

# Scrutiny Panel Meeting

**Grand Jury Room, Town Hall, High Street,  
Colchester, CO1 1PJ  
Tuesday, 07 June 2022 at 18:00**

**The Scrutiny Panel** examines the policies and strategies from a borough-wide perspective and ensure the actions of the Cabinet accord with the Council's policies and budget. The Panel reviews corporate strategies that form the Council's Strategic Plan, Council partnerships and the Council's budgetary guidelines, and scrutinises Cabinet or Portfolio Holder decisions which have been called in.

# Information for Members of the Public

## Access to information and meetings

You have the right to attend all meetings of the Council, its Committees and Cabinet. You also have the right to see the agenda (the list of items to be discussed at a meeting), which is usually published five working days before the meeting, and minutes once they are published.

Dates of the meetings are available here:

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

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## Scrutiny Panel – Terms of Reference

1. To fulfil all the functions of an overview and scrutiny committee under section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and in particular (but not limited to):

- (a) To review corporate strategies;
- (b) To ensure that actions of the Cabinet accord with the policies and budget of the Council;
- (c) To monitor and scrutinise the financial performance of the Council, performance reporting and to make recommendations to the Cabinet particularly in relation to annual revenue and capital guidelines, bids and submissions;
- (d) To review the Council's spending proposals to the policy priorities and review progress towards achieving those priorities against the Strategic and Implementation Plans;
- (e) To review the financial performance of the Council and to make recommendations to the Cabinet in relation to financial outturns, revenue and capital expenditure monitors;
- (f) To review or scrutinise executive decisions made by Cabinet, the North Essex Parking Partnership Joint Committee (in relation to decisions relating to off-street matters only) and the Colchester and Ipswich Joint Museums Committee which have been made but not implemented referred to the Panel pursuant to the Call-In Procedure;
- (g) To review or scrutinise executive decisions made by Portfolio Holders and officers taking key decisions which have been made but not implemented referred to the Panel pursuant to the Call-In Procedure;
- (h) To monitor the effectiveness and application of the Call-In Procedure, to report on the number and reasons for Call-In and to make recommendations to the Council on any changes required to ensure the efficient and effective operation of the process;
- (i) To review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of functions which are not the responsibility of the Cabinet;
- (j) At the request of the Cabinet, to make decisions about the priority of referrals made in the event of the volume of reports to the Cabinet or creating difficulty for the management of Cabinet business or jeopardising the efficient running of Council business;

2. To fulfil all the functions of the Council's designated Crime and Disorder Committee ("the Committee") under the Police and Justice Act 2006 and in particular (but not limited to):

- (a) To review and scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions;
- (b) To make reports and recommendations to the Council or the Cabinet with respect to the discharge of those functions.

**COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**Scrutiny Panel**  
**Tuesday, 07 June 2022 at 18:00**

**The Scrutiny Panel Members are:**

Councillor Dennis Willetts  
Councillor Sue Lissimore  
Councillor Darius Laws  
Councillor Mike Lilley  
Councillor Sam McCarthy  
Councillor Lee Scordis  
Councillor Paul Smith

Chairman  
Deputy Chairman

**The Scrutiny Panel Substitute Members are:**

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

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

**Please note that Agenda items 1 to 5 are normally dealt with briefly.**

**1 Welcome and Announcements**

The Chairman will welcome members of the public and Councillors and remind everyone to use microphones at all times when they are speaking. The Chairman will also explain action in the event of an emergency, mobile phones switched to silent, audio-recording of the meeting. Councillors who are members of the committee will introduce themselves.

**2 Substitutions**

Councillors will be asked to say if they are attending on behalf of a Committee member who is absent.

**3 Urgent Items**

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

**4 Declarations of Interest**

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

participating in any vote upon the item, or any other pecuniary interest or non-pecuniary interest.

**5 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Councillors will be invited to confirm that the minutes of the meeting held on (insert date) are a correct record.

**Scrutiny Panel Minutes 22 February 2022** 7 - 18

**Scrutiny Panel Minutes 15 March 2022** 19 - 22

**Scrutiny Panel Minutes 25 May 2022** 23 - 24

**6 Have Your Say!**

The Chairman will invite members of the public to indicate if they wish to speak or present a petition on any item included on the agenda or any other matter relating to the terms of reference of the meeting. Please indicate your wish to speak at this point if your name has not been noted by Council staff.

**7 Decisions Taken Under Special Urgency Provisions**

To consider any Cabinet decisions taken under the special urgency provisions.

**8 Cabinet or Portfolio Holder Decisions called in for Review**

The Councillors will consider any Cabinet or Portfolio Holder decisions called in for review.

**9 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.***

**10 Town Deal Reporting** 25 - 28

This report recommends a timetable for future scrutiny of Town Deal projects by the Panel.

**11 Work Programme 2022-23** 29 - 42

This report sets out the current Work Programme 2022-2023 for the Scrutiny Panel. This provides details of the reports that are scheduled for each meeting during the municipal year.

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

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).

**Part B**  
**(not open to the public including the press)**

# SCRUTINY PANEL

## 22 February 2022

*Present: -*

Councillor Cory (Chair)  
Councillor Barton, Councillor Chapman, Councillor  
Loveland, Councillor Whitehead, Councillor  
Willetts, Councillor Wood

*Substitutions: -*

Councillor Lilley for Councillor Bourne

*Also present: -*

Councillor Dundas, Councillor Ellis, Councillor  
Laws

### **338. Arts Organisations**

Anthony Roberts, Director of Colchester Arts Centre, introduced the work of the Centre and gave a presentation to show the funding received from the Council and how it had been used. £48,175 had been provided by the Council, equating to around 7% of the Centre's overall income and was the foundation upon which other income generation was built. £12.99 of external income was generated for each £1 of funding from the Council. In addition, a capital investment of £35k had been made over the past two years.

The Director outlined the employment of staff at the Centre, and a total of £780,133 of inward investment had been recorded, including wages, fees, payments to suppliers, etc.

Performance targets were covered, and it was explained that the pandemic has caused most to be missed. The target for ticket sales had been 46,000 per year; this had only just been missed, even with the effects of the pandemic. The demographic data of ticket purchasers was shown.

The Director outlined how the Arts Centre had responded to the Climate Emergency. Audience travel remained the largest portion of the Centre's carbon footprint. The Centre had increased its use of 'grey' water and reduced its use of fossil fuels, aiming to bring this to zero by using alternatives such as e-cargo bikes. Growing projects and carbon offsetting were also being employed, alongside efforts to enhance biodiversity and conservation. The churchyard was being utilised, in consultation with experts on the different flora and fauna located there.

The Arts Centre continued to support vulnerable people and to address inequalities. Project 'Game Changer' aimed to do this, reducing exclusion from use of the venue and informing decision making. Examples were given of events, shows and activities held by and for vulnerable groups. The facilities had also been improved to be more easily accessible, including a shower facility which could be used by all, including

those with limited mobility. Examples were given of members of vulnerable and oft-excluded demographics who had worked with the Arts Centre to increase its accessibility and broaden its offering of events and activities.

Council funding had helped to increase the Centre's partnership in strategic initiatives, investment, employment, arts provision, social engagement and collection of data used to evaluate how to improve visitor experiences and increase numbers.

Steve Mannix, Executive Director of the Mercury Theatre, presented an update on the Theatre's work, including the prioritisation of maintaining connections with its partners, stakeholders and staff during the pandemic, and in meeting the challenges caused by the pandemic. This included the setting up of a hardship fund for freelancers who were often not eligible for furlough or other sources of Government support.

The Mercury Rising project had continued to target and had not been significantly delayed by the pandemic. Costs had risen but these had been met, and the building was now ranked in the top 25% of buildings in the UK for sustainability.

The Theatre's staff had supported organisations across the Borough in tackling the effects of the pandemic, including volunteering with the Council and the Foodbank and producing PPE, whilst supporting local groups.

118 online events had been held, with an emphasis on inclusivity. Creative engagement had been prioritised and a digital film festival had been held with opportunities for youth work and screenings at care homes.

Funding successes were listed, including from the Town Deal, Arts Council England, and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's 'kick-start' funding. This led to an outline of the Theatre's local strategic partners including non-profit organisations, the Business Improvement District [BID] and the Haven Gateway.

The Theatre had achieved an average of filling 65% of its capacity, which compared well to other venues. Numbers had been affected by the pandemic. In addition to shows/events, the Theatre had conducted creative engagement work and activities, looking to improve participation.

The Panel was informed that it cost £4.4m to run the Mercury Theatre each year, with 4% and 20% of costs met by the Council and Arts Council England respectively, with 76% of income generated by the Theatre itself. The Theatre prioritised spending on local suppliers, products and food. It was estimated that audience members for Theatre productions spent around £3.8m around Colchester annually. In addition, the Mercury Rising project had led to around £10.6m to be spent locally, with 44 new jobs per year. The Mercury Creatives Programme supported 114 local businesses, with over £1m income generated for those firms.

The future targets and aims of the Theatre were outlined, along with recovery work to return to full output and touring activities. This included work and activities for young people and members of vulnerable and marginalised groups.



Sally Shaw, Director of Firstsite, introduced the work of the gallery over the past year. In the past year £95k of Council funding had been used to help generate £1.9m additional income for the gallery, including funding from Arts Council England. Essex County Council had also reinstated its core funding of the gallery, following the arts organisations' previous appearance before the Scrutiny Panel. It was felt that the Council's investment had encouraged Essex County Council to renew its funding. The funding received from the two councils gave confidence and certainty to the gallery.

In the past year, an estimated £2.2m of press coverage had been generated, including for the successful 'Museum of the Year' campaign. Coverage was used to build the reputation of Firstsite and Colchester.

Firstsite had fully delivered its planned programme of events and continued to aim to provide and support World-class local artists and exhibitions. Examples were provided of the support given to local artists, including social media, publicity, and advice on selling works. Examples were also given as to how creativity and mental health wellbeing of visitors were supported and encouraged, especially for young people. There had been 40,000 participations in the Holiday Fun programme, with more than 1,000 different families engaged and 12,000 meals provided for free. Attendance levels had recovered to 70% of pre-pandemic levels, which was in comparison to London museums which had reported that their visitor numbers were between 40% and 45% of pre-pandemic levels. Demographic data was given of those visiting the gallery, with 18% of audience members now being from non-white demographics. This had increased from 11% pre-pandemic and, whilst it was hard to definitively explain this, it was suggested that this might have been as a result of increasing the use of digital workshops and through partnership with other organisations.

The Director informed the Panel that Firstsite planned to use the money from winning 'Museum of the Year' to commission an asylum seeker who lived and produce art locally to make a rug to depict his journey to the UK from Sweden, to partner his earlier work which showed his journey from Iraq to Sweden. This would feed into the gallery's aim to 'make art matter' and to show how increasing artistic creativity can increase the creativity shown to find solutions to problems across the UK.

Firstsite's goals included listening to audiences, showing and promoting what artists could do, sharing resources to create social capital and taking a sustainable approach to everything it did.

Commercial operations were outlined, and it was confirmed that the gallery's café had now become profit-making, in a welcoming space for visitors and participants in activities. The Christmas programme, working with others, had generated enjoyment for visitors, longer stays at the gallery, more jobs at the venue and greater spending in the café and shop.

Firstsite aimed to promote Colchester in general, and part of this was the campaign to win the 'Museum of the Year' award, which was the biggest prize of its type in the World. This showed the payoff from investment in Firstsite and across the local

cultural sector, showcasing the difference and radicalness of Colchester, and how this was being encouraged.

The Panel welcomed the information provided by its guests. More detail was asked on the Arts Centre's 'pay what you like' events on Wednesday nights. Anthony Roberts, Director of Colchester Arts Centre, explained that the approach was akin to having an 'honesty box', where people could pay what they could afford in order to participate in cultural events, encouraging people to try new things and to increase inclusivity through experiencing new arts and artists. A part of this strategy was to generate greater interest and popularity, leading to increased income over time.

Steve Mannix, Executive Director of the Mercury Theatre, detailed the Theatre's range of ticket options and prices, including cheaper options for those on limited incomes which aimed to encourage more to come to see productions. Bursaries were provided, especially targeted at those who were vulnerable or more likely to be facing exclusionary pressures.

Firstsite's Kickstart programme was due to commence interviewing for young people to take up work placements at the gallery, gaining experience which was aimed at creating careers in the creative arts sector. Additionally, it was hoped that this would help users of the Holiday Fun programme to engage and then progress to employment at Firstsite. Sally Shaw, Director of Firstsite, explained the importance of expanding imaginations and creativity to improve success in the workplace. Anthony Roberts, Director of Colchester Arts Centre, likewise explained that the Centre was also looking to commence an apprenticeship/work placement scheme following the pandemic, also offering school work experience opportunities and mentoring to generate and improve skills.

The Panel discussed the 'Mercury Creatives' programme and were informed that this had engaged with 114 individuals, with 26 hours of tailored support provided to each participant. One example was training offered on marketing, idea development and promotion. The programme's aim was to help increase resilience in the sector, increase access to necessary skills and to improve partnerships locally. Partners included Colbea, University of Essex and the Colchester Institute.

The Director of Firstsite was asked how environmental sustainability at the gallery could be improved. The Panel were informed that Firstsite had applied for Arts Council England funding to replace every bulb with modern energy-efficient bulbs. Most fixtures would need to be refitted to accommodate LED bulbs. A review would be carried out to identify ways to reduce energy use and to seek sustainable energy options. Any points of learning gained from this review would be shared with other organisations to help them improve sustainability and reduce costs.

The arts organisation representatives were asked by the Panel to give information regarding their continuity and succession planning for the future. The three representatives all gave assurance that continuity planning and succession strategies were in place, with an emphasis on team strength and resilience.

The Panel asked whether there were any hard-to-reach groups for which more could be done. The Director of Firstsite explained that work was ongoing to ascertain

reasons which prevented members of the public from visiting the site. This had shown the complexity of the question. A meeting had been held with community leaders to discuss digital exclusion and had shown the scale of the problem and how much was needed to be done. An issue identified was that some families could not afford to travel to Firstsite for the free Holiday Fun Days and meals. Another problem was the reliability of public transport, and the need to ensure people felt safe when visiting Colchester. The Director of the Arts Centre agreed that it was important for the venues to reach out to future generations, fostering ideas and artistic spirit for the future. This would connect with action on environmental sustainability and conservation work.

A Panel member asked what further work could be done to improve the organisations' environmental sustainability. The Executive Director of the Mercury praised the partnership working which had been fostered during the pandemic and acknowledged the challenges everyone had faced. Cost and availability of public transport had been found to be a significant problem.

The guests were asked what lessons were being taken forward from the pandemic and whether there would be an increase in virtual events. Further to that, a question was asked as to whether there could be further sharing of back-office functions to reduce costs. The Executive Director of the Mercury explained that the pandemic had reminded everyone of the importance of their staff members and the need to support and protect them, especially freelancers. The Director of Firstsite agreed that the pandemic had led to significant re-evaluations as to what was important at each organisation, and the need for cultural activities and events. It was potentially possible to increase the impact of the venues' work by reducing the number of shows and making more of those that are held. The lockdowns had given time for the organisations to look at how to do things differently in the future and embrace new ideas as to how the spaces were used and how outreach work was conducted.

The guests were asked how much their organisations spent locally to benefit communities and whether they and their contractors paid the living wage. Widening this to cover a range of ethical matters, the Executive Director of the Mercury informed the Panel that the Theatre had a close relationship with the Fairtrade Foundation and was working towards being able to pay at least the enhanced minimum wage to all members of staff. Staff pay was not affected by age, so younger employees received the same wage rates and opportunities as older staff. Firstsite were increasing their lowest wage rates and worked to influence suppliers to do likewise. Similarly, the gallery expected its contractors to meet its ethical standards, with any who did not act accordingly being replaced. The Director of the Arts Centre explained that a condition for receiving Culture Recovery Fund funding had been to freeze pay rates. The Centre provided proper pay rates for its apprentices.

The Panel and its guests discussed the relationships between the Council and local arts organisations. The arts organisations maintained a non-political stance in their dealings with the Council and looked to cooperate on shared priorities and principles, necessitating a partnership with clear objectives and aiming to be critical friends, when appropriate. The Directors of Firstsite and the Arts Centre welcomed the longer-term thinking and funding agreement with the Council, especially around

points of mutual interest. Appreciation was also shown that changes in Council administrations had never interfered in the workings and partnerships with the local arts organisations. The setting of a four-year funding agreement was felt to be helpful by the arts organisations. There were always issues around the timing of agreements, for example the Council funding agreement was for four years, whereas the funding agreement with Arts Council England was only for three years.

Questions were asked regarding what activities and events were being provided for individuals who were not within one of the demographics identified as being more likely to be excluded or hard-to-reach. The organisations' outreach work was explained, including how this work led to an increased uptake in events and activities across all demographics. The Executive Director of the Mercury explained that record sales showed how the Theatre offered things of interest across the board. Nigel Hildreth, Chairman of the Arts Centre, explained that the Centre offered events and performances for all tastes, across many art forms.

The Panel and arts organisation representatives discussed the outreach work carried out, and the importance of arts not being removed from school curriculums, with schools expecting arts organisations to pick up this work instead. The Executive Director of the Mercury agreed that the loss of arts teaching on curriculums was a concern and informed the Panel that the theatre offered a venue for the Essex Music Service to conduct instrumental lessons on Saturdays. The Chairman of the Arts Centre gave a view of the difficulties in teaching arts subjects during lockdowns/Covid restrictions and confirmed that the outreach work carried on was not designed to replace arts on school curriculums.

In response to questions involving cooperation in back-office systems and booking service, it was explained to the Panel that the venues already sold tickets via a shared booking system which had been put in place in collaboration with the Council.

Scrutiny Panel thanked the representatives of the Mercury, Firstsite and the Arts Centre for attending the meeting, and thanked their organisations for the work that they had carried out.

*RESOLVED* that the Scrutiny Panel had reviewed the work of the arts organisations and their performance in relation to their funding agreements with the Council.

### **339. Portfolio Holder Briefing from Councillor Andrew Ellis [Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning]**

Councillor Ellis, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning, provided an overview of the highlights from within his portfolio. The Portfolio Holder praised the quality of the teams in planning, housing, and at Colchester Borough Homes.

The Housing Revenue Account [HRA] Business Plan had been updated. The Council was now falling short of the progress needed to meet its target of net zero carbon emissions, due primarily to budget constraints. The Council was therefore taking a 'fabric first' approach to its work and aiming to achieve net zero as soon as possible. If increases in housing charges could be kept at CPI [consumer price index] plus one percent, the Council would be able to raise enough income to achieve net zero.

An update was provided on the '100 Homes' project. The Council had experienced some challenges and had found it was chasing the housing market and its increasing prices. 76 properties had been acquired, and the remaining number of properties were under offer. Only 16 or 17 of the acquired properties had been rented out thus far, due mainly to market conditions, including the scarcity and shortage of the materials and labour to make these properties ready for letting. Significant repair work had also been needed for some existing Council properties, which caused further challenges, but a new contractor had been appointed to expedite the work done on eight of the new properties. 84 more affordable homes had been delivered across the Borough, taking the total delivered so far in 2021-22 to 144.

A Panel member asked if and how the Council was prioritising local applicants. The Portfolio Holder explained that a pilot scheme had been set up in Layer de la Haye. There would be 30% affordable housing on the development site, with other properties going straight to market. Clauses were put in place to require that first letting would need to be to local residents. The outcomes of this pilot would be assessed.

The 'Heart of Greenstead' project was described, in addition to the investment of £1.7m in Colchester by Homes England.

Disruptions in the Council's work had been experienced, with challenges being faced regarding staff retention in a labour market experiencing high demand for trained officers. The death of Alistair Day had also necessitated structural change within the Council's planning and development services.

The Panel were informed that around £6m in Section 106 contributions had been gained by the Council from planning applications during 2021-22.

The Council was developing its own design code for Colchester. This aimed to help change the types of housing delivered and avoid homogenous, characterless developments. This could include some tall buildings, where they were deemed appropriate. This work would assist in the holistic work with partners to improve the centre of Colchester. Expert advice would be sought in drafting the new code.

Concern was raised that a new design code would increase the cost of new build properties and questions asked as to whether this would be addressed. The Portfolio Holder explained that a code was hoped not to lead to increase costs once developers understood its requirements. They would also save owners money in the long term, through inbuilt environmental sustainability measures.

The Panel discussed the Housing and Planning portfolio, noting its size. Comments were made in support of the development of a Town Masterplan and design code, which could look to avoid unwanted types of development. The Portfolio Holder explained that he wanted to see the Council being given first opportunity to purchase the premises of any businesses vacating them, so that they could be run by the Council's Amphora companies. The Portfolio Holder was asked what was happening regarding Vineyard Gate and the Britannia Car Park, regarding Town master-planning. The Panel were told that these were currently on hold, due to their location in proximity to the St Botolph's area where investment was already being made.

However, the Portfolio Holder posited that the Vineyard Gate area would potentially be a good site for a new bus station. Plans which had been suggested for the Britannia Car Park had been deemed inappropriate, with some parts of the site where underlying archaeology would prevent any building.

In response to questions, the Portfolio Holder agreed that there should be room for environmental sustainability requirements within the proposed Colchester design codes. This would be looked at with officers to see what was possible.

The Panel asked whether there was a future for planning committees, given the proportion of planning applications decided by officers. The Portfolio Holder noted that he didn't see value in 'permitted development' items going to Planning Committee, given that these, under current law, could not be refused or changed by planning committees. The Portfolio Holder gave the view that there was still a role for planning committees to do useful work in amending planning applications or refusing them on valid planning grounds, and that planning committees were important in maintaining a link with residents and their views.

The Panel questioned what the Council was doing and could do to protect staff in the planning team from overload, with regard to its increased workload and increase in number of applications. The Portfolio Holder agreed that it was difficult to retain and recruit staff in present circumstances, but noted that recruitment efforts were proceeding to expand the team and reduce pressure. A restructuring of the team had helped to ease pressures. The apprenticeship scheme had proved a success, with one apprentice now progressing to become a full planning officer. The scheme helped the Council to address capacity gaps from within and reduced pressure on staff, especially regarding enforcement work.

The Portfolio Holder was asked whether the Council was ruling out making use of new shared-ownership options and changes made to the way receipts from Right to Buy sales could be used. The Panel were told that Cabinet had not directed for investment to be made into these options, and that the Portfolio Holder did not consider this the best way to proceed, but that these options were worth considering further. The Portfolio Holder informed the Panel that he was looking at improving the use of almshouses within the Borough and was keen to increase social housing assets by spreading resources, as well as building affordable housing, whether in Council ownership or the ownership of other organisations.

The Panel discussed the challenges facing those needing housing and joining the Housing Register. The Portfolio Holder agreed that it could take time to gain a property via the Register, but emphasised that it was still worthwhile for those in need to join the Register and apply for properties via it. The Portfolio Holder noted that there were currently 3,016 on the waiting list, with 1,067 households in bands A, B and C combined. In answer to questions as to why the waiting list on the Register was so large, the Portfolio Holder explained that this was affected by incoming population, births, and other pressures on the overall housing supply. Affordability of local housing still remained a problem.

The Panel debated progress on neighbourhood plans, with the Portfolio Holder confirming that two plans were going to referendum, in Marks Tey and West Mersea.

The plans for West Bergholt and Tiptree were also progressing and the Council continued to encourage communities to develop neighbourhood plans.

### **340. Corporate Key Performance Indicator [KPI] Targets for 2022-23**

Richard Block, Assistant Director – Corporate and Improvement, introduced the proposed targets for 2022-23, which were due to go to Cabinet for consideration on 9 March 2022. Many were static, with some being returned to pre-pandemic levels. Following previous Scrutiny Panel feedback, a new KPI target had been proposed for homelessness. This was easier to understand than the previous target and could be benchmarked against other local authorities' performance. This was welcomed by the Panel.

The Panel discussed the target relating to 'Average time to re-let council homes' [K1H5] and the Assistant Director was asked if there was a way for this to be split to give a breakdown of re-let times for properties of different levels of dilapidation. The Assistant Director advised that this could be raised with Colchester Borough Homes and with Geoff Beales, Client Services Manager and that any KPI area could be added to the Panel's work programme for a more in-depth consideration in the future.

The Panel noted that the target for 'Residual household waste per household' [K1W1] was proposed to stay static. A member of the Panel suggested that the Council should challenge itself to find opportunities to reduce this. The Assistant Director explained that this was challenging, due to the increase in home working, which was likely to remain to some extent in 2022-23. The target for 'Household waste reused, recycled and composted' [K1W2] was recommended for returning to the pre-pandemic target of 55%, up from 53%. The Panel urged consideration of greater opportunities to promote home recycling options.

The Panel discussed the target for processing housing benefit claims and changes, and Local Council Tax claims and changes. The Assistant Director expanded upon the report to explain that performance here remained strong and well above target. The targets proposed gave a degree of 'slack' but still ensured that performance remained strong and would ensure that the Council continued to perform well in comparison to benchmark performance levels.

A Panel member noted that it would take some time before the effects of the pandemic worked through the system and before long-term changes to targets could be considered without the pandemic affecting them.

*RECOMMENDED* to CABINET that Cabinet campaigns and pushes to achieve a reduction in household waste produced and an increase in household recycling.

### **341. Colchester Borough Homes [CBH] Performance Targets 2022/23**

Geoff Beales, Client Services Manager, and Karen Loweman, Director of Operations at Colchester Borough Homes, introduced the proposed performance targets for CBH in 2022-23. The targets were set out for five years in the Medium-Term Delivery Plan. The Government's agenda was changing, with a greater emphasis on

compliance, safety, and satisfaction of tenants. The Housing regulator was consulting on new key performance indicators [KPIs] for repairs.

The KPI for homelessness had been too complicated and had then been over-simplified, so a new indicator had been proposed for this which could be more easily understood and benchmarked. Reducing homelessness remained a key priority.

The target for gas servicing had been removed and a new suite of compliance indicators would be provided to the Council to ensure safety. Work on sustainable homes was set out in the Asset Management Strategy and the aim was for all stock to receive an EPC [Energy Performance Certificate] rating of at least a Band C by 2030. The Panel discussed whether benchmark data could be obtained regarding property energy performance and how the Council compared to other local authorities. The Client Services Manager confirmed that benchmarking could be applied to all targets and that this would be shown when the Panel considers CBH's performance in the Summer of 2022.

Compliments were paid by the Panel for the streamlining of targets and the improvements made.

Returning to an earlier question as to whether a breakdown of performance against the target time for reletting Council properties could be given, broken down to show relet times for properties needing different levels of maintenance work, The Director of Operations explained that this would partly depend on what properties the benchmarking group measured and how they were measured. The definition of major works on void [empty] properties was fluid, but had been tightened. This normally referred to works necessitated by a property being ruled as uninhabitable without such works being carried out. There had been a decrease in relet numbers over time, as pressure on the housing stock continued to rise. Where there were fewer relets, it took fewer lengthy relets to skew the figures.

A Panel member asked if there was any indication as to the percentage of applicants on the housing register who had moved to the area to take advantage of potentially less-strict requirements to get on to the register here than elsewhere. The Director of Operations gave assurance that applicants needed to show a local connection to join the register, such as having family locally or having local residency for at least six of the previous twelve months. The Homelessness Reduction Act had changed the criteria for owing a duty to house. The Director of Operations offered to provide the figures to members but confirmed that there were not many who moved to the area and then joined the housing register.

*RESOLVED* that the Scrutiny Panel had considered the draft performance targets for 2022/23 and had no recommendations that it wished to make at this time.

### **342. Work Programme 2021-22**

The Chairman noted that it would be necessary for him to liaise with One Colchester to provide the Partnership with a steer as to what the Scrutiny Panel wished to cover at its next meeting. The Panel suggested that this should include the NICS [North East Essex Integrated Community Services] contract, One Colchester's approach to



health partnership work and lessons learned during the pandemic, especially regarding integrated working. The Chairman urged members to provide any further ideas to their respective lead group members on the Panel.

The Chairman notified the Panel that he would declare the appropriate interest, given his involvement with One Colchester, following consultation with the Council's monitoring officer.

*RESOLVED* that the Panel has considered and approved the Work Programme for 2021-22.



# SCRUTINY PANEL

## 15 March 2022

*Present: -*

Councillor Cory (Chair)  
Councillor Barton, Councillor Chapman, Councillor  
Loveland, Councillor Whitehead, Councillor  
Willetts, Councillor Wood

*Substitutions: -*

Councillor Lilley for Councillor Bourne

*Also present: -*

Councillor Crow, Councillor Dundas, Councillor  
Ellis, Councillor Laws

### **343. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

*RESOLVED* that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2022 be approved as a correct record.

### **344. Decisions taken under special urgency provisions**

Richard Block, Assistant Director – Corporate and Improvement, introduced the one decision which had been taken under special urgency provisions, the awarding of the contract for refurbishment and decarbonising of Rowan House. Over £500k of Government funding had been provided for this work. Changes in the building sector had necessitated a series of changes to the plans to ensure these remained within budget; this had delayed the procurement process. To ensure that the Government funding was not lost, the decision had to be taken and contract awarded before the Government's deadline elapsed on 14 March 2022. This was the reason for the use of the urgent decision provisions and the lack of call-in period. Approval for this had been sought and granted by the Chairman of Scrutiny Panel, and the decision report and documents had been circulated to the Scrutiny Panel prior to this meeting.

A Panel member underlined the importance of strong decision making and the fundamental importance of the right of councillors to call in decisions about which they held serious concerns for scrutiny by the Panel. Whilst it was accepted that there were occasional needs to use urgency provisions, the member underlined the importance of gaining an explanation as to why the decisions had to be taken under the Council's protocol for urgent decisions. The Assistant Director shared concerns regarding the use of urgent decision provisions and noted that this was a rarity, with this being the first urgent decision necessary in the 2021-22 municipal year. If the decision had not been taken in this fashion, it would have cost £500k extra to the Council, to make up for the lost Government funding.

The Assistant Director explained that officers had worked hard to complete the necessary work on what would be a complex project to decarbonise using new

technology. There was an expectation from Government that the Council would showcase how to decarbonise similar buildings. It had been an involved process to put in place the necessary elements for the project specifics. A Panel member expressed agreement with the need to proceed with an urgent decision and asked for details regarding the project methodology and the timescales set. The Assistant Director was asked as to when the Government funding deadline had been noted by the Council and whether there had been a sensible balancing of time and work. The Assistant Director explained that the project had initially been conceived in March 2021, with Cabinet then deciding to pursue decarbonisation and changes to the use of Rowan House. The Government funding deadline had been laid down around a month/month-and-a-half prior to the date of that new deadline, which was a key change to the requirements for spending the funding granted.

*RESOLVED* that the Scrutiny Panel had noted the decision taken under special urgency provisions.

### **345. Portfolio Holder Briefing from Cllr Simon Crow [Environment and Sustainability]**

Councillor Simon Crow, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, presented the highlights from his portfolio and paid tribute to the officers who had helped and advised him since his appointment to that position.

The Council continued to work with the Carbon Trust to look at how it could achieve net zero carbon and to make environmental sustainability an integral part of the Council's tendering process. The Council also worked with the Essex Forest Partnership to plant 325 new trees, put in place a 'no mow' scheme, increase levels of wild flowers and plants and to hold community planting days. The Council aimed to have planted 20,000 new trees by the end of the 2021-22 municipal year and was concentrating on maximising the number which survived and grew, rather than the number planted. Examples of planting locations were given. Trees planted were maintained and funding had already been gained for that work.

The Portfolio Holder highlighted the Red Squirrel Project, the re-establishing of the tree collection service for residents and the pledge by Colchester Borough Homes [CBH] to follow the Council's example in ceasing use of glyphosate weedkiller, except where it would be directly injected to kill invasive species of flora.

Work had begun to procure electric vehicles [EVs] by Helpline, following the example of the North Essex Parking Partnership who already had five in operation. EV charging points were being installed and more were planned, with the Council seeking to access funding for this.

The Council was working to develop a long-term parking strategy alongside the new Town Centre Master Plan. The St. Mary's car park had been improved, with wider ground floor bays, a new paint scheme and better walkways. In answer to questions regarding the number of bays, the Portfolio Holder explained that the car park had a surfeit of spaces and could widen some and still preserve enough bays. The existing bays had been designed for older, smaller cars from decades ago, and demand for car parking had diminished over time. Modern models, even the smaller cars, were

wider and needed wider bays. The Portfolio Holder was asked if there were plans to offer other facilities or shops at the car park and confirmed that there were no plans, but that this could be discussed with officers.

Secure cycle parks were being installed, such as the one on St. Isaac's Walk. 25 E Cargo Bikes had also been purchased, funded by a grant from the Energy Saving Trust. An E Cargo Bike courier service had been established for use by Town Centre shops, funded by a grant from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Air quality targets were being set, with actions including better signage on Brook Street and at Eastgates to encourage people to stop idling engines.

Improvements were being made to the Shrub End Depot, including better staff facilities and an improved weighbridge being ordered. A memory garden had been installed for staff and site drainage had been improved.

A campaign had been run to emphasise the crackdown on enforcing the three-bag limit for residential black-bag waste. The Council had been nominated for recycling awards in the past year and was set to create a new Recycling Strategy to meet the requirements of the expected passage of the Environment Bill through Parliament.

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that he continued to work with Essex County Council [ECC] on producing a Transport Strategy, expected to be released in the near future. In answer to questions regarding negative public feedback on the ECC electric scooter trials, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that he had seen much abuse of the scheme, but that this seemed to be waning and its scooters being used more appropriately. Infractions have been reported where these are seen. Members often used these scooters, and the Portfolio Holder defended their use as a travel option in place of car use.

A Panel member noted that the results of the Climate Emergency UK review had recently been published, with the Council doing well and scoring above average. It was noted that the Council had gaps in its diversity and problems with exclusion and the Portfolio Holder was asked for information as to the Council's plans for improvement. The Portfolio Holder stated that the Council had been rated the second-highest performing authority in Essex and gave assurance that it was addressing ways to improve, including some easy wins identified.

A Panel member asked for an update on the blue bag scheme for clothing recycling. The Portfolio Holder gave a promise to provide a written answer following the meeting, acknowledging that there had been complaints and explaining that the administration had been looking to find ways to improve the scheme since it took power. A Panel member noted that a number of residents had stopped using the scheme due to its unreliability.

The Panel discussed the replacement of the old Shrub End Depot weighbridge. The old bridge had been removed and officers were using alternative methods until the replacement could be installed. The Portfolio Holder offered to discuss this with

officers and provide a more-complete description of how officers were operating without the use of this weighbridge in the short term.

In answer to questions regarding rural street cleansing, the Portfolio Holder gave assurance that Councillor Beverley Oxford, Portfolio Holder for Communities, was working to address this. There had been issues with the Council's vehicle fleet's computer systems. This had been resolved, but had caused delays in service provision.

A Panel member detailed work done to steward Ferry Marsh [Wivenhoe] and requested that the Council look to acquire land currently in the Crown Dependency in order to better steward it.

The Panel discussed potential ways to improve the use of portfolio holder briefings at Panel meetings. It was generally felt that they had been informative and interesting, but had taken up too much of the work programme and led to items being shoehorned into packed agendas. It was felt that they had led to unfocussed discussions, and it was suggested that they should be more focussed on key decisions in the future. It was also suggested that they focus more on specific topics and go into more depth on narrower topics.

Councillor Andrew Ellis, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning, joined the meeting and recommended that, if future briefings were to be more-focussed deep dives into specific topics, then officers should accompany portfolio holders to help give greater details and operational information where necessary. It was also suggested that it would help for the Panel to have better communications with Cabinet in case Panel items arose which would benefit from Cabinet members attending to give information or answer questions.

The Scrutiny Panel and officers thanked Councillor Tina Bourne for her work during her time as an elected member, ahead of her retirement at the forthcoming elections.

# SCRUTINY PANEL

## 25 May 2022

*Present: -*

Councillor Laws, Councillor Lilley, Councillor Lissimore, Councillor McCarthy, Councillor Scordis, Councillor Smith, Councillor Willetts

*Substitutions: -*

*Also present: -*

### **346. Appointment of Chairman**

*RESOLVED* that the Councillor Willetts be appointed Chairman for the ensuing municipal year.

### **347. Appointment of Deputy Chairman**

*RESOLVED* that Councillor Lissimore be appointed as Deputy Chairman for the ensuing municipal year.





June 2022

Report of Assistant Director for Place and Client Author Matt Sterling

Title Town Deal Reporting

Wards affected Not applicable

## 1. Executive summary

- 1.1 This report recommends a timetable for future scrutiny of Town Deal projects by the Panel.
- 1.2 The ongoing governance and monitoring of performance for the Town Deal is managed by the independent We Are Colchester Board
- 1.3 The Town Deal is one of several funds being pursued to deliver improved outcomes and tackle inequalities. Many of these funds are within the Government's Levelling Up initiative.

## 2. Action Required

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to consider and approve the proposed scrutiny schedule.

## 3. Reason for Scrutiny

- 3.1. At its February meeting, Scrutiny Panel considered the entire Town Deal programme in detail at the end of the work to prepare business cases for each project, and ahead of Cabinet approving the submission of summaries of these business cases to Government.
- 3.2 As a result of that scrutiny, Panel resolved that a timetable be brought to Scrutiny Panel as soon as possible, and at the Panel's meeting on 7 June 2022 at the latest, to set out a recommended timetable for future scrutiny of Town Deal projects.

## 4. Background Information

- 4.1 In response to the Government's Town Deal Programme, Colchester was one of 101 English towns invited to submit a Town Investment Plan (TIP) and bid for up to £25m. In response, Colchester Borough Council (CBC) with Essex County Council and others established a 'We are Colchester' (Town Deal) programme and board. The TIP for Colchester was submitted to Government on 29 October 2020, and an £18.2m award was made to Colchester in March 2021. The TIP covers just the wider urban area of Colchester.

- 4.2 The Town Deal Programme and thus our TIP was required to reflect six specific intervention themes prescribed by the then Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, these being: 1) Local transport, 2) Digital connectivity, 3) Urban regeneration, planning and land use, 4) Arts, culture, and heritage, 5) Skills infrastructure, 6) Enterprise infrastructure.
- 4.3 'We are Colchester' (Town Deal) was established and formally launched in January 2020, comprising of a board chaired by an independent person and including key organisations and interests. The programme developed a vision which was designed to provide a platform for strategic intervention at a scale which will achieve transformation, whilst complimenting local economic and place-making activity which the partners deliver.
- 4.4 Decisions about the projects included in our Town Deal were made by the independent We Are Colchester Board. Colchester Borough Council acts as accountable body for the monies. The accountable body role includes a:
- Commitment to manage the secretariat function to the Town Deal board, including member and senior officer leadership and involvement in the board.
  - Commitment to managing external relationships including with the members of the partnership, local MPs, and other key stakeholders.
  - Commitment to help to develop the role of the Town Deal board into the next phase and provide wider leadership including for example developing our strategic relationships with BID, University, Health and Business – to drive investment in Colchester in a strong, coherent and visible 'whole place' manner.
  - Commitment of CBC officer time and capacity to progress to the next stage (business case development), noting there will be no further provision of capacity funding from government.
  - Committing to CBC holding responsibility for financial management, audit and delivery assurance of the £19.2m capital programme; in line with and using existing CBC models of governance for capital projects and programmes.
- 4.5 Following the announcement of Colchester's Town Deal award in March 2021, the Town Deal Board agreed plans to manage the lower £19.2m award (from the £25m original grant submission).
- 4.8 Colchester was required to, and completed the following steps:
- Instigate a specific Town Deal board (makeup prescribed by Government): set up in January 2020
  - Prepare and submit a full Town Investment Plan: submitted October 2020
  - Following submission, and confirmation of our conditional award and Heads of Terms in March 2021, the Council has been required to:
    - Confirm final list of projects to be taken forward to business case development - submit project confirmation documents to Government: June 2021
    - Submit updated financial profiles for each project: September 2021
  - Prepare Business Cases for the key workstreams or where required projects
  - Submitted summary documents (relating to each of the business cases) to Government by 24th March 2022.

- 4.9 During 2021, officers and partners developed detailed Business Cases for each project. This work included convening project teams, engagement with stakeholders, detailed planning, architectural design work and cost estimation.
- 4.10 Each Business Case covers five themes which cover the strategic scope, alignment and case for the project, the economic benefits, the financial case, commercial opportunities and viability, and the approach to management.
- 4.11 These Businesses Cases were reviewed by the Council's Section 151 Officer who independently assessed the sustainability, viability and value for money of each business case to ensure they are sound.
- 4.12 The development of these Business Cases resulted in all projects being assured sound and viable to progress.
- 4.13 The necessary documents were submitted to Government in March.
- 4.14 Since then, Service Level Agreements have been drafted for all projects led by external partners to manage the release of monies and assure agreed outcomes.
- 4.15 Consideration has been given to how We Are Colchester will manage performance and an approach agreed focussing on the achievement of the delivery plans within time and budget, the mitigation of risks, and the achievement of outcomes and connections between projects.
- 4.15 The final stage in the process ahead of the delivery of projects commencing is the decision by Government to confirm funding. Decisions are expected in the summer of 2022; with projects moving straight into delivery phase thereafter if successfully approved.
- 4.16 Over time other related streams of work are likely to emerge such as those funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund or other Levelling Up funds. Scrutiny Panel may wish to scrutinise performance delivering these in the round.

## **5. Proposed Scrutiny schedule**

- 5.1 It is proposed that Scrutiny Panel receives an interim performance report 6-months after the first award of funding, and then an annual report on the progress of all Town Deal projects each year of the programme. These reports would cover how projects are achieving their projected milestones, interconnections and outcomes, and give an opportunity for scrutiny. It is recommended that this report is presented by project Sponsors. We anticipate the first award of project delivery funding to be in July 2022 and so the first performance report would be in January 2023, with annual reports being in July thereafter.

## **6. Standard References**

- 6.1 There are no particular references to publicity or consultation considerations, or financial, equality, diversity, human rights, community safety, health and safety, environmental and sustainability or risk management implications.

## **7. Strategic Plan References**

- 7.1 The Town Deal is intended to boost the local economy, support the creation of jobs, improve areas of public realm, facilitate increased cycling and walking, improve housing and health outcomes as well as leveraging private sector investment.
- 7.2 It will contribute to the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2020-2023 priorities and direction for the Borough as set out under the strategic themes of:
- Tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability
  - Creating safe, healthy and active communities
  - Delivering homes for people who need them
  - Growing a fair economy so everyone benefits
  - Celebrating our heritage and culture

**Appendices:** None.

7 June 2022

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Assistant Director – Corporate and Improvement Services</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Owen Howell</b> ☎ 282518
<b>Title</b>	<b>Work Programme 2022-23</b>		
<b>Wards affected</b>	Not applicable		

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the current Work Programme 2022-2023 for the Scrutiny Panel. This provides details of the reports that are scheduled for each meeting during the municipal year.

## 2. Action Required

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to consider and approve the contents of the Work Programme for 2021-2022, or request amendments, additions and/or deletions.
- 2.2 The Scrutiny Panel is asked to approve the additions of items to the agenda for the meeting scheduled for 5 July 2022. These are for the Panel to conduct pre-decision scrutiny of Cabinet reports on the Housing Strategy and Economic Strategy, due to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 6 July 2022.
- 2.3 Following comments by the 2021-22 Scrutiny Panel membership, the Scrutiny Panel is asked to approve the cancellation of the Crime and Disorder Committee meeting scheduled for 14 February 2023, and its replacement by an additional Scrutiny Panel on that date, as shown in Appendix A.
- 2.4 The Scrutiny Panel is asked to approve the return to holding one scheduled meeting of the Crime and Disorder Committee each year [rather than two], on the understanding that additional meetings of that Committee can be scheduled should the Panel decide that this is necessary.

## 3. Background Information

- 3.1 The Panel's work programme evolves as the Municipal Year progresses and items of business are commenced and concluded. At each meeting the opportunity is taken for the work programme to be reviewed and, if necessary, amended according to current circumstances. The draft work programme for 2022-23 is appended to this report. This contains the items which are reviewed each year by the Panel.
- 3.2 It should be noted that members of the Panel in 2021-22 commented on the weight of items on some of the agendas of the Scrutiny Panel. This has led to the recommendation that the 14 February 2023 meeting of the Crime and Disorder Committee be replaced with a Scrutiny Panel meeting. It has also led to the request that the Panel approve the return to the scheduling of one meeting of the Crime and Disorder Committee per year.

The Crime and Disorder Committee has a statutory duty to meet at least once per year, but additional meetings can be scheduled by the Scrutiny Panel (including when the Panel sits as the Crime and Disorder Committee) should the Panel feel this is necessary.

- 3.3 The Forward Plan of Key Decisions is included as part of the work programme for the Scrutiny Panel, and this is included in **Appendix A**.

#### **4. Standard References**

- 4.1 There are no particular references to publicity or consultation considerations, or financial, equality, diversity, human rights, community safety, health and safety, environmental and sustainability or risk management implications.

#### **5. Strategic Plan References**

- 4.1 Scrutiny and challenge is integral to the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2020-2023 priorities and direction for the Borough as set out under the strategic themes of:
- [Tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability](#)
  - [Creating safe, healthy and active communities](#)
  - [Delivering homes for people who need them](#)
  - [Growing a fair economy so everyone benefits](#)
  - [Celebrating our heritage and culture](#)
- 4.2 The Council recognises that effective local government relies on establishing and maintaining the public's confidence, and that setting high standards of self-governance provides a clear and demonstrable lead. Effective governance underpins the implementation and application of all aspects of the Council's work.

#### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Scrutiny Panel Work Programme, 2022-23

Appendix B – Forward Plan of Key Decisions: 1 June – 30 September 2022

**Work Programme for 2022/23**

<b>Scrutiny Panel meeting – 7 June 2022</b>
<b>Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 1 June 2022</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Town Deal Reporting</li> <li>2. Work Programme 2022-23</li> </ol>
<b>Scrutiny Panel meeting – 5 July 2022</b>
<b>Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 30 June 2022</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Year End 2021/22 Performance Report and Strategic Plan Action Plan</li> <li>2. Economic Strategy</li> <li>3. Housing Strategy</li> <li>4. Annual Scrutiny Report</li> <li>5. Work Programme 2022-23</li> </ol>
<b>Scrutiny Panel meeting - 16 August 2022</b>
<b>Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 11 August 2022</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Portfolio Holder Briefing</li> <li>2. Work Programme 2022-23</li> </ol>
<b>Scrutiny Panel (Crime and Disorder Committee) - 13 September 2022</b>
<b>Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 8 September 2022</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Safer Colchester Partnership (Crime and Disorder Committee)</li> </ol>
<b>Scrutiny Panel – 11 October 2022</b>
<b>Scrutiny Panel Chairman's Briefing – 6 October 2022</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Portfolio Holder Briefing</li> <li>2. Review of Colchester Borough Homes: 2021-22 Performance, and discussion of Key Performance Indicator Targets for 2023-24</li> <li>3. Local Council Tax Support – Year 2023/24</li> <li>4. Budget Strategy for 2023-24</li> <li>5. Work Programme 2022-23</li> </ol>
<b>Scrutiny Panel meeting - 8 November 2022</b>
<b>Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 3 November 2022</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Portfolio Holder Briefing/s</li> <li>2. Work Programme 2022-23</li> </ol>

<b>Scrutiny Panel meeting - 13 December 2022</b>
<b>Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 8 December 2022</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Portfolio Holder Briefing</li> <li>2. Half Year 2022-23 Performance Report &amp; Strategic Plan Action Plan progress</li> <li>3. Work Programme 2022-23</li> </ol>
<b>Scrutiny Panel meeting - 24 January 2023</b>
<b>Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 19 January 2023</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Portfolio Holder Briefing</li> <li>2. 2023-24 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme, Medium Term Financial Forecast and Treasury Management Investment Strategy</li> <li>3. Housing Revenue Accounts Estimate and Housing Investment Programme</li> <li>4. Town Deal projects progress report</li> <li>5. Work Programme 2022-23</li> </ol>
<b>Scrutiny Panel - 14 February 2023</b>
<b>[Currently scheduled as a Crime and Disorder Committee Meeting]</b>
<b>Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 9 February 2023</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Portfolio Holder Briefing</li> <li>2. Reports from Arts Organisations (Mercury, The Arts Centre, FirstSite)</li> <li>3. Corporate Key Performance Indicator Targets for 2022-23</li> <li>4. Work Programme 2022-23</li> </ol>
<b>Scrutiny Panel meeting– 14 March 2023</b>
<b>Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 9 March 2023</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Portfolio Holder Briefing/s</li> <li>2. Scrutiny Panel Annual Report</li> </ol>



# COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL

## FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS 1 June 2022 – 30 September 2022

During the period from 1 June 2022 – 30 September 2022\* Colchester Borough Council intends to take 'Key Decisions' on the issues set out in the following pages. Key Decisions relate to those executive decisions which are likely to either:

- result in the Council spending or saving money in excess of £500,000; or
- have a significant impact on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards within the Borough of Colchester.

This Forward Plan should be seen as an outline of the proposed decisions and it will be updated on a monthly basis. Any questions on specific issues included on the Plan should be addressed to the contact name specified in the Plan. General queries about the Plan itself should be made to Democratic Services (01206) 507832 or email [democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk)

The Council invites members of the public to attend any of the meetings at which these decisions will be discussed and the documents listed on the Plan and any other documents relevant to each decision which may be submitted to the decision taker can be viewed free of charge although there will be a postage and photocopying charge for any copies made. *All decisions will be available for inspection on the Council's website, [www.colchester.gov.uk](http://www.colchester.gov.uk)*

If you wish to request details of documents regarding the 'Key Decisions' outlined in this Plan please contact the individual officer identified.

If you wish to make comments or representations regarding the 'Key Decisions' outlined in this Plan please submit them, in writing, to the Contact Officer highlighted two working days before the date of the decision (as indicated in the brackets in the date of decision column). This will enable your views to be considered by the decision taker. Details of the decision makers are correct at the time of publication.

Contact details for the Council's various service departments are incorporated at the end of this plan.

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If you need help with reading or understanding this document please telephone (01206) 282222 or textphone users dial 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.

\*The Forward Plan also shows decisions which fall before the period covered by the Plan but which have not been taken at the time of the publication of the Plan.

KEY DECISION REQUIRED	DOES DECISION INCLUDE EXEMPT INFORMATION (or information defined by the Government as Confidential)	DATE OF DECISION or PERIOD DECISION TO BE TAKEN	DECISION MAKER (title and name, including Cabinet, portfolio holders and officers) – details of decision makers correct at time of publication	DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED OR TO BE SUBMITTED TO DECISION TAKER TO CONSIDER (and from where they are available)	CONTACT DETAILS FROM WHICH DOCUMENTS CAN BE OBTAINED (name of the authors of the reports)
Approval to complete the purchase of land/property at 'The Centre' Greenstead from Notting Hill Genesis, using funding received via the Estates Regeneration Fund	No	May 2022	Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Sue Lissimore  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Daniel Barton Greenstead and Youth (Town Deal) Projects Manager 01206 282912: Daniel.Barton@colchester.gov.uk
Award of Contract for Replacement Telephony System	No	May 2022	Portfolio Holder for Resources, Cllr Lissimore, and the Assistant Director for Corporate and Improvement Services, under delegated authority from Cabinet.  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Kieran Johnston Strategic ICT Manager 07983 164744 <a href="mailto:Kieran.johnston@colchester.gov.uk">Kieran.johnston@colchester.gov.uk</a>

KEY DECISION REQUIRED	DOES DECISION INCLUDE EXEMPT INFORMATION (or information defined by the Government as Confidential)	DATE OF DECISION or PERIOD DECISION TO BE TAKEN	DECISION MAKER (title and name, including Cabinet, portfolio holders and officers) – details of decision makers correct at time of publication	DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED OR TO BE SUBMITTED TO DECISION TAKER TO CONSIDER (and from where they are available)	CONTACT DETAILS FROM WHICH DOCUMENTS CAN BE OBTAINED (name of the authors of the reports)
<b>Award of contract for Renewal of Microsoft Licensing agreement</b>	No	May 2022	Portfolio Holder for Resources, Cllr Lissimore, and the Assistant Director for Corporate and Improvement Services, under delegated authority from Cabinet.  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Kieran Johnston Strategic ICT Manager 07983 164744 <a href="mailto:Kieran.johnston@colchester.gov.uk">Kieran.johnston@colchester.gov.uk</a>
<b>Award of Contract for Kitchen Refurbishments for Housing Stock</b>	Yes	May 2022	Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Andrew Ellis  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Geoff Beales Client Services Manager 01206 506514 <a href="mailto:geoff.beales@colchester.gov.uk">geoff.beales@colchester.gov.uk</a>

KEY DECISION REQUIRED	DOES DECISION INCLUDE EXEMPT INFORMATION (or information defined by the Government as Confidential)	DATE OF DECISION or PERIOD DECISION TO BE TAKEN	DECISION MAKER (title and name, including Cabinet, portfolio holders and officers) – details of decision makers correct at time of publication	DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED OR TO BE SUBMITTED TO DECISION TAKER TO CONSIDER (and from where they are available)	CONTACT DETAILS FROM WHICH DOCUMENTS CAN BE OBTAINED (name of the authors of the reports)
Approval of Award of Contract for Replacement Windows and Doors	Yes	May 2022	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning, Councillor Ellis  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Ernie Gray Client Asset Manager 01206 282506 ernie.gray@colchester.gov.uk
Award of Contract for Bathrooms and Wet Rooms in Council owned residential properties	Yes	May 2022	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning, Councillor Ellis  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Geoff Beales Client Services Manager 01206 506514 <a href="mailto:geoff.beales@colchester.gov.uk">geoff.beales@colchester.gov.uk</a>

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Levelling Up Fund	No	8 June 2022	Cabinet (Cllrs Dundas, Crow, Ellis, Laws, Lissimore and B. Oxford)  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report	Matthew Brown Economic Development Projects Manager 01206 507348 <a href="mailto:matthew.brown@colchester.gov.uk">matthew.brown@colchester.gov.uk</a>
Approval of land acquisition for development to form part of the Councils housebuilding programme	No	8 June 2022	Cabinet (Cllrs Dundas, Crow, Ellis, Laws, Lissimore and B. Oxford)  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report	Ruth Newcombe Client for Affordable Housebuilding 01206 505845 <a href="mailto:Ruth.newcombe@colchester.gov.uk">Ruth.newcombe@colchester.gov.uk</a>

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<b>Sale of 125 Gosbecks Road, Colchester</b>	Yes	8 June 2022	Cabinet (Cllrs Dundas, Crow, Ellis, Laws, Lissimore and B. Oxford)  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report	Andrew Tyrrell Client and Business Manager 01206 282390 <a href="mailto:Andrew.tyrrell@colchester.gov.uk">Andrew.tyrrell@colchester.gov.uk</a>
<b>Disposal of Plot 600, The Crescent, Colchester</b>	Yes	8 June 2022	Cabinet (Cllrs Dundas, Crow, Ellis, Laws, Lissimore and B. Oxford)  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report	Andrew Tyrrell Client and Business Manager 01206 282390 <a href="mailto:Andrew.tyrrell@colchester.gov.uk">Andrew.tyrrell@colchester.gov.uk</a>

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<b>Award of Contract for External Painting to Council owned residential stock</b>	Yes	June 2022	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning, Councillor Ellis  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Geoff Beales Client Services Manager 01206 506514 <a href="mailto:geoff.beales@colchester.gov.uk">geoff.beales@colchester.gov.uk</a>
<b>Award of Contract for Acquisitions Refurbishment Programme</b>	Yes	June 2022	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning, Councillor Ellis  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder report	Geoff Beales Client Services Manager 01206 506514 <a href="mailto:geoff.beales@colchester.gov.uk">geoff.beales@colchester.gov.uk</a>

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<b>Housing Strategy 2022 - 27</b>  To adopt a new Housing Strategy for Colchester for 2022 to 2027 To recommend to full Council that the strategy be adopted as part of the Council's Policy Framework.	No	6 July 2022	Cabinet (Cllrs Dundas, Crow, Ellis, Laws, Lissimore and B. Oxford)  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Report Housing Strategy and Delivery Plan Evidence base	Karen Paton Housing Strategy Officer 01206 282275 <a href="mailto:karen.paton@colchester.gov.uk">karen.paton@colchester.gov.uk</a>
<b>Colchester's Economic Strategy 2022-2025</b>	No	6 July 2022	Cabinet (Cllrs Dundas, Crow, Ellis, Laws, Lissimore and B. Oxford)  Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Cabinet report Draft Strategy document	Karen Turnbull Economic Development Officer 01206 282915 <a href="mailto:karen.turnbull@colchester.gov.uk">karen.turnbull@colchester.gov.uk</a>



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