

Motion from Full Council meeting of 7 December 2023

The motion below was agreed at the Full Council meeting on 7 December 2023. As paragraph 3 of the resolution of the motion informs Cabinet of the view of Full Council it is referred to Cabinet for further consideration.

Accuracy in Financial Reporting

Proposer: Paul Dundas

This Council notes that:

- 1. Colchester City Council recently published on its website a list of payments to suppliers over the last 12 months, this being a statutory duty pursuant to the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, revealing to Colchester Council Tax Payers where their money was being spent.*

- 2. All payments were correctly made, but a publication error meant that a number of payments were incorrectly attributed to the wrong recipients including £2,200,809 on stationery, over £2.1m on election software, £880,000 on playground inspections, over £5m on newspaper advertising, over £1m on an individual no one can identify, £350,000 on printing, £847,000 on telephone bills, just under £5m with a Christian Empowerment Charity, £8,646 on Oysters, £130,000 on mobile phones and £1,097,146 on Ice Creams. This has led to misunderstanding and complaint, regretted by the Council.*

- 3. Consequently the published figures were removed from the website and the Leader of the Council issued an apology to Councillors.*

Therefore, the Council:

- 1. Thanks the Leader of the Council for prompt acknowledgement of the error and the email notification of the data failures issued on October 31.*

- 2. Thanks and notes the work of Conservative opposition councillors who brought these errors to the attention of the Council.*

3. *Informs Cabinet that the operational finance team may be under considerable time pressure and a review of its workload would be appropriate.*

4. *Notes the Council has apologised for this rare publication error and has taken steps to ensure it will not be repeated*