

Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel

**Grand Jury Room, Town Hall
25 October 2011 at 6.00pm**

The Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel look at policies and strategies from a borough-wide perspective and ensure the actions of the Cabinet accord with the policies and budget of the Council. The Panel reviews corporate strategies within the Council's Strategic Plan, overviews Council partnerships, considers the Council's budgetary guidelines for the forthcoming year, and scrutinises Cabinet decisions or Cabinet Member decisions (with delegated power) which have been called in.

Information for Members of the Public

Access to information and meetings

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The Council values contributions from members of the public. Under the Council's Have Your Say! policy you can ask questions or express a view to meetings, with the exception of Standards Committee meetings. If you wish to speak at a meeting or wish to find out more, please pick up the leaflet called "Have Your Say" at Council offices and at www.colchester.gov.uk

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Occasionally meetings will need to discuss issues in private. This can only happen on a limited range of issues, which are set by law. When a committee does so, you will be asked to leave the meeting.

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Please ensure that all mobile phones and pagers are turned off before the meeting begins and note that photography or audio recording is not permitted.

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There is wheelchair access to the Town Hall from St Runwald Street. There is an induction loop in all the meeting rooms. If you need help with reading or understanding this document please take it to Angel Court Council offices, High Street, Colchester or telephone (01206) 282222 or textphone 18001 followed by the full number that you wish to call and we will try to provide a reading service, translation or other formats you may need.

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Terms of Reference (but not limited to)

1. To review corporate strategies and strategic partnerships to ensure the actions of the Cabinet and Portfolio Holders accord with the policies and budget of the Council.
2. To monitor and scrutinise the financial performance of the Council, and make recommendations to the Cabinet particularly in relation to annual revenue and capital guidelines, bids and submissions.
3. To link the Council's spending proposals to the policy priorities and review progress towards achieving those priorities against the Strategic / Action Plans.
4. To scrutinise executive decisions made by Cabinet or Cabinet Member, the East Essex Area Waste Management Joint Committee, the Colchester and Ipswich Joint Museums Committee and the North Essex Parking Partnership (decisions relating to off-street parking only) which have been made but not implemented, and referred to the Panel through call-in.
5. To monitor the Council's operational performance in relation to the Strategic Plan and Performance Indicators, and the Cabinet's performance in relation to the Forward Plan.
7. The panel will be the appropriate route for any member to refer a 'local government matter' in the context of Councillor Call for Action.

Process for Councillor Call for Action

Councillors have the ability to call for debate and discussion a topic of neighbourhood concern, limited to issues affecting a single ward, in an attempt to bring about specific solutions for local problems, without going through the Council's executive decision making process.

Members may not call for debate matters relating to a planning or licensing decision, an individual complaint or where a right of recourse to a review or right of appeal is already provided for in law. Examples of where a member can bring an action to the panel's attention are poor service performance or increased anti-social behaviour.

The panel may reject a request as not within the guidance or where they consider the usual channels have not been exhausted, or accept that an investigation is the appropriate action.

The panel may conduct an investigation in the usual scrutiny manner and a report with recommendations will be compiled and brought to the Council or partners attention, with the Council or partners having a duty to respond. The panel will consider and publish the responses to their recommendations and feed back this information to the Councillor requesting the action.

COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL
STRATEGIC OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
25 October 2011 at 6:00pm

Members

Chairman : Councillor Andrew Ellis.
Deputy Chairman : Councillor Dennis Willetts.
Councillors Kim Naish, Gerard Oxford, Colin Sykes,
Nigel Chapman, Nick Cope, Bill Frame, Theresa Higgins and
Will Quince.

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

Agenda - Part A

(open to the public including the media)

Members of the public may wish to note that agenda items 1 to 5 are normally brief and agenda items 6 to 9 are standard items for which there may be no business to consider.

Pages

1. Welcome and Announcements

- (a) The Chairman to welcome members of the public and Councillors and to remind all speakers of the requirement for microphones to be used at all times.
- (b) At the Chairman's discretion, to announce information on:
- action in the event of an emergency;
 - mobile phones switched off or to silent;
 - location of toilets;
 - introduction of members of the meeting.

2. Substitutions

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

3. Urgent Items

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

4. Declarations of Interest

The Chairman to invite Councillors to declare individually any personal

interests they may have in the items on the agenda.

If the personal interest arises because of a Councillor's membership of or position of control or management on:

- any body to which the Councillor has been appointed or nominated by the Council; or
- another public body

then the interest need only be declared if the Councillor intends to speak on that item.

If a Councillor declares a personal interest they must also consider whether they have a prejudicial interest. If they have a prejudicial interest they must leave the room for that item.

If a Councillor wishes to make representations on an item on which they have a prejudicial interest they may do so if members of the public are allowed to make representations. In such circumstances a Councillor must leave the room immediately once they have finished speaking.

An interest is considered to be prejudicial if a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard it as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest.

Councillors should consult paragraph 7 of the Meetings General Procedure Rules for further guidance.

5. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2011 will be agreed at the November meeting.

6. 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.

7. Items requested by members of the Panel and other Members

(a) To evaluate requests by members of the Panel for an item relevant to the Panel's functions to be considered.

(b) To evaluate requests by other members of the Council for an item relevant to the Panel's functions to be considered.

Members of the panel may use agenda item 'a' (all other members will use agenda item 'b') as the appropriate route for referring a 'local government matter' in the context of the Councillor Call for Action to the panel. Please refer to the panel's terms of reference for further procedural arrangements.

8. Referred items under the Call in Procedure

To consider any decisions taken under the Call in Procedure.
The panel may a) confirm the decision, which may then be implemented immediately, b) refer the decision back to the decision taker for further consideration setting out in writing the nature of its concerns, or c) refer the matter to full Council in the event that the panel considers the decision to be contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council or contrary to, or not wholly in accordance with the Budget.

9. Decisions taken under special urgency provisions

To consider any Portfolio Holder decisions taken under the special urgency provisions.

10. Colchester Borough Homes Fundamental Service Review - Progress review of Customer Experience and Access 1 - 63

Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration

11. Work Programme 64 - 66

See report from the Scrutiny Officer.

12. Exclusion of the public

In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in accordance with The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended) to exclude the public, including the press, from the meeting so that any items containing exempt information (for example confidential personal, financial or legal advice), in Part B of this agenda (printed on yellow paper) can be decided. (Exempt information is defined in Section 100I and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).



Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Item
10

25 October 2011

Report of	Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration	Author	Lindsay Barker ☎ 282253
Title	Colchester Borough Homes' Fundamental Service Review- Review of Customer Experience and Access - progress to date		
Wards affected	All		

This report provides the an update on the implementation of the Fundamental Service Review of Colchester Borough Homes 'Review of Customer Experience and Access'

1. Action(s) Required

- 1.1 To note the progress made on the implementation of the Business Case for the Fundamental Service Review (FSR) of Colchester Borough Homes 'Review of Customer Experience and Access'.

2. Reasons for Action(s)

- 2.1 The Business Case was developed as part of the Fundamental Service Review of Colchester Borough Homes. In order to assess the effectiveness of the review, clear monitoring arrangements have been put in place. This report contains an update on progress against the Business Case.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 The alternative would be not to monitor or evaluate the implementation of the Business Case which would not allow an assessment of progress.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel invited CBH to present an update of their Fundamental Service Review.
- 4.2 In May 2010 CBH Board agreed that an FSR of the CBH functions would be carried out to improve the customer experience of CBH.
- 4.3 A business case was approved by the Board in January 2011.
- 4.4 The initial phase of the implementation was to design and recruit to a new structure for the delivery of services.
- 4.5 The recruitment process was successfully completed and the new structure implemented in August 2011.

- 4.6 A report outlining progress against all of the business case opportunities is included with this report. There will also be an accompanying presentation by Greg Falvey, Chief Executive, and Karen Loweman, Director of Housing, Colchester Borough Homes.
- 4.7 The implementation of the FSR has already created a positive customer experience, resulting in a reduced level of complaints and an increase in the number of tenant involvement.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 Implementation of the Business Case for the Fundamental Service Review (FSR) of Colchester Borough Homes 'Review of Customer Experience and Access'.

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 The Council has a Strategic Plan covering the period from 2009 – 2012. One of the 9 priorities within this plan is:

Homes for All

We will work towards providing safe, secure, decent and affordable homes for all.

Within the context of the Council's Strategic Plan priority above, the overall objective of the CBH review is concerning customer excellence and access.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 The Business Case for the Fundamental Service Review was subject to consultation with key partners and customer satisfaction information was used to inform the review. Outcomes will be tested by a comparison Customer survey which we is planned for completion in December 2011.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 There are not expected to be any publicity considerations arising from this report.

9. Financial Implications

9.1 There are planned savings from the first three years of implementation as detailed below.

	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>Year 2</i>	<i>Year 3</i>
	<i>2011/12</i>	<i>2012/13</i>	<i>2013/14</i>
	<i>£'000</i>	<i>£'000</i>	<i>£'000</i>
Management Fee - Other	93	145	205
Management Fee - Sheltered	76	100	125
CBC Delegated	70	80	90
Property Services	61	85	100
Total Savings	300	410	520

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the implementation of the FSR Business Case and can be found attached as appendix A.

11. Community Safety Implications

11.1 Housing Services play a significant role in community safety and tackling anti social behaviour in communities. The detailed business case considered through many of the opportunities identified how this can continually be improved.

12. Health and Safety Implications

12.1 There are no specific Health and Safety Implications

13. Risk Management Implications

13.1 A full risk register has been created as part of the Business Case.

Background Papers

Report: Colchester Borough Homes Fundamental Service Review – progress update to end September 2011.

**Colchester Borough Homes
Fundamental Service Review - progress up date to end September 2011 (Updated)**

Summary of progress from July to September 2011:

- **New staff structure in place August 2011.**
- **Customer services team joined to work from the Greenstead Local Housing Office – August 2011.**
- **Geographic patches managed holistically by Community Housing Officers in place August 2011. This will allow closer working in zoned areas linked to other council services and aims to improve liaison and engagement with local councillors and communities.**
- **Visiting officer structure in place for management and support of sheltered housing August 2011.**
- **Moved office from Wellington house to Rowan house September 2011.**
- **Joint review with CBC of Sheltered housing service.**
- **Extra Care sheltered housing decommissioned Heathfields house (July) and transfer care and housing related support service at the Cannons to Swan housing association (November)**
- **Increased enablement and involvement through increased resources October 2011.**
- **Repairs policy agreed and implemented – extending offer of repairs for tenants.**

- **Flexible working arrangements agreed with Property services staff to be able to offer repair appointments in the evenings and on Saturday mornings.**
- **Staff training programme to support change process and to increase staff skills to be able to empower to address customer enquiries at first point of contact.**
- **Taking forward business proposal to manage homes on behalf of Co-op.**
- **Board approved offer of Private Sector Leasing service by CBH to CBC.**
- **Improved thermal efficiency of council homes through cavity wall and loft insulation; development of ground source heat pumps as alternative to oil or electric heating systems.**
- **Developed the allocations and lettings process to reduce re let times and improve contact and liaison with new tenants.**
- **New service to collect and administer rent accounts for homeless temporary accommodation.**
- **ASB teams from CBH and CBC working at one location to improve liaison, monitoring and services.**

Opportunity 1

Enabling community & tenants to do more for themselves

Action	Update	Outcome
<p>Increase number of Quality Assurance Assessors.</p> <p>Review resident involvement structure.</p>	<p>Staff structure has increased number of staff to enable and engage with tenants.</p> <p>Resident Involvement structure reviewed and approved – increasing.</p> <p>Environmental improvement and Community budgets combined and managed by Tenant-led group to deliver neighbourhood improvements.</p> <p>Participation and scrutiny of services</p> <p>i-connect development</p>	<p>Increased number of involved tenants.</p> <p>Level of participation in services increased and providing scrutiny and feedback to improve service delivery.</p>
<p>Develop “self serve” opportunities for tenants (Rent statements, Housing Benefit and Lettings on line).</p> <p>Develop straightforward and easy to access services.</p>		<p>Self serve PC’s available at Greenstead. Lettings and Benefits available on line.</p>
<p>Provide staff and customers with information about contracts, planned works and tenancy matters.</p> <p>Create pride in homes and communities.</p>	<p>Weekly customer services briefing circulated to improve staff awareness of matters across the company.</p> <p>10 Making a Difference days held providing high visibility and impact to communities.</p>	<p>Reduced volume of complaints and councillor enquiries.</p>

Action	Update	Outcome
<p>Web site improvement to provide good information and access to services.</p>		
<p>Develop residents groups and provide training, support and encouragement.</p>	<p>Tenant training programme delivered to improve skills and confidence.</p> <p>Sheltered housing enabling officers developing activities which will encourage participation and engagement from the wider community.</p>	

Opportunity 2

Develop Joint work within the Community

Action	Update	Outcome
Develop Greenstead office as local "one stop shop".	Initial enquiries made regarding lease of building to ECC for Youth services.	
Develop Multi agency anti social behaviour team.	CBC and CBH ASB teams currently working from joint location and reviewing working practices and responsibilities.	
Work with partners to provide high visible community engagement (Community Days of Action, Making a Difference days).	CBH participate with Community Days of Action and Safer Colchester follow up work in neighbourhoods. Making a Difference days carried out throughout the summer months.	
Share resources with others to improve efficiency.	Director of Resources – new post shared with South Essex Homes.	Efficiency and closer working relationship with South Essex Homes.
Develop use of facilities available at the Gosbecks Road site.	Site at Gosbecks Road generating income from use of facilities.	

Opportunity 3

Re-process systems and ways of working

Action	Update	Outcome
<p>Re-process tenancy sign up reducing passing and scanning of papers.</p> <p>Re-process new tenant take up – including shortlisting and viewing.</p> <p>Re-process repair requests and inspections.</p> <p>Re-process meals service in extra care sheltered housing.</p> <p>Re-process empty property management.</p> <p>Re-process leasehold administration.</p> <p>Re-process assessment and allocation of sheltered housing.</p> <p>Re-process complaints and councillor enquiries.</p>	<p>Tenancy sign up, new tenant take on, repair inspections, assessment and allocation of sheltered housing processes have been reviewed and re engineered.</p> <p>The extra care meals service is now outsourced.</p> <p>Leasehold administration and support integrated within customer services and Asst Housing Officer teams.</p> <p>Complaints, councillor and board member enquiries service reviewed and improved.</p>	<p>Staff time released through improved processes</p> <p>Reduced level of complaints and enquiries achieving 100% response within target.</p>

Action	Update	Outcome
Develop more flexible appointment service for tenants to avoid missed calls.	Opti time system implementation expected to be in place November 2011.	
Repairs – graphic/diagnostic system to delivery of first call resolution.	i-connect (CRM) system used for all customer contacts (integration with Capita required to make efficient use of the system).	i-connect is not integrated and leads to double handling of information.
Make effective use of customer relationship management system.		

Opportunity 4

Increase skills of staff to allow flexibility and empowerment

Action	Update	Outcome
Deliver programme of training for staff to increase core skills and capacity to deal with new ways of working.	Programme of training delivered to staff to support and increase capacity	Outcomes will be tested by comparison Customer survey which we plan to complete in November/December once staff structure in place
Staff roles change to provide more flexible workforce.	Staff now working in more generic roles, increasing capacity to deal with enquiries	
Change management structure to reduce levels of supervision.	Management structure reviewed and some changes made	

Opportunity 5

Join services with others to maximise productivity

Action	Update	Outcome
Develop joint multi agency anti social behaviour team for Colchester	Initial consultation regarding joint ASB team complete. CBC and CBH ASB team working at one location and making assessment of roles and responsibilities	
Review Service level agreements with CBC to ensure value for money and effective	Service Level agreements reviewed – improved contract management in place through nominated officers	Limited outcomes at this stage – but building development and confidence in shared service agreements and working with others
Manage housing services on behalf of others	Developing agreement to lease properties from the Co-op. Offer of services to local RSLs	
Share resources with other organisations	Director of Resources shared with SEH, Equality & Diversity & Welfare Rights Officer shared with CBC.	
Offer repairs services to CBC corporate services and other public bodies		

Colchester Borough Homes

**Customer Excellence and Access
Fundamental Service Review**

**Full Business Case for CBH Board
January 2011**

Colchester Borough Homes (CBH)

Customer Excellence and Access - Fundamental Service Review (FSR)

Full Business Case

CONTENTS	PAGE
1. Executive summary	1
2. CBH – the Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) context	6
2.1 Current Services	7
2.2 Customer Contact	9
2.3 Current Organisational Chart	9
2.4 Repairs	10
2.5 Asset Management/Finance and Business Support	11
3. Proposal for Change	13
3.1 Organisational Model	15
4. Opportunities for change	16
4.1 Enabling Customers	16
4.2 Universal Customer Contact	17
4.3 Specialist Staff	18
4.4 Support	19
4.5 Enablers	20
4.6 Organisational Model	20
4.7 Opportunities	21
4.8 Co-location – working with others at shared locations	22
4.9 Increasing income – offering services to others	22
5. Finances	23
5.1 IT costs & savings	23
5.2 Investment/Costs	23
6. Communications	23
7. Next Steps	23
APPENDICES	
A Opportunity Summaries	24
B Project Summary document	26
C Equality Impact Assessment	37
D Risk Assessment	41
E Unison queries and responses	42
F Abbreviations	46

1. Executive Summary

The review has considered the changing environment for managing housing which includes the impact Welfare Benefit changes are likely to have on our customers and our business; the changes which have yet to be confirmed for the delivery of support delivered through the Supporting People grant as well as the HRA reform which will impact on finance.

Since 2007/8 CBH has found cashable savings and efficiencies of £362,600. This represents 10% of the 2010/11 Management fee. In addition there have been a number of further efficiencies to procurement, third party contract management and cost. The scope of the services delivered by CBH has increased and performance in key areas has continued to improve.

Over recent years CBH has embarked on a series of annual efficiency projects and this has set a culture of continuous improvement and efficiency.

This FSR should be seen in the context of this on going approach.

Restructuring of staffing is one of the principal ways in which future savings can be achieved along with savings from Business efficiency. Our analysis suggests resource and cost base savings of around £300,000 within the initial year, with further saving expected as the result of improved process efficiencies and better use of technology, achieving savings of around £520,000 by 2013/14. Some of these savings have been built in to 2011/12 base budgets.

The overall change described within the Business case is to move towards a model of service that enhances customer focus, and is designed to manage demand, deliver as much service as possible through a multi skilled contact team, refer to specialists when appropriate, and support and manage the organisation in a streamlined way.

It is recognised that to ensure that a high level of service can be maintained that the full savings will not be realised in the initial year. Managers and team leaders will be an important part of the staffing structure to ensure that staff are skilled and trained to deliver services. However, as process efficiencies and technology improves it is anticipated that the structure will evolve accordingly with on going review of any vacancies which occur.

It is envisaged that scope exists to find additional business efficiency and opportunity savings beyond those which have been identified within this report as follows:

Joining or sharing services which have been identified through opportunities such as:

- Extending the use of the Greenstead office base to deliver a greater range of services which will improve services for customers and create a neighbourhood resource hub.
- Joint working between CBH and CBC services, for example dealing with anti-social behaviour and estate management which includes litter collection, grounds maintenance services, environmental improvements
- Review of the CBH support services and Service Level agreements
- sharing roles and functions with other organisations
- a number of joint working initiatives between CBH and other local housing providers to deliver recognised standards and improved local resources for customers

The expected savings are summarised in the table below:

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Staffing structure cost	£3,868,000	£3,668,000	£3,578,000	£3,488,000
Saving	-	£200,000	£290,000	£380,000
Planned savings from Business efficiency and developed opportunities	-	£100,000	£120,000	£140,000
ANTICIPATED SAVINGS	-	£300,000	£410,000	£520,000

These figures do not include any one off costs associated with redundancy. By phasing the structure over a three year period costs of redundancy will be reduced.

This represents an opportunity for savings of £1,230,000 (gross) over the three years. The reduction in salaries amounts to 9.3% across the organisation, excluding the direct service organisation (previously subject to the HQN review)

The estimated costs of investment required to enable the service and organisational changes, including technology, are currently estimated at £220,000.

The planned savings from business efficiency and developed opportunities are expected as follows:

Improved use of Service Level Agreements	£10,000
Delegated budget for Street Services	£20,000
Delegated budget for Tenant Incentive to move	£20,000
Income from services	£20,000
Sheltered housing mechanical & electrical contracts	£10,000
Third party contract savings	_____
	£100,000

The savings shown are based on assumptions of business efficiencies and ongoing review of emerging vacancies over the three year period.

The review has been undertaken with an expectation that funding received within the management fee which includes the payment to support services for Older people will be reduced by 20% to reflect the anticipated reduction in the Supporting People grant which is paid directly to the council. If the reduction is more than anticipated a further review of the delivery of support for Older people will be undertaken.

The review has identified that further and more long term savings could be achieved if the ALMO had longer term certainty. Currently funding is restricted to an annually agreed budget which restricts longer term planning. For example contracting with others could yield better efficiency if there were greater certainty in the term of the management agreement.

Changes to the way in which the service is delivered are grouped into four categories:

- **Avoidable activity** - for example, activity that customers could carry out for themselves. We will work towards increasing the services which are available to our customers through our web site and through improved information to our customers and stakeholders. Anticipating reduced levels of enquiries and improved customer information. We will invest in technology which will assist with planning appointments for staff and reminding customers of planned appointments to reduce travel and staff time on missed appointments.
 - **Activity that is moved** - for example, activity that is currently carried out by specialists that could in future be carried out within a multi skilled customer services team. This will increase staff ability to deal with a wide range of enquiries and assist customers to have queries resolved at their first point of contact.
 - **Productivity gains** - for example, management savings, process and technology improvements.
- Capacity increases** - where areas of the organisation need skills to be developed and where likely to require increased resources or support.

Current position

The review covers the following services:

- Tenancy services
- Rent and income collection an arrears management
- Tenancy enforcement and support
- Estate management
- Customer service and access to services
- Communication and involvement with residents
- Older people services
- Leasehold management
- Delivery of day-to-day repairs
- Asset management.

The delivery of repairs and asset management have been subject to a recent review by consultants (Housing Quality Network), so this review only covers these services to the extent that they influence the customer experience and interface with other elements of CBH.

2. Colchester Borough Homes – The ALMO Context

CBH was created as an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) in August 2003. Through the creation of an ALMO, CBC was able to continue to own the housing stock, with CBH as the ALMO operating on a not-for-profit basis to provide a management service to council-owned homes.

An ALMO is a company set up by a local authority to manage and improve all or part of its housing stock. The local authority remains as the landlord and tenants remain secure tenants of the authority. An ALMO does not trade for profit and is managed by a board of directors comprising council representatives, elected tenants and independents.

The government decided that local authorities pursuing this option can secure additional capital funding if the new arms length body provides high standards of service.

To access this additional funding an authority must:

- have established an ALMO to manage its housing stock and associated investment*
- have demonstrated a high level of performance as measured against the best value national housing indicators and a 'good' rating following a housing inspection*
- have demonstrated sound financial planning, management and long-term financial viability through a high quality business plan*
- have provided a clear plan showing how it proposes to move to a structure of rents and a lettings scheme that is in line with the reforms agreed following the Housing Green Paper.”*

(source: Audit Commission)

CBH was assessed by the Audit Commission in 2006 to be a ‘two star’ management organisation, enabling funding to be available to bring the 6,168 homes in its management to an improved condition when judged by the Decent Homes Standard.

A Management Agreement between CBC and CBH sets out the required services, and payment is made to the ALMO through an annual management fee. In addition to funding through the management fee, a number of additional services are managed by the ALMO through budgets which are delegated for specific services.

A number of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) are in place between CBC and CBH, and these set up the provision for CBH to directly purchase services from CBC.

In 2009 a variation to the existing management agreement was agreed between the council and CBH to extend CBH’s role to carry out a range of asset based services. These include acting as administrators for the Council held HRA capital investment programme, the management of the housing maintenance service, and carrying out day to day repair work to bring empty properties back to letting, through its directly employed workforce.

The ALMO is paid for these services independently from the management fee and receives only those costs actually expended.

Over the past six years the ALMO management model has improved the condition of the housing stock and areas of key performance to improve overall services for its tenants.

The ALMO board, where decisions are made in respect of budgeting and services, consists of three independents (one of whom is currently chair), four tenants, one leaseholder and six councillors, who are selected by the Council. This broad representation on the board ensures that tenants' views are represented within the decision-making processes of the company.

The current budgets available to CBH are as follows:

2010/11 Budget	£0000
Management Fee: (includes support for older people)	£3,563.3
Supporting People: (Home Support contract only)	£ 58.2
Delegated Budgets:	£1,845.1
Repairs and maintenance (Revenue repairs): Includes £449,000 staffing costs	£3,757.3
Asset Management (Capital repairs): Includes £507,000 staffing costs	£2,200.2

Where reductions to the management fee are required, CBH has to consider the impact of the services which are currently delivered to its customers. This review has considered that service enhancement is possible alongside efficiency savings.

Primarily this review has focused on improving the delivery of frontline services through examination of the skills and resources of its staff, and developing a higher level of multi-skilled staff to deliver services in a consistent manner. To support this, it will be important that resources and systems available to staff are reliable and up to date.

The Capita Housing management system is managed and developed by CBC on behalf of CBH. Currently a number of processes are limited within it, and access to information is not well shared or available to staff from CBH and CBC. Similarly, scanned documentation has limitations so that it is not freely available to all staff. The review assumes that these improvements will be delivered within the early months of the review to enable improvement.

2.1 Current services

CBH provides a management service to 6,168 homes (which includes 696 sheltered housing) and 987 leasehold properties.

The core services which are provided are as follows:

- Repairs and planned maintenance
- Management of the Council's HRA capital investment programme
- Joint strategic asset management
- Rent collection and arrears management
- Leasehold service charge collection
- Tenancy and estate management
- Allocation and letting

- Dealing with nuisance and anti-social behaviour
- Community involvement and tenant participation in service delivery
- Business support (IT, HR, Finance and administration).

Tenant satisfaction with the services provided was confirmed in the June 2010 STATUS survey, which indicates that 78% of tenants are satisfied with the overall services provided by CBH.

Performance and costs in key areas is benchmarked with other housing providers through “HouseMark”. These demonstrate that costs are already low when compared with other ALMOs. Once the FSR is implemented together with the initiative to bring together ASB teams the cost of Housing Management and staffing at CBH across the board will all be upper quartile (lowest cost) when compared to the HouseMark benchmarking data 2009/10.

Summary table of key performance indicators
(HouseMark ALMO benchmarking club report 2009/10):

TSA Standard Summary for Colchester Borough Homes						
TSA Standard	Cost KPI	Cost KPI Quartile		Quality KPI	Quality KPI Quartile	
		Colchester Borough Homes (2009/2010)	Colchester Borough Homes (2008/2009)		Colchester Borough Homes (2009/2010)	Colchester Borough Homes (2008/2009)
Tenant Involvement and Empowerment	Direct cost per property of Resident Involvement			Percentage of tenants satisfied that views are being taken into account (GN & HfOP)		
				Percentage of respondents who felt staff were able to deal with their problem (GN & HfOP)		
				Percentage of tenants satisfied with complaints handling		
Home	Direct cost per property of Responsive Repairs & Void Works			Percentage of tenants satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service (GN & HfOP)		
				Repairs completed 'right first time'		
	Direct cost per property of Major Works & Cyclical Maintenance			Percentage of tenants satisfied with overall quality of home (GN & HfOP)		
				Percentage of dwellings failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard		
Tenancy (Including Allocations, Rents and Tenure)	Direct cost per property of Housing Management			Average time in days to re-let empty properties		
				Percentage of tenants satisfied with overall services provided (GN & HfOP)		
				Current tenant rent arrears as % of rent due		
Neighbourhood and Community	Direct cost per property of Estate Services			Percentage of tenants satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live (GN & HfOP)		
	Direct costs per case of Anti social behaviour			Percentage of respondents satisfied with anti-social behaviour case handling		

Quartile Key							
	Upper Quartile	Middle Upper	Median	Middle Lower	Lower Quartile	N/A	No Data
Valid dataset							
Small dataset							

2.2 Customer Contact

The primary reason for customers to contact CBH is to report repairs. Around 3,000 telephone calls are made to CBH each month to make an enquiry regarding a repair, resulting in an average 1,200 repair orders being raised.

The second highest level of enquiries relates to rent accounts, with around 1,300 telephone enquiries monthly to request an up-to-date balance or advice and guidance regarding payments.

Customers are able to make face-to-face contact with staff through a reception at Angel Court which is available Monday to Friday mornings, or at the Local Housing office which is located on the Greenstead estate and is open Monday to Friday 9 – 5pm. Around 1,500 visitors are received through these reception areas each month.

Research conducted by the Council's policy unit has confirmed that the preferred method of contact for our customers is telephone with an increasing number using mobile telephones. Our customers ability to contact us through the internet is comparatively low, however many would be able to use this method if they had support and use of public access computers.

2.3 Current organisational structure

Staffing is currently arranged within three areas with a lead Director for each:

- **Property services** – management of the housing repairs service, delivery of repairs and maintenance to the housing stock, through a directly employed workforce. Managing agent for council contracts to deliver improvements and services to inform and deliver the Council's asset management strategy.
- **Housing Management** – management of tenancies and services to tenants, including collection of rent, dealing with tenancy changes, allocation and letting, dealing with anti-social behaviour and encouraging tenant and community involvement. Provision of housing related support to tenants living in Sheltered and Extra Care sheltered housing.
- **Business Support, Finance and governance** - Provision of human resources support, governance, financial planning and monitoring, policy development, performance management and administration.

The staffing levels and costs were assessed at the beginning of the review in June 2010 as follows:

Summary FTEs and FTE Costs – by process		June 2010			
Process reference	Process / Activity	FTE Total		FTE Cost Total	
The Customer					
C01	Customer Take-on	7.55	5%	£170,760	4%
C02	Customer Management - Changes	2.63	2%	£64,114	2%
C03	Customer Management - Sustainable Tenancies	19.09	12%	£450,641	12%
C04	Customer Management - Finish Contracts	4.52	3%	£114,457	3%
C05	Older People / Special Services	12.66	8%	£240,231	6%
C06	Other	3.86	2%	£97,804	3%
C07	Billing for Services	2.17	1%	£48,842	1%
The Environment / Properties					
P01	Environmental Management	5.62	4%	£128,594	3%
P02	Asset Management	25.19	16%	£669,307	18%
P03	Repairs and Maintenance	36.44	23%	£714,712	19%
P04	Paying for services	0.29	0%	£9,944	0%
P05	Finance	5.40	3%	£179,919	5%
P06	HR	2.58	2%	£62,736	2%
P07	Governance	5.63	4%	£161,951	4%
P08	IT	1.30	1%	£31,920	1%
P09	General	15.75	10%	£330,454	9%
P10	Management	7.96	5%	£342,558	9%
TOTAL		158.63		£3,818,943	

Vacancies and adjustments to grading balance the June staffing structure to the annual staffing budgets.

2.4 Repairs

Following a review, commissioned by CBC, of the repairs and property maintenance service by consultants Housing Quality Network, an action plan for service delivery and improvement was agreed.

The action plan has formed the development opportunity as part of this review. The action plan required that changes be made to the service to present the opportunity to:

- create a strong Client service for CBC
- extend service provision to evenings and Saturday mornings
- improve a 'right at first visit' repairs service
- improve appointment making and keeping.

The thrust of the action plan was to move to an enhanced schedule of rates, and to introduce a dynamic work scheduling tool to manage the repair reporting and contract management processes.

This would mean a more defined separation between the management of the repairs service including the initial ordering of repairs, and the business of managing the in-house works teams, meeting appointments, and managing subcontracting to carry out the work effectively and efficiently.

An agreed outcome of the action plan to date has been to increase the client management resource and create a separate contracting arm of the business.

The next stage has been to examine the overall contracting costs and determine which services are better provided by the in-house workforce and by subcontractors. The outcome has been to increase the directly employed workforce.

The plan is aligned with the ethos of this FSR to focus on and improve the customer experience.

With a number of changes to the current structure and those already implemented, together with the introduction of the planned ICT enhancements set out above, it is anticipated that the service improvements required by the action plan, including extended hours of operation, can be introduced without any change to the overall repairs spend.

2.5 Asset Management / Finance and Business Support

To reflect the introduction of new contracts, contract management routines and the shift towards the introduction of more systems automation, the technical professional and support resource may be reduced further during 2011.

The exact timing will be dependent on the roll-out of planned automation and system changes, and a stabilisation in the Decent Homes programme.

Further saving opportunities will become available during 2012 should the Capital programme develop as anticipated. However caution should be exercised when considering changes post-April 2012, which may be affected by the introduction of changes to housing funding for councils. These could equate to a further £93k of savings to this service area.

It is important to note that none of the changes set out above represent an overall saving to CBH due to the mechanism of payment through the Deed of Variation. However they do represent savings overall to the HRA which will be used to improve the customer experience.

3.0 Proposal for change

To provide efficiency within the delivery of service, a number of the work flow processes have been examined and provide opportunities to gain efficiencies.

With a clear priority to consider improving the way in which customers access the services of CBH and working toward achieving the customer excellence standard of working, the fundamental review of services provides the opportunity to implement a new way of working.

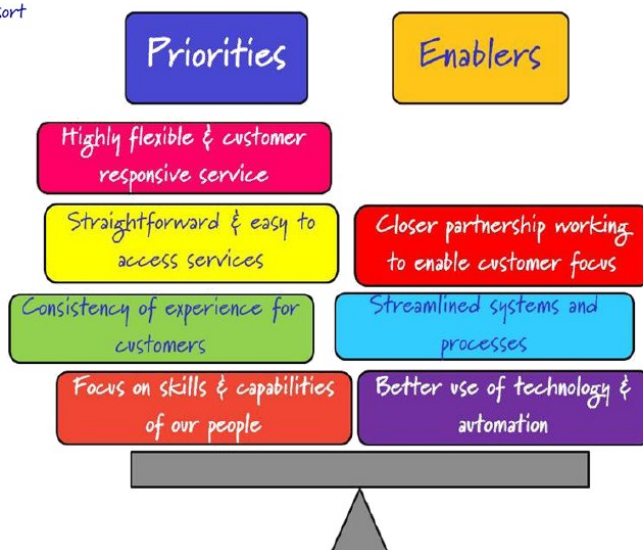
Through consultation with tenants, staff and stakeholders the following key areas have arisen:

- Customer access
- Flexibility and responsiveness
- Consistency of experience.

CBH Priorities



(from card sort exercise)



4

Approach

The approach has involved:

- a series of workshops with staff from across CBH and with stakeholders:
 - to understand what success would look like
 - to assess the current position of the service
 - to develop outline solutions
 - to turn these into more detailed proposals
- a detailed analysis of the current resource and cost base, and development of a TO BE model with supporting numbers
- Interviews with customers and analysis of their views.

3.1 Organisational model

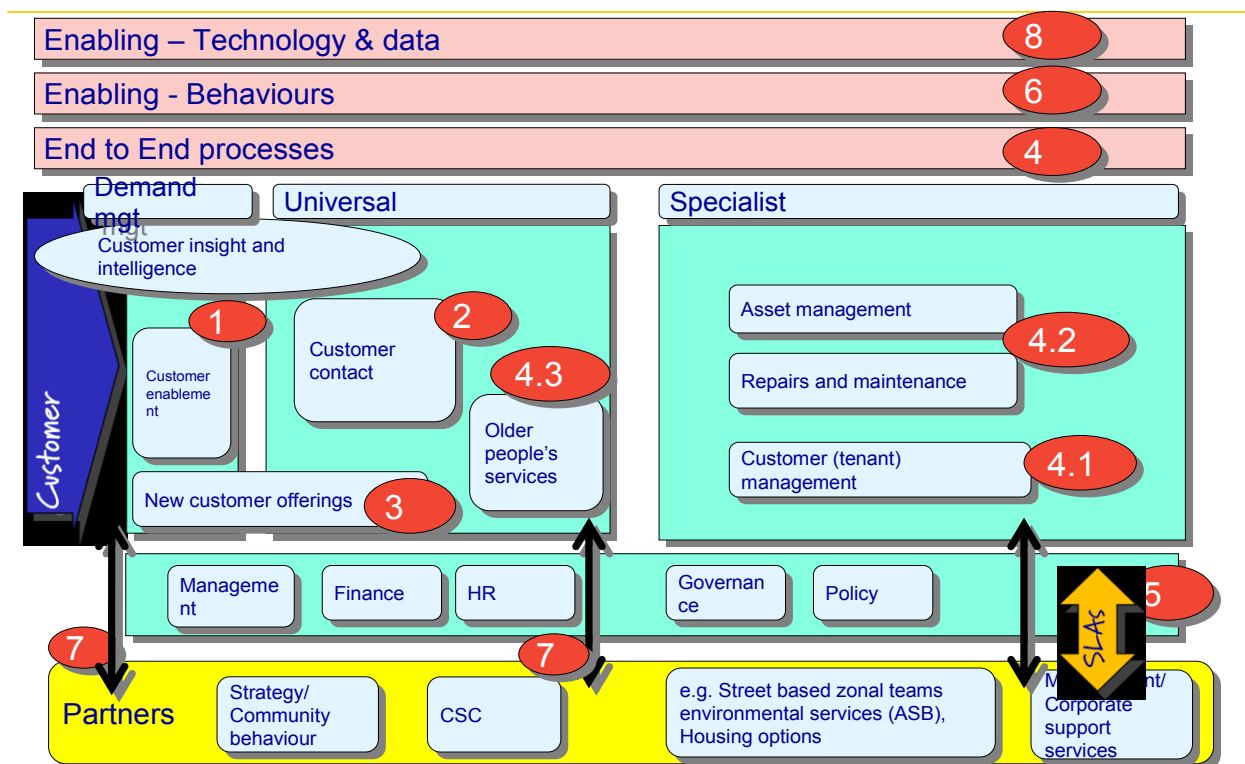
An organisation model emerged from thinking and discussions within and outside of the FSR workshops, and the opportunities that have arisen from the review can be clustered within and around this.

The model is designed to manage demand, deliver as much of the service as possible via a universal customer contact method, passing work to specialists where appropriate, and supporting and managing the organisation efficiently.

The model shows the key elements of:

- **Community behaviour / enabling** - which helps tenants and the community to take responsibility and help themselves so as to address CBH aims and reduce demand for services
- **Universal customer contact** – which comprises all activity associated with customer contact (office and locality based), resolving questions and issues (simple and complex) and scheduling input from others where required. Evolving Customer champions to ensure the highest possible levels of service for customers and stakeholders, providing a dependable image of the company
- **Specialists** – who make knowledge accessible to customers and customer contact staff, support and provide advice and guidance to frontline staff and who take on specialist cases that genuinely require expert knowledge or specialist case management skills
- **Support** – which is non-customer facing back office functions, much is transactional but some requires organisational-specific intelligence.

Model - CBH



The numbers on the model show opportunities identified through the review:

Reference on model	Opportunity	What does this mean?
1	Enabling customers	<p>Avoiding or reducing the need for CBH services by enabling the community and tenants to do more for themselves. This reduces the volume of work for customer contact and specialist staff</p> <p>Joining up existing CBH enabling related activity and refocusing it</p> <p>Potentially investing more resource in this area to develop volunteering and increasing skills of tenants</p>
2	Universal customer contact	<p>Rapid assessment of customer need, the resolution of a high proportion of enquiries at first point of contact and fewer enquiries passed to specialist staff</p> <p>A shift forward in overall resource - more in universal customer contact and fewer specialists</p> <p>Enhanced productivity through more streamlined processes, improved technology and data, and joining up pockets of activity</p>
3	Customer offerings	<p>Making changes to the services offered to customers and being clear what services are available and how they can be accessed</p>
4	Specialists	<p>Fewer issues passed on from customer contact staff to specialists for resolution</p> <p>A shift forward in overall resource - more in customer contact and fewer specialists</p> <p>Enhanced productivity through more streamlined processes, targeting of activity using customer intelligence, improved technology and data, and joining up pockets of activity</p>
5	Value for money	<p>A shift forward of activity from some support areas into customer contact or specialist areas</p> <p>Enhanced productivity within support services through more streamlined processes, improved technology and data, and joining up pockets of activity</p> <p>A more streamlined and efficient overall management structure</p>
6	Behaviours	<p>Investing in new ways of working including multi-skilling of frontline staff to allow flexibility and empowerment – so as to enable other opportunities</p>
7	Joining up	<p>Making the most of joining up opportunities within CBH and externally so as to maximise productivity</p>
8	Technology and data	<p>Investing in improvements to technology and data to enable other opportunities</p>

4. Opportunities for change

This section of the report is structured around the areas of the organisational model, with details of each opportunity embedded within it. This is to maintain simplicity and to avoid duplication.

4.1 Enabling Customers

Purpose

Enabling the community and tenants to do more for themselves, self-serve, make decisions without making contact directly with CBH. This provides customers with better choice and breaks dependencies.

Methods

- Better information on the website and in written communication eg tenants being able to access information about their own home and planned improvements
- Increased knowledge of local communities including better partnership work with councillors, parish councillors, residents' associations and local community leaders
- DIY support eg training and access to materials for simple repairs
- Better education and support for tenants to build a 'self-helping' community and promote tenant responsibility eg more opportunities for community involvement and more events, forming relationships with customer to enable early interventions where helpful
- Better communicated expectations eg a clear repair and maintenance policy which sets out landlord and tenant responsibilities
- Web access and easy-to-navigate website eg allowing tenants to see their rent balance online, request repairs online, make payments and requests for tenancy changes online
- Extended hours of access eg extended opening hours for telephone contact and 24/7 access via the web, repairs service appointments to be extended to 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday, plus additional Saturday morning appointments
- Supported self-serve eg help customers overcome hurdle of shifting to the web by offering to support them face-to-face at a range of locations, or in their home, support increased use of existing tools eg choice-based lettings and Housing Benefit application and assessment
- Joining up and focusing existing resources on community behaviour and enablement eg supporting communities with local events and training, providing direct training and development of tenants to enable them to support others in their local community, enabling tenants to have better understanding of our services so that they can scrutinize and support our decision-making processes and ensure that services are providing good value for money.

Impact and benefits

- Reduced volume of enquiries
- Reduced complexity of enquiries as customer will be better informed and more likely to be able to be served right first time
- A more vibrant self-helping community
- Embracing culture of the Big Society
- Higher impact from the resource allocated.

An increased focus is required in this area of work. This can be achieved by bringing together and sharpening the focus of the existing resource from community involvement and older people services, and by building responsibility into a wide range of roles across the organisation.

Assumptions

- This area will have an impact on the level of avoidable work in the short, medium and long term
- A productivity gain can be achieved by bringing roles together into a focused resource.

4.2 Universal Customer Contact

This covers the customer contact elements of the model – customer enquiries, lettings, lower level elements of tenancy management such as nuisance and collection of debt, leasehold enquiries and service charge administration, neighbourhood wardens, repairs and maintenance raising orders and scheduling, and most of the contact and visiting elements of older people’s services. Activities previously undertaken by specialist teams are brought closer to the customer and are embedded and become part of an integrated universal team.

Purpose

To enable the rapid assessment of need and the resolution of a high proportion of enquiries at the first point of contact, and rapid scheduling or direction to the most appropriate member of staff where more in-depth support or a service is required.

Methods

- Diagnostic routines eg key questions to ascertain whether a repair needs to be made
- Frequently Asked Question scripts eg what information is required to assess whether someone can take on a tenancy after the tenant dies
- Training and knowledge transfer eg so that street-based staff can complete some visits such as accompanied viewings and new tenant visits
- Access to good information eg customers able to track their own enquiries, single customer record accessible to all staff
- Clear understanding of pathways eg what are the processes for resolving anti-social behaviour complaints, what are the needs of vulnerable/hard-to-reach customers
- Multi-skilled staff - office and locality-based - ensuring that locality-based staff can answer the same queries as if they were based in an office, and a consistent service is offered
- Technology improvements including single customer record (customer relationship management), scheduling system to improve successful appointments together with the ability to generate reminders and prompts to tenants by telephone or text.

Impact/Benefits:

- Happier customers
- Reduction in handoffs and transfers between staff within CBH
- Improved resource mix of staff
- Increased flexibility in the deployment of staff
- Higher impact from the resource allocated.

Existing work moves forward into customer contact from specialist and support areas. Hours may be extended for the service but is balanced by an improved customer contact process/systems and improvements to other processes, for example, lettings and dealing with voids. There is also a reduction in volumes through customer enabling and demand management.

Assumptions:

- Work is avoidable as better customer information, self-serve opportunities and other customer-enabling activity result in a reduction in the volume of calls. Reduced staffing could be higher in the medium to long term as a result of the efficiencies
- A productivity gain would be achieved through introducing simpler processes, improved technology and multi-skilling and empowering staff
- The increase in capacity reflects an option to extend opening hours to enhance access for customers.

4.3 Specialist staff

This covers the specialist areas of the model – asset management, repairs and maintenance, tenancy management and older people's services. This brings together tenancy management into 8 geographic areas, where the specialist officer will be responsible for and co-ordinate the service delivery within the area. It is envisaged that this will enhance relationships with local community leaders and increase local improvements.

Purpose

Expert staff solve problems, deliver services, manage difficult cases, provide specialist advice and collaborate on service strategy.

Methods

- Complex queries requiring professional judgement are passed from universal customer contact to specialists
- Defined rule-based processes with clearly defined points for specialist input
- Enhanced customer intelligence allows proactive tenancy management, effective targeting and early intervention eg staff are able to anticipate and deal with multiple needs of customers who need more support
- Technology improvements eg mobile technology and single customer record improve productivity by allowing information to be recorded once in real time, and by reducing time in the office
- Improved scheduling allows better productivity of repairs operatives.

Impact and benefits

- Improved levels of neighbourhood satisfaction
- Defined role within communities
- Improved resource mix
- Higher satisfaction for specialist staff with focus on more challenging work
- Raised productivity.

Work moves forward from these area into universal customer contact. Productivity gains also contribute to savings.

Assumptions

- Activity is moved forward from these areas into universal customer contact
- There is also an element of avoidable work that produces a saving – for example missed appointments

4.4 Support

Purpose

Provide efficient and streamlined support services.

Methods

- Address current SLA arrangements with CBC to ensure value for money is achieved
- Reposition customer-facing activity as universal or specialist
- Review residual support elements, and assess as 'to keep in house' or 'outsource/share/buy in'
- Join up elements of finance and administration within CBH
- Streamlined management structure across CBH in line with organisational model emerging from the review
- Automate processes, eg customer feedback on property services and on landlord services. Performance information could be produced for staff and tenants through direct reports from core systems to avoid duplication of work. Recording of staff holidays, sickness and training records could be achieved through improved technology.

Impact and benefits

- Leaner service to support the organisation
- Appropriate levels of service through SLAs with proven best value providers
- A more streamlined and effective management structure.

4.5 Enablers

Key enablers for the model are set out below. Costs associated with these are the costs of change.

- **Flexible working, knowledge and skills** – empowered and multi-skilled staff able to work across subject areas and at hours to reflect customer need; staff development, training and shadowing to support new ways of working and new technologies, redesigned career pathways and continuous professional development.
- **Technology** – key technology changes are required to enable mobile working for staff, improved scheduling of appointments and improved existing integrated housing management system access and support.

Initial estimates suggest a cost in the region of £220,000 as follows:

- Costs for technology to support mobile working are estimated at £1000 each for 80 staff = £80,000
- Costs for hardware for supported self serve are estimated at £10,000
- Costs for scheduling technology are estimated at £90,000
- Improved web for self serve will be part of the i-connect roll out that is already funded (no additional cost)
- Provider costs to improve existing (Capita) systems are estimated at £20,000
- Change management – training and development to support implementation are estimated at £20,000

4.6 Organisational Model

Through restructure of the organisation, services can be delivered in a more effective manner reducing overall staffing costs and improving the delivery of services, through increased support to enable customers and a higher level of pro active rather than reactive services.

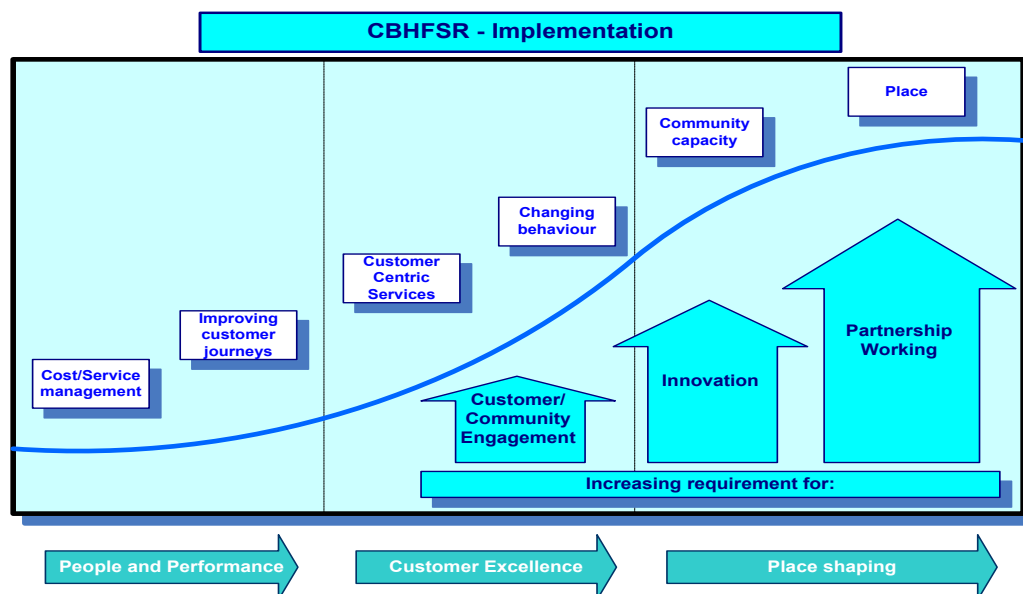
The table below shows the staff structure and impact of change in year one:

	As is FTEs	Cost	To be FTEs	Cost	Change (numbers)		Change (%) cost
					Cost	FTEs	
Enabling	2	56,050	6.3	153,770	97,720	4.3	174%
Universal	45.8	972,945	43	868,685	-104,260	-2.8	-11%
Specialist	78.7	1,912,823	70.6	1,738,537	-174,286	-8.1	-9%
Support	34.7	925,941	31.2	885,688			
TOTALS	161.2	3,867,659	151.1	3,646,681	-221,078	-10.1	-6%

These figures are adjusted from the June baseline to account for additional staffing (and increased costs) of staff recruited to join the older persons team since June.

The table demonstrates that staffing will reduce by the full time equivalent staffing of 10.1 posts achieving a 6% saving in salaries (£221,078). The structure will need to be fully consulted and recruited to and is not likely to be fully in place until May 2011 therefore savings of £200,000 for year one have been assumed.

The diagram below demonstrates how the structure and opportunities are expected to develop:



4.7 Opportunities

The review has produced a number of opportunities which could deliver longer term efficiency. These are detailed in this report's appendices, and will form an important part of CBH's future annual delivery and business plans.

A number of opportunities have considered how cost saving may be achieved through sharing services, staff and buildings. CBH has two existing posts which it shares with CBC: our Welfare Benefits adviser works within CBH and also is a member of CBC's Welfare Rights team; and our Equality and Diversity Officer is employed by CBH but works with CBC for 2 days each week. These posts bring valuable cross-organisational communication and networking, and provide effective use of resources.

Some existing Service Level Agreements (SLAs) provide services and resources from CBC to support CBH. By considering the volumes and frequency of work requirements, there may be further scope to consider shared roles or resources to continue to ensure that best value is achieved in this way.

Additional opportunity for sharing services may arise from developing greater partnership working with local Housing Providers and other ALMOs. There are two further ALMOs in Essex with whom CBH works closely, and CBH will consider developing more opportunities to share resources. For example we are considering shared training and staff development and tenant involvement opportunities with other housing providers.

The way in which anti-social behaviour is dealt with across the borough will be reviewed with CBC and others. There is an opportunity to develop a multi-agency team of staff who could be linked to provide one central contact point to resolve and take action in respect of nuisance and anti-social behaviour. This work is being developed alongside this review

and is expected to result in both efficiency and staffing savings for both the Council and CBH, whilst providing an improved anti social behaviour service for Colchester.

Services which are delivered directly to tenants can be recovered through de pooling the rent charged and making an appropriate service charge. These services should be reviewed regularly with tenants in order to introduce further services which improve the quality of life for tenants.

Sharing of services is particularly relevant to services where duplication can occur. Whilst it is important to the integrity of the ALMO to retain its own financial management and monitoring, HR services and performance management, a number of elements of some business support services could be reduced through process efficiencies and maximising the potential of the value within SLAs. Through the review of a number of these agreements, it is anticipated that around £10,000 of efficiency gain could be achieved.

The Greenstead Local Housing office provides a convenient location for around 25% of CBH tenants to be able to access services. With free car parking and its close proximity to shops, a local library and community centre; it is a good location from which to provide face-to-face customer services.

Currently the Greenstead office's resources require some updating to provide the required levels of interview space with appropriate security and facilities for customers. To provide a greater range of services for customers from this location would enhance the service, and provides an opportunity for CBC to deliver some relevant services from this office. A feasibility study will be completed outside of this review to consider the options and potential benefits to develop this resource.

4.8 Co-location – working with others at shared locations

There are a number of options to consider in respect of co-location of services. This integrates staff working in joint processes more closely, and provides a good opportunity for networking and changing service delivery.

CBH is considering the costs of its accommodation, although these are relatively low and compare well for the extent of the accommodation which is available. Opportunities may be available for other organisations to co-locate their local staff within our premises either at Wellington House or at the Greenstead or Gosbecks offices.

Co-location is also being considered to bring greater efficiencies within services. Consideration will be given to centrally locating telephone call handling within CBH. This call handling service could benefit from a greater level of technical support and development.

4.9 Increasing income – offering services to others

A number of services can be explored which have the potential to raise additional income for CBH such as:

- Managing housing stock on behalf of others (both private sector and registered providers)

- Providing resources to others to develop their local services (community involvement, anti-social behaviour, property inspection, or visiting officer service)
- Managing additional services on behalf of CBC and others (rental income management and/or support for people in homeless temporary accommodation, management of private sector leasing scheme, developing customer involvement).

5. Finances

5.1 IT costs and savings

Investment in IT to improve processing and scheduling of works will be required in order to implement the revised structure. The level of investment required to deliver scheduling of routine repairs estimated to be £90,000 including costs to enhance customer contact with text messaging.

Automation of the first stage of collection processes for both tenants and leaseholders requires some development within the existing Capita housing management system. The anticipated cost to develop the system is estimated to be £20,000 but this is expected to achieve efficiencies to reduce staff resources which are currently involved in a manual system to produce, print envelope and post standard letters

5.2 Investment / costs

The savings identified above are dependent on the investment being made into the enabling opportunities (behaviour change and technology), and spend being approved on the changes associated.

6.0 Communications

Investment to ensure that customers have improved levels of information can reduce call volumes and staff time. This will range from the development of self-service and access through the website, improved access through planning and routing telephone enquiries effectively, linking to an out-of-hours service.

Communication with our customers will remain a key to develop and enable our customer base to understand our service standards and be able to contribute toward service development in the future. We will reconsider our Resident involvement and communication strategies to ensure that our customers remain at the heart of our business.

7.0 Next Steps

The proposed restructure of staffing will be presented to the Board of Colchester Borough Homes on 13 January 2011.

If approved, staff will be consulted with the intention to implement the structure from April 2011 onward. Recruitment and consultation processes may delay the implementation and this will need to be factored in to the budget assessment process.

APPENDIX A

Colchester Borough Homes– Fundamental Service Review

Opportunity Templates

The 8 high level opportunities are listed below:

1. Customers

1.1 Customer Attitudes and Behaviours

1.2 Customer Enablement

1.3 Consistency of Service

2. Customer Contact

2.1 Customer Contact

2.2 Process efficiencies

2.3 Joined up working

3. Customer Offerings

3.1 Customer Offerings

4. Process Efficiencies

4.1 Process Efficiencies – Tenants

4.2 Process Efficiencies – Repairs and Asset Management

4.3 Process Efficiencies – Older People

5. Value for Money

5.0 Value for Money

6. Behaviours

6.0 Behaviours

7. Joined up Working

7.0 Joined up Working

8.0 Technology and Data

8.1 Technology

8.2 Data

1. Customers

1.1 Customer Attitudes and Behaviours

The issue

- Community Involvement is mainly seen as one team's job, there is a lack of engagement from many members of staff. We need to get a greater buy in from staff that customer involvement is everybody's job
- Community involvement and sheltered activities are run and resourced separately
- Also tends to be the same residents who are on lots of different groups, we need to engage with a more varied and diverse variety of residents.
- Creating Pride in the community: If the issue of Community Involvement is addressed then pride in the community should follow.
- Creating Pride in the home: At the end of and during some tenancies some properties are damaged or in an unacceptable state.

The Solution

- Embed Community Involvement across the company
- Enabling and training customers to self serve
- Targeted involvement to support tenants in sustaining their tenancies
- Recognising and developing role of tenant volunteers and advocates in supporting tenants and enabling residents to access services and improve their local communities
- Enabling CBH employees to be pro-active within the community
- Working in partnership with local and wider community agencies, businesses, schools etc
- Manage customer expectations through education and by information about the services we deliver and what we expect of them
- Use new media and social network sites to promote CBH and interact with customers
- Develop the community engagement role to encompass older person's activities, extending these to reflect the changing needs and age range of our sheltered housing customers. Also to work alongside other agencies to provide activities which also encompass older people in general needs housing and other tenures.

1.2 Customer Enablement

The issue

- Access to information, services and support is complex and disjointed and includes:
 - Repeat contacts

- lack of self serve/mediated self serve options
- Limited or inconsistent approach to prioritisation, intervention and prevention resulting in cases escalating to urgent/emergency situations
- Need for holistic approach to enable customers to gain straightforward and timely access to services which best meet their individual needs

The solution

- To enable customers to easily access advice, information and support both by having widely available self serve and mediated self serve options and by offering an all encompassing frontline service.
- Use of customer insight and profiling to gain better understanding of current and potential customer base and shape approach to early intervention and prevention activity
- Enable customers to receive timely and targeted support and advice, to enable them to access and sustain appropriate housing.

1.3 Consistency of Service

The issue

- Customers do not always receive consistent service.
- As a company we do not focus on measuring behaviours and monitoring performance against competencies.
- Separate customer service teams at Greenstead, Gosbecks Road and Wellington House
- Range of services and contracts – including people who represent CBH
- We do not have service standards set in all areas of our work and where we do, staff and customers are not always aware of them, so they may not be adhered to.
- We don't have clearly defined customer standards (including e.g. which repairs are covered)
- Currently difficult for CBH to measure the service customers receive across the company.

The Solution

- One point of contact for customers created by merging the Customer Service Teams at Greenstead, Gosbecks and Wellington House to create one larger frontline team dealing with a wider range of, and more in depth queries
- Centralise call handling to deliver consistent training and quality control monitoring and thus consistent service.
- Have one team dealing with voids and lettings to provide a consistent service in this area.
- Having core organisational objectives built into core competencies.
- Train all staff (back office or frontline) to the same high standard of customer service.
- Multi skilled front line enabling us to have a whole view of the customer, people and property.
- Enabling and up skilling front line staff to deal with complaints.
- Technology needs to support consistency making sure that information is shared and accessible by staff internally and by partner organisations
- Have service standards in the main /all areas of work so staff know what they should and shouldn't be doing and customers know what to expect.
- A menu of FAQ'S to include external contracts.

- Utilize E learning to annually refresh knowledge.
- Have a quality audit of standardised functions in order to measure consistency.

2. Customer Contact

2.1 Customer Contact

The issue

- At the moment there are a number of ways a customer can access our services. This in turn can result in many calls not being resolved at the first point of contact.
- At peak call times the current small and separate teams at GLHO and repairs sometimes struggle to answer calls promptly and have limited capacity to cover for staff sickness and absence or training
- Inconsistencies in data capture, quality and systems access make it difficult for staff to deliver a consistent and bespoke customer service.
- There could be better joined up working between CBH/CBC on frontline services offered.

The solution

- Merge the current customer service centres at Greenstead, Gosbecks and Wellington House to create one universal team dealing with all incoming calls and based at one location.
- Have a one stop shop / face to face HUB at the GLHO to provide customer access to CBH and CBC services, and those of other partner organisations to create a very positive community environment with other services like the community centre, library and schools close by.

2.2 Process efficiencies

The issue

- Advice, complaints and guidance are currently separate processes with duplication of recording but no full history or any one system for staff to access background/issues.
- The wide range of enquiry points makes it difficult for staff and customers to get a complete view of what is happening with complaints and enquiries.

The solution

- Have a single customer services centre for all CBH queries so there is one port of call for all CBH customers, whatever their enquiry is to do with, whether it's a service request (e.g. repairs, ASB, Leasehold), need for advice or a complaint
- Only very specialised queries e.g. high level ASB to be passed on to specialist officers.
- At the same time need to improve the opportunities for self service for customers, so that staff have more time to really help the people who need support.
- CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system extended across the company to capture all enquiries and responses on one system to give 'one view' of the customer.

2.3 Joined up working

The issue

- To provide a consistent customer service to all CBH customers regardless of who and how they contact us. Currently the service they receive varies depending on who they contact and how, why and when they contact us.
- Also need to improve connections within CBH so service is more joined up and all departments are aware of what others do and are able to access the relevant information.
- Also to have more joined up working with CBC and other organisations, to provide improved services more efficiently.

The solution

- Have one universal customer service centre for all CBH queries with staff enabled to resolve the majority of enquiries at the first point of contact including enquiries relating to repairs, housing management and other queries
- Have smaller specialist teams responsible for the case management of complex enquiries, including liaison with partner organisations to support individual customers as well as connecting with local communities

3. Customer Offerings

3.1 Customer Offerings

The issue

- To explore opportunities for increasing revenue in a variety of ways we don't currently use
- Lack of clarity around existing customer offerings

The solution

- Identifying what, when, and how we could deliver some of our current services to a wider income generating market e.g. providing housing management services on behalf of other organisations, repairs service for leaseholders and non CBH tenants
- Sell the services we have identified to create an income, to feed back into increasing the service we provide to our existing customers
- Making better use of our assets e.g. renting out facilities to raise income or increasing garage rents
- Clarifying existing customer offerings e.g. void and other service standards
- Have more control over the delegated budget which could result in money being invested into non statutory maintenance
- Extend existing customer offerings e.g. older persons services to general needs customers and the wider community

4. Process Efficiencies

4.1 Process Efficiencies – Tenants

The issue

- A need to provide a consistent customer relationship in the early stages of the tenancy
- Improve consistency of approach to void properties and turnaround time
- Improve rent arrears, income management and access to services

The solution

- Streamlined processes and customer journeys which can efficiently and effectively address the individual needs of each customer. Specific solutions include:- moving to paperless processes, removing duplication of work, improving the capture and use of customer data, improved use of IT e.g. using a void tracker system, improved reporting capability and mobile technology for staff, making payments easier for customers e.g. giving a choice of direct debit dates
- More of our resources will be focussed at the front end of processes enabling customers to self serve and facilitating early interventions. This will help to reduce the need for more costly interventions at a later stage and also reduce the likelihood of more serious consequences for our customers.
- A multi-skilled universal team with increased knowledge and capability

4.2 Process Efficiencies – Repairs and Asset Management

The issue

- There is a need to increase efficiency and effectiveness at customer interface in respect of repairs and asset management services to secure improvements in the standards and consistency of services to customers. Specific issues include:
 - Separate repairs and housing management customer service teams
 - Complexity of repairs ordering process involving the use of multiple systems
 - Property and customer records held separately
 - Need to increase the percentage of repairs completed at 'first fix'
 - Out of hours service reliant on paper based processing of requests
 - Poor communication with customers
 - Limited self serve options
 - High level of missed appointments
 - Inconsistent approach to property inspections

The solution

- A one organisation approach to repairs and asset management with resources aligned to deliver a joined up approach to customer services across each element of the CBH model.
- One customer service team for CBH enquiries
- Improving processes process efficiency and services to customers by:
 - Getting it right first time
 - Minimizing the number of staff involved in the process between the end of one tenancy and the start of the next
 - Clarifying customer offerings – what we will and won't do or will do but charge for
 - Significantly reducing double handling and avoidable contact
 - Enabling all staff to report repairs and view repairs /asset records

- Enabling customers to self serve
- Introducing a scheduling system for appointments
- Improving the accessibility of systems and mobile technology for staff
- Ensuring effective use of resources – right person for the job, minimize down time and travel costs
- Enabling greater flexibility i.e. more variation tolerance with trades equipped and able to complete additional work if required
- Standardizing property inspection process to gain maximum benefit from each inspection in terms of updating property records and minimizing the need for repeat inspections
- Targeting services to customers needs
- Enabling out of hours staff to access systems, improving accuracy and consistency of repairs reporting and eliminating duplication of effort

4.3 Process Efficiencies – Older People

The issue

- We are currently providing a one size fits all service to a rapidly changing customer base and profile. The customer base is now made up of customers with far more varied requirements/support needs. Some customers needing less support, others needing more, need for new types of support (e.g. around drug/alcohol dependency) and a need to provide a similar service to customers within General needs housing.

The solution

Delivery of services which recognise and address the changing and increasingly diverse needs of our customers. This includes:

- Balancing needs and expectations of customers aged between 55 and 104
- Ensuring customers able to make informed choices about sheltered housing and support services including informal viewings, virtual tours of schemes and locations
- Tailoring services to meet individual needs
- Introducing self serve options
- Improve efficiency and effectiveness of processes to offer a comprehensive one stop service at the first point of contact
- Maximising the use of the sheltered asset – including provision of office facilities for staff and partner organisations, hire of communal areas and guest rooms, offering the facility to older people in the neighbourhood
- Extending the customer offering to encompass delivery of support services to older people living in the wider community
- Enhancing benefits of CBC/CBH partnership to offer customers a comprehensive and cohesive service with greater choice, increase awareness of housing options, help alleviate pressure on housing needs register, improved information sharing, maximise use and quality of housing stock

5. Value for Money

5.0 Value for Money

The issue

- Need to improve VFM in the SLA's CBH are currently entered into to ensure that they reflect current issues and priorities (SLA's include HR, IT, Legal, Grounds Maintenance).

The solution

A full review of each SLA is required, including the following:

- **Activity Analysis** – How many times a year is the service used? Is it recorded? Is the outcome recorded? (i.e. Did the service resolve the issue?)
- **Cost Analysis** - What is the hourly rate per SLA?
- **Benchmark and compare** – How does this compare with the market? Would it be cheaper to recruit and bring in-house? Can we negotiate?
- **Use of SLA guidance notes** – The audit commission and other private companies have guidance notes of how to run a review. What is the review mechanism?

6. Behaviours

6.0 Behaviours

The issue

- Maximizing the use of staff resources
- Raising staff and customer satisfaction
- Improving service performance
- CBH currently organized in silo's
- Organisational leadership and development around a one CBH culture
- A cultural change from location based working to where the customer need is
- Delivering services differently will require a different set of management skills
- Peoples responsibilities will increase if decision making is encouraged and the roles would need to reflect this and peoples development needs met in order to deliver this way of working
- A focus on capabilities around technology and the behaviours and attitudes towards technology and also on the relationship between CBH and CBC in terms of implementation and support for significant changes

The solution

Staff skills and empowerment

Empowering staff by focusing on skills, attitudes, behaviour and accountability to deal with issues from initiation to resolution, proactively focusing on the customer:

- Staff development and training
- Enable staff to deal with issues holistically
- Specialist staff to back up multi skilled staff for more complex queries

- Culture for staff to have positive attitude with focus on resolution
- Staff empowered to make decisions and reach potential
- Staff able to deal with all issues, taking ownership of all problems

Enable staff to deliver a resolution at the front of the process by having

- The right channels available for customers to contact if they can't serve themselves.
- Staff who want to get to a resolution and own a problem until it's resolved
- Managers who empower their staff to take decisions and see supporting their staffs development as a big part of their management role
- Managers who lead and manage by performance and outcomes
- Staff who are empowered to work flexibly and are trusted to work 'out of sight'
- Staff who will buy into the need for a more flexible approach to the hours and times they work in return for greater responsibility and job satisfaction
- Technology that supports this way of working and the training and support required to use it effectively.
- An openness in the creation of a new To BE state that CBH may not need to deliver everything themselves and that partners may have services that CBH could deliver for them

Multi skilling

- Reduce number of people involved in resolution and thereby reduce number of handovers with staff taking ownership from beginning to end:
- Generic customer contact representatives
- Multi skilled repairs operatives to able to carry out a range of jobs.
- Multi skilled customer services teams who are sufficient in number to deal with a wide range of enquiries from customers
- Scripts and Frequently Asked Questions throughout Customer Relationship management systems to maximise the benefits of technology and lead to greater consistency in responding to customers.
- Better use of the telephony system will assist with call handling and management which together with development of the web site will facilitate increased levels of customer self service.
- Reducing the volume of incoming calls to strengthen the focus on priorities and improve response times will improve.

7. Joined up Working

7.0 Joined up Working

The issue

- Current cultural barriers to working in partnership with CBC with a priority to maintain separation. Checking and monitoring services leading to duplication
- Outcomes for the customer need to be the driver over the separate objectives of different service areas (e.g. Do we discuss rent arrears with tenants when considering improvement programmes?)
- Increasingly vulnerable tenants are being supported by a number of agencies with competing objectives (re housing people who have limited capacity to manage a tenancy)

- Links with other agencies (Social Care/ Police) are based on individual officer contact rather than joint organisational aspirations)
- Appointments – high level of failed appointments
- Access to services by partner agencies (web site) needs to be improved

The solution

Sharing services and joining up:

- Community based staff across organisations e.g. ASB, debt, domestic violence, ill health, children and young peoples issues
- Older persons services e.g. providing services to older people in private housing, joint working with other organisations to provide seamless service for customers
- Repairs and maintenance of assets within CBH and with CBC
- Management and back office services to achieve economies of scale and reduce costs

Ways of working

- Actively seek opportunities to develop the business and pursue partnerships
- Consider workplace opportunities to generate income or reduce costs
- Flexible ways of working to improve partnership
- Expand existing service provision to reduce overheads (repairs to schools and public buildings, managing stock on behalf of others, supporting people who are not tenants)
- Co location of services
- Improve internal communication and communication available for staff (access to Capita/appointment via phone/cross company briefings)
- Embrace dependence on others and shared services
- Lease office/desk space or workshop areas (Gosbecks) to provide partnership and financial incentive
- Share core office resources
- Embrace joint procurement opportunities

Use of technology and process improvement

- Investment in training and consultancy to make the best use of current IT services and develop systems to meet the changing needs of the business
- Increase our ability to work away from desk top with mobile technology and systems integration
- Redesigned processes 'end to end' with fewer handoffs and seamless service to customers across organisational boundaries
- Active scheduling and linking of "one customer" via CRM and scheduling
- Increase central service support
- Decrease paper flow with information connected via central IT system (Capita)

8.0 Technology and Data

8.1 Technology

The issue

One system for customer services that supports first call resolution

- Limited FAQ's, training and management
- Repairs – graphical/diagnostic system that enables customer services to deliver first call resolution
- Current system – limited and allows reporting via e mail
- Telephony – separate call centres at Greenstead, Gosbecks and Wellington House
- Inefficient planning of visits and routes
- Difficult to work remotely in homes and with tenants
- Difficult to be flexible and responsive
- Difficult not to be office based/centred
- Lack of options for customers, limited opening hours
- Supported self serve – some people don't have access to a computer or have difficulty using one
- Range of telephone numbers confusing to customers
- Still relying on a range of paper based systems – time consuming, can't easily be shared

The solution

The solution can be broken up into 3 sections:-

- Capita improvements
- Mobile and flexible working
- Operational scheduling

1. Capita improvements

1.1 System improvements

- Direct debit dates – this is system release dependant to fix an issue in the system - release due early 2011 then it's a case of testing and implementation,
- Automation of letters for arrears – this is already possible but requires a different way of working we currently use a spreadsheet as there are issues with the system prompting correct arrears action, for the letter automation to work we need to use prompts so this is both a capita integrity issue and a CBH way of working issue,
- Rent statement facility within system unable to produce rent statements from system for total indebtedness – needs solution from Capita (impact is that cannot prove total debt owed to customer)
- Issue balance file incorrect – internal and Capita process to change balance file updates to include total indebtedness,
- Extra care meals provision for older persons – could be set up on system but issue over collection would this sit in Capita or external collection system or scheduling system?
- Text facility for balances in and out / repairs info (i.e. to tenant arrears and from tenant balance enquiry) – unclear if Capita is the solution but does require interface Capita runs batch process to enable a facility to send message as part of arrears process,

1.2 Internal process

- Open up access across system Systems are not joined up generally within CBH or across CBH and CBC this is a case of changing the templates to allow access to staff this is just an internal process & not a Capita issue,
- Online payments – need to determine who is to take payments – already possible via debit and credit card web based payments and also via telephone,

- Issue over payment updates to enable funds to be processed on a Saturday is dependant on banking and post office processes being placed ready to process but is possible via a batch process which would need to be run on a Saturday (currently only run Monday to Friday) ,
- Helpline staff – access to capita – just need to be given permissions – internal process & system closure due to batch processing

2. Mobile and flexible working

- Hardware and ways of working that enable working away from an office environment e.g. in peoples homes, in sheltered schemes, on the road

3. Operational scheduling

- For example, making appointments, being able to schedule works from the first point of contact, alerting field based staff of work by priority

8.2 Data

The issue

- Information on properties and customers held on different systems and is not collated or profiled properly. A single system that does all of these is required to deliver process and customer service improvements. There is a need to improve the way information, data and insight is captured and used.

The solution

- A strategic approach to capturing information/data/insight which we then use to inform our understanding of customers, how best to approach frontline service delivery, communication with customer, influence behaviour change and achieve our strategic aims and objectives.
- This needs to be supported by appropriate technology, resource allocation and behaviour change including:
- **Systems integration** – enabling self serve, data capture, scheduling and information sharing
- **Provision and use of mobile technology** – capturing data and reporting at point of contact
- **Education and behaviour change** – increased awareness of importance of data, information and insight combined with knowledge and skills to capture, access and manage these to implement change
- **Responsibilities** – for data, information and insight embedded in roles
- **Data sharing** - Joint working with partner organisations to capture and share information, data and insight. Agreement from customers to share data

APPENDIX B

PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET

Business	Colchester Borough Homes	
Review Lead	Karen Loweman	Director of Housing
Project sponsors	Greg Falvey and Karen Loweman	Chief Executive CBH and Director of Housing
Programme Manager	Georgina Blakemore	Corporate Support Team
Steering Group	Greg Falvey, Chief Executive; Nick White, Director of Finance and Corporate Services; Mark Wright, Director of Property Services; Karen Loweman, Director of Housing	Directors' Management Team
Core Project Team	Angelique Ryan, HR and Business Support Manager	CBH Team
	Jacci Philips, Business Finance Manager	
	Jacqui Tavner, Head of Services for Older People	
	Karen Williams, Customer Services Manager	
	Gordon Steed, Tenancy Services Manager	
	Will Parrick, Tenancy Management Officer	
	Matt Armstrong, Asset Manager	
	Chris Morris, Operations Manager	
	Nevina Williams, Resident Involvement Officer	
	Jeanette Wilson, Strategy and Solutions Officer	
	Jackie Davis, Project Support Officer	Corporate Support Team
	Chris Reed, Policy and Projects Officer	
	Paul Ashley, ICT Business Partner	CBC
Timescale	July 2010 to December 2010	
Governance	Initial business case	30 Sept Project Team, 3 weeks' consultation, CBH Board 20 Oct
	Full business case	Project Team 11 Nov, Partnership Board 18 Nov, 3 weeks' consultation, CBH Board - Jan 2011
Committed efficiency / effectiveness savings	£ 40k funding for Ignite (HRA)	CBC Service budget (Strategic Policy and Regeneration)

APPENDIX C

Equality Impact assessment

Name of policy, procedure or practice document:

Colchester Borough Homes – Customer service and access (Fundamental service review)

Date started: 25 May 2010

Date complete: January 2011

Lead officer: Karen Loweman

Who is responsible for the review and its implementation?

Colchester Borough Homes – Chief Executive and Directors team

Scope of the Equality Impact assessment

To identify opportunities to deliver efficiency, effectiveness and customer excellence within Colchester Borough Homes.

What outcomes do you want to achieve?

- Reduced and balanced costs
- Improved customer services and access
- Increased effectiveness of delivery of services with improved key performance indicators
- Longer term cost reduction plan

List of Audience, users or customers

All of those who have a connection with Colchester Borough Homes – this will include:

- Tenants and leaseholders living in accommodation managed by Colchester Borough Homes
- Those who support tenants and leaseholders of CBH
- Those organisations who work with CBH to provide services in the communities and neighbourhoods in which CBH manages housing
- Staff of CBH

How will you monitor the impact of the service review on the groups that have been listed?

- The way in which customers access CBH services is monitored through a customer relationship management system. Information regarding the tenants and leaseholders is monitored through the Capita integrated housing management system.
- The bi annual STATUS survey and monthly surveys of tenants and leaseholders monitors the satisfaction of those customers with the landlord service.
- CBH service review panels
- The Association of tenants and leaseholders
- Monitoring of complaints and enquiries
- CBH Staff forum

List the data and information which is used to inform the EIA:

- Customer relationship management data base (Siebel and i-connect)
- Capita housing management system

- Abritas – allocation and lettings
- Mosaic data – CBC research team
- STATUS survey conducted by the National Housing federation (2008 & 2010)
- Touchstone – qualitative research with customers conducted by CBC policy team and CBH staff
- Feedback from the Association of tenants and leaseholders
- CBH Tenant and leaseholder consultative committee
- Customer complaints and enquires
- MP and councillor enquiries
- Feedback from tenant and leaseholders who are CBH board members

Assessment of need or impact on identified customers or users:

Information and data on existing customers has been used within the review. This will be supplemented throughout the review with customer based focus groups and workshops.

Consultation methods:

The review has included consultation with customers and service users through a range of methods including:

- A telephone survey of 300 tenants and leaseholders who have used the services of Specific needs/requirements in relation to the review and the likely impact CBH within the past 3 months (Touchstone)
- Monthly survey of 100 CBH tenants
- Customer Focus group and workshop events
- Stakeholder workshop and surveys
- CBH Face book forum (promoted through News and views newsletter)
- CBC Hub (intranet) for staff comments
- Staff drop in sessions
- CBH Staff conference
- Tenant and Leaseholder consultative committee
- Association of Tenants and Leaseholders

Specific needs/requirements in relation to the review and the likely impact

<p>1. Stakeholder group – religion and belief Awareness of religious beliefs and festivals, clothing styles, male and female interaction. Recognition that different people need to be treated in different ways to suit their specific needs. Provide flexibility and choice</p>
<p>2. Stakeholder group – Age (Younger people, Older people) Use of plain English and straightforward language. Awareness of and information about services accessible at the first point of contact, and available through a range of communication channels Provision of services and accommodation which meets the needs of older people and younger people – this may include specific support which is tailored to individual need. Providing flexibility and choice of interaction and access to services, this may include support to assist customers</p>
<p>3. Stakeholder group - BME groups (including those whose first language is not</p>

English) Use plain English and simple language. Provision of easily accessible translation service.
4. Stakeholder group – gender Adaptations to the service are available to meet specific customer need, this includes flexibility and choice
5. Stakeholder group – people with a disability Awareness of and information about services is made accessible as possible, through a range of communication channels. Use of plain English and simple language. Website provides browsealoud and translation service. Typetalk service available. Providing flexible services, where specific needs can be assessed and supported. Access to services are DDA compliant. CBH has a Disability and access awareness group – this group meets regularly to review the service delivery of CBH and the impact of services to customers who have a disability.
6. Stakeholder group – sexual orientation Adaptations to the service are available to meet specific customer need, this includes flexibility and choice
7. Stakeholder group – people with numeracy and literacy issues Provision of alternative formats of information. This includes the use of larger fonts, information available on web site, face to face meetings and specific support to complete documentation. Tenant and Leaseholder newsletter is available on CD Rom, tape or CD if requested.
8. Stakeholder group – people with drug and alcohol problems Support and practical assistance is available to support specific problems. CBH works with Open Road to provide support for its tenants with drug and alcohol problems to assist with access to services

Summarised outcomes from consultation:

The homes which are managed by CBH are maintained and managed to a good standard. Staff dealing with customers are friendly and helpful, however in some services there are inconsistencies with the outcomes from enquiries.

Information provided by CBH is useful and easy to understand.

Accessing the services of CBH by telephone was found by some customers to be confusing – customers prefer to speak to someone, rather than select options. Customers prefer to be able to have a response to their enquiry at the first point of contact.

Where CBH sub contracts its services, the information to customers should be clear and still be available to CBH in order to address enquiries.

The information gathered and held in respect of customers is not used to its full capacity in order to deliver tailored services

Proposals to overcome unjustifiable or adverse treatment of any group

The DAAG will continue to be supported by CBH in order to raise awareness of any issues which may impact on customers with special needs or a disability.

CBH Staff will receive regular training to assist them to recognise and support customers with special needs.

Complaints in respect of service delivery are monitored monthly by Directors and through the Performance and complaints sub committee. Trends and issues are identified and researched to avoid repeat.

The Association of Tenants & Leaseholders (ATL) are available to support and advocate on behalf of tenants

CBH employs a support worker and works with a number of organisations to provide support for its customers. We will continue to focus on early intervention to support and sustain tenancies.

Customer services staff are trained and have recognised institute of customer services accredited training awards

Monitoring and review arrangements

This Equality impact assessment will be reviewed in September 2011 to consider the impact of the implementation of the review.

APPENDIX D – Risk Assessment

See separate Excel document inserted manually.

[T:\CBH Management\Karen Loweman\FSR C B HOMES\Risk register\FSR Risk Log 11 10 \(3\) 6 12 for Board Jan 11.xls](T:\CBH Management\Karen Loweman\FSR C B HOMES\Risk register\FSR Risk Log 11 10 (3) 6 12 for Board Jan 11.xls)

APPENDIX E – Unison Queries and Responses

Area	Concern
<p>Business Case</p> <p>The initial business plan sets a direction for a new way of working in the future. It does contain detail as the intention of the paper was to confirm with our Board that the direction was acceptable to them.</p> <p>The initial business case presented feedback from the workshops held with customers, staff and stakeholders to make changes to the way in which we work, and does demonstrate the positive impact that these would have on our customers and staff.</p> <p>For the full business plan a risk assessment will be complete and included as an appendices.</p>	<p>Lacking in detail</p> <p>Presents positive outcomes and does not assess negative impact and risks</p>
<p>Project Team</p>	<p>Concerns that has not included front facing staff</p> <p>Concern that CBC staff are over-represented in project team</p> <p>Concern that project team lack understanding of current roles in CBH and the method of measuring time spent on tasks is nothing better than anecdotal.</p> <p>Concern that project team lack skills involved for job evaluation</p> <p>Most employees Job Accountability Statements are not up to date therefore some tasks may get lost when drawing up new JAS' and the new structure</p> <p>Concern that CBC staff are over-represented in project team</p>
<p>At the outset of the review an email was sent to all CBH staff inviting them to be involved in the review. Those who volunteered and could be released from their role then subsequently participated on the project team. Our Community Involvement officer and a housing officer were</p>	

APPENDIX E – Unison Queries and Responses

<p>key members of the project team, along with members of our senior management team who represented teams across the company. CBC were represented on the project team by two key members of staff, one to provide links to the housing service, which is a key element to improving services for customers and one to provide advice and support with technology requirements. Other CBC staff assisted with the support and administration, this support has been valuable and has reduced the impact that could have been made to our staffing.</p> <p>The project team includes our HR and business support manager who is trained and experienced in job evaluation and will work in partnership with the CBC HR team to evaluate job roles and plan implementation of structure change</p>	<p>Cost</p> <p>Multi skilling and retraining staff</p> <p>New technology required to service new ways of working</p> <p>Cost of the fundamental service review and employing consultants</p> <p>Fees paid to consultants vs prospect of job losses if savings are part of the FSR Lots of questions about accounts shown in the business case</p> <p><u>New technology required to service new ways of working</u></p> <p>Page 6 of business case has general and management activity costs – can these be explained further</p>
<p>There will be costs associated with the implementation, which will be acknowledged within the full business case.</p> <p>The funding for CBH as an ALMO is more complex than a CBC service area or single business. Overall the review will seek to make efficiency savings to the way in which our services are delivered with a balance between reducing salaries, working more efficiently and finding new business opportunity through working with others and developing new services.</p>	<p>Impact on service delivery</p> <p>Concern about impact on service delivery is training and multi-skilling has to take place in post</p> <p>Staff morale will decrease due to uncertainty in the consultation phase</p> <p>Universal officers will lead to the loss of individual customer service tailored to need and lead to a one size fits all approach</p>

APPENDIX E – Unison Queries and Responses

	Additional training will be available to assist staff who require development of skills or knowledge – multi skilling will be phased whilst using a mixture of training, coaching and support to staff dependant on their need
New ways of working	Will staff have to work outside office hours and weekends? Equality impact assessment will need to be carried out as may discriminate against women with young children.
New ways of working will be considered to enable us to meet the changing requirements for customers, many staff have also requested that we introduce more flexible working hours which assists them with child care costs and work life balance. An Equality Impact assessment is available	
Scope and purpose of review	Unclear and constantly changing Purpose of FSR – seem to be conflicting views – Customer Experience vs Efficiency savings or is it both?
The scope and purpose has been clear and consistent throughout the review. With a balance of priorities between efficiency, customer experience and effectiveness	
Consultation Process	<p>Inconsistent provision of information</p> <p>Not transparent</p> <p>Availability of information not publicised</p> <p>Over reliance on electronic methods of communication which has negative impact in areas where emails and the Hub are not readily available.</p> <p>Insufficient consultation</p>
There have been bi weekly staff briefings to all CBH staff throughout the review – although this has been through an electronic newsletter this has been printed by managers and made available to staff without access to email. An area on the Hub was set up to provide information for staff and to provide an opportunity to feedback any comment. Where possible staff were invited to workshops, an open afternoon until 6pm and information regarding the initial business case with workshop was held at our staff conference which all staff are invited to attend. The review has been an agenda item for team meetings, providing opportunity for discussion around service area concerns. This has been a very consultative process any many staff have taken the opportunity to make comments and suggestions to participate in the review,	

APPENDIX E – Unison Queries and Responses

<p>Timescale for consultation and implementation</p>	<p>Seen to be unrealistic and too short</p>
<p>The implementation timetable has not been released and is currently being agreed - not</p>	<p>Staff want to know how savings are going to be made as a result of the review</p>
<p>Savings to be made</p>	<p>How much money will be saved?</p>
	<p>Where will savings be made?</p>
<p>Savings will be achieved through a balance of process efficiencies, development of services, negotiation of service costs and review of delegated budget costs, along with savings from a change of staffing structure.</p> <p>Savings made will be balanced across CBH services (Older peoples services, Housing Management, Business support and finance and property services)</p> <p>It should be noted that reductions in budgets will be required as a direct impact of the Comprehensive spending review and funding for local authority and public service alongside reductions in grant such as Supporting People which is administered by Essex County council. By planning and preparing we hope to reduce the impact on our service delivery and staffing.</p>	

APPENDIX F - Abbreviations

CBH	Colchester Borough Homes
CBC	Colchester Borough Council
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
ALMO	Arms Length Management Organisation
FSR	Fundamental Service Review
HRA	Housing Revenue Account
SP	Supporting People
SLA	Service Level Agreement
ASB	anti social behaviour
IT	information and technology

APPENDIX C

Equality Impact assessment

Name of policy, procedure or practice document:

Colchester Borough Homes – Customer service and access (Fundamental service review)

Date started: 25 May 2010

Date complete: January 2011

Lead officer: Karen Loweman

Who is responsible for the review and its implementation?

Colchester Borough Homes – Chief Executive and Directors team

Scope of the Equality Impact assessment

To identify opportunities to deliver efficiency, effectiveness and customer excellence within Colchester Borough Homes.

What outcomes do you want to achieve?

- Reduced and balanced costs
- Improved customer services and access
- Increased effectiveness of delivery of services with improved key performance indicators
- Longer term cost reduction plan

List of Audience, users or customers

All of those who have a connection with Colchester Borough Homes – this will include:

- Tenants and leaseholders living in accommodation managed by Colchester Borough Homes
- Those who support tenants and leaseholders of CBH
- Those organisations who work with CBH to provide services in the communities and neighbourhoods in which CBH manages housing
- Staff of CBH

How will you monitor the impact of the service review on the groups that have been listed?

- The way in which customers access CBH services is monitored through a customer relationship management system. Information regarding the tenants and leaseholders is monitored through the Capita integrated housing management system.
- The bi annual STATUS survey and monthly surveys of tenants and leaseholders monitors the satisfaction of those customers with the landlord service.
- CBH service review panels
- The Association of tenants and leaseholders
- Monitoring of complaints and enquiries
- CBH Staff forum

List the data and information which is used to inform the EIA:

- Customer relationship management data base (Siebel and i-connect)
- Capita housing management system

- Abritas – allocation and lettings
- Mosaic data – CBC research team
- STATUS survey conducted by the National Housing federation (2008 & 2010)
- Touchstone – qualitative research with customers conducted by CBC policy team and CBH staff
- Feedback from the Association of tenants and leaseholders
- CBH Tenant and leaseholder consultative committee
- Customer complaints and enquires
- MP and councillor enquiries
- Feedback from tenant and leaseholders who are CBH board members

Assessment of need or impact on identified customers or users:

Information and data on existing customers has been used within the review. This will be supplemented throughout the review with customer based focus groups and workshops.

Consultation methods:

The review has included consultation with customers and service users through a range of methods including:

- A telephone survey of 300 tenants and leaseholders who have used the services of Specific needs/requirements in relation to the review and the likely impact CBH within the past 3 months (Touchstone)
- Monthly survey of 100 CBH tenants
- Customer Focus group and workshop events
- Stakeholder workshop and surveys
- CBH Face book forum (promoted through News and views newsletter)
- CBC Hub (intranet) for staff comments
- Staff drop in sessions
- CBH Staff conference
- Tenant and Leaseholder consultative committee
- Association of Tenants and Leaseholders

Specific needs/requirements in relation to the review and the likely impact

<p>1. Stakeholder group – religion and belief Awareness of religious beliefs and festivals, clothing styles, male and female interaction. Recognition that different people need to be treated in different ways to suit their specific needs. Provide flexibility and choice</p>
<p>2. Stakeholder group – Age (Younger people, Older people) Use of plain English and straightforward language. Awareness of and information about services accessible at the first point of contact, and available through a range of communication channels Provision of services and accommodation which meets the needs of older people and younger people – this may include specific support which is tailored to individual need. Providing flexibility and choice of interaction and access to services, this may include support to assist customers</p>
<p>3. Stakeholder group - BME groups (including those whose first language is not</p>

English) Use plain English and simple language. Provision of easily accessible translation service.
4. Stakeholder group – gender Adaptations to the service are available to meet specific customer need, this includes flexibility and choice
5. Stakeholder group – people with a disability Awareness of and information about services is made accessible as possible, through a range of communication channels. Use of plain English and simple language. Website provides browsealoud and translation service. Typetalk service available. Providing flexible services, where specific needs can be assessed and supported. Access to services are DDA compliant. CBH has a Disability and access awareness group – this group meets regularly to review the service delivery of CBH and the impact of services to customers who have a disability.
6. Stakeholder group – sexual orientation Adaptations to the service are available to meet specific customer need, this includes flexibility and choice
7. Stakeholder group – people with numeracy and literacy issues Provision of alternative formats of information. This includes the use of larger fonts, information available on web site, face to face meetings and specific support to complete documentation. Tenant and Leaseholder newsletter is available on CD Rom, tape or CD if requested.
8. Stakeholder group – people with drug and alcohol problems Support and practical assistance is available to support specific problems. CBH works with Open Road to provide support for its tenants with drug and alcohol problems to assist with access to services

Summarised outcomes from consultation:

The homes which are managed by CBH are maintained and managed to a good standard. Staff dealing with customers are friendly and helpful, however in some services there are inconsistencies with the outcomes from enquiries.

Information provided by CBH is useful and easy to understand.

Accessing the services of CBH by telephone was found by some customers to be confusing – customers prefer to speak to someone, rather than select options. Customers prefer to be able to have a response to their enquiry at the first point of contact.

Where CBH sub contracts its services, the information to customers should be clear and still be available to CBH in order to address enquiries.

The information gathered and held in respect of customers is not used to its full capacity in order to deliver tailored services

Proposals to overcome unjustifiable or adverse treatment of any group

The DAAG will continue to be supported by CBH in order to raise awareness of any issues which may impact on customers with special needs or a disability.

CBH Staff will receive regular training to assist them to recognise and support customers with special needs.

Complaints in respect of service delivery are monitored monthly by Directors and through the Performance and complaints sub committee. Trends and issues are identified and researched to avoid repeat.

The Association of Tenants & Leaseholders (ATL) are available to support and advocate on behalf of tenants

CBH employs a support worker and works with a number of organisations to provide support for its customers. We will continue to focus on early intervention to support and sustain tenancies.

Customer services staff are trained and have recognised institute of customer services accredited training awards

Monitoring and review arrangements

This Equality impact assessment will be reviewed in September 2011 to consider the impact of the implementation of the review.



Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Item

11

25 October 2011

Report of	Scrutiny Officer	Author	Robert Judd
Title	Work Programme 2011-12		Tel. 282274
Wards affected	Not applicable		

**This report sets out the 2011-12 Work Programme for the
Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

1. Action Required

1.1 The Panel is asked to consider and comment on the 2011-12 work programme.

2. Reason for Action

2.1 This function forms part of the Panel's Terms of Reference in the Constitution.

3. Additional item / meeting

3.1 No change

4. Outstanding Items for review

4.1 The following items will be scheduled in due course, the review of the Customer Strategy and the Street Services implementation of the FSR Business Case.

Meeting date / reviews	Portfolio	Strategic Plan Priority achievements
<p>19 July 2011</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Budget Strategy, Timetable and MTFF Review of the Arts Trial - doorstep collection of food waste (pre scrutiny) 	<p>Leader & Strategy / Resources and ICT</p> <p>Commerce and Sustainability</p> <p>Street and Waste</p>	
<p>30 August 2011</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Safer Colchester Partnership (Crime and Disorder Committee) 	<p>Housing and Community Safety</p>	<p><u>Community Safety:</u></p> <p>Work to reduce anti social behaviour continues with reduced levels being achieved across the borough.</p> <p>Community days of action continue to be held every 4 months.</p> <p>Community street wardens have delivered over 1000 activities and are now a valued and embedded part of our communities.</p> <p>Dedicated graffiti team has been in place and performing well.</p>
<p>11 October 2011 (extra) (The Old Library)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation response – Business Rates Reform (Resolution to Cabinet 12-10-11) <p>25 October (replaces 20 September 2011)</p> <p>Colchester Borough Homes – Fundamental Service Review</p>	<p>Resources and Heritage</p> <p>Housing and Community Safety</p>	<p><u>Addressing Older Peoples Needs:</u></p> <p>Encouraged over £1.2m of benefits take up for older people</p> <p>Reviewed all the councils sheltered housing schemes</p> <p>Achieved joined up public service commitment to provision of frontline advice and guidance through info point.</p> <p><u>Homes For All:</u></p> <p>Help has been provided to keep people in their own homes includes reduced use of temporary accommodation, closer working with partners, review of processes and at least 300 households have been prevented from becoming homeless.</p> <p>Our Local Development Framework requires 35% of all new homes be affordable.</p> <p>Our decent homes work is on target.</p> <p>Private sector housing standards are being enforced.</p> <p><u>Addressing Younger Peoples Needs:</u></p> <p>Increased skills in children's centres by increased training to deliver welfare advice</p> <p>Closer working between the council and schools with projects at Monkwick and St Johns schools underway.</p> <p>Provision of 89 work placements for local unemployed 18 to 24 year olds.</p> <p>Increased activities for youngsters with holiday swim sessions and 83 free activities</p>
<p>1 November 2011</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sport and Leisure - Fundamental Services Review 	<p>Communities and Diversity</p>	

		<p>attended by over 2000 people.</p> <p><u>Healthy Living:</u> Active Colchester Community Sport Network established and priorities agreed. The 2012 project and activities with partners are underway. New sports premises are being delivered with new clubhouse on Abbeyfield progressing well.</p>
<p>29 November 2011 (extra meeting)</p> <p>1. An overview of the St Botolph's Regeneration project</p>	<p>Renaissance</p>	<p><u>Community Development:</u> Work with communities to release resources to deliver a range of community facilities continues with a number of specific projects underway. A number of key activities undertaken to increase skills and reduce worklessness including training and skills. <u>Job Creation:</u> Redundant rural buildings have been brought back into commercial use. Planning gain and additional sources of funding have been secured to increase apprenticeships, employment and training. Work to sustain business growth in North Colchester has seen a further £500k secured for a creative incubator in the town centre.</p>
<p>13 December 2011</p> <p>1. Review of the Budget Strategy 2. 2011-12 6-monthly Performance report 3. Strategic Plan Action Plan 2012-15</p>	<p>Leader & Strategy / Resources & Heritage Leader & Strategy</p>	
<p>10 January 2012</p> <p>1. Public Transport in the Borough</p>	<p>Renaissance / Street and Waste</p>	<p><u>Congestion Busting:</u> A12 junction has been delivered ahead of schedule Planning application for a Park and Ride has been submitted. <u>Reduce, Reuse and Recycle:</u> Carbon emissions have been reduced by 987 tonnes per annum. Partnership working to deliver a county wide approach to reuse household items and materials is in progress. 87% of Colchester's schools are now registered with Eco-Schools compared with only 3% five years ago.</p>
<p>14 February 2012</p> <p>1. Review of Colchester Community Stadium Limited - Chief Executive, Chair David Murthwaite to attend</p>	<p>Communities Diversity</p> <p>and</p>	
<p>20 March 2012</p>		

