester compared to the least deprived areas.

As at 31st March 2012 there were 75,945 dwellings in Colchester borough of which 6257 are owned by the Local Authority. A total of 1012 were built in Colchester between April 2011 and March 2012 of which 366 of these were recorded affordable housing completions. The average household price across the borough in April 2012 was 214, 573.

Diversity of the local population

Ethnicity Summary Colchester

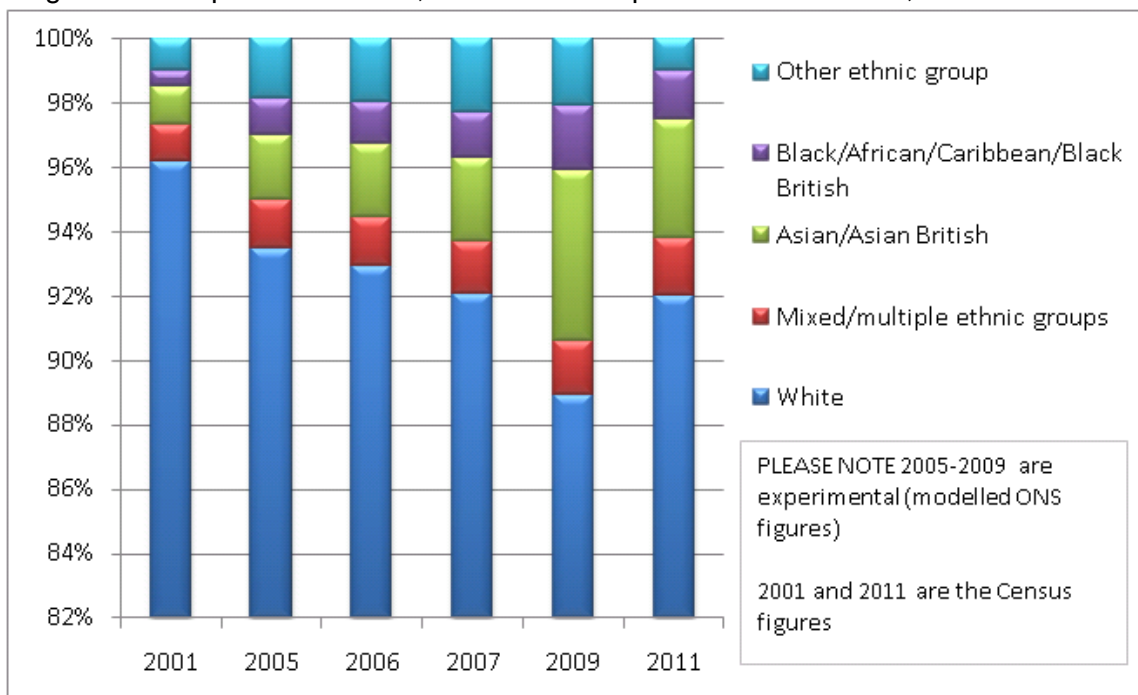
Figure 2: Census 2001 vs Census 2011 Collapsed Ethnicity Groups



Source: ONS and Census data – **Please note axis doesn't start 0.0%**

- The Census provides the most robust estimate of ethnicity at local authority level
- There has been an increase in minority ethnic groups from 2001-2011 from 3.8-8.0%

Figure 3: Collapsed Ethnicities, Census and Experimental Estimates, 2001-2011



Source: ONS and Census data – Please note axis doesn't start 0.0%

- When including modelled estimates for 2005-2009, it is evident that the proportion of minority ethnic groups in Colchester has increased over the last ten years.

Table 1: Ethnicity Classifications in Colchester, Census 2011

Ethnic Group	Colchester	
	number	%
White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	151,453	87.5
White: Irish	1,155	0.7
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	79	0.0
White: Other White	6,619	3.8
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean	889	0.5
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African	469	0.3
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian	929	0.5
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: Other Mixed	865	0.5
Asian/Asian British: Indian	1,426	0.8
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	366	0.2

Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	385	0.2
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	1,690	1.0
Asian/Asian British: Other Asian	2,488	1.4
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African	1,803	1.0
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Caribbean	528	0.3
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Other Black	244	0.1
Other ethnic group: Arab	978	0.6
Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	708	0.4

Source: ONS and Census data

- In 2011 Colchester has the third highest proportion of minority ethnic groups in comparison to other LAs (behind Harlow and Epping Forest).
- Compared to other Essex LAs Colchester had the highest proportion of other Asian, Arab and Chinese ethnicities', (shaded boxes).

Colchester Borough Council is represented on the Equality and Diversity sub group for the Greater Haven Gateway (GHG) which was set up by the GHG Steering Group to focus on specific areas of housing policy and procedure, commissioning studies when appropriate and ensuring that the work of the sub region complies with the Equality Act 2010. Under this act local authorities, must have due regard to the needs of the nine protected characteristic groups to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

The group brings together officers from the local authorities in the sub-region to contribute to and influence the equality and diversity aspects of the sub-regional action plan which includes monitoring the sub regional allocation policy and the impact on the Gateway2Homechoice housing register.

Homelessness in Colchester

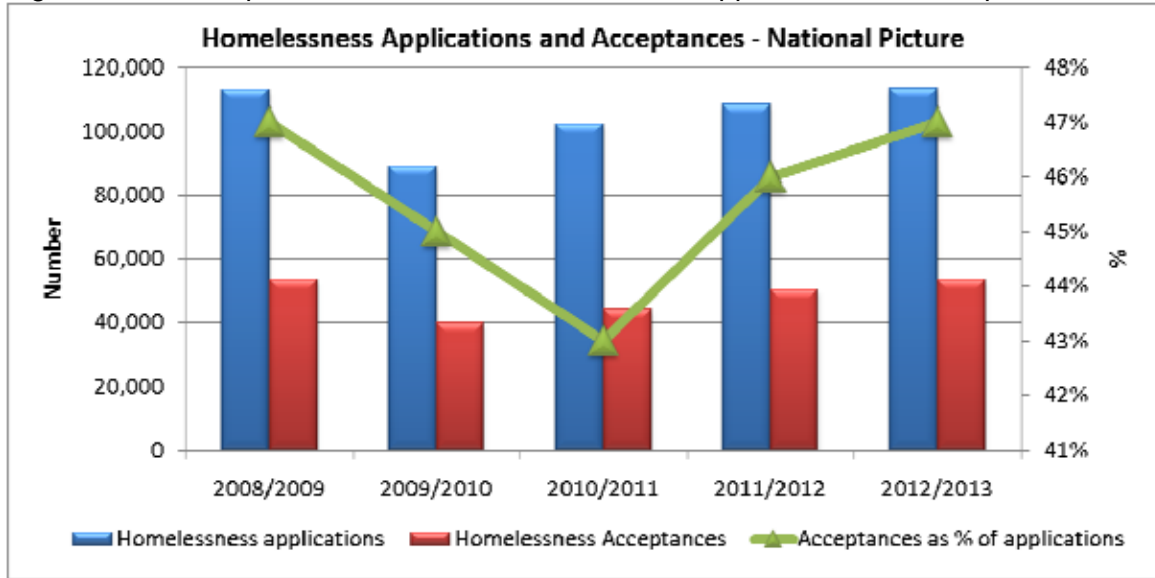
Homelessness Applications and Acceptances

Detailed information on people that have made a homelessness application to Colchester Borough Council is recorded on the P1E returns that are sent to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) quarterly.

The P1E provides data on households who have presented themselves as homeless to the Local Authority, and those who have been accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need.

Although information from the P1E provides an indicator of homelessness in Colchester it does not represent the whole picture.

Figure 4: National picture – number of homelessness applications and acceptances

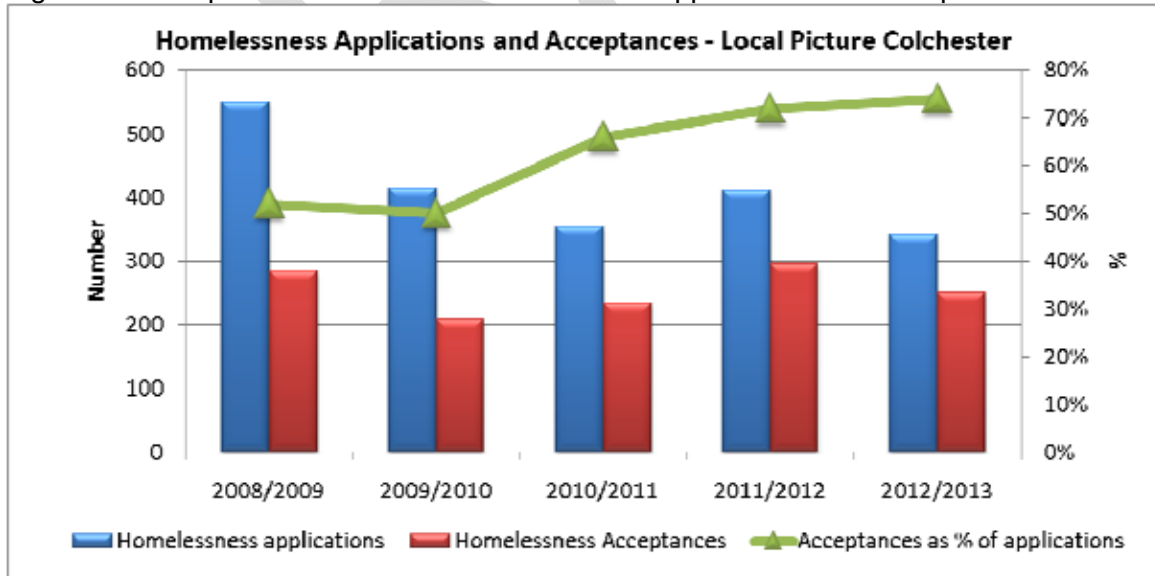


Source; DCLG P1E Return

During the 2012/13 financial year, 113,260 decisions were made by local authorities nationally. This is an increase of 4 per cent from 108,720 in 2011/12.

During the 2012/13 financial year, 53,540 households were accepted by local authorities as being owed the main homelessness duty. This is an increase of 6 per cent from 50,290 in 2011/12.

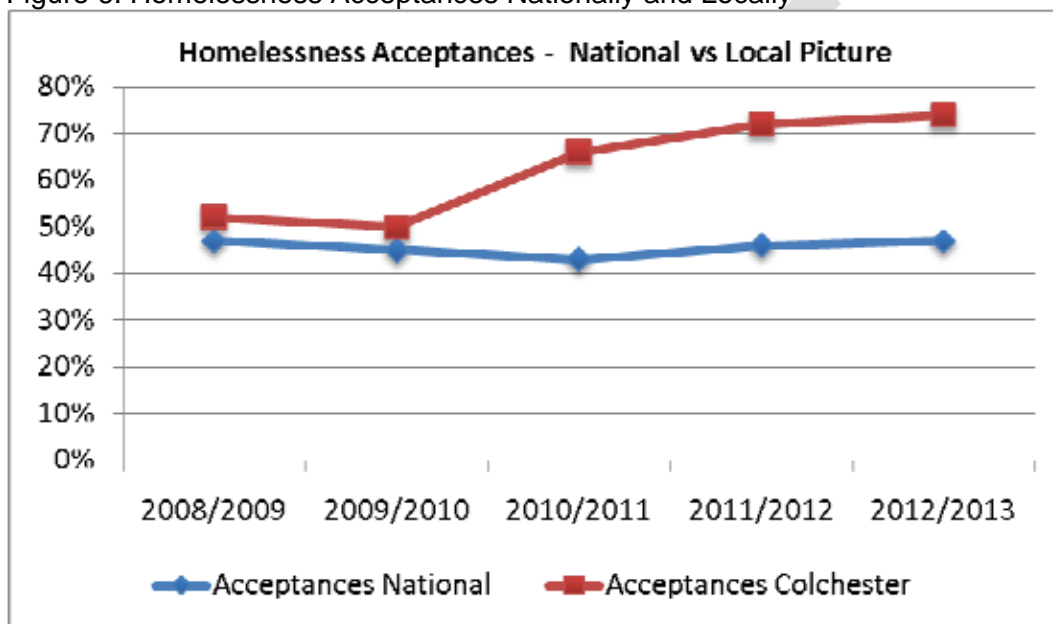
Figure 5: Local picture - number of homelessness applications and acceptances



Source; DCLG P1E Return

- During the financial year 2012-13 there were 342 homeless decisions made by Colchester Borough Council compared to 411 in 2011-2012, this was an overall decrease in decisions of 17%.
- During 2012-13 there were 251 households accepted by Colchester Borough Council as being owed a homelessness duty compared with 295 accepted in 2011-12, this was an overall decrease in acceptances of 15%.

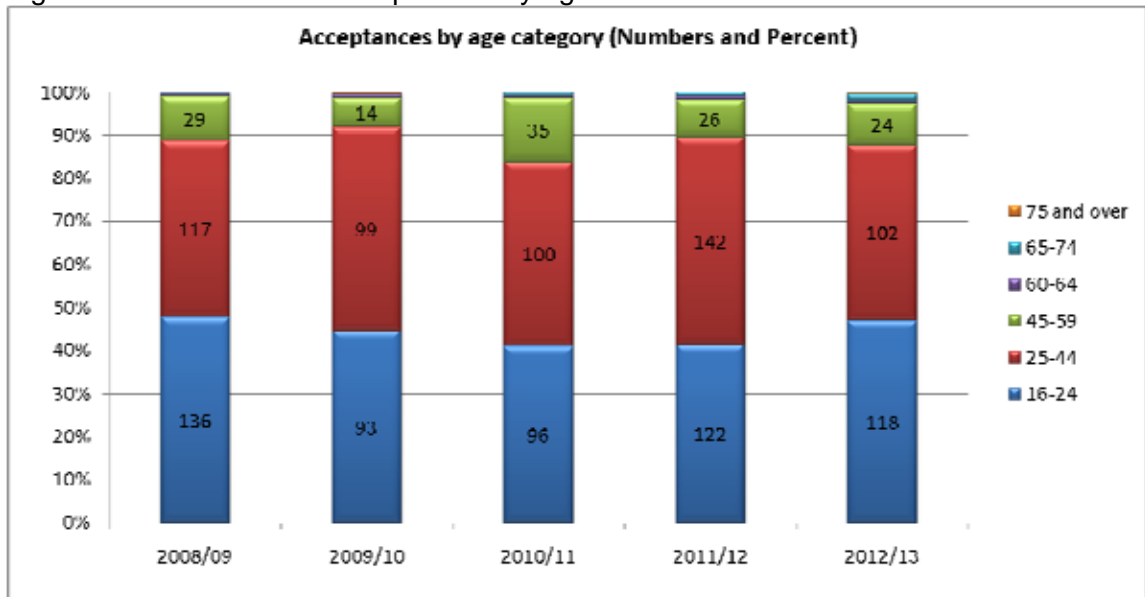
Figure 6: Homelessness Acceptances Nationally and Locally



Source; DCLG P1E Return

Compared to national trends the numbers of homeless applications and acceptances by Colchester Borough Council have shown a decrease in the last financial year whereas nationally there has been an increase. However as shown in figure 6 above, the percentage of applications that has led to an acceptance of homelessness remains higher than the national trend.

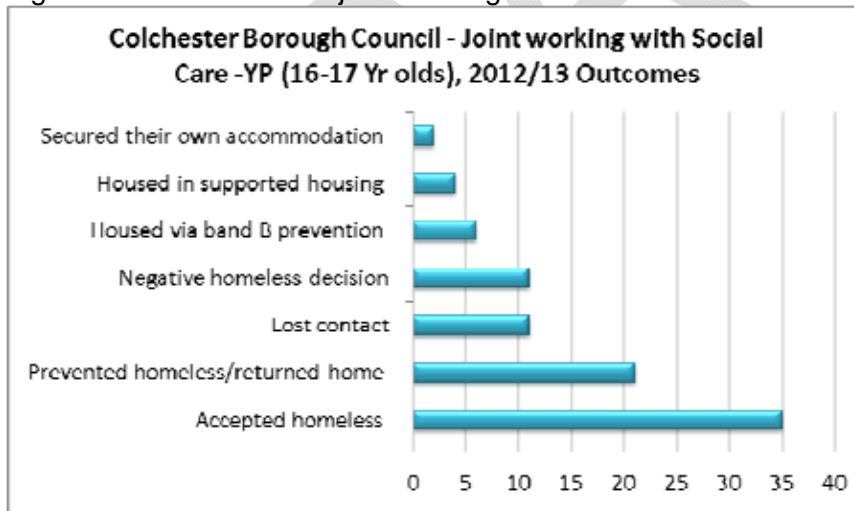
Figure 7: Homelessness acceptances by age



Source; DCLG P1E Return

As shown in figure 7, the highest proportion of homelessness acceptances in 2012 /2013 is predominantly made up of young people between the ages of 16 - 24 years and households in the 25-44 age categories.

Figure 8: Outcomes from joint working with Social Care



In the past year, Colchester Borough Council have conducted joint homelessness assessments with the Social Care Team at Essex County Council to try to prevent young people becoming homeless. Figure 8 above shows the outcomes from the assessments. The total number of young people assessed in 2012/13 was 90. Colchester Borough Council accepted a duty to 35 young people and homelessness was prevented for 21.

Table 2: Accepted Homeless Households by (main) priority need category

Priority need category	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/2012	2012/13
Emergency(fire, flood, storms, disaster, etc.)	0	0	0	0	1
Households with dependent Children	131	95	117	157	125
Pregnant Woman with no other dependent children	48	50	34	51	44
16 or 17 year old	32	7	10	20	27
Formerly "in care" and aged 18 to 20 years old	8	6	11	15	4
Old age	3	2	1	5	4
Physical disability	19	14	17	14	17
Mental illness or disability	40	32	39	29	23
Drug dependency	2	0	0	1	0
Alcohol dependency	0	0	0	0	0
Former asylum seeker	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	3	4	1
Been in care	1	1	1	0	0
Served in HM Forces	0	0	0	0	1
Been in custody/on remand	0	1	0	1	0
Fled their home because of violence/threat of violence	1	1	1	0	4
<i>of which Domestic violence</i>	0	0	1	0	4
TOTAL	285	209	234	297	251

Source; DCLG P1E Return

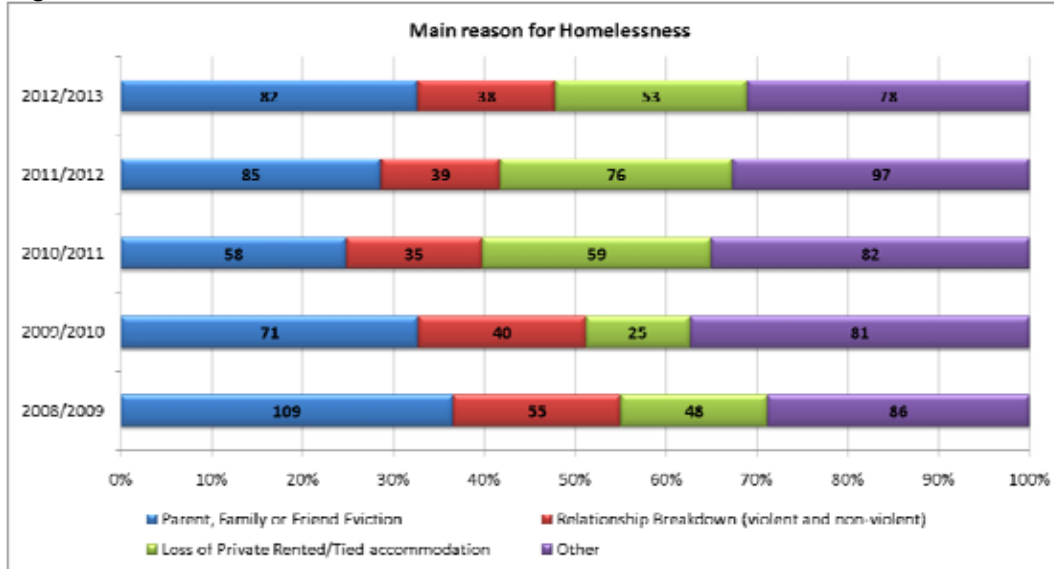
As shown above the main priority need category for people accepted as homeless continues to be those households with dependent children. The Housing Options Team continue to try to prevent homeless for families with children by helping to keep them in their homes or helping them to access accommodation in the private rented sector. Over the last year there has been a decrease in this category from 157 households in 2011/12 to 125 households in 2012/13.

Reasons for loss of last settled home

The 3 main reasons why households have been accepted as homeless due to loss of their last settled home over the last 5 years are detailed in figure 11 below.

Consistently both nationally and locally the three main reasons why people lose their last settled accommodation are due to parent, family or friend eviction, Loss of private rented/tied accommodation and Relationship breakdown. Over the last two years there has been a significant rise in those people that have lost their homes due to parent, family or friend eviction.

Figure 11: Main reasons for loss of last settled home

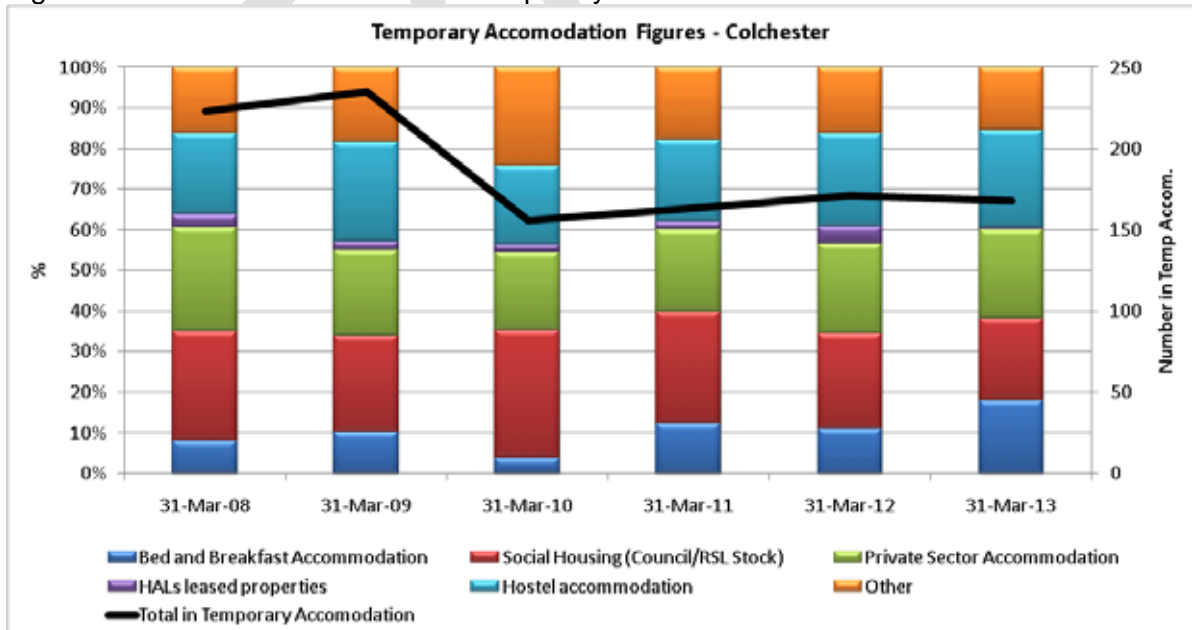


Source; DCLG P1E Return

Households in Temporary Accommodation

Since the governments drive to halve the number of households in temporary accommodation in 2010 and having met the target, Colchester Borough Council have continued to keep this figure consistent as shown in figure 12 below.

Figure 12: number of households in temporary accommodation



Source; DCLG P1E Return

(please note these figures are a snapshot as at 31 March for each year)

Table 3: Households in temporary accommodation – National picture

TA snap shot as at:	31-Mar-08	31-Mar-09	31-Mar-10	31-Mar-11	31-Mar-12	31-Mar-13
Total number in Temp	77,510	64,000	51,310	48,240	50,430	55,300

Source; DCLG PIE Return

Nationally the number of households in temporary accommodation has increased by 10% from the same time last year as shown in the table above. However this figure has significantly reduced since March 2008.

Table 4: Households in temporary accommodation - Colchester

TA snap shot as at:	31-Mar-08	31-Mar-09	31-Mar-10	31-Mar-11	31-Mar-12	31-Mar-13
Bed and Breakfast Accommodation	18	24	6	20	19	30
Social Housing (Council/RSL Stock)	60	56	49	45	40	34
Private Sector Accommodation	57	49	30	33	38	37
HALs leased properties	7	5	3	3	7	1
Hostel accommodation	45	58	30	33	39	40
Other	36	43	38	29	28	26
Total in Temporary Accommodation	223	235	156	163	171	168

Source; DCLG PIE Return

In Colchester the number of households in bed and breakfast accommodation has shown an increase of 36% from the same point the previous year. The increase has been partly due to the closure of some of the council's hostel accommodation which has now been redeveloped and transferred to Family Mosaic who manage and provide additional support to tenants at the scheme.

Homelessness Prevention

The Housing Act 1977, Housing Act 1996, and the Homelessness Act 2002, placed statutory duties on each local housing authority to provide free advice and assistance to households within its area who are homeless or are threatened with homelessness.

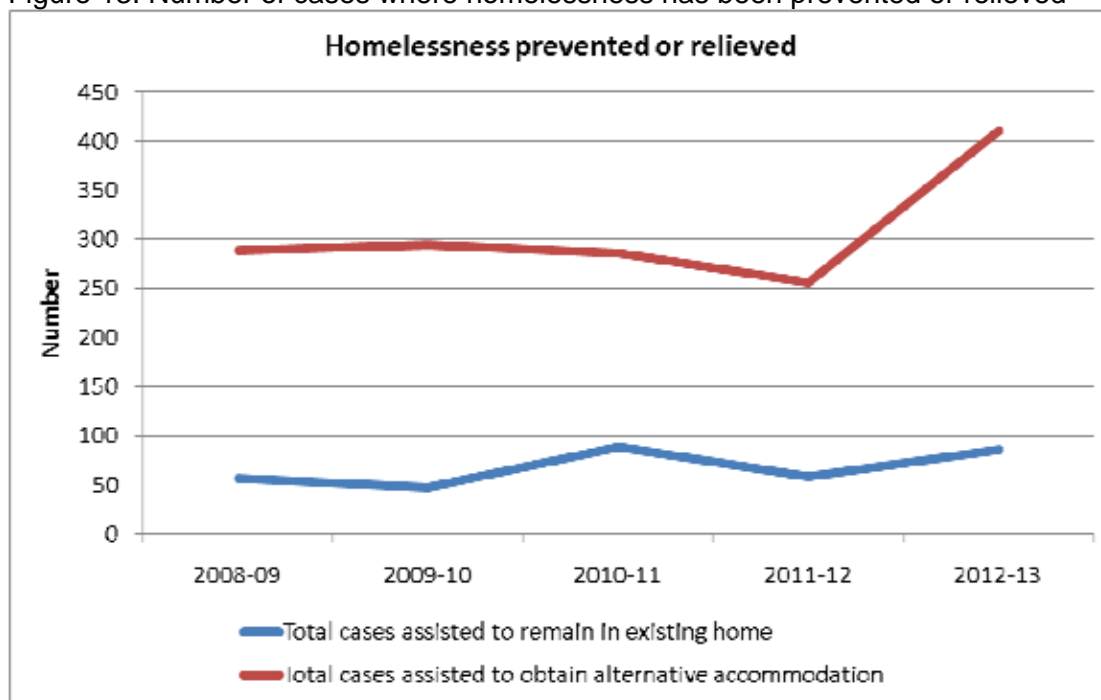
In Colchester advice and assistance to find alternative accommodation for people that are homeless or threatened with homelessness is provided by voluntary sector organisations, as well as the Housing options Team.

Homelessness prevention involves providing people with the ways and means to address their housing and other needs to avoid homelessness. This is done by either assisting them to obtain alternative accommodation or enabling them to remain in their existing home.

Homelessness relief occurs when an authority has been unable to prevent homelessness but helps someone to secure accommodation, even though the authority is under no statutory obligation to do so.

Figures recorded for the DCLG P1E return on homelessness prevention and relief in Colchester include those provided by organisations including the Youth Enquiry Service and the April Centre who receive funding from Colchester Borough Council to help provide this service.

Figure 13: Number of cases where homelessness has been prevented or relieved



Source DCLG P1E Return

Figure 13 above shows the number of cases where homelessness has been prevented or relieved in Colchester.

During the last financial year 2012/2013 the number of cases that have been prevented from homelessness by assistance to remain in existing home is 86, of which 77 cases were assisted by the Housing Options Team. This is an increase of 31% from the previous year 2011/2012. The main reason for this is the increase in the number of cases that have been provided with assistance to stay in their private or social sector homes.

The number of cases where assistance was given to obtain alternative accommodation in 2012/2013 was 325, of which 251 were assisted by the Housing Options Team. This was an increase of 39% on the previous year 2011/2012. Over the last year there has been a significant increase in the number of cases that have been helped to obtain accommodation in the private rented sector without a Landlord Incentive scheme and those that have been awarded a high priority to obtain social housing.

The national picture shows that the total number of cases of homelessness prevention and relief increased by 2 per cent in 2012/13 compared to 2011/12.

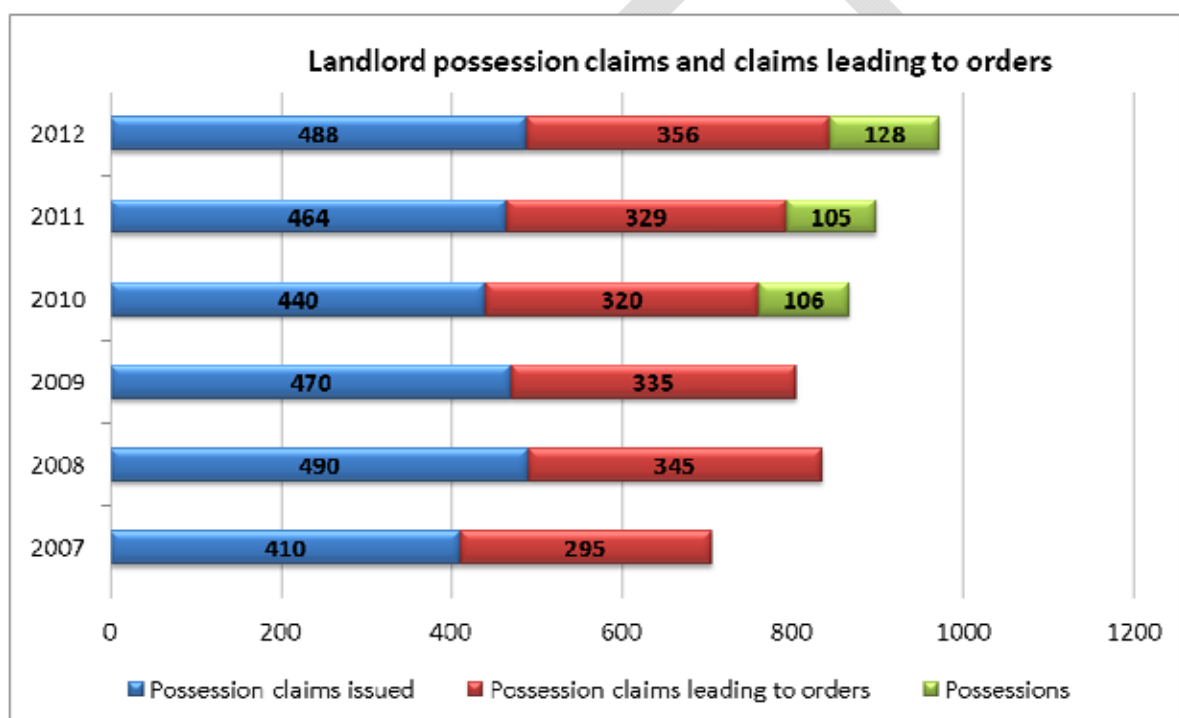
Possession Actions in the private and public sector

Landlord possession actions

As shown in figure 14 the number of Landlord (social and private) possession claims have been decreasing since a peak in 2008 and reached their lowest level around 2010. Since then there has been a gradual increase and this upward trend in recent years is the same as the national picture and coincides with an increase in the number of renters.

The proportion of claims which have progressed to a further court action has been rising again since 2010. This means that the likelihood of a tenant being repossessed has been increasing for two reasons: because possession claims have risen and because the proportion of those claims that lead to repossession has risen slightly.

Figure 14: Number of landlord possession actions in Colchester



Source; Ministry of Justice statistics

Mortgage Possession Actions

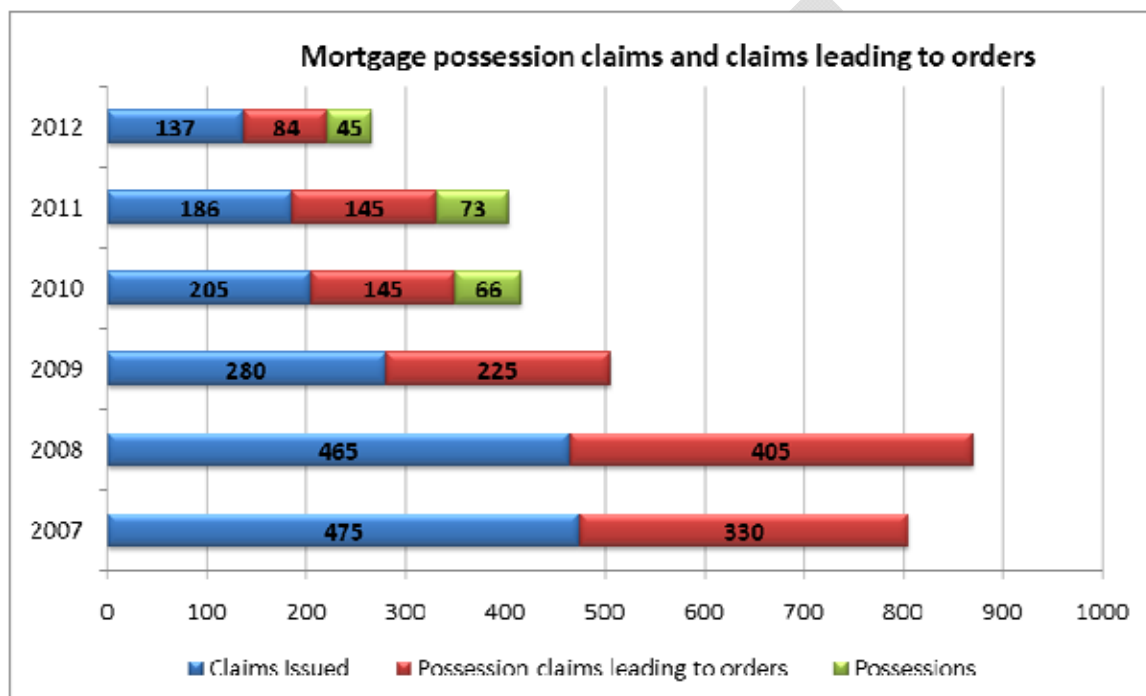
Since 2007/08 the number of mortgage possession claims has fallen as shown in figure 15 below. In addition, the total number of possession claims leading to orders and properties repossessed has followed a similar trend.

This means that the numbers of mortgagees being repossessed has fallen in recent years, both because of a falling number of claims, and because of a slight fall in the proportion of those claims that progress to a further stage in court process.

The fall in the number of mortgage possession actions since 2008 coincides with lower interest rates¹, a proactive approach from lenders in managing consumers in financial difficulties and other interventions from the government, such as the Mortgage Rescue Scheme. Other factors that may have contributed to the rapid fall in the number of mortgage possession claims and claims leading to orders after 2008 include;

- the introduction of the Mortgage Pre-Action Protocol
- a decrease in the number of owner-occupiers

Figure 15: Number of Mortgage possession actions in Colchester



Source; Ministry of Justice statistics

Social Housing Evictions in Colchester

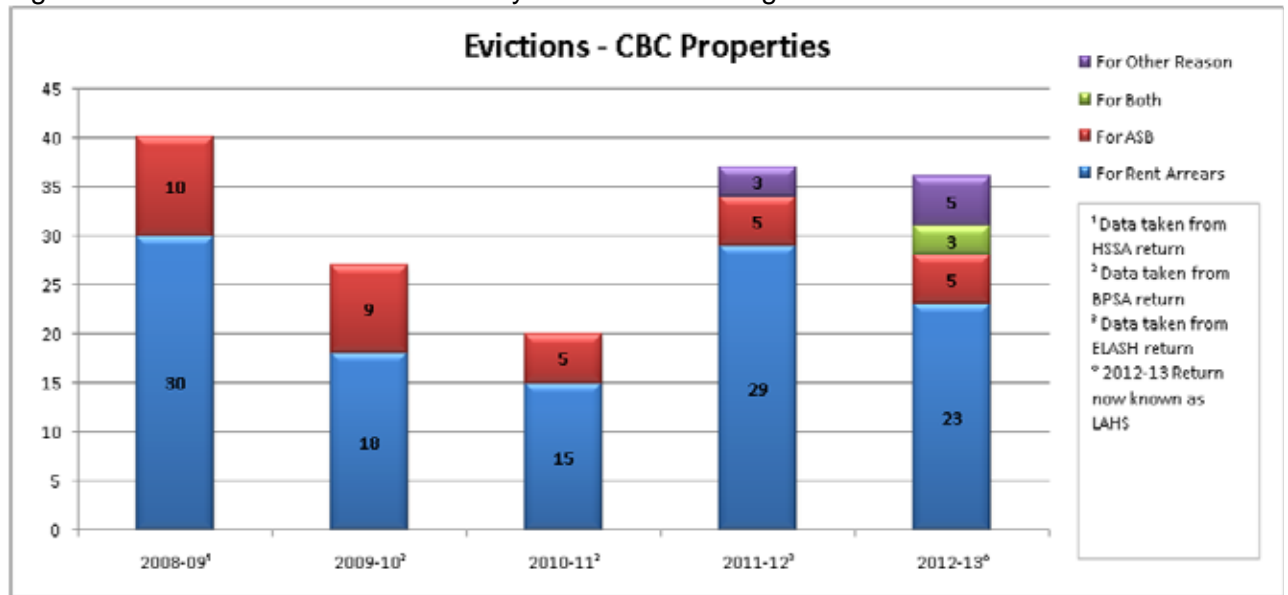
The graph below shows the number of evictions due to rent arrears and anti social behavior made by Colchester Borough Homes over the last 5 years. In line with the Landlord Possession Claims, there was a reduction in Evictions for rent arrears up until 2010. In 2011/2012 the number of evictions for rent arrears increased by 48%, but over the last year 2012/13 there has been a reduction.

Over the last two years there has been a significant increase in single people, predominately men in their twenties and early thirties, being evicted due to rent arrears. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this group have more difficulty in engaging with the processes in place to support them in their tenancy; this includes personal support offered by CBH, their ability to apply for benefits on time or maintaining a regular payment pattern.

The rise in evictions for this group alone has doubled since last year which indicates that more people in this age group are at risk. Other tenant groups engage better with the support process and this has led to a lower level of evictions for these groups.

Colchester Borough Homes have introduced Tenancy Sustainment Officers to help tenants sustain their tenancies and reduce the number of those losing their properties through eviction.

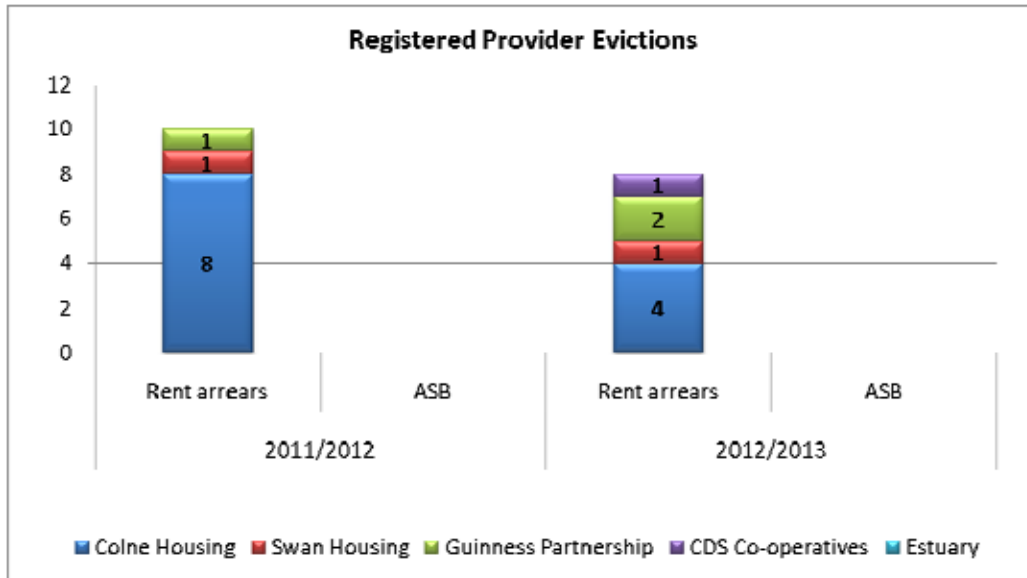
Figure 16: Number of evictions made by Colchester Borough Homes



Source; Capita

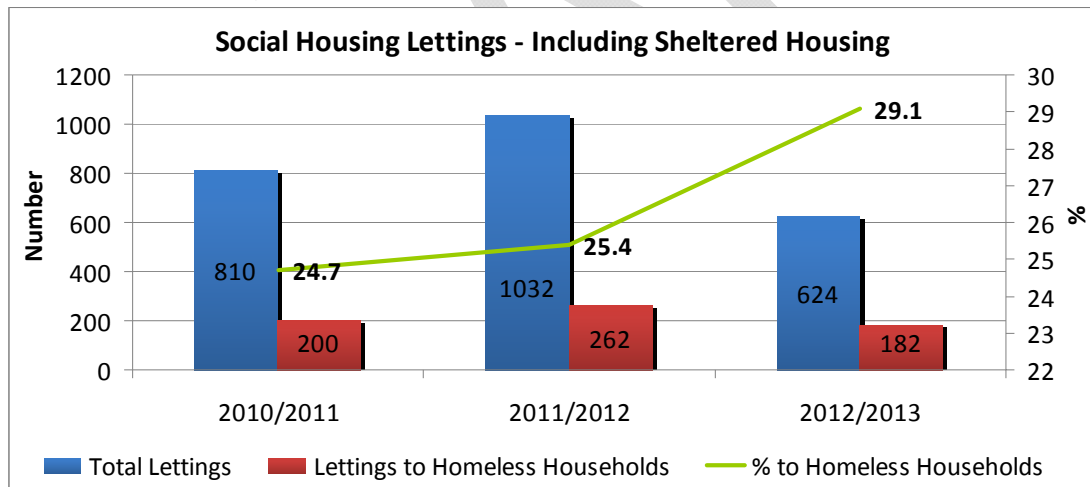
Figure 17 below shows information provided by some of the Registered Providers in Colchester on the number of evictions made for rent arrears over the past 2 years. Colne Housing Society had a 50% reduction in 2012/13 from the previous year. Colne offer help to support Introductory tenants to enable them to sustain their tenancies.

Figure 17: Number of evictions made by Registered Providers in Colchester



Social Housing Allocations and Nominations

Figure 18: Total number of Social Housing lets for Colchester including Sheltered Housing



Source: Abrisas

The number of social housing lets in Colchester in 2012/13 has significantly decreased from the previous year as shown in figure 18 . This decrease is partly due to the number of new build properties that became available for letting in the last financial year (see table 5 below). The percentage of lets to homeless households slightly increased in 2012/13 to 29% which is almost a third of the total lets.

Table 5: Affordable Housing Units delivered by RSL partners

Year	Total units
------	-------------

2010/11	141
2011/12	333
2012/13	86

NB; This figure does not include shared/low cost home ownership schemes

Although there was a significant reduction in the number of affordable housing units delivered in the last year this has remained strong in challenging economic times. The majority of affordable housing is delivered through s106 agreements and therefore delivery is dependent on the building of market housing. The 86 homes delivered have provided much needed affordable housing for households in housing need in the borough.

Welfare Reform

The Welfare Reform Act introduces the most fundamental reforms to the social security system for 60 years.

The impacts to housing customers mainly arise from four policy areas:

- The Benefit Cap
- The removal of the spare room subsidy in the social rented sector – under occupation
- Introduction of Local Council Tax Support
- Universal credit

Benefit Cap – from April 2013

The maximum level of benefits, including housing benefit, will be capped at £500 weekly for families and couples and £350 for single people.

Nationally 40,000 households are affected by the benefit cap most of which are larger families with 3-4 children in private rented accommodation.

The Benefit Cap Colchester

The latest information from the DWP shows that 98 households in Colchester will be potentially affected by the cap.

Breakdown of households;

- Private rented sector 55
- Colchester Borough Council 17
- Other registered social landlord 26

DWP pre implementation national impact assessment identified that the benefit cap would affect mainly those with three or more dependent children. In Colchester data analysis shows households affected have four or more dependent children.

The removal of the spare room subsidy in the social rented sector – under occupation - From April 2013

Social sector tenants of working age renting from a local authority, housing association or other registered social landlord will receive housing support based on household size. A version of this already applies to private tenants.

The allowance is for one bedroom for each person or couple living as part of the household. Two children under 16 of the same gender will be expected to share a room, as will two children under 10 regardless of gender.

Household size criteria will also allow one bedroom for a non-resident carer if a tenant or their partner is a disabled person who needs overnight care.

Households with a disabled child may retain housing benefit for an additional room, if the nature and severity of the child's disability disturbs the sleep of the other child that they would normally be expected to share with.

Where a property is deemed 'under occupied' the eligible rent under Housing Benefit will be reduced by 14 per cent for one room and 25 per cent if under occupied by two rooms or more.

Approved foster carers, whether or not they have a child placed with them or are between placements, will be allowed an extra room, as long as they have fostered a child within the last 12 months or become a registered foster carer within the last 12 months.

Wives or husbands of those serving in the armed forces will be unaffected by these changes. Parents with adult children in the Armed Forces who continue to live with their parents will continue to be considered as living at home when applying the size criteria whilst away on operational duty.

Under occupation Colchester

The table below shows the under occupation of households in the social rented sector in Colchester as at July 2013.

Table 6: Under Occupation in Colchester

	Colchester Borough Council Tenants	Non Colchester Borough Council Tenants	Total
Under occupying by 1 bedroom	372	413	785

Under occupying by more than 1 bedroom	76	43	119
Total	448	456	904

Colchester Borough Council

A number of Colchester Borough Council tenants have already been affected by the under occupation charge, with a small number being affected by the benefit cap as at June 2013.

Table 7 below shows the rent outstanding and the number of tenants in arrears as at June 2013 compared to the same period last year.

Table 7: Rent and Income comparison

Rent & Income	Jun-13	Jun-12
Arrears outstanding	£402,521	£420,000
as % of debit raised	1.52	1.58
No of tenants in arrears	1707	1524
No owing more than 7 weeks rent	153	182
No of evictions	5	2

Although the amount of arrears outstanding has reduced since the same period last year, the number of tenants in arrears has increased.

Table 8 below shows the number of households affected by under occupation in July 2013 compared to the previous quarter, broken down by amount of arrears. There has been a significant increase in the number of households in arrears in Bands 1-3; this is predominantly due to the reduction in housing benefit received.

Table 8: Breakdown of arrears by households affected by under occupation

	Number of households in arrears as at 1st July	Number of households in arrears as at 1st April
Band 1 - under £50	81	14
Band 2 - £50-99.99	49	12
Band 3 - £100-499.99	132	73
Band 4 - £500+	22	20
Total	284	119

The table below shows an analysis of the arrears of Colchester Borough Council tenants that are under occupying their council property and are receiving Housing Benefit (HB), over the 1st quarter of 2013-2014.

Table 9: Analysis of under occupation arrears

	April	May	June
All tenants in arrears	1587	2077	1707
Under occupying HB tenants in arrears	323	309	284
Total arrears	£374,000	£401,592	£402,521
Under occupying HB tenant arrears	£47,832	£54,803	£54,614
% of tenants in arrears who are HB under occupiers	26%	23%	17%

Over the 1st quarter of 2013-2014 the number of under occupying HB tenants in arrears has slightly decreased although the amount of arrears has increased over this period.

A Housing Welfare Reform Group has been set up between relevant teams at Colchester Borough Council and Colchester Borough Homes to collect information to assess and respond to the impact of Welfare Reform on tenants.

Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) - from 1 April 2013.

As part of the national welfare reforms Council Tax Benefit has been replaced by Local Council Tax Support (LCTS)

Colchester Borough Council - Local Council Tax Support scheme

Those of state pension credit age receive the same level of support as they did under Council tax Benefit.

The following applies to residents of working age and entitled to Local Council Tax Support (LCTS)

- Residents are required to pay a minimum of 20% of their Council Tax liability.
- The first £25 per week of earnings will not be taken into account when calculating LCTS.
- £6000 saving limit for non passported claims
- Child Benefit and maintenance payments will be taken into account when calculating LCTS.
- A new flat rate non-dependant deduction of £10 regardless of income or savings
- Second adult rebate claims will no longer be accepted.

LCTS Colchester

- Currently around 12,000 residents are in receipt of LCTS
- 7,000 of working age
- 5,000 of state pension credit age

Universal Credit – from April 2013

Universal Credit aims to make the welfare system simpler by replacing six benefits and credits with a single monthly payment for those residents on a low income or out of work. It includes support for the costs of housing, children and childcare, as well as support for disabled people and carers.

Between April 2013 and the end of 2017, Universal Credit will replace:

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-based Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit

Early rollout of Universal Credit, known as Pathfinder, started in some areas of Greater Manchester and Cheshire in April 2013. Universal Credit will be progressively rolled out nationally from October 2013.

New Claims to Universal Credit are expected in Essex from February 2014.

Colchester Borough Homes have started to identify tenants who will be affected by the changes so that support services can be targeted to them.

Two important features of Universal Credit are:

- Universal Credit is designed to be claimed online.
- Universal Credit is paid monthly into a single account with day payment principles.

Single Homeless and Rough Sleepers

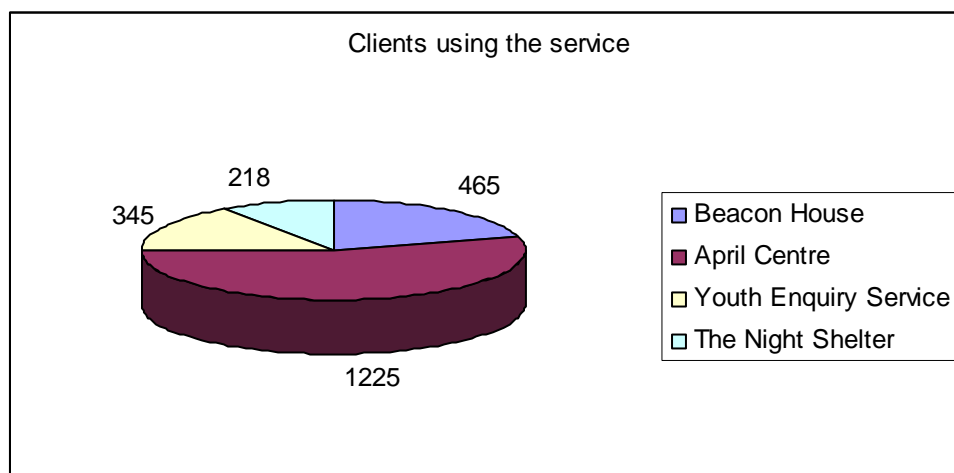
Single Homeless

There are a significant number of single homeless people in Colchester that the council does not owe a duty to house because they are not in priority need as set out by Homelessness legislation.

A number of voluntary sector organisations in Colchester provide valuable advice, support and accommodation for the growing number of single homeless people.

Figure 20 below shows that during 2012/13 the number of clients referred by other organisations to the April Centre for help to secure accommodation was 1225. The number of clients that used the services provided by Beacon House for help and support was 465. The Youth Enquiry service helped prevent homelessness for 345 young people under 25 referred to the service and 218 clients stayed at Colchester Emergency Night Shelter.

Figure 20: Single homeless clients that used voluntary sector services during 2012/13



Source; Voluntary sector organisations

Single Homeless and Health

A research study by Crisis (a national charity for single homeless people) to investigate the mortality of homeless people in England from 2001-2009 found that homeless people are more likely to die young. Homelessness leads to very premature mortality and increased mortality rates.

The average age of death of those who die on the streets or while resident in homeless accommodation is 47 years and even lower for homeless women at 43 years. This compared to 77 years for the general population, 74 years for men and 80 years for women.

Standardised mortality rates show that homeless 16-24 year olds are at least twice as likely to die as those that are not homeless. The ratio increases to four to five times for 25-34 year olds and five to six times at ages 35-44.

The findings of the research shown below clearly indicate that being homeless is incredibly difficult both physically and mentally and has a significant impact on people's health and well being.

Distribution of causes of death for homeless people;

- Cardiovascular (18.3%)
- Cancer (9.8%)
- Respiratory (8.4%)
- Infections (2.5%)
- Other diseases and disorders (10.9%)
- Due to alcohol (14.4%)
- Due to drugs (21.7%)
- Suicide/undetermined intent (8.5%)

Falls (2.0%)
 Traffic accidents (1.2%)
 Other external causes (2.3%)

Beacon House is a Primary Health Care Centre that offers healthcare facilities to clients that are homeless, are threatened with homelessness or are living in insecure accommodation.

Beacon House offers help to homeless people who have health problems by providing the following services:

- Nurse-led clinics
- Help with accessing GPs and other health services
- Needle exchange
- Clothing
- Laundry
- Toiletries
- Showers
- Shaves
- Advice & referral

The nurse-led clinic operates a needs led 'drop in service' where clients do not need to make an appointment. All new clients who register with Beacon House will have a comprehensive health and well being check. Existing clients also have a health assessments offered on subsequent visits.

Figure 21; Clients Health Issues

BEACON HOUSE - Clients Health Issues					
	Jan-Mar 2012	Apr-Jun 2012	Jul-Sep 2012	Oct-Dec 2012	Total
Trauma	28	5	6	5	44
Musculoskeletal	28	10	7	17	62
Dermatology	12	6	5	10	33
Respiratory	30	7	1	12	50
Gastro	9	6	1	4	20
Cardiovascular	51	16	9	10	86
Obstetric	3	2	0	1	6
Gynae/GU	7	5	6	8	26
Family planning/advice	5	11	5	8	29
Psychiatry/Mental health	140	31	56	52	279
Other	20	5	2	1	28
Hep/HIV Screen	2	2	0	0	4
Pneumo/Flu vaccines	33	0	0	25	58
Alcohol	112	45	42	72	271

Drugs	75	40	37	30	182
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Source; Beacon House

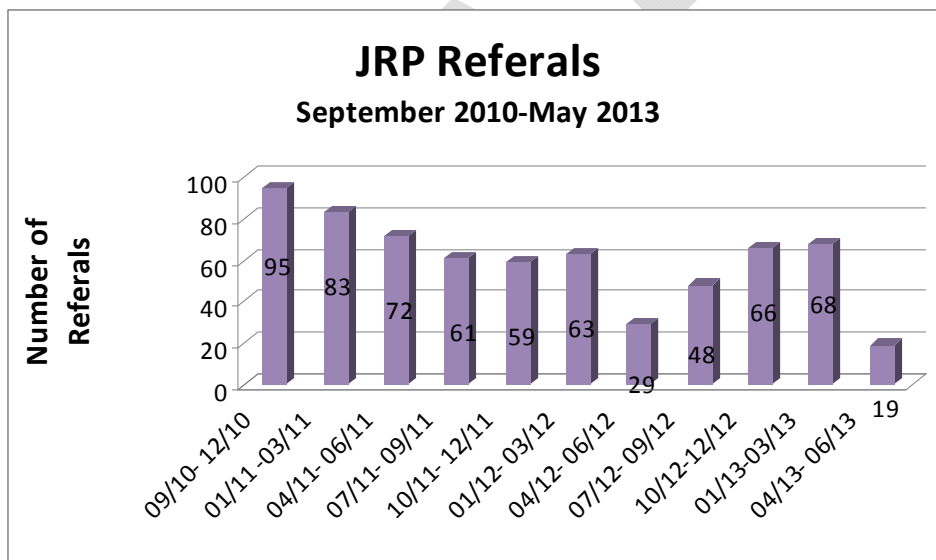
Figure 21 above shows the number of clients suffering from different health issues treated at Beacon House clinic in 2012. Mental Health and Alcohol and drug issues affect significantly higher numbers than any other issues.

Young Single Homeless and Support needs

Joint referral panel for under 25's

The Joint Referral Panel (JRP) is made up of a group of agencies who provide or refer young single homeless clients into supported housing projects in Colchester. The panel meets every two weeks and its function is to assess applications for supported housing services in Colchester and make decisions about allocations to ensure that each applicant is offered the most appropriate service for their needs.

Figure 22: Referrals excluding re-referrals



Source; JRP

Figure 22 above shows the number of referrals excluding re-referrals made to the JRP quarterly from September 2010 – May 2013. The number has significantly reduced in the last quarter 04/2013 – 06/2013 which forms a similar pattern to the same period last year.

Demand for supported housing for young people in Colchester far outweighs the supply and most schemes have waiting lists.

The numbers of units in schemes specifically for single young people are as follows:

Family Mosaic including;

Bernard Brett House – 23 units
Mersea Road – 8 units
YMCA – 44 units

Nacro provides 24 units of supported accommodation for 16-65 years and
Sanctuary Housing provides 49 units for 18–65 years, including;
Queen Elizabeth Way – 20 units
Chinook – 25 units
Pebmarsh Close – 4 units

Rough Sleepers

Local Authorities are required to provide a figure for the number of people rough sleeping in the area to the DCLG on an Annual basis; this can either be by way of a count or by providing an estimate from information gathered from local organisations.

Over the last few years Colchester has provided an estimated figure to the DCLG. The organisations that provide the most accurate information about who is sleeping rough include; the Night Shelter, the April Centre, Beacon House and many other organisations that delivers services to or supports those people rough sleeping.

Since 2010 the estimated figure for rough sleeping in Colchester has significantly risen from 10 people in 2010 to 24 and 25 in 2011 and 2012 respectively. Based on 2012, Colchester has the joint highest number of rough sleepers in the Eastern region (with Luton UA) and nationally, the joint 14th highest.

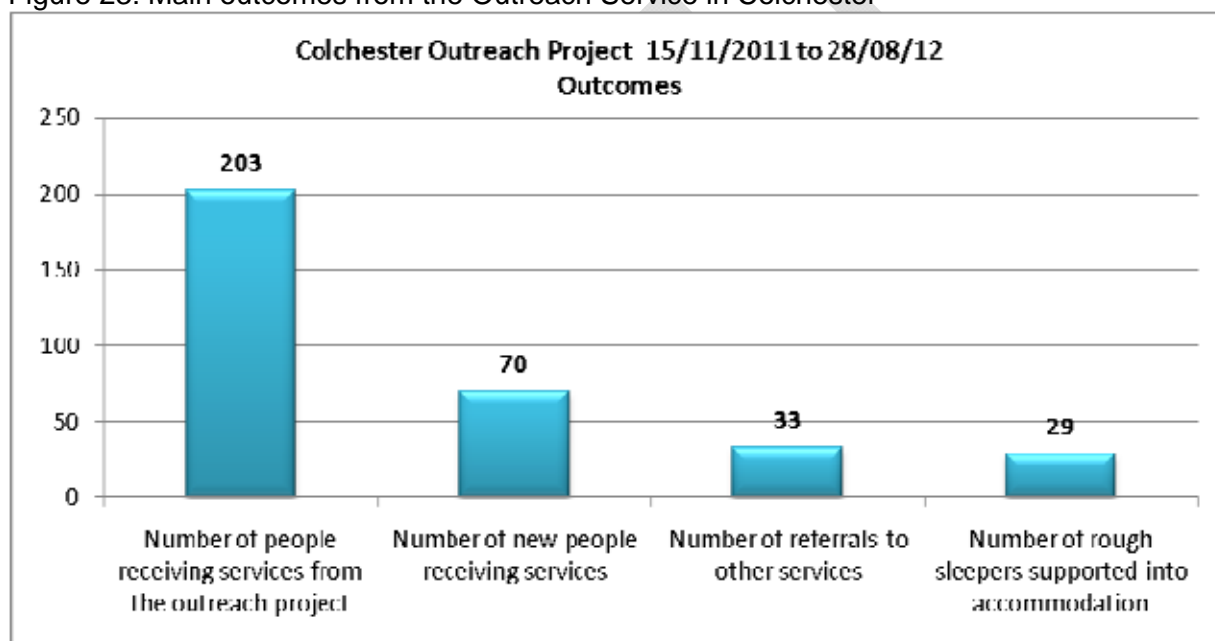
Figures for Rough Sleepers in 2012 in some other Local Authorities in the Eastern Region were:

Ipswich (count) – 7
Chelmsford (estimate) – 8
Norwich (count) – 6
Cambridge (estimate) - 20

In 2011 the DCLG awarded £40,000 funding to the Greater Haven Gateway with Colchester as the lead authority, to support work to prevent and tackle single homelessness and rough sleeping in the sub region.

Part of this funding was used to provide an outreach service in Colchester and Tendring by the April Centre, an organisation that worked across both local authorities. The project ran from November 2011 to September 2012.

Figure 23: Main outcomes from the Outreach Service in Colchester



Source; The April Centre

Figure 23 above shows that the project met its objective to prevent and tackle rough sleeping by addressing the issues faced by single homeless people as well as rough sleepers. This is due to the number of rough sleepers that engaged with the outreach workers, were referred to other services and supported into accommodation

In February 2012 the DCLG allocated £20m funding to Local Authority Sub-Regional Groupings across the country, appointing a Lead Authority in each. The Greater Haven Gateway was awarded £362,000 with Colchester as lead authority to 'bolster' front line provision to prevent single homelessness and rough sleeping and support the roll out of No Second Night Out.

**EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
SCRUTINY PANEL
HELD ON 11 FEBRUARY 2014**

49. Colchester's Homelessness Strategy 2013 – 2018

Councillor Davies (in respect of her Vice-Chairmanship of Colchester Community Voluntary Service) declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7 (5).

Councillor Frame (in respect of his paid work for the Mental Health Trust) declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7 (5).

A report was submitted by the Head of Commercial Services asking for the Scrutiny Panel to consider and provide feedback on the new draft Homelessness Strategy for Colchester prior to it being considered by Cabinet.

Councillor Tina Bourne, the Portfolio Holder for Housing, together with Tina Hinson, Housing Strategy Manager, and Karen Paton, Housing Strategy Officer, attended the meeting to present the report.

Councillor Bourne introduced the report to the Panel, which is the third strategy from Colchester Borough Council. Whilst the Borough has a legal responsibility to produce a Strategy, it would not have been possible without the commitment of our partner organisations.

This new strategy looks to build on the successes of the previous strategy in preventing homelessness; and also reflect the new challenges within the Borough. The main causes of Homelessness remain largely the same;

- Family and friends no longer willing or able to accommodate people,
- Loss of private sector accommodation for a number of different reasons, or accommodation that is provided with employment, and
- Losing accommodation due to relationship breakdown.

The Portfolio Holder stated that the Localism Act 2011 and the Welfare Reform will have a significant impact on how the services are delivered, and the options available to prevent and relieve homelessness. The key priorities as set out in the Strategy will help to address this. Councillor Bourne finished by praising the work of the officers in compiling the strategy.

Karen Paton, the author of the report, gave the Panel a presentation on the new draft Homelessness Strategy. The presentation outlined the background behind the strategy, and the work undertaken to date.

Within Colchester a total of 251 households were accepted as being owed a homelessness duty. The number of households in temporary accommodation was 168 as of 31 March 2013, which was a slight reduction from the previous year. However, the number of rough sleepers, which is estimated to be 35 as of 2013, is a significant increase.

The presentation also outlined the consultation undertaken, with 33 out of 200 surveys responded to by homeless people in Colchester, as well as a number of different focus groups being held. This in addition to discussions with stakeholder groups all fed into the 2013-2018 strategy. In terms of monitoring the outcomes, the Colchester Homelessness Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

The following issues were raised by Panel members:

- Councillor Quince – What is the average length of time it takes to evict private tenants? Cllr Quince also highlighted that there is a hidden element of homelessness, with individuals sleeping on couches.
- Councillor Quince - Enquired about the numbers of rough sleepers in Colchester and the reasons behind their situation, and the possibility of conducting more research with them.
- Councillor Quince – What are the implications of the benefits cap and spare bedroom tax?
- Councillor Harrington – How are the causes behind homelessness identified when some of the highest causes are mental health issues, or relationship breakdown. How is the term household described in relation to the Strategy, couples/families/single etc.
- Councillor Harrington - Queried the Council's obligations to help those adults who are above 18 and not vulnerable, as well as what is being done to help the very high percentage of 16-24 year olds.
- Councillor Frame – Commended the level of work that had gone into the Strategy, and asked about SMART targets and figures that would actually show the work that the strategy had undertaken, particularly in terms of prevention of homelessness.
- Councillor Oxford – What else could be done for the high number of 16-24 year olds so that they don't have to face life away from home? What life skills other than financial advice are given to those that are made homeless?
- Councillor Harris – Commended the work of the Strategy, asked for further details of the 904 under occupied households as of July 2013. Councillor Harris also suggested the need to take action against Landlords who did not comply with their legal duty to keep homes in good repair. Councillor Harris also requested statistics just for the work carried out by Colchester Borough Council.
- Councillor Mudie – Queried the situation with the Council's rent and deposit guarantee scheme.
- Councillor Quince – Enquired as to whether any work had been undertaken with private lodgings, both by Colchester and the wider sector.

- Councillor Davies – Asked whether there had been a response to the adverts regarding renting out spare rooms.
- Councillor Harrington – What work is undertaken with the Armed forces?
- Councillor Frame – What support does Colchester Borough Council provide in helping people out of a homeless situation, for example work experience.
- Councillor Davies – Colchester is currently joint highest in the eastern region for rough sleepers and 14th highest in the UK. Are records kept for those coming in to Colchester?
- Councillor Quince – What's the impact when other towns nearby change their decisions, for example Ipswich banning super strength alcohol.
- Councillor Davies – Questioned the figures on page 50, with the number of households in temporary accommodation in both Bed and Breakfast and Hostels increasing, even though the paragraph in the report states that some of the Hostel accommodation has been closed? What is the average length of stay in a Bed & Breakfast?
- Councillor Oxford – With the Universal Credit on the horizon, which might cause a significant impact, is there any work to pre-empt this?
- Councillor Oxford – Will the level of Discretionary Housing Payment Government Grant be reducing?

In response to the issues raised, the following information was provided:

- The strategy aims to prevent homelessness by encouraging people that face eviction to get help before their situation reaches crises.
- With regard to rough sleepers, the Borough Council is required by the Department for Communities and Local Government to produce an annual estimate formed by input from the different partner organisations. Tina Hinson, Housing Strategy Manager, stated that many of the rough sleepers don't sleep in the town centre or at night as it is too dangerous. She also highlighted that rough sleepers may not be able to access the services available due to being excluded for a variety of issues or are too vulnerable to access.
- Tina Hinson stated that they have not yet seen the full force of the impact of benefit cap and spare bedroom tax; it is the tip of the iceberg until the introduction of universal credit. The Customer Support Team are working hard to help Colchester's residents and a member of staff from Job Centre Plus has been seconded to the team to offer employment advice. Discretionary Housing Payments are helping to buffer the impact whilst tenants look to move or consider other options. Colchester Borough Homes are working with tenants to provide support including help with budgeting.
- Councillor Tina Bourne, in response to Councillor Harrington, stated that the strategy's aim is to prevent people from getting into this situation, quickly referring them to partner organisations if they do. Without shelter all other needs are difficult to achieve.

- Karen Paton explained that under Homelessness Law some single adults over the age of 25 do not have a priority need. Therefore the Council makes referrals to the voluntary sector organisations that are able to support and accommodate single homeless people.
- In response to Councillor Frame, Councillor Bourne commented that the Homelessness Strategy will last five years, and key performance indicators are already being monitored quarterly on the corporate dashboard.
- In response to Councillor Oxford, Councillor Bourne stated that it was necessary to build awareness with parents, and potentially help to mediate between the parties. There is a need here to make sure we get to them first, and prevent them from staying in unsafe places. The Borough along with its partners needs to ensure the help is there in both the financial sense and helping with strains in the families. Priority 4 in the Homeless Strategy Delivery Plan will also help, as it will provide education in schools, and effective planning of move-on accommodation.
- In response to Councillor Oxford's query on developing skills for those that are made homeless, Tina Hinson, stated that Ascot House, which is staffed 24/7 provides support and life skills development.
- The number of under occupied households in the Borough, which stood at 904 as of July 2013 is reducing with an increase in mutual exchanges and moves through the tenant incentive scheme.
- The Private Sector Housing Team does work with private sector landlords, and has had successful prosecutions of those landlords who have not looked after their property. The requested statistics by Councillor Harris for Colchester Borough Council work will be provided.
- Councillor Bourne in response to Councillor Mudie, stated that they are working to get more landlords on board, and there is an expectation that they are responsible for their tenants.
- Councillor Bourne stated that a scheme does exist to provide spare rooms and lodgings through and has been publicised through a number of routes including Colchester Borough Homes news and views articles. In terms of the wider sector, Tina Hinson confirmed that Solo Housing have also had articles and publicity on the availability and benefits of lodgings.
- The take-up from landlords willing to let out rooms is slowly showing an increase, with a number of different schemes in existence. Colchester hasn't however had the huge numbers that other Local Authorities have seen.
- Karen Lowman recently met with a representative of the Armed forces to discuss housing issues. Local Authorities are already required to give service personnel increased preference through the allocation scheme.
- Councillor Smith responded to the queries by Councillor Frame, that the enterprise grant has been used to provide job help and CV's through Signpost.
- In regards to the number of rough sleepers, Colchester is a victim of its own success with the support that it provides. A lot of hard work is put

into supporting those individuals, making Colchester an attractive town in which to be homeless. It is also the case that places like Tendring suffer the same situation during the summer months. There are some records of the number of those coming into the town, which the voluntary sector is aware of.

- In response to Councillor Quince, Councillor Bourne stated that there are so many different reasons for individuals travelling to Colchester when homeless meaning that it would be difficult to specify any single reason.
- The figures regarding usage of Hostels and Bed and Breakfasts do not necessarily correlate because there were some existing vacancies in Hostel accommodation and often a mismatch between the size of the accommodation and the size of the household. It was also the case that whilst the Council stopped using Ascott House, and Bardfield House, the latter had to be used again to prevent households from having to stay in Bed and Breakfasts outside of Colchester. Councillor Bourne highlighted that these figures show the importance of working with the voluntary organisations, and that if there are changes to temporary accommodation this will have a knock on affect on Bed and Breakfast usage. Tina Hinson will provide the Panel with information on the average length of stay at Bed and Breakfasts.
- The Portfolio Holder stated that Universal Credit was an issue which the Council had started to look into back in 2012. It is possible to identify those that may need additional support including Housing Association and Private Sector tenants as well as our own tenants, and work with Housing Associations and the Department for Work and Pensions. Colchester has done very well in its work in managing Discretionary Housing Payments. Colchester Borough Homes are visiting tenants to help with budgeting and financial management.
- The Government settlement for Discretionary Housing Payment this year is slightly less than the previous year, but as yet there is no indication what the settlement will be for the future.

RESOLVED that Colchester's Homelessness Strategy 2013 – 2018 be noted.



Cabinet

5 March 2014

Item
8(i)

Report of	Head of Commercial Services	Author	Howard Davies 507885
Title	St. Botolph's Quarter – Approval of Draft Heads Of Terms for St. Botolph's Quarter site, comprising former remainder of Bus Station site, St. James House, Bus Depot and ticket office		
Wards affected	All		

This report seeks approval of draft Heads of Terms for the long leasehold Sale of St. Botolph's Quarter site, comprising former remainder of Bus Station site, St. James House, Bus Depot and ticket office

1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To agree the long leasehold disposal of the remaining St Botolph's Quarter land, identified by the area marked red on the attached plan, to Building Partnerships following a marketing exercise at the end of 2013.
- 1.2 To approve the draft Heads of Terms for long leasehold sale including the financial offer proposed (confidential appendix including heads of terms is included in Part B of the agenda).
- 1.3 To give delegated authority to the Strategic Director in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration to conclude the Heads of Terms and legal agreements substantially in accordance with the approved draft.

2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 To complete the redevelopment of St. Botolph's Quarter site, comprising former Bus Station site, St. James House, Bus Depot and ticket office, replacing with a new Hotel, a mix of restaurant uses and townhouses and apartments.
- 2.2 The proposed development will complement the new Curzon Cinema development planned at Roman House and the firstsite gallery.
- 2.3 To bring forward another stage of regeneration of the St Botolph's Quarter which will create 100 new jobs in the area.

- 2.4 To provide a capital receipt to the Council and a significant increase in Business Rates.
- 2.5 The formal approval of the Heads of Terms signifies a really positive step in bringing forward the regeneration of the wider area following a period of time that has seen an adverse economic climate.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 The Council could conclude that the financial terms or regeneration objectives offered are not satisfactory and seek to remarket the site but the marketing exercise has demonstrated market value is being obtained and the proposals meet the Council's vision for the site.

4. Supporting information

- 4.1 The St. Botolph's Quarter, was originally marketed in the autumn of 2006. The Council secured a preferred partner for the delivery of a scheme which failed to deliver a solution due to the economic circumstances at the time.
- 4.2 In 2012 the Council took the decision to start the process afresh. A process of 'soft market testing' took place which generated significant interest in the site further improved by negotiations with First Group which will lead to the Council acquiring its land holding in Queen Street to add to the available site area.
- 4.3 The Council subsequently formally marketed the St Botolph's Quarter site in September 2013 seeking expressions of interest from developers for the whole or part of the site.
- 4.4 In November Cabinet agreed to proceed with Curzon Cinemas in respect of a sale of Roman House and it was agreed that the 3 remaining parties who bid for the whole site would be asked to resubmit their proposals based upon the smaller site area.
- 4.5 Two proposals were received and following an evaluation process with the Portfolio Holder, the Building Partnerships proposal is being recommended to Cabinet.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 The Building Partnerships proposal to deliver a new Hotel, a mix of restaurant/cafe uses and townhouses and apartments, meets the Council's vision for the Quarter. The offer also provides for a capital receipt for the long leasehold sale of the site together with the ability to create 100 new jobs in the town.

5.2 Therefore the Council proposes to agree the attached draft Heads of Terms with Building Partnerships for the re-development of the site. The Heads of Terms will form the basis of negotiations in respect of the legal agreement, due for completion within three months from the Heads of Terms approval date.

5.3 The draft Heads of Terms, which have been negotiated with the Developer, are attached as a confidential appendix to this document and provide for a swift exchange of contracts, conditional upon securing planning consent. We expect that initial conversations with the Council's planning team are due to be carried out.

6. Strategic Plan References

6.1 Colchester's Regeneration is a priority for the Council and the St. Botolph's Quarter is detailed in the Strategic Plan as being a key project which contributes to the "Regeneration of land and buildings within the Borough".

7. Consultation

7.1 Substantial consultation was undertaken prior to the approval of the St. Botolph's Quarter Masterplan.

7.2 The site was openly and widely marketed

7.3 Once the developer submits a scheme for planning consent it will be subject to the normal consultation process.

8. Publicity Considerations.

8.1 There has been significant publicity around the empty buildings on the site and the ability to redevelop this area will be considered as a positive step.

8.2 The redevelopment of the Bus Station site, St. James House, Bus Depot and ticket office will remove the Council's rating liability which has been subject to recent press interest.

9. Financial Implications

9.1 The detailed financial proposals are contained within the confidential section of this report which includes draft Heads of Terms but the disposal would provide a capital receipt to the Council and generate new business rates.

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

The EQIA can be viewed via the link below

<http://www.colchester.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=3669&p=0>

or by following this pathway from the homepage of the Council's website. www.colchester.gov.uk:-

Council and Democracy/Policies, Strategy and Performance/Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessments/Commercial Services/Disposals and Marketing.

11. Community Safety Implications

None identified at this stage

12. Health and Safety Implications

There will be no Health and Safety implications at this stage.

13. Risk Management Implications

13.1 Current risk lies around the legal agreement with the developer.

13.2 A full risk management programme will be developed as the project continues

Attachment

1. Site plan showing area in red

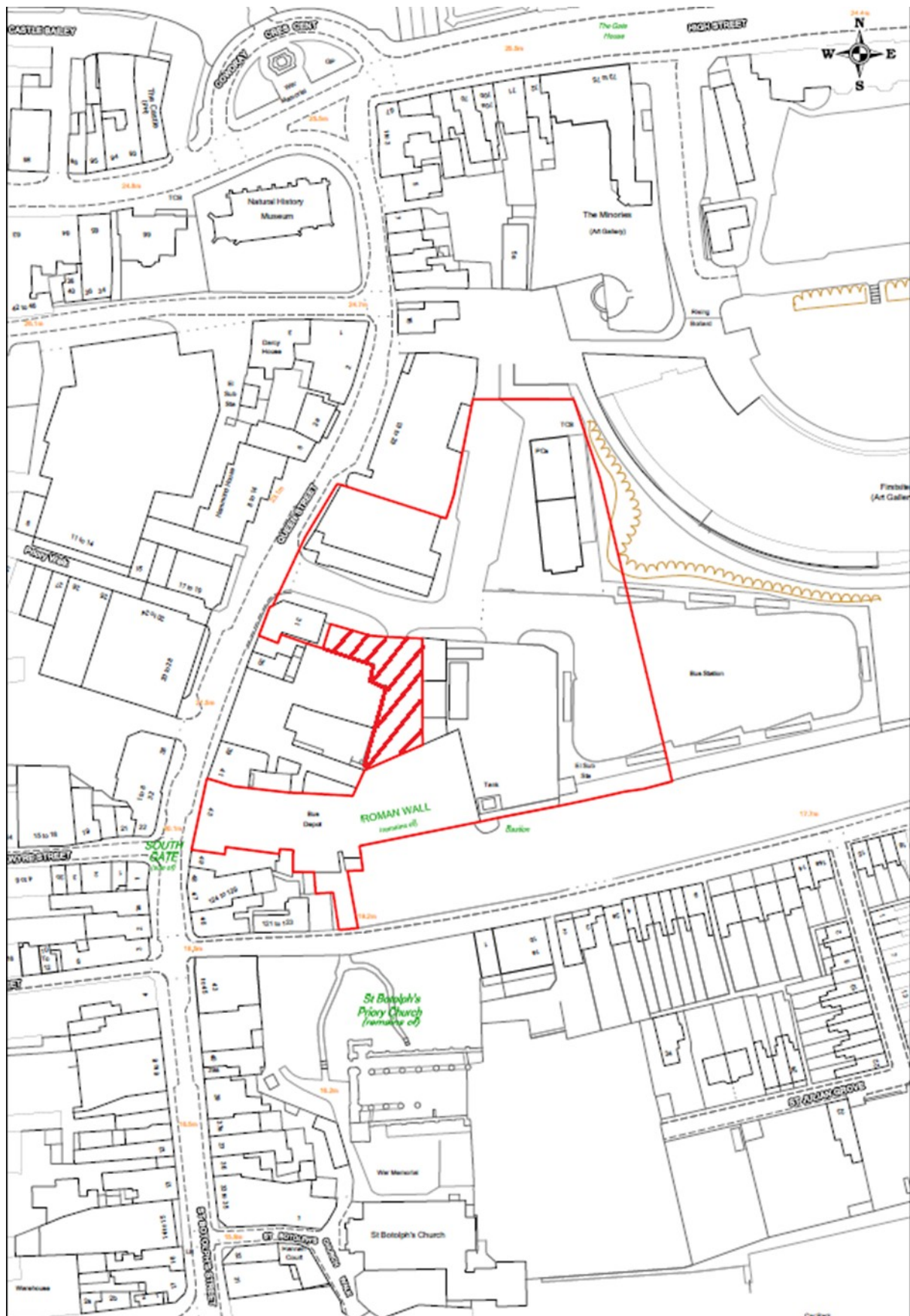
Appendices – not for publication documents contained in Part B of the Agenda

Appendix One

1. Confidential Background paper

Appendix Two

1. Confidential Summary of Key Terms



Note

- The hatched area remains in the ownership of the Council
- The first building of the Bus Depot will remain in Council ownership, the actual line is yet to be determined.

5th March 2014

Report of	Head of Commercial Services	Author	Fiona Duhamel 01206 282252
Title	Depot and Offices, 123, Gosbecks Road, Colchester – Supermarket Proposal		
Wards affected	Shrub End		

This report seeks approval of the revised Heads of Terms for the disposal of part of the site at 123 Gosbecks Road following an extensive marketing process.

1. Decision(s) Required

1.1 To approve:

(i) The revised Heads of Terms including the sale price for a freehold disposal of land to the rear of 123 Gosbecks Road (draft terms attached in confidential section of this report)

(ii) The sale of the land to Lidl supermarkets, as the successful bidder, following an extensive marketing process carried out by the Council's development partner, Scott Properties under the previous agreement for lease.

1.2 To authorise the Head of Commercial Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources to conclude the legal transaction substantially in accordance with the approved draft terms.

2. Reasons for Decision(s)

2.1 Following a formal marketing process (agreed at Cabinet in 2012) to secure a foodstore operator for the site, it has become evident that there has been no interest from retailers in acquiring a long leasehold interest in the site. Therefore Cabinet are being asked to agree a disposal of the site on a freehold basis for a one off capital receipt rather than an annual income.

3. Alternative Options

3.1 A number of alternative options have been considered prior to bringing a report back to Cabinet. These are:

3.2 (1) Retain the land and continue to lease to CBH for operational purposes – whilst this option would continue to provide a rental income to the Council, the income is not secure as operational requirements could change. The capital value of retaining the land for this purpose is not as high as the recommended sale option.

3.3 (2) Retain the land and seek alternative development uses – The majority of the site is located within an Employment Zone, so planning policy does not support the option of

housing development in this location. A small office development would not create the same level of value at the proposed retail use.

- 3.4 (3) Review the retention or disposal of the site in the future – The opportunity to capitalise on the retail planning consent of the neighbouring property in order to gain the foodstore planning consent (which is also owned by Scott Properties) may not exist in future years. The owner of the adjacent property may decide to proceed with a smaller scheme without the Council's land which will remove the potential to create extra value in the future.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The Council's depot and offices site (number 123), comprising an area of about 1.7 acres, is situated on the north-eastern side of Gosbecks Road on the southern edge of Colchester and next to various commercial uses that fall within an Employment Zone. Adjacent to the site are the retail trading premises of Lay and Wheeler, Wine Merchants, owned by Scott Properties.
- 4.2 A Cabinet decision on the 28th November 2012 agreed a set of draft terms for the granting of a development agreement to Scott Properties in order for them to secure a planning consent on land R/O 123 Gosbecks Road, market the site to foodstore operators and agree final lease terms for the grant of a long lease by the Council to the end user.
- 4.3 The legal agreement with the developer was completed and they have now gained full planning consent for a foodstore but following an extensive marketing process, there has been less interest in the site than expected from large foodstore operators. This may be due to market conditions as many retailers are drawing back on new store expansions at the current time.
- 4.4 However there was strong interest in the site from some of the smaller retailers and although they were competitive in the bidding process, it was unlikely they would take a leasehold of the site.
- 4.5 Subsequently, the Council has received a final offer for the site from Lidl, which currently has no representation in the town, for a freehold purchase.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 It is proposed to sell the freehold of the site direct to Lidl for a capital receipt which will bring forward a development of circa 20,000sq ft and provide for up to 40 new jobs.
- 5.2 The purchaser will carry out and bear the cost of diversion of services and other ancillary Works required to separate the site from the Council's retained land.
- 5.3 There is a target date for the completion of the sale of the 15th April 2014.

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 The disposal of this land will meet several objectives within the Council's Strategic Plan.
- 6.2 The rationalisation of the Council's land and property assets and generation of additional income or capital receipts are Key Aims in the Strategic Asset Management Plan 2010 – 13 to assist delivery of the Capital Programme.

7. Consultation

7.1 The current tenants, CBH, have been fully involved in the development proposal and have indicated their support and a willingness to reduce their operational premises requirement.

7.2 Scott Properties in consultation with the Council have fully marketed the land to potential occupiers.

8. Publicity Considerations

8.1 The proposed development should result in positive publicity for the Council as it will assist in bringing forward additional retail provision on the southern edge of Colchester and associated local job creation.

9. Financial implications

9.1 The financial implications are set out in the confidential section of this report but do provide for a capital receipt which will be payable upon completion. Also, the development will generate substantial business rates which will be assessed when the supermarket opens for business but are likely to be in the region of £140,000pa.

9.2 A proportion of the premium payment to the Council will still be required to enable the use of a new workshop for CBH either on their revised site or alternative premises.

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

10.1 It is considered that this transaction will not give rise to any equality and diversity considerations, nor impact on the promotion of equality and diversity in relation to gender, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age and race/ethnicity.

10.2 The relevant Equality impact Assessment can be found on the Council's website at;

<http://www.colchester.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=3669&p=0>

10.3 This financial transaction does not result in any new policy or in any major change to existing policies.

10.4 It is considered that this financial transaction does not give rise to a breach of human rights.

11. Community Safety Implications

11.1 It is considered that the proposed development will not have any adverse affect upon community safety, crime and disorder.

12. Health and Safety Implications

12.1 There will be no impact upon the health and safety of the general public by this transaction. When the site is developed health and safety will be the responsibility of the food store operator and its contractor team and the usual regulations will apply.

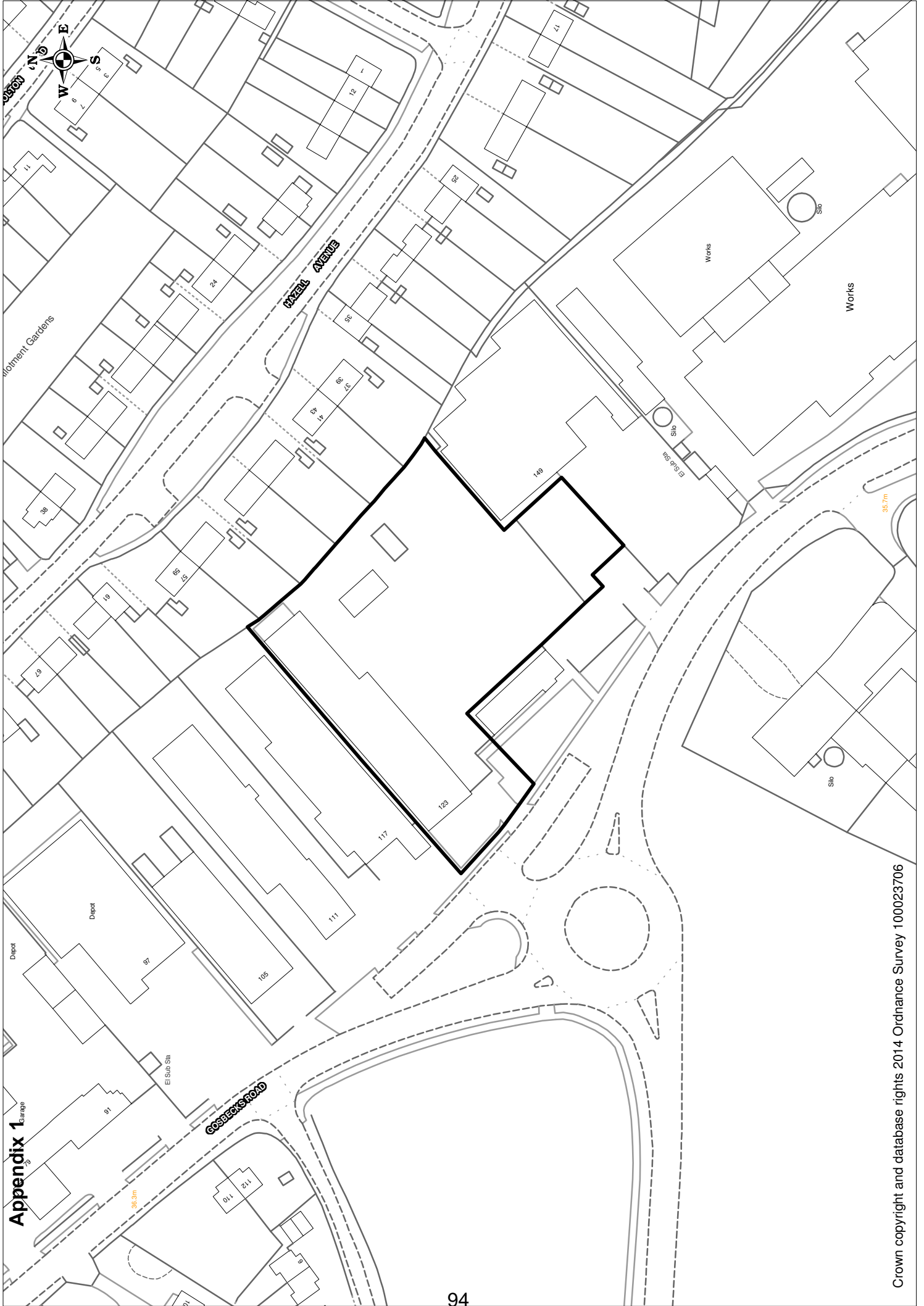
Appendices

Appendix 1

Site plan

Appendix 2

Supporting statement and Draft Heads of Terms for the freehold sale (please note this a not for publication document and is contained in Part B of the Agenda).



Appendix 1

5th March 2014

Report of	Assistant Chief Executive	Author	Lee Spalding ☎ 282118
Title	Restoration of Moot Hall Organ, Colchester Town Hall		
Wards affected	Castle Ward		

This report concerns works to restore the Moot Hall Organ within Colchester Town Hall

1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To agree to proceed with works to restore the Moot Hall Organ within Colchester Town Hall.
- 1.2 To agree to enter into a contract with the successful contractor to undertake the aforementioned works.

2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 The Council supported by the Friends of the Moot Hall Organ was successful in its second round bid to secure grant funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a project to restore the Moot Hall Organ within Colchester Town Hall.
- 2.2 The works are necessary to restore the Moot Hall Organ back to full working order. The Organ has not worked properly and therefore has not been played for more than ten years.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 Decide not to undertake the restoration works therefore forfeiting the HLF Grant funding.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The Moot Hall Organ was constructed within the Moot Hall in Colchester Town Hall in 1902 by the firm of Norman & Beard. Despite ongoing maintenance of the Organ's humidification plant and bellows, over time it developed some fundamental problems with its inner workings and pipework. Sadly these problems have meant that the Organ has now been unable to be played in public for more than ten years (see also Appendix A – A Brief History of the Moot Hall Organ by Dr William McVicker attached to this report).
- 4.2 The Council and The Friends of the Moot Hall Organ, a group established by Cllr Nigel Chapman in 2001 tasked with raising funding to repair and restore the Organ, was awarded grant funding from the HLF in March 2013 for its project to restore the Moot Hall Organ in Colchester Town Hall.
- 4.3 The restoration works included within the successful HLF bid are broken down into three main areas as summarised below:

- The removal of the organ from site, its restoration and return to site;

- The removal of additions to the specification made in 1972; and
- The treatment of the organ casework.

4.4 A project to deliver the aforementioned works has been developed by specialist Organ consultant Dr William McVicker who was commissioned following a competitive fee bid competition held in February 2012. Dr McVicker's fees to date have been paid for from the first stage HLF grant award made in December 2011.

4.5 Tenders for the works were returned on Friday 31st January 2014 and opened by the Council's Legal Services Team, witnessed by Lee Spalding, Buildings Services and Facilities Manager.

5. Proposals

5.1 To enter into a contract with the successful contractor for the works.

6. Strategic Plan References

6.1 By undertaking the Organ restoration works the Council will be ensuring that a once popular community attraction and an important Civic and heritage asset is restored to its former glory, providing further evidence that the Council is responsible in preserving its heritage.

6.2 Once restored it is hoped that the Organ will once again draw visitors from both within and outside of the Borough both helping to bolster the Town Hall Business Plan and continuing to demonstrate that Colchester is a place that people want to visit.

7. Consultation

7.1 The specification and proposals for the restoration works have been discussed and developed with the assistance and involvement of The Friends of the Moot Hall Organ, the HLF and English Heritage, as well as the Council's own Building Services and Facilities Management Team.

7.2 In addition to the above, The Friends of the Moot Hall Organ have been releasing regular project updates and have also hosted a number of events presenting the proposed project.

8. Publicity Considerations

8.1 Major works being undertaken to restore an important heritage asset within a prominent building such as Colchester Town Hall is a good news story and is likely to, and in fact has already attracted press attention. It is also a condition of the HLF grant award that the project continues to be publicised at key stages throughout the project programme.

8.2 As such, the Council's Communications Team in conjunction with the HLF and The Friends of the Moot Hall Organ will be fully involved with the project as it progresses and in fact collectively they have already issued a press release publicising the HLF grant award.

9. Financial implications

9.1. The Moot Hall Organ restoration works are wholly funded by the HLF grant awarded in March 2013 supplemented by match funding raised by The Friends of the Moot Hall Organ. No Colchester Borough Council funding is required to deliver this project.

9.2. Based on the tenders reported, the existing funding allocated within the overall project budget for the restoration works is sufficient to cover the cost of the tendered works and subsequent consultant fees.

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

10.1 An EQIA for the project is published on the Council's website and can be accessed by the link below:-

<http://www.colchester.gov.uk/article/4574/Corporate-and-Financial-Management>

10.2 In addition to the above Contractors that have tendered for the project have been asked a set of equality and diversity questions at the PQQ stage of the tender process to ensure that they are fully committed to equality and diversity.

10.3 These questions included:

- Requesting that a copy of the contractor's equal opportunities policy (if they have one) is submitted along with their tender.
- Confirmation that they are able to fully meet the requirements that all local authorities have, i.e. a statutory duty to outlaw discrimination based on race, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion or belief, gender and human rights, as this duty extends to organisations carrying out functions or works on the council's behalf also.

11. Community Safety Implications

11.1 None directly arising from this report.

12. Health and Safety Implications

12.1 Due to the nature of the works to be delivered, the project falls within the jurisdiction of the Construction Design and Management (CDM) Regulations 2007 and as such, the Council as the "Employer" has appointed a CDM Coordinator and Competent Designer as it is required to do to properly fulfil its obligations under the Regulations.

13. Risk Management Implications

13.1 There are no major risks associated with this project. However, it is a condition of the HLF grant award that the project have its own risk management plan to ensure that potential risks are identified and mitigated wherever possible.

Appendix A – A Brief History of the Moot Hall Organ by Dr William McVicker

Appendix A – A Brief History of the Moot Hall Organ by Dr William McVicker

The firm of Norman & Beard enjoyed a decade of supremacy in the English organ building world between the death of 'Father' Henry Willis in 1901 and the emergence of Harrison & Harrison Ltd as a major competitor during the first decade of the twentieth century.

The instrument in the Moot Hall is vintage stuff and, as such, is an important organ. It is curious that it is not better known in this country – clearly it is a hidden gem. It was conceived as an orchestral instrument – that is to say one capable of performing orchestral transcriptions, perhaps in lieu of a town orchestra.

The organ is brilliantly designed. There are several features that emerge from a closer examination of the design notes for the instrument. There were only 28 speaking stops and yet the organ gives the impression of being much larger. The main diapason stop is labelled 'Grand Open Diapason' and worthy of the label it certainly is. The pipework has leathery lips and is of large scale 'constructed in a special manner so as to give great power to the whole of the organ' (the underlining is from the document drawn up in 1901 and reproduced here in the Appendix). The Claribel Flute Harmonique is described as 'a new stop specially designed for Orchestral Organs. Of fine Solo Quality'. The Great chorus has a good 4-rank mixture – a bold inclusion at a time in English organ-building history when such chorus stops were going out of fashion. The two reeds on the Great have tremendous power and presence. They fill out the sound of the organ and are provided with their own coupler which gives the organ *gravitas* and helps to create the impression that the instrument is much larger than it actually is.

The Swell Organ has plenty of colours. The Rohr Flute is made to a design from *Modern Organ Building* by W & T Lewis (London: Reeves, 1890s); the Harmonic Gemshorn (replaced in 1972) carried through the principle of orchestral tone. As with the Great Organ, the reeds have their own sub-octave coupler which 'doubles the power of the Swell Horn and Oboe, as well as producing very beautiful Orchestral effects'.

The Choir Organ was conceived as a miniature Solo Organ to add further orchestral effects, rather than as a secondary chorus. The reeds for the Pedal Organ were never constructed. These stops were supposed to add the finishing touch of magnificence and were to be 'made with specially shaped Reeds for producing a majestic tone'. Were they, one wonders, designed to be similar to T.C. Lewis's Pedal reeds at Southwark Cathedral? Certainly they were intended to have similar names: Bombarde and Trumpet. Alas, we can only speculate. But the earlier reference to 'specially shaped Reeds' in the original document does tempt such speculation.

The organ contract was signed on 21 April 1902 at a cost of £1000 and was supposed to be completed by 24 May. Graffiti inside the organ indicates that the instrument was opened by C.W. Perkins – then organist of Birmingham Town Hall – on 15 May 1902.

In 1938 the organ was given an overhaul and some minor changes were made to the tonal scheme. The old-style trigger swell pedal was replaced by a balanced pedal; thumb pistons were added to the keyboards to replace the original mechanical composition pedal mechanism. The present arrangement to be retained.

A drawstop was added to couple 'Great Pistons to Pedal Compositions'.

The pitch of the organ was formerly C=517Hz (A=435Hz) which was known as 'Normal Continental Queen's Hall USA PMA 1891 or French New Pitch'. This was changed to modern pitch (A=440Hz) between 5 August and 19 September 1952. Further faults were corrected – 'runnings' on the Choir Organ and changes made to the piston settings, the cost being £450.

A further overhaul took place in 1964 between 20 July and 28 August; the work included renewing the leatherwork to the book motors for the pistons at a cost of £822. 18. 6.

The last time that the organ was overhauled was in 1972 when major building alterations were carried out to the town hall. A new heating system was added, together with air conditioning; the organ was included in the scheme of improvement. Hill, Norman & Beard replaced the doors in front of the Choir Organ with a mesh; the painting, which was in the way, was re-hung in another location; the Swell Harmonic Gemshorn was replaced by a 2ft Super Octave – the tone of the former stop, apparently, having become irregular. The Choir Organ was remodelled as a Positif division. The Lieblich Gedeckt received new treble pipes; a new Gemshorn 2ft was added, together with a Larigot 1½ft (on a clamp at the front of the soundboard) and a two-rank Sesquialtera. The pipework was imported from Stinkens of Holland. The total cost of all this work was reported to have been £3,700.

PETITIONS, PUBLIC STATEMENTS, QUESTIONS

(i) Have Your Say speakers

Date of Meeting	Details of Members of the Public	Subject Matter	Form of Response	Date Completed
Cabinet, 29 January 2014	Nick Chilvers	Leisure World, Creative Hub	Verbal response provided at the meeting by Councillor Feltham Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure Services and Councillor Barlow, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration	29 January 2014

(ii) Petitions

Date petition received	Lead Petitioner	Subject Matter	Form of Response	Date Completed
No valid petitions received				

