

# Cabinet Meeting

**Grand Jury Room, Town Hall, High Street,  
Colchester, CO1 1PJ  
Wednesday, 06 July 2022 at 18:00**

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



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**COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**Cabinet**  
**Wednesday, 06 July 2022 at 18:00**

Leader and Chair	Councillor King (Liberal Democrats) Councillor Cory (Liberal Democrats) Councillor Cox (Labour) Councillor Fox (Labour) Councillor Goss (Liberal Democrats) Councillor Luxford Vaughan (Liberal Democrats) Councillor Nissen (Green) Councillor J. Young (Labour)
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**AGENDA**  
**THE LIST OF ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING**  
**(Part A - open to the public)**

**Live Broadcast**

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

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

**1 Welcome and Announcements**

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

**2 Urgent Items**

The 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.

**3 Declarations of Interest**

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

**4 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Councillors will be invited to confirm that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2022 and 8 June 2022 are a correct record.

**Cabinet minutes 250522**

9 - 10

**Cabinet minutes 080622**

11 - 24

**5 Have Your Say!**

Members of the public may make representations to the meeting. This can be made either in person at the meeting or by joining the meeting remotely and addressing the Council via Zoom. Each representation may be no longer than three minutes. Members of the public wishing to address the Council remotely may register their wish to address the meeting by e-mailing [democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk) by 12.00 noon on the working day before the meeting date. In addition a written copy of the representation will need to be supplied for use in the event of unforeseen technical difficulties preventing participation at the meeting itself.

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

**6 Decisions Reviewed by the Scrutiny Panel**

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

**7 Strategy**

**7(i) Addressing the Cost of Living Crisis**

25 - 44

Cabinet will consider a report setting out a three point plan to address the cost of living crisis.

**7(ii) Shared Prosperity Fund**

45 - 50

Cabinet will consider a report providing an outline Investment Plan for Colchester's allocation under the Government's Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) programme.

**7(iii) Policy Panel Work Programme**

51 - 54

Cabinet will consider a request from the Policy Panel to add a number of items to its work programme for the 2022-23 municipal year.

## **8 Housing and Communities**

### **8(i) Colchester's new Housing Strategy 2022-27** 55 - 116

Cabinet will consider a report inviting it to adopt a new Housing Strategy covering the period 2022-27. The new Housing Strategy sets out the Council's ambitions for housing in Colchester over the next 5 years and describes how the Council intends to use its resources and work with partners in both the public and private sectors to help it achieve its priorities. The new Housing Strategy highlights how the Council's work in housing contributes to wider agendas such as Levelling Up.

## **9 Resources**

### **9(i) Budget Strategy 2023-24** 117 - 124

Cabinet will consider a report on the Budget Strategy 2023-24.

### **9(ii) Sale of 125 Gosbecks Road, Colchester** 125 - 130

Cabinet will consider a report which seeks approval for the sale of 125 Gosbecks Road. This property was previously occupied by Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) under a lease from the Council but has now been vacated and is deemed surplus to their requirements for space with post-Covid working.

## **10 Local Economy and Transformation**

### **10(i) Member Development Group Annual Report 2021-22** 131 - 150

Cabinet will consider the Annual Report from the Member Development Group for the 2021-22 municipal year.

## **11 General**

### **11(i) Progress of Responses to the Public** 151 - 152

Cabinet will be invited to note a report containing details of members of the public who have addressed meetings of Council and Cabinet under the Have Your Say provisions.

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

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

## **Part B**

### **(not open to the public including the press)**

#### **13 Resources \_ Part B**

##### **13(i) Sale of 125 Gosbecks Road, Colchester - Part B**

Cabinet will consider a report which contains not for publication information in support of the report by the Assistant Director, Place and Client Services, in part A of the agenda,





# Cabinet

Wednesday, 25 May 2022

**Attendees:** Councillor Mark Cory, Councillor Pam Cox, Councillor Adam Fox, Councillor Martin Goss, Councillor David King , Councillor Andrea Luxford Vaughan, Councillor Steph Nissen, Councillor Julie Young

## 656 Appointment of Deputy Chair

*RESOLVED* that Councillor Adam Fox be appointed as Deputy Chair for the 2022-23 municipal year.



<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CABINET</b> <b>8 June 2022</b></p>
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*Present:* - Councillor King (Chair)  
Councillors Cory, Cox, Fox, Goss, Luxford Vaughan,

Also in attendance: Cllrs Harris, Laws, McLean,  
Pearson, Scordis, Sunnucks

**657. Minutes**

*RESOLVED* that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

**658. Have Your Say!**

John Akker MBE addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(1) on behalf of West Mersea Town Council. He drew Cabinet's attention to the publication of the British Energy Statement in April and the aim of the government to develop nuclear power rapidly, particularly Small Modular Reactors. This could lead to further development of new nuclear at Bradwell. The Council had issued a full statement in response to the Part 1 consultation and the then Leader had addressed a national meeting in Colchester opposing development. The Council should engage with the planning process and express clearly its objection in any future consultation. He would be writing in similar terms to the Chief Executive.

Councillor King, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, indicated that the Council would respond to any future consultation, although there was no indication of when this might take place. The expectation was that the Council position would not change and that the Council would continue to object to new nuclear at Bradwell in view of the environmental impacts. Its preferred approach was to encourage the use of renewable energy. It would work with BANNG and other groups to make the strongest possible case.

Sir Bob Russell addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(1) to seek clarification on the statement by the Leader on behalf of the new administration that he was "seeking to restore trust in politics". He also noted that Councillor Fox had highlighted the importance of the environment. However, on the only opportunity he had to vote on Middlewick he had voted for its inclusion in the Local Plan, as had all but one Liberal Democrat and Labour Councillor.

Councillor King, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, explained that he was not seeking to lay blame. Politics had been eroded by a lack of personal integrity. Trust could only be restored by how politicians acted, through what they said and through being approachable, transparent and honest.

Councillor Fox, Portfolio Holder for Local Economy and Transformation, also responded. The planning system was set up to benefit landowners and developers. The Council had a responsibility to put together a Local Plan that met government housing targets and also respond to offers of land from developers. Part of maintaining trust was being honest and not promising the unachievable. Together with ward councillors, he had campaigned to encourage the Ministry of Defence to withdraw Middlewick from sale. The final decision in respect of the Local Plan would be for all Councillors to consider. His preference would be for the local environment to be protected through the establishment of a country park and he would continue to lobby the Ministry of Defence.

Councillor Harris attended and with the consent of the Chair addressed the Cabinet and endorsed Councillor Fox's comments on Middlewick. He praised the redevelopment of Elfreda House and hoped the existing residents would be encouraged to return. He also highlighted the work done by the Zones teams with Monkwick Residents Association on the jubilee celebrations. The Council should consider putting further resources into the Zones Teams in view of the valuable work they did.

Councillor Goss, Portfolio for Neighbourhood Services and Waste, and Councillor Fox, Portfolio Holder for Local Economy and Transformation, thanked Councillor Harris for his comments which would be passed on to the teams concerned. Councillor Goss indicated that whilst further resource would be welcomed, in view of the budget position he was looking for process improvements to maximise the team's efficiency. Councillor Fox highlighted the quality of the Elfreda House scheme and that it was also providing work for a number of local companies.

Councillor Scordis attended and with the consent of the Chair addressed the Cabinet and explained that the vote referred to by Sir Bob Russell was an amendment to the budget on a proposal for a Country Park. He had proposed a scheme to the previous administration to deal with graffiti by allowing local artists to paint over it. He hoped the new administration would now implement such a scheme.

Councillor Goss, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services and Waste, explained that the new Graffiti Policy meant that the Council would not tackle graffiti on third party property. He welcomed Councillor Scordis' suggestion and had raised with officers a scheme in York in which the BID funded artists to cover street furniture with designs.

Councillor McLean attended and with the consent of the Chair addressed the Cabinet to raise concerns about flytipping in New Town, which was a drain on Council resources. In other wards with a high rate of flytipping, a free bulky item pick up service was offered and he requested that the provision of a similar service be rolled out in New Town. This would reduce the pressure on the Neighbourhoods Team. Councillor Cox, Portfolio Holder for Heritage and Culture, explained that the issue was the disposal of bulky items, as a consequence of the high turnover of rented properties in the area.

Councillor Goss, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services and Waste, explained that he would consider the request. There were currently no plans to roll out the service to other wards. This might increase rather than reduce the pressure on the Neighbourhoods Team and could actually encourage the behaviour it was seeking to address.

## **659. Cabinet Vision and Priorities 2022-23**

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

Nick Chilvers addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(1). He welcomed the extension of the Cabinet to eight members which he felt enabled Cabinet members to manage their portfolios effectively. Spending should be targeted at the really needy and concentrated on essential services. Culture and sport had been heavily invested in already and other services should be prioritised. Major projects should work for the majority, not narrow interest groups. In terms of levelling up south east Colchester, what concrete action would be taken? The Deputy Leader should organise a tour for Cabinet and senior officers around south east Colchester to demonstrate its condition and some of the issues residents faced. It was not close to strategic routes and public transport services were being reduced. Development and funding had been concentrated in north Colchester and Greenstead. In terms of Middlewick, the Inspector had stressed the importance of engaging with the community and a creative approach needed to be taken. South east Colchester also did not have the benefit of a community council to raise issues on its behalf so it needed dedicated and approachable officers to understand the issues and push for solutions.

Councillor King, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder thanked Mr Chilvers for his comments. The need to ensure that help was directed to those most in need was understood and underpinned the proposals. He accepted the need for consultation to be done properly. Councillor Fox, Portfolio Holder for Local Economy Transformation, indicated that he recognised much of Mr Chilvers's comments and would be happy to lead a delegation to south east Colchester. The proposed priorities would help address a number of the issues raised.

Councillor Pearson attended and with the consent of the Chair addressed the Cabinet. He welcomed the vision and priorities. In respect of the priority relating to tackling the climate emergency, would the administration now seek to roll out the provision of wheeled bins to the rest of Colchester, where appropriate? Greater emphasis should be given to the provision of social housing, rather than affordable housing, in the priority at paragraph 4.6 of the Deputy Chief Executive's report.

Councillor Luxford Vaughan, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure, explained that new ideas would be coming forward that would give greater permanency and security to those in affordable housing. This was a completely new scheme and further details would follow.

Councillor Goss, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services and Waste, indicated that whilst he was personally supportive of wheeled bins there were no plans for a further roll out. The Government was looking at kerbside recycling and was looking to introduce

greater consistency to services across the country.

Councillor Sunnucks attended and with the consent of the Chair addressed the Cabinet. He supported the aspiration of the vision and priorities but stressed the need to address practical issues. The fundamental problem for Colchester was that housing development had run ahead of infrastructure provision. It should be a top priority to develop a coherent plan to tackle this infrastructure deficit and enable the Council to get the right infrastructure and funding from developers. This would help ensure it could meet its aspirations. He was willing to help in anyway he could. However, the Council needed to take greater responsibility for the issue and had the power to do so.

Councillor Cory, Portfolio Holder for Resources, welcomed the comments. However, the Council had to meet housing development targets imposed by the government. The system favoured developers and the largest developers were making large profits and should be doing more to provide infrastructure to support development. The levers available to the Council were small and the government need to provide greater support.

Councillor Luxford Vaughan, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure, welcomed Councillor Sunnucks comments and indicated she would continue the work of the previous portfolio holder in this area. Work would continue to find infrastructure gaps and getting developers to fill them. It was also important to reform the planning system so that such large housing numbers were not imposed in future.

Councillor King introduced the report and explained that it set out high level priorities. It contained as much details as it could given the short timescale since the administration had been formed. The proposals would be fleshed out in the future. The administration was looking for continuity and would build on the work of the previous administration and was conscious of its limits but would take responsibility for what it could achieve.

The vision and priorities addressed the quality of life of the borough's residents. The intention, given the cost of living crisis which meant that the needs of residents were manifest and growing, was to address systematically those challenges faced by residents ahead of the winter. A Cost of Living Action Plan would be developed with new and existing partners to help ease the pressure on residents. The administration would contribute financially, would ensure the relevant teams were reinforced so they were best placed to help, ensure government funding was combined with local funding to deliver help where needed and would provide additional financial help and advice and where appropriate signpost residents to partners. There would be a particular need to help those who had not been in this position before and who would not know how to navigate their way through the system. The Council would help the foodbanks if they were struggling to respond to need. Further announcements would follow in the coming week.

Councillor Cory expressed his support for the vision and priorities. The coalition would work together to address both the cost of living crisis and the environmental crisis. He endorsed the comments made about social housing: it was vital that affordable housing was genuinely affordable. As well as providing practical help to deal with the impact of the cost of living crisis it was also important to tackle longer terms issues, and the partnerships that had been developed over the past few years would be key to this.

Councillor Fox, Portfolio Holder for Local Economy and Transformation, stressed the cost

of living crisis was very real and needed both short term interventions and longer terms support in order to address it.

*RESOLVED* that:-

(a) Cabinet agrees to work with Colchester Borough councillors, officers, residents, businesses and partners to help the Council tackle the biggest challenges facing Colchester, from sustainability and climate change to the cost-of-living crisis, homelessness, and inequalities.

(b) The priorities for the 2022/23 municipal year as set out in Section 4 of Deputy Chief Executive's report be approved.

### *REASONS*

To review and confirm the Cabinet's priorities at the beginning of the new Municipal Year will provide greater confidence, direction and clarity for the benefit of residents and businesses, for Council officers and for partner organisations across Colchester and North Essex.

The complexity of the issues facing the borough requires significant analysis, modelling, engagement, review and testing to ensure that the scope, impact and benefits of the Council's actions are fully understood and deliverable. An early signal of priorities supports the ability of the organisation and its partners to begin this work.

This Cabinet will look to build on the strengths within Colchester's communities, businesses, and partnerships to tackle the challenges and opportunities facing Colchester together.

### *ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

No alternative options were presented.

## **660. Levelling Up Fund**

The Assistant Director, Place and Client Services, submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Alan Skinner addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(1) in respect of lifelong learning. This could help citizens achieve fulfilling, productive and health lives and enable them to cope with life changing circumstances. In Colchester this had been provided through Grey Friars adult college, who had worked through Colchester Learning Shop partnership to make choices clear. The Borough Council had been a key partner. Both were town centre walk in facilities, Grey Friars had closed in 2007 and the Learning Shop partnership closed shortly afterwards. He had formed a charity "Learning Never Stops" to fill the gap but this had closed last year. However there still remained a need for a One Stop Shop providing information about what was available. The Borough Council could put together a Lifelong Learning Information Service together for a minimal outlay. It had both the connections and resources to do this. It would be a prefect use of levelling up funds.

Councillor King, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, thanked Mr Skinner for this thoughtful contribution, Essex County Council had responsibility for adult skills and the Wilson Marriage Centre continued to provide adult education. The Council was also using Town Deal funding to provide a Digital Skills Hub. However, he would ask officers to make contact and discuss his ideas.

Councillor Cory, Portfolio Holder for Resources, stressed the value he placed on education and the importance of investing in people so everyone had the opportunity to improve their skills.

Councillor Laws attended and with the consent of the Chair addressed Cabinet to express his support for an exciting project. It provided an opportunity to build on the work of the We Are Colchester Board and to seek funding for some of the projects they had not been able to fund. In particular, the opportunity to fund a wet dock should be looked into: this was a real asset for Ipswich. It was noted that the Roman Circus site fell outside the red line for the project. This site should also be included as it was of such significance. In addition, the NCP car park and Bingo Hall site, the lack of a proper bus station and the improvement of disjointed cycleways were all schemes that could be addressed through the fund.

Councillor Cox, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Heritage, expressed support for the inclusion of the Roman Circus site.

Councillor King, Leader of the Council and Portfolio for Strategy, introduced the report and stressed that this was a significant opportunity to bid for funding. It was important that the Council work cross party and be prepared to work at pace to secure a successful outcome.

*RESOLVED* that:-

- (a) The thematic and geographic focus of Colchester's Levelling Up Fund round 2 bid currently in preparation, with reference to the published Levelling Up Fund eligibility criteria, be endorsed.
- (b) Further work on the bid be undertaken including engaging the local MP and key stakeholders to confirm their support.
- (c) The final approval of the bid submission be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Strategy and the Portfolio Holder for Resources in liaison with the Head of Finance, and thereafter its submission to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on or before 6th July 2022 by officers.

## *REASONS*

Approval to proceed and submit a bid of up to £20m to LUF round 2 will build upon the strong foundations set by the 'We are Colchester' (Town Deal) programme, potentially attracting further substantial investment into a key part of our core town centre.



The cohesive set of proposed interventions outlined in the Assistant Director's report best meet the criteria set out at paragraph 1.6 of the Assistant Director's report and will further boost Colchester's opportunities to realise its economic development, place-making, inward investment, and regeneration ambitions, targeting the area of the town centre with the most extensive challenges, but also opportunities.

It should be noted that the criteria from DLUHC for this fund are very specific, and a number of the ambitions of the administration which do not fit within the intervention themes for this funding may do so for future funds. Furthermore, substantial, and eligible match funding of around £2.5m aligned to the St Botolph's highway scheme is already identified and included within this proposed bid.

### *ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

No alternative options have been presented to Cabinet. As with the Town Deal, LUF is recognised as a once in a generation opportunity for Colchester, and there are no other current or anticipated sources of funding and investment of comparable size and scope. Some of the interventions included in the proposed LUF round 2 bid see LUF as the funder of last resort as they are unlikely to attract suitable investment from other sources; and cannot be funded within the Council's resources.

### **661. Appointments to Council Groups and External Bodies**

The Assistant Director, Corporate and Improvement Services, submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Cabinet noted that the Conservative Group appointment to the Board of Colchester Borough Homes and the Green appointment to the Member Development Group were outstanding and it was agreed that authority be delegated to the relevant group Leader to make these appointments.

*RESOLVED* that:-

- (a) The representatives to the various external organisations and Council groups listed in Appendix A to the Assistant Director's report be appointed for the 2022-23 municipal year, with such appointments to cease if representatives cease to be members of the Council during the municipal year and authority be delegated to the relevant Group Leader to make the outstanding appointments in Appendix A.
- (b) The Leader of the Council be authorised to make a determination, where a nomination is deemed to be in dispute, if a vacancy occurs or if an appointment needs to be made to a new organisation during the municipal year.
- (c) Councillor King be appointed as the Council's Armed Forces Champion.
- (d) The reports about the work undertaken by appointees to external organisations in 2021-22, as set out in Appendix B of the Assistant Director's report, be noted.

### *REASONS*

It is important for the Council to continue to make formal appointments to certain organisations and council groups such as those with statutory functions, our key strategic and community partners and groups with joint working arrangements

### *ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

No alternative options are proposed. It is proposed to authorise the Leader of the Council to make a determination where a nomination is deemed to be in dispute or if an appointment needs to be made if a vacancy occurs or an appointment needs to be made to a new organisation during the municipal year.

### **662. Land Acquisition for Development as Part of the Council's New Housebuilding Programme**

The Assistant Director, Place and Client Services, submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor Fox, Portfolio Holder for Local Economy and Transformation, introduced the report and explained that this provided a new opportunity to provide affordable housing in the town centre. It would support the economy and vibrancy of the town Centre. The proposal aligned with the current town centre masterplan and the Levelling Up Fund bid.

*RESOLVED* that:-

- (a) The Council pursue this particular town centre opportunity as set out in the Assistant Director's report
- (b) Authority be delegated to the Assistant Director of Place and Client Services, in conjunction with the appropriate Portfolio Holder to negotiate terms, approve the exchange of conditional contracts to acquire the town centre site, and any other related matters, and to complete the purchase when all conditions are satisfied.

### *REASONS*

There are almost 3,000 households on the Council's Housing Register seeking social housing and approximately 200 households in temporary accommodation. It is a priority of the Council, as shown by its New Housebuilding Programme, to try and find new ways to provide more homes in response to this need.

The Council is delivering affordable homes, but it is still continually seeking new and innovative ways to increase the supply of affordable housing further; and provide good quality, affordable and secure homes for Colchester's residents who are in housing need

Although there is a supply of affordable housing through Section 106 provision via Registered providers, alongside Council led projects such as HRA Garage Sites Phase 2, Military Road, Creffield Road, Garage Sites Phase 3 and Elfreda House, supply is not meeting the need. The Covid impacts have slowed affordable housing delivery in the market, and for the first year the Council delivered more affordable homes through its

delivery Programme than all other Registered Providers combined; which evidences the importance of the Council's role.

This project will increase the Council's housing stock in the town centre and diversifies the methods to bring forward additional affordable housing. This will also strengthen the Council's investment partner status with Homes England and will provide more opportunities to bid for Affordable Housing Grant within the 2021/26 affordable homes programme.

### *ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

The Council could do nothing, but this will mean the Council will miss opportunities to maximise the delivery of newbuild social rent housing in Colchester and it will mean that households on the housing register and in temporary accommodation will wait longer for a secure affordable home.

### **663. River Strategy**

Minute 42 of the Policy Panel meeting of 2 March 2022 was submitted to Cabinet.

Councillor Laws attended and with the consent of the Chair addressed the Cabinet to stress that the middle stretch of the River Colne provided a potential for improved leisure and tourism opportunities. These opportunities included the Old Lido, Cymbeline Meadows, the Belle Vue site and Middle Mill. More should be done to engage with users, such as the Canoe Club, who would be able to advise on potential sources of funding. It was disappointing that there were such few facilities available for users. It was a key asset for Colchester. However it was accepted that development of this potential needed to be consistent with public safety and environmental considerations.

*RESOLVED* that:-

- (a) Work be commenced to develop a new Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Colchester and that development of the strategy be incorporated within a Panel work programme for the 2022/23 municipal year. A key element of the strategy development to include consultation with stakeholders.
- (b) Options be explored working alongside key partners to identify and lever in external funding to accelerate wetland restoration projects as part of the Woodland and Biodiversity Programme of work.
- (c) The Council collaborates with the Land Use and Green Infrastructure Essex Climate Action Commission with a view to the Council being a partner to the proposed Essex Climate Focus Area and that future updates are taken to Environment and Sustainability Panel for consideration.
- (d) An options paper on fishing rights for the River Colne be developed with stakeholders and presented to the relevant Portfolio Holder for consideration.

## *REASONS*

Cabinet supported the recommendation of the Policy Panel.

## *ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

It was open to the Cabinet not to agree the recommendations from the Policy Panel or agree them subject to amendments.

### **664. Community Engagement and Climate Change Update**

Minute 64 of the Environment and Sustainability Panel meeting of 22 March 2022 was submitted to Cabinet.

Councillor King explained that the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability was not present at the meeting but he reported her view that a separate website dedicated to environmental issues was not necessary. There was already significant information available online about the climate emergency and environmental issues. It was accepted that the presentation of environmental issues on the Council's website could be made more accessible, and that there was a role for improved outreach and social media work. The Council's website was mainly used for transactional purposes, rather than for information gathering. It would be a better use of resource to seek to enhance the existing webpages than develop a separate website. This enhancement could include signposting and links to partner organisations and improved search functionality. It should also link into other promotional work by the Council on raising awareness on environmental issues and encourage residents to take part in environmental initiatives..

In discussion, members of Cabinet acknowledged that the website could be difficult to navigate and that there could be value in seeking the view of a sample of users and analysing information on visits. However, it was explained that the functionality was continually improved and usage monitored so that the most common transactions or information were prioritised and were most prominent on the site.

*RESOLVED* that:-

- (a) The Environment and Sustainability Panel be thanked for their recommendation;
- (b) The information on environmental issues and climate change on the website be enhanced and made more accessible

## *REASONS*

Cabinet considered that it was a better use of resources to seek to enhance and improve the accessibility of the existing website than to look at developing an entirely new and separate website dedicated to environmental issues.

## *ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

It was open to the Cabinet to agree the recommendations from the Environment and Sustainability Panel.

## **665. Corporate KPI Targets for 2022-23**

Minute 340 of the Scrutiny Panel meeting of 22 February 2022 was submitted to Cabinet.

Councillor Goss, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services and Waste, explained that he was content for Cabinet to accept the recommendation. The Covid 19 pandemic had led to an increase in household waste as many people were working at home. It was accepted that it would require the Council to push and promote behaviour change in order to significantly improve household recycling rates.

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

### **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

It was open to the Cabinet not to agree the recommendations from the Scrutiny Panel or agree them subject to amendments.

## **666. Sale of Plot 600, Severalls Business Park**

The Assistant Director, Place and Client Services submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

With the consent of the Chair a statement provided by Councillor G. Oxford was read to Cabinet. The development was wholly within the Highwoods ward. A significant portion of the capital receipt generated from the sale should be used towards St Marks Community Centre, in addition to £1.8 million already secured. As there had been a delay in the tendering process, the costs were likely to be higher than anticipated. An additional capital receipt would ensure the Community Centre went ahead without any reduction in quality of design or materials. Without the additional funding the project was at risk as Trustees may not sign the lease if the quality of the final scheme were reduced.

Councillor Cory, Portfolio Holder for Resources, explained that an increased offer had been made for the site, after the previous sale had not been proceeded with. This was a good for Colchester and would enable investment on other opportunities and projects. The site was undeveloped and it was hoped that some of the greenery could be maintained or provided elsewhere though biodiversity mitigation.

In response to Councillor Oxford's submission, Councillor King, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, stressed that the Council remained committed to the delivery of St Marks Community Centre.

*RESOLVED* that:-

(a) the disposal of Plot 600, The Crescent on a 250 year lease on the terms set out in Parts A and B of the Assistant Director's report be agreed.

(b) All of the offers received (as set out in Appendix A of the not for publication report in Part B of the agenda be noted) and the disposal to the 2<sup>nd</sup> party should the winning party fail to perform, and similarly to dispose to the 3<sup>rd</sup> party if the 2<sup>nd</sup> party does not perform, be agreed.

(c) Authority be delegated to the Assistant Director, Policy and Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources, to approve the final terms, conclude the legal documentation and complete the sale.

## *REASONS*

To conclude the disposal to the preferred bidder for the site with the objective of securing a capital receipt to fund regeneration projects and to maximise the effectiveness of its assets and contribute, in a planned and holistic manner, to the growth and prosperity of the wider borough in the interests of public benefit.

## *ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

The Council could keep hold of the land and retain it as a longer-term asset to develop it itself in the future. However, the capital receipt has already been earmarked to support regeneration projects.

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

### **667. Land Acquisition for Development as Part of the Council's Housebuilding Programme**

The Assistant Director, Place and Client Services, submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

*RESOLVED* that the contents of the Assistant Director's report be noted.

## *REASONS*

As set out in minute 662.

## *ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

As set out in minute 662.

**The Cabinet resolved under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and**

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

**668. Sale of Plot 600, Severalls Business Park**

The Assistant Director, Place and Client Services submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member .

*RESOLVED* that the contents of the Assistant Director's report be noted.

*REASONS*

As set out in minute 666.

*ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

As set out in minute 666.





6 July 2022

Report of	Assistant Director, Communities Assistant Director, Customer	Michelle Tarbun & Samantha Preston
Title	Addressing the Cost of Living Crisis	
Wards affected	All wards	

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The “Cost-of-Living” crisis continues put an increasing strain on residents and communities. The highest level of inflation seen in a generation, low wage growth and inequalities exacerbated by the Covid pandemic are being compounded by particularly high increases in everyday household expenses, food and energy. The cost-of-living crisis is disproportionately affecting those on low incomes with the likely effect of further entrenching and widening inequalities in our Borough.
- 1.2 “The cost-of-living crisis needs an immediate response, from every level of Government, with partners and at pace. This Cabinet will prioritise support for those faced with terrible choices, between food or warmth or other essential needs, working with communities and through our community partners to build community wealth. This will include continuing to work with partners, strengthening the capacity of the Council’s high performing welfare support team and leveraging resources to provide targeted help for those in extreme difficulty, acknowledging rising demand for help and support for the most vulnerable.” – Cabinet Vision and Priorities 8 June 2022.
- 1.3 The UK government has announced a package of support measures, however, there is a clear role for CBC to take in addressing the crisis in collaboration with our key partners in ONE Colchester, Tendring District Council, Essex County Council, Active Essex and the North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance through increasing the support available through programmes and projects tackling inequalities in our communities.
- 1.4 Our proposal to address the crisis consists of a three-point plan, as follows:

### 1.5 Crisis Support

- With rising demand and falling donations, we will intervene immediately to **support foodbanks in Colchester** and continue to work with partners to ensure demand is met and premises are secure.
- We will deliver a targeted and personalised **communications campaign**, with a high-profile **social media** strategy designed to reduce hardship and private sector rent arrears/eviction.

## 1.6 Increase help available

- Establish a **Crisis Coordinator** role to identify those in greatest need and navigate holistic support from across the system to provide early help to avoid extreme hardship
- Focus on **maximising income and benefits** for those in greatest need and often new to the benefits system, exercising discretion where possible
- Strengthen our influence with **system partners** to increase impact, through joint funding, the new Alliance Director role and locally through **neighbourhood teams**
- Review the **Local Council Tax Support Scheme** with a view to provide additional support for residents in 2023/24.

## 1.7 Reduce further hardship

- Maximise the benefits of the Local Delivery Plan in promoting **exercise, good health and wellbeing**
- Seek out innovative local solutions to help people find an **affordable home**
- Support residents suffering with **fuel poverty** to access energy efficiency and active travel options to reduce their energy costs and help tackle the climate emergency.
- Secure wider opportunities, from the Town Deal and Levelling Up funding, to achieve a step change in **tackling inequalities** including community wealth building and inclusive economic growth supporting training and employment opportunities

## 2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To approve the three-point plan outlined above and enable Officers to plan and deliver an integrated programme of work with partners.

## 3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 The plan outlined above makes use of existing partnerships, structures, workplans and programmes to support our residents through this crisis.

## 4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 To reject the plan or agree an alternative.

## **5. Background Information**

- 5.1 Tackling inequalities is not something new to Colchester Borough Council - it has long been a council priority and is embedded within our ONE Colchester strategic approach to working with communities ('Communities Can') which is based on the principles of Asset-based community development (ABCD).
- 5.2 In December 2020 Full Council passed a motion to tackle growing inequalities in Colchester.
- 5.3 In September 2021 Cabinet approved a proposal to accept funding from the Clinical Commissioning Group and the local hospital trust (ESNEFT) to tackle inequalities – the amount of funding has since increased and is being used to recruit new posts focussing on issues such as housing as well as in providing direct support to individuals and communities in vulnerable situations.
- 5.4 Further work including the Heart of Greenstead project, our work with Active Essex through the Local Delivery Pilot and bids to the UK Government's Levelling-Up fund further support our strategic priorities in this area.
- 5.5 Despite all of our efforts, the national and international situation are likely to exacerbate existing issues of equality and equity most notably through the cost-of-living crisis.
- 5.6 Nationally:
- Around 9 in 10 (87%) adults reported an increase in their cost of living over the previous month in March 2022 (16 to 27 March 2022), an increase of 25 percentage points compared with around 6 in 10 (62%) adults in November 2021 (3 to 14 November 2021).
  - Nearly a quarter (23%) of adults reported that it was very difficult or difficult to pay their usual household bills in the last month, compared with a year ago, in March 2022 (16 to 27 March 2022); an increase from 17% in November 2021 (3 to 14 November 2021).
  - Focusing on the latest period, among those who pay energy bills, around 4 in 10 (43%) reported that it was very or somewhat difficult to afford their energy bills in March 2022 (16 to 27 March 2022).
  - Of adults currently paying off a mortgage and/or loan, or rent, or shared ownership, 30% reported that it was very or somewhat difficult to afford housing costs, and 3% claimed to be behind on rent or mortgage payments, in March 2022 (16 to 27 March 2022).
  - Among all adults, 17% reported borrowing more money or using more credit than they did a year ago, in March 2022 (16 to 27 March 2022).
  - Among all adults, 43% reported that they would not be able to save money in the next 12 months, in March 2022 (16 to 27 March 2022); this is the highest this percentage has been since this question was first asked in March 2020 (2 March to 6 April 2020).
- 5.7 Locally:
- Colchester already has the busiest foodbank in the East of England
  - Donations to the foodbank are down 12% since Ukrainian crisis
  - Yet demand has been increasing by 12% in this period.
  - The foodbank therefore has dwindling stock reserves
  - The foodbank suffers from insecurity in the tenancy of their premises
  - The foodbank has serious concerns about winter (cold weather and rising fuel prices)
  - Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) anticipate great pressure on social tenants and higher rent arrears are likely
  - Private sector housing rents very high/unaffordable and this is likely to lead to financial difficulties for those who rent privately, yet it seems that there is more support via the

Discretionary Housing Payment taken up by those in housing association. This is likely down to lack of awareness of the option for those in the private rented sector.

- Around 3,000 applicants are on the Housing Register, with applications renewed annually to review need.
- There are low levels of housing that become available – especially 3-bed family homes.
- 370 families are classified as in high need (currently in a priority band on the Housing Register).
- Applicants can bid for properties through the Gateway to Homechoice system. The number of bids for available properties range from 3 for a bedsit studio to 383 for a 3-bedroom house.

#### 5.8 CBC Customer insight indicates that residents in greatest need of support are:

- Often in-work (min wage and zero hours contracts, on threshold of benefit entitlement)
- Very difficult to identify
- In deep and serious debt
- Ignoring the problem
- Unaware of support or how to access it
- Facing extreme remedies e.g. eviction
- In need of immediate income support/advice
- Seeing an increase in mental health issues

#### 5.9 The National response

- £15 billion support package from the UK Government including:
  - One-off £650 payment to 8m low-income households on Universal Credit, Tax Credits, Pension Credit and legacy benefits, with separate one-off payments of £300 to pensioner households and £150 to individuals receiving disability benefits
  - Universal support increases to £400, as the October discount on energy bills is doubled and the requirement to repay it over five years is scrapped
  - extra £500m of local support, via the Household Support Fund, extending it until March 2023. This brings the total HSF to £1.5 billion.

#### 5.10 The local response – see Appendix A: Current Support – Cost of Living

### 6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 6.1 Given that the proposal augments existing workstreams and projects there are no new equality, diversity and human rights implications.

### 7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 This proposal synergises with much of the Strategic Plan, most obviously the priority to: “Tackle the causes of inequality and support our most vulnerable people”.

## **8. Consultation**

8.1 Not applicable.

## **9. Publicity Considerations**

9.1 A communications campaign is central to our proposals, ensuring that vulnerable citizens have the information they need on help that is available to them.

9.2 Nationally, a toolkit has been created for cost of living crisis support that can be localised (using local images and case study information). It has been created to support councils that are planning to support residents through the crisis. The digital assets are free and cover a wide range of messages, offering support, offering financial tips and signpost to local support.

9.3 The CBC Communications Team is currently putting together a communications plan highlighting that “We’re Here to Help” with the main themes being: food, energy, money.

## **10. Financial implications**

10.1 Up to £170,000 will be made available in 2022/23 for this project. This will be funded from a combination of increased revenue from an in-year review of Sales, Fees and Charges income and, if necessary, the draw-down of unallocated reserves previously budgeted for use in 2021/22, whilst ensuring services remain competitive.

10.2 System partner funding and existing budgets will be deployed where possible to maximise the impact of the programme

## **11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications**

11.1 In directly addressing detrimental determinants of health, wellbeing and community cohesion, the proposal will improve community safety, health and wellbeing.

## **12. Health and Safety Implications**

12.1 None.

## **13. Risk Management Implications**

13.1 None.

## **14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications**

14.1 None.





# Key Teams within CBC - Communities

**Bereavement Services**

**Digital Access**

**Community Enabling**

**Healthy Homes**

**Private Sector Housing**





# Working together

**Inequalities Funding**

**Communities Can**

**One Colchester**

**Active Essex**

**Tendring District Council**

**NEE CCG/ICS**



# Key Teams within CBC - Customer

**Financial and Employment Support**

**Council Tax and Corporate Debt**

**Housing Benefit**



# Financial and Employment Support

- Benefits uptake campaigns
- Community outreach and drop in sessions
- Council Tax Rebate
- Discretionary Housing Payment
- Employment support and advice (with DWP)
- Exceptional Hardship Payment
- Funeral cost support
- Household Support Fund
- Housing Benefit & LCTS
- Welfare Benefits Advice



# Example of multiple support provided to resident

Dear Cllr [REDACTED]

Referral re : [REDACTED]

Thank you for passing on this referral with regards to financial support for [REDACTED]

I have been in contact with [REDACTED] and would like to update you on the support that has been provided.

- A Discretionary Housing Payment has been awarded to support with rental arrears and ongoing rental shortfall
- A Household Support Fund payment has also been awarded to support towards a new washing machine, clothing and items of specific need for her baby
- A referral was made to C360 who supplied a Coop voucher to exchange for goods
- A food bank referral was made for a parcel to be delivered
- We have escalated the Universal Credit issue with the Manager at Job Centre Plus and have requested they contact [REDACTED] direct

I hope these measures will relieve some of the financial worry that [REDACTED] is experiencing at present.

[REDACTED] has been provided my personal contact details should she need any further advice or support.



# Working with Partners

## Financial Support Services through Partners

### Direct Financial Support

- Essential living fund
- Credit Union
- Community 360 funding

### Advice and Employment Support

- Citizens Advice (CBH funded dedicated post)
- Christians against poverty
- Step Change





# Council Tax and Corporate Debt

- Soft reminders with support information
- More flexible payment arrangements
- Working with enforcement to offer additional support
- Breathing space/debt repayment plans



# Housing & Energy Efficiency Support

- Private Sector Housing Enforcement
- Disabled Facility Grants
- Emergency Loan Heaters
- Energy efficiency advice and support – LAD3
- CBH – energy efficiency improvements to Council housing



# Working with Partners

## Energy Efficiency

- Essential living fund
- Green Doctor

## Transport

- C360 community Transport
- Hospital / Health transport schemes
- Active Travel/Cycling/Bike donations & recycling
- Shopmobility

## Help with Clothing

- Anti loo roll brigade community shop
- One Colchester Hub
- School Uniform Project
- North Essex Support Team
- Tots to teens
- Clothing for Job interview





# Working with Partners

## Help with Hunger

- Holiday Hunger schemes – FirstSite, Essex ActivAte
- Colchester Foodbank
- Cultural Foodbank (RAMA)
- BOAZ Outreach Project
- North Essex Support Team (NEST)
- GO4 Café - Foodbank & Community Fridge
- C3 Church – Community Supermarket
- Refugee Action Colchester

## Crisis Support

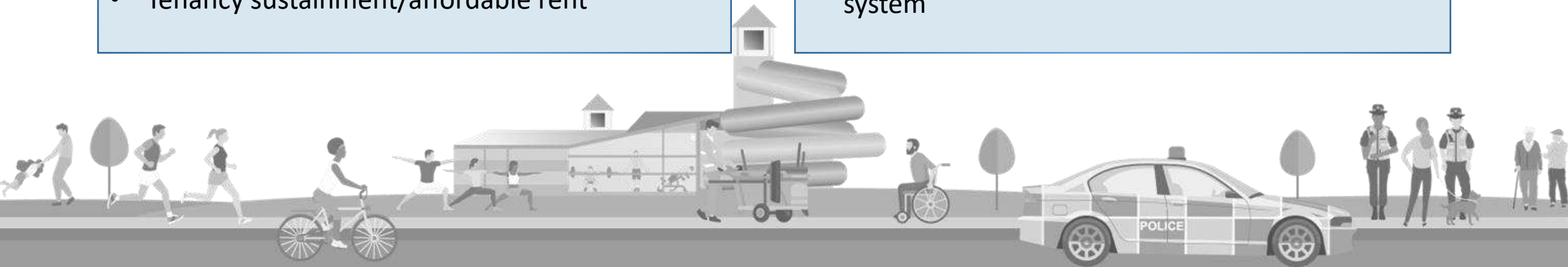
- Hospital Discharge bursaries at C360
- Mental Health bursaries at C360 – can also be used for practical support
- Essential Living Fund
- Hygiene Bank
- Catalyst grants for people with support needs
- Buttle UK
- Friends of the Elderly



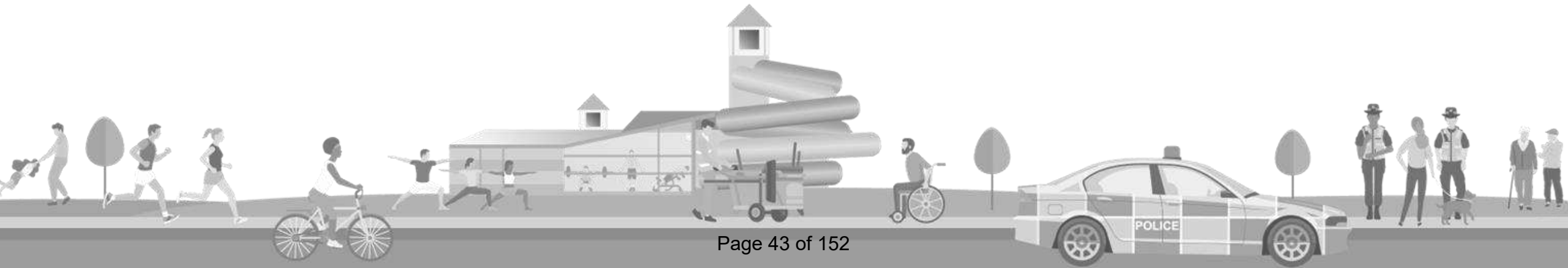
# Future considerations

- Resource/funding issues
- Recruitment/retention issues
- Measurement/metrics
- UC Managed Migration
- Government rebates & support via LA's
- Tenancy sustainment/affordable rent

- One Colchester Communications campaign
- Ukraine/Refugee crisis
- Ongoing Covid implications
- Sustainable solutions, not just short term crisis reaction
- Maximise other funding & resource across the system




# Questions?





**6<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Assistant Director Place and Client Services</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Karen Turnbull</b>  <b>282915</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Shared Prosperity Fund</b>		
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards		

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an outline Investment Plan for Colchester's allocation under the Government's Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) programme.
- 1.2 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is a new three-year domestic fund running from 2022/23 that replaces the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIFs) such as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF). These funds have supported a range of job creation, innovation and skills programmes for many years.
- 1.3 Colchester's allocation of £1.3m from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund was announced in April with a requirement for an Investment Plan to be submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities by 1 August.
- 1.4 The Investment Plan takes place over three years including the current financial year and the Government has set a spend profile against each year.
- 1.5 The SPF Investment Plan sits alongside other programmes to tackle local inequalities work including the successful £19.2m Towns' Fund bid to boost the borough's economy, create jobs, improve connectivity, develop housing, and improve health outcomes. The health Alliance has invested large sums in work to tackle health inequalities such as with our housing partners to improve the standards in private rented accommodation. And Essex has a Local Delivery Pilot led by Active Essex, to build healthier, more active communities, and the Levelling Up Fund bid which is about to be submitted to Government for consideration.
- 1.6 The criteria for the SPF are theme based, comprising business support, community and place and, from the third year onwards, people and skills and aim to:
  - Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging
  - Spread opportunities and improve public services, especially in those places where they are weakest
  - Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost
  - Empower local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency

- 1.7 Given the relatively short time window available to prepare the Investment Plan submission, officers have focussed on projects which meet the criteria, complement other levelling up activities such as Town Deal and the Levelling Up Fund bid and include the work of partners.
- 1.8 This report provides an overview of the SPF Investment Plan bid currently being prepared.

## **2. Recommended Decisions**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
- a) Endorses the thematic and geographic focus of Colchester's Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan currently in preparation, with reference to the published Shared Prosperity Fund eligibility criteria.
  - b) Agrees to further work on this Investment Plan including engaging with key stakeholders to confirm their support.
  - c) Agrees to delegate the final approval of the bid submission to the Portfolio Holder for Strategy in liaison with the Head of Finance, and thereafter its submission to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on or before 1 August 2022 by officers.

## **3. Reason for Recommended Decision**

- 3.1 Approval to proceed and submit an Investment Plan will build upon the strong foundations set by other levelling up activities, potentially attracting further substantial investment into some projects over time.
- 3.2 The draft proposals in the Investment Plan, which are subject to change, outlined in this report best meet the criteria set out at 1.6 above and will further boost Colchester's opportunities to realise its economic and skills development, place-making, inward investment, and regeneration ambitions.

## **4. Alternative Options**

- 4.1 No alternative options have been presented to Cabinet. As with the UKSPF is not a bid but an allocation of Government funding to Colchester. Some of the interventions included in the SPF Investment Plan see this as the opportunity as funder of last resort as they are unlikely to attract suitable investment from other sources; and cannot be funded within the Council's resources.

## **5. Background Information**

- 5.1 The Government published its [Prospectus for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#) on 13 April 2022.

- 5.2 The Shared Prosperity Fund along with the Levelling Up Fund and Town Deal Fund can be seen as a programme of investments in addressing inequality and supporting inclusive economic recovery and growth.
- 5.3 The Town Deal Programme's £19.2m Investment Plan reflects six specific intervention themes prescribed by DLUHC, 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.
- 5.4 Colchester's £20m Levelling Up Fund bid reflects three themes to improve the east of the town centre around St Botolph's: 1) Town Centre and High Street regeneration 2) Local Transport Projects, 3) Cultural and Heritage Assets.
- 5.5 The UKSPF outline Investment Plan

<b>SPF Theme</b>	<b>Project</b>
<b>Business support</b>	<p><b>North Essex Business Support Programme</b> Following the success of the Covid Business Support Discretionary Fund 'top slice' collaboration, which is delivering business support and skills projects across North Essex, North Essex Economic Board (NEEB) members are keen to explore using UKSPF monies to support a refined programme when the current one ends at the end of this year. Likely key SPF outcomes: Increased number of businesses supported, jobs safeguarded, increased business sustainability and increased take up of energy efficiency measures</p> <p><b>ONE Colchester Apprenticeship Programme</b> This project would bring public sector partners together on a joint apprenticeship scheme to build relevant skills and help recruit and retain talent. Likely key SPF outcomes: Number of people in employment, including self-employment, following support</p> <p><b>Care Tech Hub</b> This project would allow the innovative Care Tech project to move from the successful initial business case work already completed to the next stage of business planning. Likely key SPF outcomes: Jobs created, increased amount of investment, and number of organisations engaged in new knowledge transfer activity</p>
<b>Communities and place</b>	<p><b>Third sector volunteering project</b> A third sector partner is preparing a proposal to support community volunteering with the twin goals of supporting communities and building employability. Likely key SPF outcomes: Fewer people facing structural barriers into employment and into skills, Volunteering numbers as a result of support</p> <p><b>Cultural Strategy enabling</b> An enabling fund for initiatives by smaller arts organisations to support the delivery of Colchester's Cultural strategy. Likely key SPF outcomes: Number of community-led arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes as a result of support</p> <p><b>Community Supermarket</b> A partnership project to support the continuing provision of a community supermarket Likely key SPF outcomes: community support and cohesion</p> <p><b>Wayfinding</b> This potential Community Safety project seeks to improve safety on the route into town from Greenstead. The project will help reduce crime and the fear of crime along with encouraging sustainable travel. Likely key SPF outcomes: Improved perception of safety</p>

<b>People and skills</b>	<p><b>Training for growth sectors</b> A key education partner is preparing ideas to provide new training opportunities in core and growth sectors such as construction, digital in construction, and health/care. Likely key SPF outcomes: Number of people in education/training, Number of people gaining a qualification or completing a course following support</p> <p><b>The Colchester Skills Programme</b> We are also preparing a proposal for a skills programme based on the work the Colchester Ambassadors have started. This may include supporting schools and business links as well as sharing training provision. Likely key SPF outcomes: Number of people gaining a qualification or completing a course following support</p>
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- 5.6 Together this suite of interventions meets the key criteria of the three investment priorities, tackle some key issues and open up potential for some economic projects
- 5.7 The SPF presents an opportunity to work in partnership with stakeholders to deliver on joint priorities such as the Care Tech Hub, the Business Support Programme and the Skills agenda. In this way the SPF work programme is endorsed and supported by our partners and stakeholders.

**Rationale to project prioritisation above:**

- 5.8 This configuration of project elements delivers a strong package of impacts/benefits, responds most strongly against all three DLUHC investment priorities, and builds on recent investment secured and existing project aspirations.

**6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications**

- 6.1 Consideration will be given to equality and diversity issues in respect of individual project elements that contribute to the delivery of the Shared Prosperity Fund programme through the development of the project application.
- 6.2 Colchester Borough Council and its partners will prepare specific Equality Impact Assessments, and the Council will have due regard to its Public Sector Duty continuing to work to tackle discrimination and inequality and help to create a fairer society, improve housing choice and social mobility (including for protected groups).

**7. Strategic Plan References**

- 7.1 The following Strategic Plan References are relevant to the proposed bid:

**Tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability:**

- Work with partners to implement strategies and develop measures to business environmental impacts

**Delivering homes for people who need them:**

- Create great places to live through skills development to make Colchester even more attractive as a place to live, work and do business.



**Growing a fair economy so everyone benefits:**

- Ensure our borough becomes stronger post Covid-19 by supporting businesses to recover, adapt and build resilience.
- Work with our partners to enable Colchester town centre to be more vibrant, resilient, and adaptable to future change.
- Continue to collaborate on other levelling up programmes to regenerate Colchester Town Centre using Council assets, aligned private investment, the Town Deal and Town Investment Plan.

**Celebrating our heritage and culture:**

- Though enabling and facilitating delivery of aspects of the Cultural Strategy

**8. Consultation**

- 8.1 The Investment Plan has been developed over recent weeks based on an inception meeting with Council colleagues and their wider networks, such as ONE Colchester.
- 8.2 The projects identified in the Investment Plan have been developed through a mix of pre-existing consultations and identified needs from project pipelines and other programmes such as the Town Deal.

**9. Publicity Considerations**

- 9.1 None specific to this report.

**10. Financial implications**

- 10.1 No capacity funding is available from Government as the funding is an allocation from DLUHC.

**11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications**

- 11.1 There are no specific implications but generally the proposal aims to promote positive health and well-being for our residents, and this policy theme features prominently in several the interventions being developed.

**12. Health and Safety Implications**

- 12.1 There are no specific concerns at this stage of the development of the LUF round 2 bid. Risk will be identified and assessed at individual project level and addressed at that stage.

**13. Risk Management Implications**

- 13.1 No implications are identified at this stage. Risk will be assessed at individual project level and addressed at that stage.

**14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications**

- 14.1 Environmental and sustainability considerations are considered of paramount importance and are a cross-cutting theme within the Town Investment Plan. As specific projects and interventions within this programme are developed further, each will be considered in relation to the Climate Emergency Action Plan to ensure that the Council's climate change, environmental and sustainability ambitions and policies are actively addressed and promoted throughout the development of specific projects and programmes.

## **15 Head of Finance Comments**

- 15.1 The Investment Plan is being prepared under a very tight timetable set by Government, so the final Plan is not available for analysis.
- 15.4 If approved some project activity will be delivered in 2022-23.
- 15.4 The bid will need to be supported by an analysis of the main financial risks and how these will be managed. This will include the management of cost overruns on the project and how these will be shared with any partners.
- 15.4 Any additional revenue or capital requirements for CBC will need to be reflected in the 2023-24 Revenue Budget, Medium Term Financial Forecast and 2023-24 Capital Programme reset. It is not expected any revenue requirements will be at a significant level. Some provision will probably need to be made for potential cost overruns on the capital project given current procurement and inflationary issues.

**Appendices:** None.

**Background Papers:** None.

**Extract from the minutes of the Policy Panel meeting of 15 June 2022**

**47. Have Your Say!**

Ms. Vivien Collins addressed the Panel pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(1) to raise her concerns regarding the recent Elections Act and its requirement that, as of May 2023, voters will need to show valid photographic identification documentation [ID] at polling stations when voting in parliamentary or local elections. Ms. Collins provided the background to this issue, including Cabinet Office research which had stated that, of 46m voters, it was estimated that around 3.5m would not have in-date or valid photographic ID.

Government laid out that local authorities would be responsible for providing a service to provide free photographic ID to those who needed it in order to vote. Ms Collins raised a number of potential problems, including where photos in ID became out of date and unlike the valid ID holder's current appearance, and who would adjudicate whether an ID was valid. Ms. Collins requested that information be provided as to how the Council intended to advertise the service for providing photo ID which it would have to start operating, as this would be necessary to tell people how they could go about applying for an ID. Ms. Collins also asked for information to be provided as to what training would be given to those officers who would be called upon to adjudicate as to whether or not an ID being presented was accepted as being valid and legitimately presented.

The Panel addressed and shared Ms. Collins concerns, suggesting that this may well be a matter for Cabinet to look into, or to direct Policy Panel to consider what measures the Council could take to ensure voters were not disenfranchised. Councillor David King, Leader of the Council, attended and, with the permission of the Chairman, addressed the Panel to give his assurance that it would be a fundamental priority for the Council to ensure access to voting and to make this as easy as possible. The Panel agreed that a recommendation should be made [under the agenda item relating to the Panel's Work Programme] to Cabinet that Policy Panel be authorised to examine the issues relating to voter ID requirements. It was requested that officers provide Ms. Collins with the details as to how this issue would be addressed, following the meeting.

**48. Work Programme**

The Panel considered whether to recommend that changes be made to its terms of reference, potentially to codify a proactive role for the Panel to recommend subjects to Cabinet for future consideration by the Panel. It was noted that the Leader of the Council had indicated an openness to suggested changes if these might encourage more members of the public to bring ideas forward. The Panel considered whether a change in wording was necessary to achieve this. Councillor David King, Leader of the Council, gave his support for encouraging members of the public to raise ideas

with the Panel, whilst ensuring that such ideas were within the remit of the Council to take action, and were feasible when considering officer time and finance that they might require. The Leader posited his view that the precise wording of the terms of reference were less-important than the Panel and Cabinet working in a spirit of cooperation, with two-way conversation and flexibility. In light of the commitments made by the Leader of the Council, the Panel gained assurance and did not wish to pursue wording changes to its terms of reference at the present time.

The Panel discussed the items for scheduling in to its Work Programme, and possible subjects to recommend for Cabinet approval to be added to the Panel's Work Programme. Rory Doyle, Assistant Director (Environment), suggested that, being conscious of the need to focus officer time on delivering the Council's priorities, it might be helpful to Cabinet for the Policy Panel to focus its efforts on these priorities, to get the most out of finite officer resources.

The Leader of the Council suggested that the Panel might wish to first look at whether and how it wished to proceed with its existing workstreams on the structure of future Grounds Maintenance services and stewardship of Green and Blue Infrastructure, finding ways to maximise the utility gained from the Council's open spaces and address priorities such as increasing biodiversity. These subjects could potentially be considered by the Environment and Sustainability Panel, should the Policy Panel wish to examine other issues.

The Panel welcomed and considered the Leader's suggestions. A Panel member argued that the current and future Grounds Maintenance arrangements was a long-running item of work for the Policy Panel, and should remain so.

The Panel considered whether it wished to seek Cabinet approval to examine ways in which the Council could act to mitigate effects of the cost of living crisis on residents in vulnerable financial positions, and to continue to provide vital services and identify those residents in need.

Support was voiced for the consideration of the ramifications and opportunities presented by Colchester's achievement of city status. It was suggested that the Leader and Chief Executive talk to the leadership of Chelmsford City Council to gain their experiences of the process, effects and opportunities. It was also suggested that residents of the Borough should be asked their views on the achieving of city status. A Panel member urged that the Council should still maintain its Borough ethos and not lose sight of the rural parts of the Borough. The possibility of potential future boundary changes, as a result of population increases, was raised, along with a suggestion that the Council should examine the current rights of the Borough and the Council, and to seek assurance that these would be transferable to still apply once Colchester's city status was formally confirmed by the issuing and receipt of the relevant letters patent. The Leader of the Council emphasised that the Council wanted to do more than just change nameplates and letterheads and wanted to ensure that the Council put energy into moving forward and showing stakeholders the opportunities which city status could hold for them and for the progress of projects and improvements within the Borough. A key question would be how best to use the momentum generated.

The Panel considered whether it should request permission to examine ways to pursue measures to address the Climate Change Emergency and achieve the Council's target of carbon neutrality. A member queried whether there was a formal policy to codify the Council's approach, arguing strongly in favour of having such a policy to show how the Council was working and would work to meet its targets.

A request was made by a member of the Panel for a recommendation to be put to Cabinet that the Policy Panel be allowed to examine potential ways to strengthen the Council's enforcement of planning conditions on developments, such as where work deadlines were breached, work was left unfinished or necessary maintenance not carried out, all causing problems for residents. The Panel member suggested that a policy should be drawn up to hold property management companies to account. If this would be impossible under current law, a further suggestion was made that the Panel could discuss how best to lobby parliamentarians to push for a change in current legislation in order to allow such a policy to be drawn up by local authorities. The Panel discussed these suggestions, with a view being given by one member that there were already ways for the Council to enforce planning conditions. A Panel member noted that a similar discussion had been held in the previous year, with the advice from the Monitoring Officer being that this would be a matter for the Local Plan Committee, rather than for the Policy Panel. There was some debate and differing views regarding whether Local Plan Committee would be the appropriate body for this. Officers agreed to raise this question with the Monitoring Officer and provide his view on this subject at the next meeting of the Panel. The Leader of the Council opined that the best way to address enforcement of planning conditions could be via the Portfolio Holder pushing for action. The Panel then discussed whether training could be provided to all councillors to detail planning and development issues, the enforcement powers of the Council and ways in which enforcement could be carried out, within the existing legislative framework. Richard Clifford, Democratic Services Manager, explained that this could be provided by officers in-house and so could potentially be arranged quickly, once he had discussed this with relevant colleagues.

The Panel discussed the scheduling of its work programme, on the assumption that Cabinet would approve the subject put forward by the Panel. It was suggested that Voter ID requirements and city status ramifications should be tabled for early in the municipal year, with an update on the Grounds Maintenance contract to be scheduled for later in the year. Rosa Tanfield, Group Manager (Neighbourhood Services), offered to arrange a site visit and briefing for the Panel at the Shrub End Depot, followed by a formal report to a future meeting of the Panel. This was welcomed by the Panel. It was also suggested that the update on Council mitigations of financial inequality be moved to an earlier meeting, on 21 September 2022, given the worsening cost-of-living crisis.

An update on the drafting of a Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy was requested, and it was proposed that an initial update be given on 21 September, with a broader report on this later in the municipal year, once more work had been carried out. A Panel member suggested that some of the initial work on this could be done by the Environment and Sustainability Panel before it returned to Policy Panel. Rory Doyle, Assistant Director (Environment) advised that the Panel could work with the Environment and Sustainability Panel on this, albeit that the Green and Blue

Strategy would cover a wider range of subjects than those within the remit of that Panel, including economic regeneration, health and wellbeing and other issues. This meant that it would therefore be appropriate for examination by the Policy Panel. The Council was currently working with Essex University on examining potential uses of riverways and an update on this could be provided at the Panel's meeting on 21 September 2022. A suggestion was made by the Panel that the two Panels could potentially hold a joint meeting on this subject.

The Panel considered a suggestion that it should look at whether to recommend a move to change the election cycle to one where elections to all Council seats would be held once in a single election every four years. The Panel discussed this and agreed that this was a political issue which would need considerable discussion, and would not be a good fit for the work of the Policy Panel.

The Panel agreed that it was important for all of its meetings to be open and welcoming to encourage members of the public to attend and speak. Suggestions were made that the Panel could engage with parish councils and the local councillor network. A Panel member requested that the Panel's meeting on 3 August be advertised as widely as possible, to invite members of the public to attend and present their views, ideas and suggestions. The Panel also agreed that it wished to be able to receive updates on progress attained on issues and work that it had examined, to talk through how progress was being made on any recommendations from the Panel which gained Cabinet approval.

*RECOMMENDED* to CABINET that Policy Panel be given approval to examine the following subjects:

- a) City Status, ramifications and opportunities
- b) New voter ID requirements
- c) Cost of living crisis
- d) Green/Blue infrastructure strategy update
- e) Developing the roles of CBC Champions
- f) Climate Change Policy [potentially in cooperation with the Environment and Sustainability Panel]
- g) Enforcement of Planning conditions and how to strengthen this [dependent on advice from Monitoring Officer]

*RESOLVED* that the Chairman and Lead Group Members on the Policy Panel agree the scheduling of items for the Policy Panel's work programme for 2022-23, prior to the Panel's next meeting and subject to those items being approved by Cabinet for the Panel to consider.

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Assistant Director of Place and Client</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Karen Paton</b> ☎ 282275
<b>Title</b>	<b>Colchester's new Housing Strategy 2022-27</b>		
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards		

## 1. Executive Summary

### 1.1 Colchester's new Housing Strategy is due for publication in 2022.

The new Housing Strategy sets out our ambitions for housing in Colchester over the next 5 years and describes how we intend to use our resources and work with partners in both the public and private sectors to help us achieve our priorities. The new Housing Strategy highlights how our work in housing contributes to wider agendas such as Levelling Up

The Local Government Act 2003 required all local authorities to have a Housing Strategy, which sets out its vision for housing in the local area and provides an overarching framework for policies and plans.

The Housing Strategy is a key strategic document for the Local Authority, and it recognises the importance of a safe and affordable home for health and wellbeing.

The Strategy sets out what the Council and its partners will do to help address the key housing issues and challenges facing the residents of Colchester including increasing the supply and access to affordable housing and making better use of what is available, providing support to people to help them maintain their tenancies, improving neighbourhoods to create better communities for people to live in, improving the standard of accommodation in both the public and private rented sector and reducing carbon emissions in homes.

## 2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To approve the new Housing Strategy 2022-27 for Colchester.
- 2.2 To recommend to full Council that the Housing Strategy be adopted as part of the Council's Policy Framework.

## 3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility to produce and publish a Housing Strategy based on a review of housing in the borough.

## 4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 To not adopt the Housing Strategy. There are however clear risks to not having a robust evidence based strategy in place such as not achieving local priorities, not being able to evidence and articulate Colchester Borough Council's wider vision for housing and not providing a strong focus to our partners about their contribution to meeting our priorities.



## 5. Background Information

### 5.1 Developing the new Housing Strategy

In the process of developing the new Housing Strategy, we have collaborated extensively to ensure it is based on firm evidence.

- We updated and considered an in-depth evidence base to understand the details of housing need.
- We held a Consultation workshop with representatives from local housing organisations to help shape the new Housing Strategy by identifying the current challenges for housing in Colchester for both organisations and residents and how these can be addressed.
- Following the consultation, we established a Project Group with partners to ensure a collaborative approach to designing the new Strategy. The group considered the challenges identified at the workshop and agreed priorities with collaborative actions to improve the housing situation for the residents of Colchester.
- The Portfolio Holder for Housing, CBC Senior Management Team and Colchester Borough Homes Board have been given the opportunity to review the documents.
- The Draft Housing Strategy has been circulated to Officers and Partners for their comments and amendments made based on largely positive feedback.
- Senior Managers have reviewed and approved the draft.

### 5.2 Key Priorities

Colchester's Housing Strategy 2022-27 sets out our vision for housing in the borough:

‘Colchester, where all residents have access to a safe and affordable home that promotes health and equality, in a sustainable community’.

The Housing Strategy recognises the importance of a safe and affordable home in ensuring healthy lives and levelling up access to life opportunities. It provides the overarching framework for the Council's housing policies and plans.

The key priorities that the new Housing Strategy will focus on are:

- Supply – ‘We will increase the supply of quality affordable homes’
- Sustainability and Community – ‘We will support people to maintain their homes and build sustainable communities’
- Structure – ‘We will reduce carbon emissions from homes and improve quality and standards’
- Prevent Homelessness – ‘We will prevent homelessness by working with partners to deliver Colchester's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy’ (A separate document that sits under the Housing Strategy).

We have considered government policy in the development of the new strategy to ensure that it aligns with the priority housing issues identified nationally especially around:

- Initiatives for increasing housing supply and homeownership
- Reforming the welfare system
- Quality of housing in both the social and private sector
- Levelling Up

We recognise that our work with partners is key to achieving the actions set out in our new Housing Strategy Delivery Plan and we have ensured that this aligns with the work of existing partnerships and programmes.

### **5.3 Monitoring and Review**

The strategy will be a live document that will achieve its aims and objectives through the implementation of a 5-year Delivery Plan, which will be updated by Colchester Borough Council on a regular basis.

## **6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications**

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment on the Housing Strategy has been completed and a link to the document can be found below:

[Colchester's Housing Strategy 2022-27 · Colchester Borough Council](#)

6.2 There are no Human Rights implications

## **7. Strategic Plan References**

7.1 The priorities in the new Housing Strategy will deliver against the Council's current Strategic Plan 2020-23 priorities in particular the pledge to "increase the number, quality and types of homes" and under this the goals to:

- Deliver 30% affordable housing across all our own housing sites
- Deliver 380 affordable homes
- Improve existing Council homes to keep them in good repair and improve energy efficiency
- Build new Council homes for our residents
- Ensure all new homes are designed to a high quality across all tenures
- Continue to improve and modernise available housing for older people

## **8. Consultation**

- A Consultation workshop was held with representatives from local housing organisations as well as housing teams from CBC and CBH to help shape the new Housing Strategy.
- The Draft Housing Strategy has been circulated to Officers and Partners for their comments.
- The Portfolio Holder for Housing, CBC Senior Management Team and Colchester Borough Homes Board have been given the opportunity to review the documents.
- The responses to consultations have been positive. Where comments, amendments and suggestions have been made these have been incorporated where appropriate.

## **9. Publicity Considerations**

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

## **10. Financial implications**

- 10.1 The strategy sets out a challenging and ambitious vision for housing which will be delivered against a backdrop of significant reduction in funding for local government. In the current financial climate of reduced resources, the Council will need to look carefully at how it will use these resources to deliver the strategy from existing budgets.

The Council will work to encourage its partners to commit their resources to meeting the priorities set out in the strategy. As many of the organisations are members of the Housing Strategy Project Group, they have already helped to shape the strategy and shown their commitment to its delivery.

## **11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications**

- 11.1 Providing good quality homes is crucial to people's health and quality of life and the actions set out in the Delivery Plan of the new Housing Strategy aim to improve the health and wellbeing of residents in Colchester by providing affordable, safe and secure housing.
- 11.2 It is anticipated that with the implementation of the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan there will be a positive benefit for Community Safety.

## **12. Health and Safety Implications**

- 12.1 There are no health and safety implications

## **13. Risk Management Implications**

- 13.1 There are no risk management implications

## **14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications**

- 14.1 Environmental and sustainability implications have been considered throughout the development of the new Housing Strategy, recognising the role that housing must play in the Net Zero Carbon agenda. The Housing Strategy Delivery Plan sets out dedicated actions to improve the energy efficiency of existing homes as well as on new housing developments. These improvements will benefit residents by providing a cost saving on utility bills and improvements to their health and wellbeing.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix A Colchester's Housing Strategy 2022-27  
Appendix B Housing Strategy Delivery Plan 2022-27



### Colchester's Housing Strategy 2022-2027

Logos and list of partners – to be confirmed

#### **Foreword**

Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities

Providing good quality homes is crucial to people's health and quality of life and supporting the provision of new and affordable housing across Colchester, is a key role for the Council.

Our new Housing Strategy for Colchester has been produced taking into account changes to national and local policy as well as the economic and social impacts of the Covid 19 Public Health pandemic.

Demand for all types of housing in Colchester continues to grow whilst the supply of affordable accommodation is reducing. To mitigate this, we need to look at ways in which we can work in partnership to increase the supply of affordable housing and make best use of the stock, as well as ensuring that existing and new homes meet the required standards and help to reduce carbon emissions.

In addition, we will also strive to support people from losing their homes and build sustainable communities where people want to live.

We recognise that there is no magic bullet, no one single action which will make a dramatic difference to the housing situation in Colchester. But by achieving lots of smaller actions and adding these together we believe we can make a significant difference. Working collaboratively in partnership will be key to the success of this Strategy.

The new Housing Strategy will set out our ambitions for housing in Colchester over the next 5 years and describe how we intend to use our resources and work with partners in both the public and private sectors to help us achieve our priorities.

#### **Contents**

##### **What the new Housing Strategy will include:**

- Foreword – PfH for Planning and Housing
- Executive Summary - What this document is and how it has been produced
- Section 1: Setting the scene – including key Housing Statistics
- Section 2: What we have achieved so far – key successes since the last strategy
- Section 3: Housing in Colchester
- Section 4: Our Vision and Key priorities - How we will deliver the strategy
- Section 5: The way we work
- Section 6: Links to national and local policy
- Section 7: How we will monitor the Housing Strategy

## **Executive Summary**

Colchester's Housing Strategy 2022-27 sets out our vision for housing in the borough:

**‘Colchester, where all residents have access to a safe and affordable home that promotes health and equality, in a sustainable community’.**

It recognises the importance of a safe and affordable home in ensuring healthy lives and levelling up access to life opportunities.

The Housing Strategy provides the overarching framework for the Council's housing policies and plans.

The new Housing Strategy has been developed by Colchester Borough Council and its partners who have identified the most important priorities and what we should do to:

- address key Housing issues and challenges
- recognise Housing as a key determinant for good health
- provide agreement for action and resource decisions

The scope of our new strategy meets the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003 for all Local authorities to have a Housing Strategy, which sets out 'its vision for housing in its area and objectives, targets, and policies' that explain how it will play a leading role to:

- Assess and plan for current and future housing needs of the local population
- Make the best use of existing housing stock
- Plan and facilitate new supply
- Plan and commission housing support services which link homes to support and other services that people need to live in them
- Have working partnerships that secure effective housing and neighbourhood management

We have collaborated extensively to produce this strategy and to ensure it is based on firm evidence.

We have updated and considered an in-depth evidence base to understand the details of housing need.

We have held a Consultation workshop with representatives from local housing organisations to help shape the new Housing Strategy by identifying the current challenges for housing in Colchester for both organisations and residents and how these can be addressed.

Following the consultation, we established a Project Group with partners to ensure a collaborative approach to designing the new Strategy. The group considered the challenges identified at the workshop and agreed priorities with collaborative actions to improve the housing situation in Colchester. This group met several times.

We have also tested our emerging ideas with Senior Officers, members of Cabinet,

## **Project Group members**

Members of the Project Group include representatives from:

- Colchester Borough Council – Strategic Housing, Housing Client, Private Sector Housing and Planning Policy
- Colchester Borough Homes – Housing Options and Housing Management
- Amphora Homes
- Housing Developer
- Housing Association partners
- Supported Housing Provider
- Essex County Council
- North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group

The Project Group identified the following key priorities that the strategy will focus on:

**Supply – ‘We will increase the supply of quality affordable homes’**

**Sustainability and Community – ‘We will support people to maintain their homes and build sustainable communities’**

**Structure – ‘We will reduce carbon emissions from homes and improve standards’**

**Prevent Homelessness – ‘We will prevent homelessness by working with partners to deliver Colchester’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy’**

(A separate document that sits under the Housing Strategy).

We have considered government policy in the development of the new strategy to ensure that it aligns with the priority housing issues identified nationally especially around:

- Initiatives for increasing housing supply and homeownership
- Reforming the welfare system
- Quality of housing in both the social and private sector
- Levelling Up

The themes for the new strategy also align with our partners strategies including:

Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy  
Essex County Council Housing Strategy

Our work with partners is key to achieving the actions set out in our new Housing Strategy and we have ensured that this aligns with the work of existing partnerships and programmes including:

South - East Local Enterprise Partnership - bringing together key leaders from business, local government and education in order to create the most enterprising economy in England.

Gateway to Homechoice Project Board – manage the Allocations policy for the Gateway to Homechoice choice-based lettings scheme which consists of a single Housing Register and a choice-based lettings scheme for allocating social housing.

The North - East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance - brings together authorities, commissioners and providers of health and wellbeing services including the ‘Live well’ approach.

Essex Housing Officers Group – working with local housing authorities across Essex to collaborate and share good practice and oversee the work of the housing sub groups.

The priorities identified for the new strategy will be achieved through the implementation of actions set out in a Delivery Plan, working collaboratively with a wide range of partners in Colchester.

## **Section 1. Setting the scene – the local picture**

The borough of Colchester covers an area of 324 square kilometres in north east Essex. It borders Suffolk in the north, along with three Essex districts – Tendring in the east, Braintree in the west and Maldon in the south west.

At its centre is the town of Colchester, surrounded by villages and smaller towns of distinct and complementary character. Some are in the Dedham Vale, a designated area of outstanding natural beauty.

Our largest towns are Wivenhoe, Tiptree and West Mersea. The island of Mersea is at the south of the borough, and it forms the borough's principal coastal area.

According to the Government's Indices of Deprivation, across Essex County, **Colchester ranks as the 5th most deprived authority** (out of the 12 Essex LAs) - up one place from 2015. This means that deprivation has decreased slightly in Colchester.

The **most deprived areas** of the borough are Magnolia, Forest and Salary Brook South (Greenstead Ward) and St Anne's Estate (St Anne's and St John's Ward).

The **least deprived** areas are Bergholt (Lexden and Braiswick Ward) and Drury (New Town and Christ Church Ward).

The **health** of people in Colchester is generally in line with the average across England. Life expectancy in Colchester for men is 0.6 years better than the average for England, however in women the rate is 0.1 years lower than the England average.

<b>Statistical Profile of Colchester</b>	
The total population of Colchester in mid-2020	<b>197,200</b>
By 2030 the population is expected to grow to:	<b>214,160</b>
In mid-2020, the estimated number of people aged 16-64	<b>126,176</b> 64% of the total population
In mid-2020 the estimated number of people in Colchester who were 65+	<b>34,056</b> 17.3% of the total population
As of 31 March 2021, the number of households in the borough	<b>84,041</b>
As of 31 March 2021, the household size	<b>2.38</b>
<b>Key Housing statistics</b>	
The total number of new homes delivered for the year 2020-21	<b>741</b>



The number of affordable Homes delivered for the year 2019 - 20	<b>101</b> (of which <b>59</b> homes were acquired by the Council).
The average household size (persons)	<b>2.33</b>
The number of properties sold under the Right to Buy scheme during 2020-21 was 46	<b>46</b>
The number of affordable homes let from April 2020 to March 2021	<b>474</b>
The average household price (£) as of April 2021	<b>£338,193</b>
The lower quartile house/flat price (£) as of April 2021	<b>£230,000</b>
The total number of Empty Properties (classified as empty for Council Tax purposes) in April 2021	<b>1,851</b> empty properties ( <b>1,734</b> privately owned or owned by Registered Providers and <b>117</b> owned by CBC)
The length of time that Empty Properties have been empty	<b>0 – 6 months</b> <b>899</b> <b>7 – 12 months</b> <b>360</b> <b>1 – 2 years</b> <b>365</b> <b>2 – 5 years</b> <b>147</b> <b>5+ years</b> <b>80</b>
The number of households on the Housing Register as of March 2021	<b>3,009</b> households
The number of Homelessness households for 2020-21	The Council accepted a full homeless duty for <b>185</b> households. Action was taken to prevent homelessness for <b>187</b> households and relieved homelessness for <b>136</b> households.
The number of households living in temporary accommodation as of March 2021	<b>209</b> households.

More detailed information on Housing and Homelessness in Colchester can be found in the Evidence Base that supports Colchester's Housing and Homelessness Strategies  
[link to go here....](#)

## **Section 2: What we have achieved so far – Key successes since the last Housing Strategy**

Since the last Housing Strategy was published in 2015, we have worked together to:

- Develop 4,990 new homes in Colchester between April 2016 and March 2021
- Deliver 697 affordable homes in Colchester during the same period with our Housing Association partners
- Bring back 16 ex local authority properties to be used as Temporary Accommodation  
Bring back 78 ex local authority properties to be let as General Needs Accommodation at Social Rent – (8 bought in 2018/19, 35 in 2019/20 and 35 in 2020/21)
- Successfully purchase 100 properties through the Council's 100 Homes programme over an 18-month period, to be used as general needs housing, let at social rents through Gateway to Homechoice, for Colchester households.
- Deliver 31 new affordable homes on Council owned garage sites in 2015

- Achieve planning consent on Council land and assets at Creffield Road, Buffett and Scarfe Way, Military Road and Hardings Close delivering 32 new homes, 26 of which are affordable (some of these homes have been completed already, with the remainder due for completion Spring/Summer 2022).
- Achieve planning consent to redevelop an existing sheltered scheme, Elfreda House, which will deliver 36 new homes to a much higher standard than the existing building. The new development will be completed in 2023.
- Develop Colchester's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-25 with organisations and agencies that support people that are homeless
- Implement a number of major projects and initiatives to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings, local businesses and households in the borough.  
As of July 2021, Colchester's Council housing stock has an average EPC rating of 'C'
- Administer 399 Disabled Facilities Grants to adapt properties to enable people with disabilities to continue to live in them.
- Improve standards in the Private Sector by
  - Improving the safety of 706 homes
  - Removing 1,600 serious category 1 and 2 hazards from homes
  - Serving 39 improvement notices on non-compliant landlords to ensure compliance with housing standards

In addition, we have worked successfully in partnership with:

- 7 Local Authorities (LA's) in Gateway to Homechoice to review the Allocations Policy and upgrade the system
- 12 District Councils and Essex County Council (ECC) on a Homeless Families protocol, Prisoner release protocol, 16- and 17-year-old protocol and Hospital discharge protocol
- Health on key worker housing
- ECC, Essex LA's and the voluntary sector on the response to our duties under the Domestic Abuse Bill
- ECC on the recommissioning of housing support services
- Private Sector funders, Housing associations, Almshouses and Charities to increase the supply of affordable housing
- Homes England, where the Council now has Investment Partner Status

### **Section 3: Housing in Colchester**

Colchester has a long track record of joint working to meet housing need and tackle issues.

Our consultation workshop and the Housing Strategy Project Group identified the following strengths in this area along with challenges facing housing organisations and residents in Colchester over the next 5 years

#### **Housing Supply**

##### **What are our strengths?**

Working with developers and Housing Associations to aim to secure 30% affordable housing on newbuild sites

Building on the success of our Acquisition programme to increase the supply of affordable housing

Making better use of the Council's land and assets through our housebuilding programme

## **What are the challenges?**

- Not enough affordable accommodation of all sizes available
- Need to put more pressure on developers to ensure adequate affordable housing is included in developments.
- Developers are focussing on policy changes – little risk with affordable housing but First Homes may change that dynamic.
- Lack of understanding about what type of housing is really needed – need to improve data sharing across organisations and partners
- Affordability
  - House prices
  - Rental prices
- Need to work more closely with private landlords to help meet the needs for affordable housing to reduce reliance on social housing
- Make better use of the Council's housing stock by helping people downsize, to free up larger accommodation for families
- Not enough property that's adapted or can be adapted at reasonable cost to accommodate people with disabilities
- Lack of appropriate, emergency accommodation
- Ever increasing demand for social housing/number of households on the housing register

## **Sustainability and Community**

### **What are our strengths?**

Working in partnership with:

Essex County Council to ensure that the commissioning of supported housing meets the needs for people in Colchester

Private Sector landlords to encourage access to accommodation in the private sector for move-on

Voluntary sector and local organisations to encourage community cohesion, strengthen communities and enable behaviour change to help them become more self-sufficient.

### **What are the challenges?**

- Lack of access to supported housing, particularly when trying to house vulnerable people
- More support needed to enable people to remain in their own home, "lifetime in the community"
- More move-on options from supported accommodation for vulnerable groups
- An increase in more residents with chaotic lifestyles and anti social behaviour which lead to evictions and who are more difficult to move on
- Securing accommodation for asylum seekers and refugees
- More people in temporary housing – lack of security
- Regeneration of estates needed where there are pockets of vulnerability
- Tools made available to the parishes directly to build a neighbourhood/community development plan
- Enable communities to become more self-sufficient and help themselves

## **Structure, standards and reducing carbon emissions**

### **What are our strengths?**

Improving the condition of the housing stock to improve energy efficiency

Successfully working with landlords to improve the condition of housing in the private sector

Our Council approach to driving up standards in homes developed under Permitted Developments

### **What are the challenges?**

- Current housing stock needs to be modernised and improved
- Environmental agenda may impact on affordability.
- Need to improve smart technologies within homes
- Living in poor quality homes links directly to health issues and lower educational attainment
- Housing standards need to be improved as poor housing conditions impact on quality of life
- Homes need to be compliant with modern standards including - damp/mould, carbon emissions/fire safety/adequate heating
- We need to ensure that permitted developments are fit for purpose as difficult to enforce under planning

## **Section 4: Our Vision and Key Priorities – How we will deliver the Strategy**

### **Our vision for housing:**

**‘Colchester, where all residents have access to a safe and affordable home that promotes health and equality, in a desirable and sustainable community’.**

To achieve this vision and mitigate the challenges for housing in Colchester, 4 Key Priorities have been identified for our new Housing Strategy

### **Key Priority 1**

#### **Supply – ‘*We will increase the supply of quality affordable homes*’**

The impact of the pandemic and supply chain issues has resulted in a decrease in the number of affordable homes across the country in the last year with completions of affordable rented homes hit the hardest. This contrasts with the previous year which saw a record number of affordable homes delivered. Colchester has followed this trend.

An increase in households across the borough has had a significant impact on housing growth and the demand for different house types and tenures. The demand for affordable rented housing continues to outstrip supply and with the increase in house prices and the cost of living the gap between the supply and demand for affordable housing is set to widen.

In Colchester’s emerging Local Plan, the allocation for affordable housing is 30% on all proposals considered a major development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more, but current allocations are 20%. (In designated

rural areas the threshold is lower, above 5). Once the local plan is adopted the requirement will be 30% affordable housing on all sites with a mix of housing types and tenures. There has been significant growth and demand for Private Rented Sector accommodation in Colchester and we need to ensure that this provides good quality and affordable accommodation for our residents.

Through our new Housing Strategy:

- We will deliver market and affordable housing to meet housing demand and need through our emerging Local Plan
- We will continue to purchase properties through our Acquisition programme to help increase supply
- We will continue to work in partnership with Developers, Housing Associations and Almshouse charities to maximise the supply of affordable housing on new developments
- We will maximise the Council's land and assets to deliver new housing through our housebuilding programme and identify future developments
- We will continue to partner with Homes England to deliver affordable housing through their Affordable Homes Programme 2021-26
- We will ensure that the Council's new housebuilding programme will provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the range of households on the register, including accessible homes where possible
- We will continue to support government initiatives to help people who wish to buy their first home.
- We will work with Private Sector Landlords to ensure they are supported to provide good quality homes.
- We will provide incentives and support to encourage tenants to downsize to reduce under occupation and make best use of the Council's housing stock.
- We will Identify and support the need for adapted properties as part of new developments

#### ***Case study: Increasing the supply of affordable housing - 100 Homes Programme***

*Building on the success of the Council's Acquisition Project, In September 2020 Cabinet approved the purchase of 100 properties over an 18-month period within the Housing Revenue Account. The properties were to be used as General Needs housing, let at social rents through the Council's Choice Based Lettings system, Gateway to Homechoice, and reserved specifically for Colchester households.*

*The properties were to be bought through the Right to Buy Back covenant and the open market and would predominantly be ex Local Authority properties. Although there was also the possibility to purchase non-Ex LA properties to suit specific needs if required such as medical requirements or larger properties (4/5 bed properties).*

*The budget was set at £21,000,000 for the programme with an additional £1,000,000 to achieve an average Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of B across the programme.*

*There was also a focus on providing more accessible homes.*

*CBC worked in partnership with CBH on the project and by the end of February 2022 all 100 properties had been identified within the agreed budget.*

*The programme helped to increase the number of affordable homes during the period of Covid 19 when housing developments had stalled. Although the programme also suffered*

*from delays in sourcing materials to complete the works on the properties, to bring them up to lettable standard, by working collaboratively and building on the strengths within the partnership solutions were identified.*

## **Key Priority 2**

### **Sustainability and Community – ‘We will support people to maintain their homes and build sustainable communities’**

Providing support to people at the right time is essential in helping people maintain their tenancies and build sustainable communities.

Consultation with housing organisations identified a lack of supported housing in Colchester to meet the needs of all groups and move-on opportunities to reduce the reliance on social housing.

We are inspired by One Colchester's Communities Can approach, recognising the strengths in our communities and the value of encouraging self-help. This is all the more important at a time when the demands on organisations and agencies are high and their resources are stretched. We will need to work collaboratively to ensure that these essential services are delivered.

Providing advice and support upstream to residents to help them maintain their homes by offering debt and budgeting advice will help to reduce evictions, preventing people from losing their homes.

Through our new Housing Strategy:

- We will ensure a co-ordinated approach to supported housing across the council, social care and health.
- We will conduct a mapping exercise to identify the current stock profile of supported housing for all groups across Colchester to identify gaps in provision.
- We will continue to work with partners to identify move-on opportunities for vulnerable groups.
- We will work in partnership with other providers to ensure a sufficient supply of housing for older people, including extra care.
- We will work with partners to ensure that there is an adequate supply of specialist housing and support available to meet the needs of residents with a disability.
- We will improve tenancy sustainment by working proactively with residents to provide advice and assistance around budgeting, work and debts.
- We will adapt properties where possible to allow tenants to stay in their homes and remain within existing communities and support networks.
- We will continue to work with residents to improve the external environment on the Council's housing estates.
- We will empower communities to become more self-sufficient by enabling them to help themselves.
- We will work with colleagues and partners to develop masterplans in key areas i.e., the town centre to ensure that housing is included.
- We will capitalise on regeneration schemes i.e., the Heart of Greenstead to ensure good quality housing is delivered.

### **Case Study - Improving the external environment on the Council's housing estates – Greenstead Housing Panel.**

*Empowering people to take an active part in the Community that they live in helps us to make improvements where they are most needed and gives residents a say in what is important to them.*

*In 2018 Colchester Borough Homes developed a local tenant panel to help improve Greenstead Housing Estate. The purpose of the group is to make recommendations and decisions on estate improvement requests and monitor the performance.*

*The requirements to be a member of the Panel are that you must be a current tenant or leaseholder of Colchester Borough Council living on the Greenstead Housing Estate and therefore have a specific interest and knowledge. The role of a panel member is to help monitor:*

- The performance of the local housing management services for Greenstead*
- The quality of maintenance and other contracts within the estate*
- Raise and discuss local housing related issues*
- Agree budget proposals for estate improvements, landscaping schemes and community funding*

*Since the panel started it has been responsible for agreeing £10,000 work of community fund projects each year specifically for Greenstead.*

*The Panel has also approved landscaping improvement schemes and estate improvements. Comments and feedback from the Panel are also fed into the Heart of Greenstead Project. The scheme has helped residents to have a say and take pride in the community that they live in.*

*CBH also carried out estate tours with tenants and Councillors to identify estate improvements and have developed an Estate management standard and strategy.*

## **Key Priority 3**

### **Structure – ‘We will reduce carbon emissions from homes and improve standards’**

Housing is responsible for about one fifth of all carbon emissions, therefore schemes to decarbonise existing homes are just as important as the energy efficiency of new properties. Social housing is generally more energy efficient than privately owned homes but much of it could be better.

An improvement to the fibre of the housing stock in all tenures is needed to enhance standards, reduce carbon emissions, and raise the energy efficiency of housing in the Borough.

Fuel poverty is one of the biggest contributors to health inequalities. Therefore, we must tackle fuel poverty to improve living standards for people on low incomes, and encourage a more energy efficient housing sector

Through our new Housing Strategy:

- We will identify funding opportunities and schemes to help reduce carbon emissions from new and existing homes
- We will encourage the take up of initiatives to reduce fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency of homes across the borough
- We will work with developers to ensure that all new homes are built to future homes standards
- We will invest in Council new build properties to ensure they are thermally efficient
- We will invest in the fabric first approach in reducing energy demand of the Council's existing homes
- We will encourage private landlords and agents to provide well managed and decent quality properties
- We will review our services and adopt new collaborative approaches to continue to deliver effective and efficient services for tenants
- We will ensure that Council and Housing Association homes meet the required standards and building safety compliance regulations
- We will work with tenants to encourage them to adapt their lifestyles to help reduce carbon emissions

**Case study - Tackling inequality and improving health outcomes**

*Helping people live healthy lives is core to our housing work. We know that having an affordable home is a key determiner of people's health.*

*One of the measures we adopt to increase the supply of affordable homes is to use the proceeds from the sale of Council homes bought under the legal Right to Buy to acquire homes on the open market to increase the stock of social housing. During the coming two years we aim to acquire 90 homes in this way.*

*These homes are truly affordable to local people as they are let at social rent levels (typically 60% of market rents). They are let based on people's housing need and tend to help house people on the lowest incomes.*

*However, we also know that these homes need to be warm and dry to be healthy. Cold and damp homes are more expensive to heat, result in more carbon emissions, and have a strong link with poor health.*

*Our local NHS Clinical Commissioning Group recently awarded us £900,000 to carry out work to these properties to significantly improve their energy efficiency. This work will be on top of the repairs we carry out routinely to ensure they meet the standards for social housing.*

*This grant funding will enable adaptations that will help reduce bills for low incomes households, avoid the health issues associated with cold housing, and reduce carbon emissions. At a time of increasing fuel bills, making these homes cheaper to heat is crucial to allowing people to keep their homes at a healthy temperature.*

*All the homes purchased will receive works to improve their energy performance certificate (EPC) rating to an average of C (B for houses, C for flats), with the funding from the CCG*



used to achieve this. An EPC measures the energy efficiency of a property on a scale of A-G.

*We have found that each property needs on average £7,300 to significantly improve its thermal efficiency. This work includes improving glazing, heating systems, or adding solar panels.*

*This initiative forms part of our wider efforts to tackle inequalities and improve health outcomes. In particular, it complements our work to improve energy efficiency in private sector housing to improve residents' health outcomes.*

## **Key Priority 4**

### **Prevent Homelessness and Rough Sleeping – ‘We will prevent homelessness by working with partners to deliver Colchester’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-25’**

The 4 key aims for the strategy are:

- Increasing access to accommodation and providing settled homes.
- Helping people to sustain their accommodation.
- Improving the health and wellbeing of people who experience homelessness
- Improving communication and challenging the perception and culture of homelessness

[CBC-Housing-Colchester’s-Homelessness-and-Rough-Sleeping-Strategy-2020-25-Colchester’s Homelessness and Rough Seeping Strategy .pdf \(windows.net\)](#)

## **Section 5: The way we work**

Demand for housing in Colchester that is safe, affordable and meets the needs of our residents continues to create challenges that require us to work together and with imagination.

Since the last Housing Strategy, we have:

- Successfully worked in partnership with developers and housing associations to build more affordable homes
- Improved relationships with our health and social care colleagues to provide housing solutions for vulnerable residents to improve their quality of life
- Worked with local organisations to encourage communities to become more self sufficient
- Implemented several major projects and initiatives to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings, local businesses, and households in the borough

### **What we will do:**

**Research    Influence    Collaborate    Partner    Facilitate**

At a time of limited resource for all partners, we need to coordinate our efforts, collaborate inclusively, work to our strengths, and be open-minded about new opportunities. We have developed strong working relationships with Essex County Council, Neighbouring District

Councils, North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group, Registered Provider's and Charities to achieve more than we could alone. We will:

- Increase our understanding of local need and sharing our knowledge with partners
- Identify opportunities to stimulate the development of new affordable homes
- Use existing assets to encourage new investment
- Develop strong relationships to allow productive collaboration with others
- Build on our existing partnerships to make our efforts more effective
- Concentrate on our role as facilitator rather than trying to 'do' everything ourselves

## **Section 6: National and Local Policy context**

This section sets out key national and local policy that was considered in the development of the Housing Strategy.

### **National Policy**

There is currently no national strategy for housing. The last national housing strategy 'Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England' was published by the coalition government in 2011. Since that time the Government has announced a number of policies and policy changes aimed at addressing its priority housing issues.

- ***Increasing housing supply*** – through Planning reforms; a Housing White Paper; supporting Garden Communities; initiatives to unlock land; supporting local authorities and housing associations to increase the supply of affordable housing through Homes England grant funding.
- ***Increasing homeownership*** with a focus on making it more affordable - through the introduction of the Help to Buy equity loan scheme; rent to buy scheme, lifetime ISA, changes to shared ownership minimum shares; mortgage guarantee scheme; changes to stamp duty land tax; stamp duty land tax holiday; introducing a right to shared ownership.
- ***Reforming the welfare system*** – through the implementation of universal credit.
- ***Reforming the private rented sector*** – through a commitment to bring forward a Renters Reform Bill and abolish s21 (no fault) evictions for private renters.
- ***Addressing homelessness and rough sleeping*** – through the Homelessness Reduction Act and financial support to local authorities to reduce rough sleeping, increased financial support during the Covid -19 public health pandemic and a national commitment to ending rough sleeping.
- ***Dealing with cladding and fire safety*** – with the introduction of approved document guidance on Fire Safety to meet the Building Regulations 2010.
- ***Protection for Social Housing Residents*** - The [Social Housing White Paper](#) was published in 2020 with a focus on resident voice and influence. The white paper presents a charter setting out seven commitments that social housing residents should be able to expect from their landlord. The overarching themes are building and resident safety, and resident voice.
- ***Levelling up White Paper published in 2022*** – setting out 12 missions to tackle inequality. The work contained in the Housing Strategy will contribute to achieving a number of these.

## **Local context**

### ***South East Local Enterprise Partnership***

The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) brings together key leaders from business, local government, further and higher education in order to create the most enterprising economy in England through exploring opportunities for enterprise while addressing barriers to growth.

The SELEP covers Essex, Southend, Thurrock, Kent, Medway and East Sussex and is the largest strategic enterprise partnership outside of London. The SELEP works at a strategic level across the region, with leaders from the private and public sectors, to create the best possible environment for businesses of all sizes and sectors to fulfil their potential.

### ***Gateway to Homechoice Project Board***

The Project Board manage the Allocations policy for the Gateway to Homechoice choice-based lettings scheme which consists of a single Housing Register and a choice-based lettings scheme for allocating social housing. The Partner Organisations (POs) that are part of the scheme include:

Babergh District Council, Braintree District Council, Colchester Borough Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Maldon District Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and East Suffolk District Council.

The Project Board is made up of housing managers from the participating POs and Registered Providers. The scheme is subject to a consortium agreement. Registered providers, charities, community land trusts and almshouses (RPs), also allocate properties using this scheme and are subject to a Service Level Agreement. The list of RPs which participate in the scheme are listed on the Gateway to Homechoice website:

<http://www.gatewaytohomechoice.org.uk/Data/ASPPages/1/277.aspx>

The scheme aims to provide a consistent approach to accessing housing across the diverse area of operation of the scheme and where possible, to ensure that applicants have choice over where they live.

### ***The Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) 2018 – 22***

This strategy promotes a shared vision for health and wellbeing in Essex, setting out key countywide strategic priorities, which focus on four areas:

- Improving mental health and wellbeing
- Addressing obesity, improving diet and increasing physical activity
- Influencing conditions and behaviours linked to health inequalities
- Enabling and supporting people with long-term conditions and disabilities.

The priorities are delivered by local government, the NHS and other partners together through the Health and Wellbeing Board.

### ***The North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance***

The Alliance brings together authorities, commissioners and providers of health and wellbeing services including the 'Live well' approach which places Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) at its heart.

The partnership work together to tackle the causes of ill health, with a focus on prevention and by adopting a Neighbourhood approach to improve health and wellbeing.

### ***Essex County Council Housing Strategy 2021-2025***

The ECC Housing Strategy sets out the actions ECC will take to help achieve progress towards three goals:

1. Growing Essex while protecting the best of the county
2. Enabling people to live independently throughout their life
3. Supporting people facing homelessness or rough sleeping.

Although ECC are not a housing authority the strategy sets out why housing is important at a county council level and acknowledges that the quality of our homes and the places we live play an important role in all our lives.

ECC commission specialist housing, secure infrastructure funding to support housing growth and direct development through Essex Housing. The strategy is a commitment to work with borough, city and district partners who have the responsibility for housing and planning.

### ***Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014***

Colchester Borough Council commissioned research to help shape future housing and planning strategies in the area. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires all local planning authorities to prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).

The SHMA is an assessment of people's housing needs within an area, based on statistical evidence and survey data.

The purpose of a SHMA is to provide local authorities with robust and credible information and data that can be used as part of its evidence base to inform future policies and decision-making related to housing and planning. Such assessments should consider housing market areas, and therefore need to be prepared jointly between neighbouring authorities. The local authorities of Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Colchester have worked collectively in commissioning their SHMAs.

### ***Colchester Borough Council Strategic Plan 2020-23 - [The Council's Strategic Plan](#) . [Colchester Borough Council](#)***

The priorities in the new Housing Strategy will deliver against the Council's strategic Plan priorities in particular the pledge to "increase the number, quality and types of homes" and under this the goal to.

- Deliver 30% affordable housing across all our own housing sites
- Deliver 380 affordable homes
- Improve existing Council homes to keep them in good repair and improve energy efficiency
- Build new Council homes for our residents
- Ensure all new homes are designed to a high quality across all tenures
- Continue to improve and modernise available housing for older people

### ***The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2013 – 2043***

Colchester's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan sets out the priorities, plans and actions for the Council's homes & tenants over the next 30 years.

The HRA Business Plan shows how Colchester Borough Council will maintain its existing homes; the viability of current plans and how they translate in the long term; identifies that money should be available for investment in new homes, existing homes and services to tenants.

The Plan includes information on the condition of council properties, how much money will be spent on improving properties and how Colchester Borough Council plan to meet the housing needs of its tenants.

***The Housing Asset Management Strategy - [Colchester Borough Council](#)***

**The strategy sets out the key priorities and levels of investment that are planned over the next five years, together with considering the longer-term investment requirements, that link to the Housing Revenue Account (Business Plan).**

The strategy broadly covers the following key areas:

- Investing for the Future
- Keeping Your Home Safe and Secure
- Preparing for Climate Change
- Homes for Life
- Rethinking Use

***Our Strategy and Climate Emergency Action Plan - [Our Strategy and Climate Emergency Action Plan · Colchester Borough Council](#)***

Colchester Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and since then have developed a Climate Emergency Action Plan on how the Council plans to reach carbon neutrality by 2030.

***Communities Can ...a collaborative approach - [Communities Can Sept 2021 \(1\).pdf](#)***

Echoing the title of the December 2020 COVID-19 Marmot Review, to “build back fairer”, the Communities Can strategy sets out the ways in which the local community will work together to reduce inequalities.

**Section 6: How we will monitor the Housing Strategy and Delivery Plan**

The Housing Strategy is intended to be a working document and therefore actions will be implemented throughout the life of the strategy.

The Delivery Plan will be monitored by the Housing Strategy Project Group and other key stakeholders and updated.

A report on the progress of the Strategy and Delivery Plan will be produced on an annual basis and circulated to the relevant stakeholders and the Portfolio holder with responsibility for housing. The report will also be published on the Colchester Borough Council website



# Housing Strategy Delivery Plan 2022 to 2027

Draft

## 1. Supply – ‘We will increase the supply of quality affordable homes’

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Deliver Market and Affordable Housing to meet housing need and demand	Produce a new Local Plan which follows the National Planning Policy Framework.	Ensure the Council's planning policies are updated to provide a robust basis for guiding future growth in the Borough.	Spring 2022		CBC Planning Policy Team
	<p>Ensure that the Local Plan meets the requirements of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 with regards to the provision of starter homes and custom and self build homes.</p> <p>Work in partnership with Parish Council's, the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE), Registered Providers and private developers to enable the delivery of</p>	Delivery of more affordable housing in rural areas of Colchester	2022-27		CBC – Housing Strategy Team Parish Council's, RCCE, Registered Providers and private developers



What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	<p>affordable housing in rural areas.</p> <p>Ensure that the planning policy framework for the proposed Garden Communities provides for a mix of housing types and tenures including self- and custom-build and includes a minimum of 30% affordable housing which will be phased through the development</p>		2022		CBC Planning Policy Team
Work in partnership with Developers and Housing Associations to maximise the supply of affordable housing on new developments	<p>Implement Colchester's Local Plan which seeks 30% of all new homes to be affordable on sites with over 5 homes in rural areas and more than 10 in urban areas.</p> <p>Continue to purchase ex local</p>	<p>Affordable housing supply target of 380 affordable Council and Housing Association homes is met (by 2023)</p> <p>Different ways of delivering affordable housing explored and successfully implemented</p>	2022-2027		CBC – Housing Strategy Team, Development Team, Planning Officers, Registered Providers

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	<p>authority properties through the Acquisition programme (using right to buy receipts) to increase the supply of affordable housing</p> <p>Support and promote government initiatives for first-time buyers. Research and identify the process for the implementation of the First Homes initiative for Colchester</p> <p>Influence the allocation of S106 contributions to ensure the delivery of affordable housing is maximised not compromised</p>				

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	<p>Ensure a balance is reached between delivering new homes and the need for affordable housing by considering viability.</p> <p>Consider if commuted sums can be used to deliver affordable housing elsewhere in the borough</p> <p>Explore how we can use the Affordable Housing New Homes Bonus to increase the supply of housing</p> <p>Work with Registered Providers to seek Homes England funding to help deliver more affordable units on new schemes</p>				

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Understand and identify housing needs in terms of number, size, tenure, quality of properties and associated facilities.	<p>Clearly set out the level of housing required in the borough to meet housing need and demand through an Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) figure, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework</p> <p>Ensure that the new Local Plan includes policies to secure good quality design and space standards for new homes</p> <p>Continue to consider the building of specially adapted</p>	<p>Robust Objectively Assessed Need figure is used to inform production of the local plan</p> <p>The Council can demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply to meet both emerging Local Plan requirements and higher delivery totals resulting from use of the new housing methodology which is applied to current planning applications.</p> <p>Housing delivered in the market is attractive and meets the needs of Borough residents, creating neighbourhoods and communities which are sustainable.</p> <p>Particular groups include larger</p>	2022		<p>CBC Planning Policy Team</p> <p>Planning Policy Team / Housing Strategy Team</p>

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Ensure that Neighborhood Plans which are making housing site allocations are delivered in timely manner consistent with National and Local Policy and provide the policy framework to contribute to meeting local housing need.	properties to accommodate those with specific needs.  CBC will support and work with Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Plan Groups where they are developing Neighbourhood Plans which are making housing site allocations. This will help ensure these Plans provide for a mix of housing types and tenures and contribute to meeting local housing need and affordable housing.	families, older people and supported housing for vulnerable people.  Neighbourhood Plans are consistent with National and Local Policy and provide the policy framework to contribute to meeting local housing need.			Planning Policy Officers (supporting Parish Councils)
Encourage new initiatives, including housing products, which meet housing	Implement Colchester's Planning Policies which seek up to	A range of products and initiatives	2022-2027		CBC Housing Strategy Team

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
need and demand between affordable rented and home ownership.	<p>20% of all affordable housing to be provided as Intermediate housing.</p> <p>Explore increasing the number of equity share properties available</p> <p>Publicise and support national initiatives which seek to bridge the gap between affordable rented and outright home ownership.</p> <p>Provide support for the provision of self-build and custom-build homes and maintain a register as required by the Housing and Planning Act so that households can register their interest in this product.</p>	available to meet housing need.			

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Maximise the use of the Council's land and assets to deliver new housing	<p>Produce a development strategy which sets out the Council's aspirations, a pipeline of development and the funding required to deliver the strategy</p> <p>Identify council owned housing that is no longer viable and consider its potential to enable the development of new homes</p> <p>Identify land opportunities for development of affordable housing</p> <p>Partner with Homes England to deliver affordable housing through their Affordable Homes Programme 2021-26</p>	<p>Delivery of new housing on Council owned sites to increase housing</p> <p>In 2019 the Council committed to deliver 350 additional social homes owned by the Council over 5 years.</p> <p>The Council's HRA newbuild developments are designed to meet the "Future Homes 2025" standard (option 2) principles to achieve a 31% carbon saving.</p>	2022-27		<p>Amphora Homes/CBC Client Team/CBH</p> <p>Joint CBC/CBH Asset Management Group</p> <p>CBC Client Team</p> <p>Amphora Homes, CBC Client Team, CBH</p>

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	Ensure that the Council new housebuilding programme will provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the range of households on the register, including those who require an accessible home				
Work in partnership with ECC and other providers to ensure a sufficient supply of housing for older people including extra care.	<p>Work with ECC to identify funding available and delivery options.</p> <p>Use information available to identify the needs and aspirations of older people, where they want to live and type of accommodation</p>	<p>Funding and schemes identified.</p> <p>Needs and aspirations of older people identified, and provision made within the Local Plan for suitable sites</p> <p>Local Plan policy requires developers to demonstrate how their proposal will meet the need for</p>	Ongoing		<p>CBC Housing Strategy Team/ECC</p> <p>Planning Policy Team</p>



What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
		housing for older residents			
<p>Continue to review the Council's existing sheltered housing stock to implement the Colchester Standard through the Sheltered Housing Refurbishment programme</p> <p>A 5-year investment programme is in place, with on-going surveys to identify major works.</p>	Review the remaining Sheltered housing stock through condition surveys and assessing their viability	<p>Colchester Standard achieved on all schemes identified</p> <p>Up to date surveys and viability assessments completed on schemes.</p>	2022-27		<p>CBH Asset Management Team</p> <p>CBC Client Team</p>
<p>Increase the role of the private rented sector in meeting housing need through incentive packages for Private Sector Landlords including the Homestep and Private Sector Leasing schemes</p>	<p>Improve access for those who traditionally face barriers to the private rented sector (PRS)</p> <p>Continue to hold a quarterly Landlords Forum</p> <p>Continue to offer a rent bond to landlords to provide affordable</p>	<p>Increased provision of Private Rented homes to meet housing needs</p> <p>Landlords Forum set up and good attendance maintained</p> <p>Increase in use of the Private Rented</p>	<p>2022-27</p> <p>Ongoing</p>		<p>CBH - Housing Options Team, CBC – Private Sector Housing Team, Private Landlords</p>

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	<p>rented accommodation and to ensure housing standards are suitable.</p> <p>Deliver housing standards regulation and management training to Private Sector Landlords.</p>	<p>Sector – Monitor take up</p> <p>Training delivered – better informed and broadly compliant landlords.</p>			
Maximise the use of council homes and reduce under-occupation	<p>Implement revised tenant incentive scheme policy to encourage council tenants who are under-occupying to move to a home that better meets their needs</p> <p>Promote the use of mutual exchange, to better meet tenants housing needs</p> <p>Maximise take-up of sheltered housing through</p>	<p>Tenant Incentive Scheme implemented and more under occupied households using the scheme.</p> <p>Mutual exchange publicised and an increase in the number of households moving through the scheme.</p> <p>Reduction in sheltered voids.</p>	Ongoing		<p>CBH –Tenant Support Officers, Registered Providers</p> <p>Tenant Support Officers</p>

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	the major refurbishment programme to free up under-occupied properties	Better use of Council properties to meet housing need.  Tenants are housed in properties which are better suited to their housing need.			
Identify and support the need for adaptable and accessible properties as part of new developments	Negotiate the provision of homes built to enhanced accessibility standards (Part M4 Cat 2 & 3) to include wheelchair accessible homes on sites where affordable housing is being provided  Include the provision of enhanced accessibility standards in Councils newbuild development programme	Increase in the number of wheelchair standard properties			CBC Housing Strategy Team CBC Client Team  Amphora  CBH
Maintain and where possible reduce the currently low levels of long-term empty	Respond to enquiries regarding long term empty	Reduction in the overall number of empty homes.	Ongoing		CBC-Private Sector Housing

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
properties in the Private Sector Provide information to residents on the reality of empty homes – manage the perception	<p>properties and take informal or formal action as appropriate.</p> <p>Offer financial assistance to bring empty properties back in to use wherever possible or to reduce the effect of the property on the neighbourhood.</p>	Make safe and secure empty properties where there is a significant public health or safety impact on the community.			<p>Registered Providers</p> <p>CBC Healthy Homes Team</p>

## 2. Sustainability and Community – *‘We will support people to maintain their homes and build sustainable communities’*

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Ensure a co-ordinated approach to supported housing across the council, social care and health	Continue to work with ECC, Health and Social Care to influence commissioning of supported housing and support services where possible.	An increase and improvement in supported housing and support services for Colchester.	Ongoing		CBC Housing Strategy Team/CBH Housing Options Team/ECC/Health
	Map the existing supply of supported housing in the borough including access to and support options and identify gaps in provision  Work in partnership with ECC, CBH and supported housing providers to ensure that the support and housing needs of Colchester's residents are still met and are not	Supported housing supply is identified to inform the commissioning process.  The housing and support need of Colchester's residents are met	Ongoing		

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Ensure that young people understand the housing options available to them and the risks of leaving home in an unplanned way	<p>compromised following procurement activities undertaken by ECC</p> <p>Continue to work with partners to identify move-on opportunities for vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Continue to review the nominations CBC gives to supported housing providers to ensure that they still meet the strategic priorities of CBC</p> <p>Work in partnership with schools in the borough to educate young people and their parents about their housing options</p>	<p>This scarce resource is used to best meet the needs of Colchester's residents</p> <p>Young people and parents are more aware of the risks and lack of housing options available.</p>	Ongoing		CBC/CBH/Supported Housing Providers
Improve health & wellbeing of Colchester residents	Engage with partner services and identify	Joint working established between	2022-27	.	CBC/CBH/Registered Providers/He

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
through greater integration of housing, health and social care services.	<p>opportunities for joint working and service delivery to tackle housing as a long-term barrier to health through the work with the Housing and Health Alliance</p> <p>Explore opportunities for additional Public Health funding.</p> <p>Establish effective multidisciplinary care/referral pathways</p> <p>Work with local community and voluntary sector organisations to improve information, access and support for household health checks.</p>	<p>housing, health and social care</p> <p>Funding opportunities identified and funding awarded</p> <p>Pathways established, and referral processes improved</p> <p>Continue to develop the Essex Hospital Discharge Protocol with ECC, currently out to consultation and developed with the support of Colchester, as a mechanism to help people whose independence may be at risk to remain in or return to their home in both the</p>			alth CCG/Essex County Council

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	Reduce the number of home hazards most likely to have a negative impact on residents' health and safety.	private and public sector properties.			CBC-Private Sector Housing Team
Improve tenancy sustainment and work proactively with residents to provide advice and assistance around budgeting, work and debts	<p>Promote pre-tenancy workshops/early intervention for arrears</p> <p>Promote financial Inclusion to help tenants to budget and provide long term improvements for residents in financial difficulty and reduce long term dependency on discretionary funds</p> <p>Identify funding initiatives to support residents with the cost-of-living crisis</p> <p>Work with ECC to identify how commissioned services such as</p>	<p>Increase in take up of workshops.</p> <p>Financial resilience encouraged and supported through Money advice outreach work and training sessions.</p> <p>Reduction in the take up of discretionary funds</p>	Ongoing		CBH – Housing Options Team /Supported Housing Organisations/CBH - Tenant Support Officers



What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	the Housing Related Support Floating Support Service and Phoenix Futures can work better with Colchester tenants and landlords alike, supporting households at risk/reducing evictions and building positive relationships between landlords and tenants.				
Support residents affected by Welfare Reforms and those experiencing financial hardship to remove the risk of homelessness	Continue to develop internal and external partnerships to mitigate the effects of welfare reform. Continue to provide proactive support to those affected by the reform agenda and experiencing financial hardship	More residents supported and where appropriate alternative housing options identified and risk of homelessness mitigated.	Ongoing		Housing Options Team, CBH, CBC Customer Solutions
Help people whose independence may be at risk to remain	Increase use of the disabled adaptations in CBC	Increase in planned and unplanned adaptations	Ongoing		CBC/CBH Asset Management

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
in or return to their home in both the private and public sector properties.	<p>properties to encourage independent living amongst older residents and residents with a disability</p> <p>Respond to recommendations from ECC Occupational Therapy service to process Disabled Facilities Grants in private sector properties.</p> <p>Provide advice on welfare benefits to older people to help them maximise their income and remain in their own home.</p>	<p>100% spend of DFG budget allocation</p> <p>Increase in older people able to remain in their own home</p>			CBC Healthy Homes Team
Increase use of assistive technologies for Council tenants.	Publicise the benefits of assistive technology to tenants to enable them to remain in their own homes.	More tenants using the service	2022-27		CBH Older Persons Services

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Facilitate integration into the local community for the incoming population including refugees and asylum seekers.	Work with the local community and voluntary sector including Refugee Action and Essex integration to improve information, access and support (especially ethnic minorities)	Community groups set up.  Incoming population successfully integrated into the community.	2022-27		CBC Community Initiatives Team
Deliver quality neighbourhoods with adequate infrastructure.	<p>Inform and consult the relevant infrastructure providers including education services of proposed housing developments so they have an opportunity to influence outcomes.</p> <p>Work in partnership with ECC and the Southeast Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) to deliver integrated and sustainable transport projects</p>	<p>High quality communities</p> <p>Projects delivered – Infrastructure needs met</p>	<p>2022-2027</p> <p>2022-2027</p>		CBC Planning Policy and Transportation Team, Development Management, Community Development Team

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Create neighbourhoods and communities which are sustainable	<p>Develop partnerships with residents, the voluntary sector, community organisations and wider local service providers, especially on new housing schemes/developments.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the Community Police to implement new legislation from the ASB Police and Crime Act and undertake enforcement action as necessary</p>	<p>Partnerships set up</p> <p>Continue to hold events including 'Days of Action' and 'Make a difference day', to bring communities together. (8 make a difference day held a year)</p>	2022 - 2027		<p>Zone Wardens, Community Police, Community Initiatives, CBH, Registered Providers, CBC – Private Sector Housing, Community Safety Team</p>
Encourage Community Engagement with housing providers and other organisations	<p>Introduce a co-ordinated approach to community engagement with voluntary sector and housing providers.</p>	<p>Community projects established</p>			<p>Police, Crime Commissioners, Colchester Community Voluntary Sector (CCVS),</p>

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	<p>Encourage parishes directly to build a neighbourhood/community development plan</p> <p>Establish a clear focus on a collaborative, cross sector, system wide, partnership approach to creating sustainable, healthy &amp; engaged communities through the Health &amp; Wellbeing Alliance and One Colchester.</p> <p>Maximise employability funding from the SELEP to support the Economic Development Strategy</p>	Funding bids submitted and agreed	2022-27		<p>CBH, Registered Providers, CBC Community Safety, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)</p> <p>CBC - Economic Development Team</p>
Improve the external environment on the Council's housing estates	Continue to implement the actions set out in the Estate Management Strategy for the	Estate Management Strategy recommendations implemented	Ongoing		CBH Housing Management Team/ Zone Wardens

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Enable communities to become more self-sufficient and help themselves	external environment within the Council's housing estates  Set up local tenant panels to encourage tenants to take pride in the areas that they live in by making recommendations and decisions on estate improvements	Local tenant panels developed			
Improved satisfaction in services that are delivered to Council tenants	We will review our services and adopt new collaborative approaches to continue to deliver effective and efficient services for tenants	Services reviewed and tenant satisfaction improved	Ongoing		CBC Client Team, CBH, Comms Team
Implement the Principal areas of the Charter in relation to Social Housing White Paper to improve tenant engagement and satisfaction	Work with CBH to ensure that CBC tenants and leaseholders are aware of the principal areas of the Charter and how their voice can	Engagement with services improved			

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	be heard to improve satisfaction in services that are provided.				
Reduce and tackle anti-social behaviour in partnership with other agencies	<p>Continue to deliver an overarching multi-agency approach to tackling ASB within the Town Centre through the Town Centre Action Plan.</p> <p>Challenge antisocial behaviour and use appropriate sanctions against those who cause a nuisance</p> <p>Work with others to offer a range of interventions to help people change their behaviour</p>	<p>Reduction in antisocial behaviour</p> <p>Town Centre multi agency partnership team set up and continue to meet regularly to agree approach with support and enforcement in place to resolve crime and ASB issues arising in the town centre.</p>	Ongoing		CBH anti-social behaviour team, Police, CBC Community Safety Team/CBH Rough Sleeper Team

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	Provide support to witnesses and victims of antisocial behaviour				
Prevent and reduce Domestic Abuse	<p>Work in partnership with Essex County Council to develop a Domestic Abuse Strategy for Essex in line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021</p> <p>Ensure that the Domestic Abuse Act implications have been considered and the Gateway to Homechoice Allocations policy amended to reflect the new legislation.</p>	Domestic Abuse Strategy produced and implemented			CBC Housing Strategy Team, CBH Housing Options Team, ECC, Registered Providers



What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcome	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Lower the rates of unemployment in the Borough by supporting and encouraging residents to take up work.	Operate weekly Work Clubs and drop-in centres for advice, support and networking Develop education, employment and training opportunities for council tenants and other residents. Develop the Local Support Services framework, in partnership with Colchester Job Centre Plus, Colchester Borough Homes, Customer Borough Council and other partners to promote employment opportunities and local support services	Work clubs/drop-in centres set up; premises and volunteers to run them identified Unemployment reduced	Ongoing		CBH/CBC Customer Solutions.  DWP

### 3. Structure – ‘We will reduce carbon emissions from homes and improve standards’

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Reduce Carbon emissions in new and existing homes by 2027	Identify funding opportunities and schemes to help reduce carbon emissions from new and existing homes	<p>Funding identified and carbon emissions in new and existing homes reduced</p> <p>The Council's Housing Revenue Account newbuild developments are designed to meet the "Future Homes 2025" standard (option 2) principles to achieve a 31% carbon saving</p>			CBC - Client Team
<p>Reduce fuel poverty in the borough.</p> <p>Increase the take up of the government's Green Deal scheme across the borough, encouraging and supporting residents to make improvements to their home increasing</p>	<p>Promote Warm Home Discount and Priority Services Register for vulnerable residents.</p> <p>Provide fuel poverty advice to households &amp; signpost customers to income maximisation and</p>	<p>Increased take up of Warm Home discount.</p> <p>Reduction in fuel poverty in the borough</p>	2022-2027		<p>CBC – Community Initiatives Team, Voluntary sector</p> <p>Energy suppliers</p> <p>Energy Savings Trust</p> <p>CBC – Healthy Homes Team</p>

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
energy efficiency, and reducing fuel bills.	<p>fuel tariff/debt advice.</p> <p>Continue to work with ECC and other districts/boroughs, work has commenced around supporting the UK Power Networks recently launched Heat Decarbonisation Strategy to support communities that are heavily dependent on oil, to use greener fuels.</p> <p>Signpost customers to Green Deal offers and measures available.</p> <p>Promote the ECO Flex scheme which will allow CBC, through its partners, to provide affordable warmth assistance to fuel poor and low-income households that are vulnerable to the effects of the cold</p>	<p>An uptake of the ECO Flex funding discounts provided by our partners</p> <p>Reduction in fuel poverty in the borough and removal of excess cold hazards.</p> <p>Removal of 80 Excess Cold</p>			<p>CBC Warm Homes partners, Energy suppliers</p> <p>CBC – Healthy Homes Team</p>

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	<p>Enforce the provision of insulation and economic/efficient heating systems in privately rented properties to remove Category 1 and significant Category 2 hazards of Excess Cold.</p> <p>Provide grant/loan aid to owner occupiers (where alternative forms of assistance are not available) to remove Category 1 and significant Category 2 hazards of Excess Cold</p>	hazards in privately rented and owner-occupied homes per annum.			CBC-Private Sector Housing/Healthy Homes Team
Undertake targeted activity to support the most vulnerable members of the community who live in the poorest quality housing containing Category 1 and significant Category 2 hazards	Continue to improve referral pathways between Private Sector Housing & Customer Support Team to raise concerns about the housing conditions of vulnerable residents	<p>Pathways established</p> <p>Progress to achieving an annual target of improving 300 dwellings occupied by vulnerable people including those with long term health conditions.</p>	Ongoing		<p>CBC Private Sector Housing</p> <p>CBC Healthy Homes Team</p>

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	Work with Clinical Commissioning Group and Health and Social Care Services to tie Environmental Health into care planning and patient discharge.	Facilitate quick and ready access to services which resolve property-related barriers to returning to/staying at home.			Registered Providers NEE CCG ECC
Target the work we do to improve homes in the private sector based on evidence and the best information and improve the energy efficiency.	Continue to use bulk Energy Performance data and Tenancy Deposit data to identify rented properties with poor energy performance.	Improved Energy performance rating of private sector homes	Ongoing		CBC-Private Sector Housing Team
Encourage private landlords & managing agents to provide good quality and well managed properties	Use the Excess Cold Calculator to assist in the assessment and decision making for enforcement of excess cold hazards  Support landlords towards provision of broadly compliant housing accommodation through improved	Excess cold hazards removed from properties  Landlord training delivered.  Participation in Landlord Forums			

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	communication and joint working - Identify common barriers to compliance and provide self-service advice and guidance in order that resources can be targeted toward criminal landlords.	and other similar events. Improvement in the management and quality of private sector accommodation			
Ensure that houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) are safe and well managed	<p>Ensure HMOs are managed in accordance with the Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006 &amp; (additional provisions) Regulations 2007</p> <p>Undertake statutory duty to license all mandatory HMOs under the provisions of the Housing Act 2004 Part 2</p> <p>Use enforcement powers to raise standards where landlords refuse to work with CBC or</p>	<p>Better quality accommodation - Improvement of HMO's from 30 to 50 per annum over the course of the strategy.</p> <p>Reduction in unlicensed HMO's</p> <p>Enforcement action and prosecution of non-compliant/criminal landlords.</p>	Ongoing		CBC - Private Sector Housing Private Landlords

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	where landlords fail to licence properties as necessary.				
Encourage & Support homeowners to maintain and repair their homes and introduce energy efficiency measures.	<p>Remove and mitigate significant hazards and fund energy efficiency improvements where no alternative form of assistance is available by providing financial assistance through grants and loans.</p> <p>Undertake review of Financial Assistance Policy and explore opportunities to further incentivise property improvements through provision of grants and loans.</p>	<p>Improvement in energy efficiency of properties.</p> <p>More grants and loans provided for property improvements.</p>	Ongoing		CBC – Healthy Homes Team
Improvement in the energy efficiency of the Council's housing stock and ensure that Council properties are thermally efficient	Implement the Green Strategy part of the Asset Management Strategy, which provides a holistic approach to making homes more energy efficient.	Increase in homes that are more energy efficient.	Ongoing		CBH Asset Management Team

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	<p>Utilise the Government's and the EU's energy grant and incentive schemes to maximise the number of measures available to individual properties within the stock.</p> <p>Include energy saving measures within the Colchester standard and ensure procurement includes measures within specifications where appropriate.</p>	Energy measure specified in Sheltered Scheme Refurbishments and in the Housing Improvement Programme (HIP) procurement.			CBH Asset Management Team
Understand the viability of implementing new energy efficiency measures for the Council's housing stock	Continue to carry out energy assessments on all properties with the Housing Stock.	Assessments completed, better understanding of costs to inform what new measures are implemented.	Ongoing		CBH Project Surveyor (Energy)
Encourage a proactive approach to dealing with dampness and condensation in flats	Work with Registered providers to identify and improve dwellings through building	Accommodation with damp and condensation problems identified and improved.	Pilot properties identified 2015 2018		CBC -Private Sector Housing-Registered Providers



What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
	fabric and behaviour change interventions	Damp & Mold hazards mitigated  NHS Cost Savings established	Ongoing		
Reduce levels of overcrowding in affordable housing	Promote the use of mutual exchange, to better meet tenants needs (see action above)  Assessment of 'crowding and space' under the provisions of part 1 of the Housing Act 2004 to ensure families are correctly prioritised for rehousing	Crowding and space hazards removed or sufficiently mitigated.  Crowding and Space hazard considered during every property inspection by the Private Sector Housing team, including inspections for HomeStep and Private Sector Leasing Scheme. An indication is given of acceptable occupancy numbers in the	Ongoing  Ongoing		CBH Housing Management Team, Registered Providers  CBC – Private Sector Housing Team

What we want to achieve	Key actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
		property inspection report provided to CBH for each property taken on by CBH for either scheme			
Council and Housing Association homes meet the required standards and building safety compliance regulations set out in the Social Housing White Paper	Work with CBH and Housing Association partners to ensure that the requirements are met.	Council and Housing Association homes meet the required standards and building safety compliance	tbc		CBC Client Team/CBH Asset Management Team

#### 4. Prevent Homelessness and Rough Sleeping – ‘We will prevent homelessness by working with partners to deliver Colchester’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-25’

Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping are addressed in our Homelessness Strategy 2020-2025. The Delivery plan for the strategy can be found by following the link here: [CBC-Policies-and-Strategies-Colchester's-Homelessness-and-Rough-Sleeping-Strategy-Delivery-Plan-2020-25---update-for-2020-21-Colchester's Homelessness and RS Strategy Delivery Plan 2020-25 - update for 2020-21.pdf](#) (windows.net)

What we want to achieve	Key Actions	Outcomes	When it will be done	Progress	Who will do it
Progress on the actions set out in the Homelessness Strategy Delivery plan monitored and updated annually.	Consult with Homelessness Strategy Project Group and other key organisations on progress on actions.	Delivery plan updated, and progress report completed and published on website.	Annually		Housing Strategy Team
To produce a new Homelessness Strategy for Colchester.	Project Group set up with key stakeholders to carry out a review of Homelessness in Colchester and develop a new Homelessness Strategy and Delivery plan.	A new Homelessness Strategy written and published.	2025 - 2026		Housing Strategy Team



6 July 2022

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Deputy Chief Executive</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Paul Cook</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 505861 <b>Darren Brown</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 282891
<b>Title</b>	<b>Budget Strategy 2023-24</b>		
<b>Wards affected</b>	All		

## 1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The report sets out the Budget Strategy for 2023-24.

## 2 Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To note the revised Medium Term Financial Forecast set out in Appendix A.
- 2.2 To agree the Budget Timetable for 2023/24 as set out in Section 13 of this report.
- 2.3 To bring forward £250k of the planned 2023/24 reserve usage to address the cost of living crisis.

## 3 Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 The report enables the Council to begin the 2023/24 budget process.

## 4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 No alternative options as the Council is obliged to balance its budget on an annual basis.

## 5 The Council's Strategic Plan

- 5.1 The Council's current Strategic Plan 2020-23 will be concluded on 31 March 2023. Work is beginning now to research, develop and engage widely on its replacement. There is no doubt that the context the Council is working in now is very different to the world in early 2020. The landscape and legislative context for public services is transforming before our eyes and communities have demonstrated time and again their incredible agility and power to affect positive change.
- 5.2 At the same time, inequalities have become yet further exacerbated post Covid, the cost-of-living crisis continues and the new City of Colchester provides an opportunity to set new aspirations for inclusive economic growth, providing affordable housing, tackling the climate challenge, allowing nature to recover and building on the incredible diversity, culture and heritage of this borough for the benefit of all residents, businesses and visitors.

- 5.3 It is intended that the next Strategic Plan will be aligned to the Medium Term Financial Forecast (MTFF) period, becoming a five year plan for the Council from April 2023 – March 2028.
- 5.4 This longer-term framework not only will align with the MTFF process, but it will provide a clear strategic context for the Council's service planning and annual budget-setting, incorporating the shared priorities of the Council's partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors, in joint programmes of work to deal with the challenges and opportunities above. This is already happening in many areas of the Council's services and the 2023-28 Strategic Plan will provide a framework for this to be applied comprehensively and consistently in line with the Council's Transformation themes of enabling, innovative and commercial.
- 5.5 Furthermore, it is anticipated that the contribution of the ONE Colchester Communities Can approach to community enabling will help the Council better understand the value of this in achieving strategic priorities and build the support for this into the Strategic Plan.
- 5.6 The development of the Council's 2023-28 Strategic Plan will therefore enable resources to be planned and assessed in the widest sense moving forward as the role of the Council as a convenor of system-wide resources, alongside the Council's statutory duties, helps to ensure a more effective approach to delivering the Strategic Plan priorities.
- 5.7 Up to £250k of the planned 2023-24 reserve usage set out in this report may be brought forward into 2022-23 without financial impact to address immediate strategic requirements. This will fund the measures recommended in Addressing the Cost of Living Crisis on this 6 July 2022 Cabinet agenda.
- 5.8 The 2023-24 Budget will be published alongside the new Strategic Plan to demonstrate how the Council's budget will be a key enabler of delivering the year one priorities of the 2023-28 Strategic Plan.

## **6 Budget Assumptions**

- 6.1 Assumptions at this stage are summarised in Appendix B.

## **7 Capital Programme**

- 7.1 A full review of the capital programme will be undertaken to ensure all projects represent good value for money. All new capital bids will be subject to a gateway process before being recommended for inclusion in the Capital Programme.

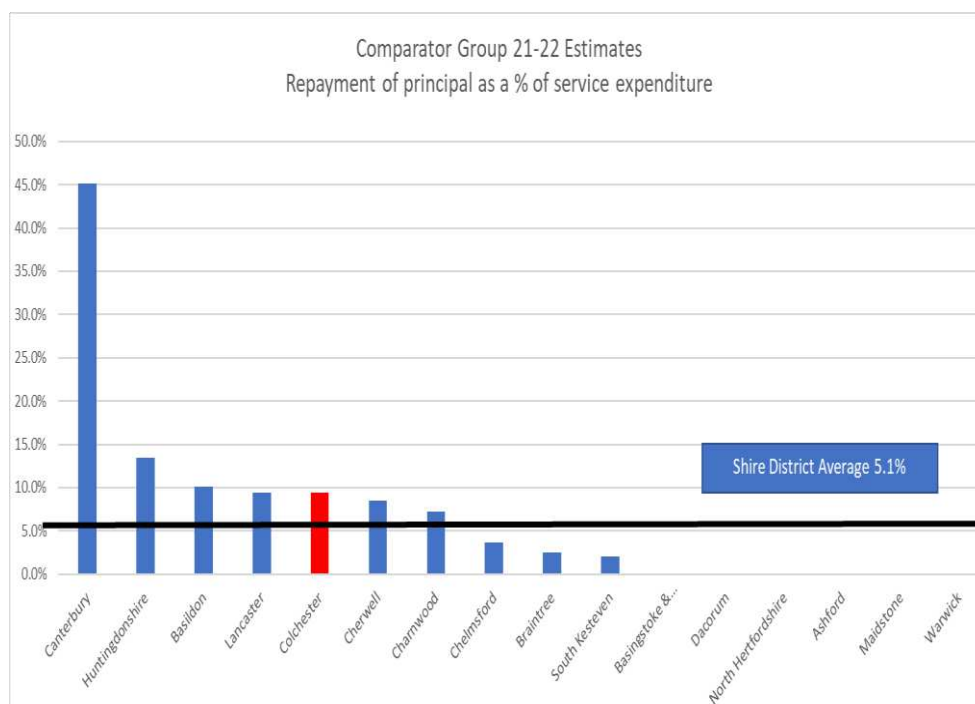
## **8 Government Funding Prospects**

- 8.1 The 2022-23 Local Government Finance Settlement was a one-year settlement only. The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has previously indicated the 2023-24 Local Government Finance Settlement would be a multi-year settlement. Long-committed reforms may be announced in the following areas:
- A review of business rate retention and the resetting of business rate baselines at individual authority level

- A review of resource allocation between different local authorities with particular emphasis on delivering the Government's levelling-up agenda.
  - The reform of New Homes Bonus
- 8.2 £2.878m of the £7.206m government support received in 2022-23 was one-off funding. £500k downward annual steps from 2023-24 onwards in the MTFF allow for continuing uncertainty over government funding prospects. Any large change in funding at individual local authority level would likely be phased in over several financial years
- 8.3 The progress of government funding changes will be monitored in the lead up to the 2023-24 Local Government Finance Settlement and finalising the 2023-24 budget and Medium Term Financial Forecast.

## **9 Technical Accounting Changes**

- 9.1 Under a long running Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities consultation, there was to be a new requirement to make minimum revenue provision in 2023/24 on Council advances to the Amphora Group. The consultation has been amended. Minimum revenue provision on loans will not now be required unless the loan is either for a commercial purpose or has lost value. This means that planned advances to Colchester Amphora Housing Limited can be made without the need for minimum revenue provision.
- 9.2 The Council will ensure that it continues to make ample, correct, and transparent provision to repay all long term borrowing. At all times it will borrow responsibly and affordably.
- 9.3 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill includes the power for The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to issue risk mitigation directions to individual authorities. Directions might be issued
- If the Council's S151 Officer makes a S114 notice.
  - The authority seeks a capitalisation direction or exceptional government funding
  - If the authority breaches any of five capital risk thresholds
  - Debt v financial resources
  - Level of commercial investments
  - Level of commercial debt
  - The level of MRP compared to the Council's budget
- 9.4 Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities setting of the capital risk thresholds will need to be monitored in the build up to 2023-24 budget setting. 2023-24 and 2024-25 already allow for significant increases in capital financing costs. The below chart based on 21-22 estimates shows Colchester as having a normal level of provision for debt repayment compared to its service expenditure.



## 10 Revised Medium Term Financial Forecast

- 10.1 The revised financial forecast based on the assumptions set out in Appendix B is shown at Appendix A.

## 11 The Transformation Programme

- 11.1 The budget gap for 2023/24 is £1.402m after £1.700m use of reserves in that financial year and increased income assumptions in some service areas.
- 11.2 The budget gap for 2024-25 is £5.029m
- 11.3 The Transformation Programme will therefore need to generate substantial savings in all years of the Medium Term Financial Forecast

## 12 Quarterly Income Reviews

- 12.1 Colchester Borough Council, in common with most other local authorities, sets its fees and charges as part of its budget setting process. Fees and charges are mostly agreed by Cabinet in November ahead of the financial year, though some are set by Budget Cabinet in January. Portfolio Holders also have delegated authority to review fees and charges in-year.
- 12.2 Regular and timetabled charging reviews are necessary in periods of inflation. This is particularly important where the aim is to recover the full cost of services and avoid unbudgeted service costs.
- 12.3 A quarterly review programme of fees and charges is being operated in 2022-23 and will continue into 2023-24 given inflation concerns. Officers will shortly report their 2022-23 first quarter reviews to Portfolio Holders who can then revise fees and charges appropriately.



### **13 Budget Timetable**

- 13.1 Transformation proposals will be brought forward at different stages of the financial year, and this will enable some changes to be accepted into the 2023/24 budget at an early stage where possible.
- 13.2 Work on budget options will proceed through the summer, with a second budget strategy report to Cabinet in October 2022.
- 13.3 The Capital Programme will be reviewed at the same time as the Medium Term Financial Forecast using the same strategic approach.

### **14 Budget and Medium Term Financial Forecast Consultation**

- 14.1 A full consultation programme will be conducted later in the calendar year as budget options are developed.
- 14.2 The budget strategy and timetable ensure that information is available for scrutiny and input from all Members. The Leader of the Opposition has been offered the opportunity to meet with officers to assist with consideration of any alternative budget proposals.
- 14.3 The normal statutory consultation with business ratepayers and parish councils will take place.

### **15 2022/23 Outturn**

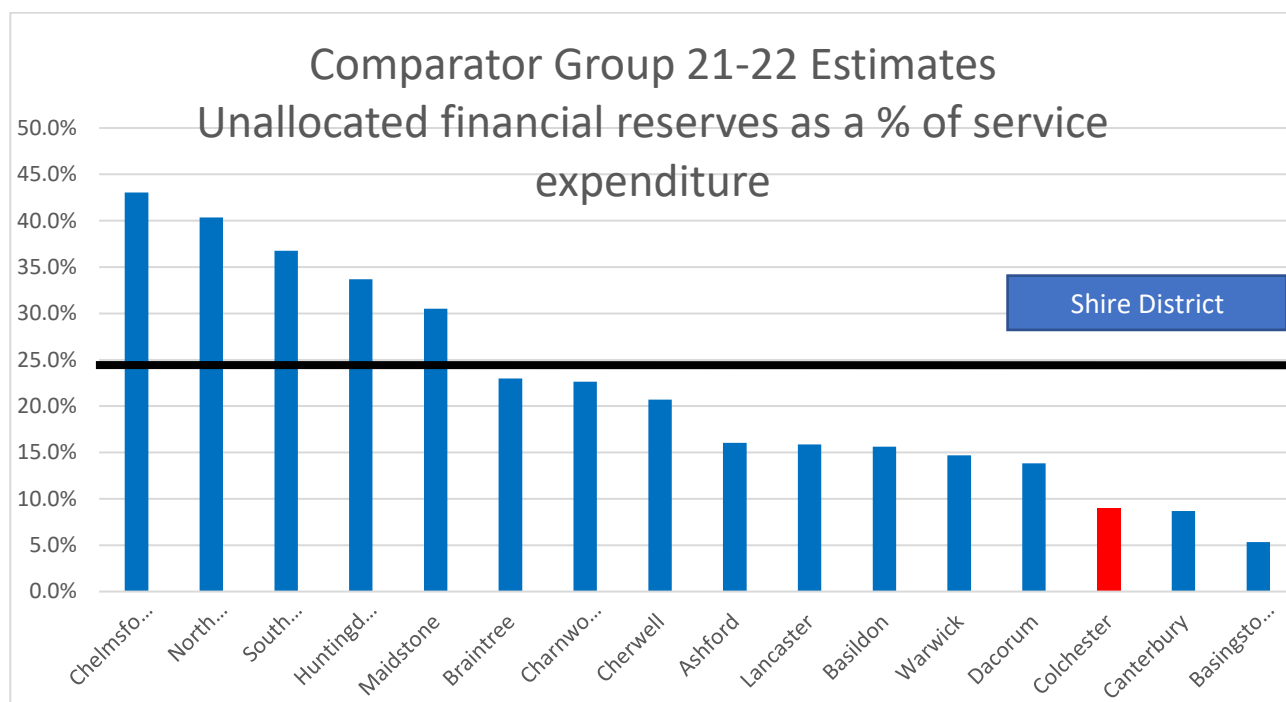
- 15.1 It is expected that 2022-23 outturn will be on budget, avoiding additional budget pressures coming into 2023-24.

### **16 Financial implications**

- 16.1 As set out in the report.

### **17 Budget Robustness**

- 17.1 The Budget Strategy assumes £1.700m use of reserves in 2023-24 and that service income can be further improved.
- 17.2 The budget gap for 2024-25 is currently calculated at £5.029m against a planned net budget of £24.665m
- 17.3 The cost of capital financing already shows significant increases, and a new system of prudential limits and some technical accounting changes will be in force.
- 17.4 A high value of transformation savings will therefore be required to continue the Council's finances on a sustainable footing.
- 17.5 A more detailed statutory robustness assessment will be made in finalising the 2023-24 budget. The chart based on 21-22 estimates shows Colchester as having an acceptable but below average level of unallocated financial reserves compared to its service expenditure. This is an overall measure and more detailed analysis will be required in due course looking at different reserve categories. The reserves to be used to support the 2023-24 budget requirement have yet to be decided.



## 18 Environmental and Climate Change Implications

- 18.1 All budget measures will be assessed for their likely environmental impact, reflecting the Council's commitment to be 'carbon neutral' by 2030. Environment and Climate Change is an essential cross-cutting theme in the Council's recovery planning.

## 19 Equality and Diversity Implications

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

## 20 Risk Management Implications

- 20.1 Financial risks will be assessed at all stages of the budget.

## 21 Other Standard References

- 21.1 There are no direct Publicity, Human Rights, Community Safety or Health and Safety implications as a result of this report.

## Appendix A – 2023-28 Medium Term Financial Forecast and Assumptions

2023/24 Budget and MTFF	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Previous year's budget</b>	<b>20,703</b>	<b>22,530</b>	<b>24,665</b>	<b>25,039</b>	<b>25,539</b>
Cost pressures & Growth items	2,862	1,700	900	1,000	1,000
Capital financing	609	385	(276)	(300)	(303)
Income losses	0	(200)	(200)	(200)	0
Savings	(640)	(50)	(50)	0	0
Use of new homes bonus for one-off investment	(1,004)	300	0	0	0
<b>Current year's budget</b>	<b>22,530</b>	<b>24,665</b>	<b>25,039</b>	<b>25,539</b>	<b>26,236</b>
Business rates	(5,956)	(5,500)	(5,044)	(4,589)	(4,134)
Govt Grant	0	0	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus	(650)	(650)	(650)	(650)	(650)
Council Tax	(13,757)	(14,221)	(14,693)	(15,173)	(15,662)
Previously planned use of reserves	935	935	935	935	935
Covid use of reserves	(1,700)	(200)	(200)	0	0
<b>Budget Gap Cumulative</b>	<b>1,402</b>	<b>5,029</b>	<b>5,387</b>	<b>6,062</b>	<b>6,725</b>

- In the finance tables expenditure is positive. A negative (bracketed) figure is an expenditure reduction.
- In the finance tables income is negative (bracketed).

### Council Tax Annual Assumptions

	<b>23-24</b>	<b>24-25</b>	<b>25-26</b>	<b>26-27</b>	<b>27-28</b>
Council Tax collection	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%
Growth in council tax base	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%
District council tax increase	£4.95p	£4.95p	£4.95p	£4.95p	£4.95p

### MTFF assumption changes compared to 2022-23 budget setting

	<b>23-24</b>	<b>24-25</b>	<b>25-26</b>	<b>26-27</b>	<b>27-28</b>
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Pay inflation	+3.0%	+2.0%	0	0	0
	600	400	0	0	0

The MTFF allows for implementation of the Real Living Wage both internally and for contractors.

Other inflation	700	700	300	300	300
Use of reserves	(1,300)				

New Homes Bonus excluding affordable housing element	400
Corporate services	100
External audit fees increase	50
Sport and Leisure income	(200)
Bereavement income	(100)
Parking income	(150)
Commercial income	(100)

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Assistant Director Place and Client Services</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Elizabeth Simpson (CATL) Andrew Tyrrell (CBC) ☎ 508792</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Sale of 125 Gosbecks Road, Colchester</b>		
<b>Wards affected</b>	<b>Shrub End</b>		

## **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for the sale of 125 Gosbecks Road. This property was previously occupied by Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) under a lease from the Council but has now been vacated and is deemed surplus to their requirements for space with post-Covid working (which will be met by Rowan House).
- 1.2 The property is being used temporarily as office space for the Council during the Rowan House refurbishment, after which it will be surplus to all requirements. The property has also been assessed for other Council uses, including for affordable housing, however for reasons which are more fully set out in the associated confidential (Part B) papers it is considered that, holistically, the disposal of the site offers the best value for money and social and environmental outcomes due to the unique considerations at this location.

## **2. Recommended Decision**

- 2.1 To agree to the disposal of 125 Gosbecks Road on the terms set out in Parts A and B of this report.
- 2.2 To note the offers received as set out in Appendix A of Part B of this report and to agree to a disposal to an alternative bidder, in sequential preference, if the winning party does not perform.
- 2.3 To give delegated authority to the Assistant Director of Place and Client Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources to negotiate terms, conclude the legal documents or any relevant consequential matters to complete the disposal.

## **3. Reason for Recommended Decision**

- 3.1 The property is surplus to requirements, including for alternative Council purposes. It has been fully marketed and a number of offers were received for the property. The receipt will be reinvested in the provision of public services and strategic projects that provide wider benefits than this site would be able to achieve on its own.
- 3.2

#### **4. Alternative Options**

- 4.1 Do nothing. This is not a viable option given the Council's vacant property strategy and vacant property costs.
- 4.2 CBC could continue to occupy the property. This is not a viable option as there is no operational requirement.
- 4.3 CBC could lease out the building for its current or an alternative use. However, the building would need a substantial amount of expenditure, for example to upgrade the mechanical and electrical services and demand for uses such as office is currently poor.
- 4.4 CBC could redevelop the site itself. This has been reviewed but the site does not currently fit within the required development scope of the Council, including those set for the New Council Housebuilding Programme, or its commercial companies.

#### **5. Background Information**

- 5.1 Until recently, CBH had a lease of 125 Gosbecks Road (see site plan below) from CBC which was due to expire in August 2023. This property became surplus to its requirements and a surrender of their lease was completed on 18 March 2022 when CBH vacated the premises. Their future requirements for space will be met in their leased space at Rowan House given post-Covid working practices.
- 5.2 From January 2022, the property has been used as temporary office space for CBC while Rowan House is refurbished and the antiquated gas boiler system is being replaced by a low carbon air source heating and ventilation system (to help meet CBC's carbon reduction targets for 2030). Once refurbishment works are completed, and staff have moved back into Rowan House, Gosbecks will be surplus to requirements for the Council too.
- 5.3 The premises were considered by a variety of services and purposes within the Council to see if it could be re-used. However, no services needed the property and any alternative uses did not provide better value for money than a site disposal on this occasion. Consequently, the site was fully and openly marketed, and a number of offers were received as detailed in the confidential Appendix A of Part B of this report.
- 5.4 It is recommended that delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director of Place and Client Services to conclude the disposal in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources.
- 5.5 The selected purchaser would complete on the sale once CBC vacates the property and relocates back to Rowan House, which is anticipated to be in early 2023.
- 5.6 See Part B for more information on the bids, which is confidential because it contains sensitive financial and other business information.

#### **6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications**

- 6.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 places a local authority under a legal duty ("the public sector equality duty") to have due regard to the following matters in the exercise of all its functions, namely the need to:

- a. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act;
- b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a "relevant protected characteristic" (i.e. age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation) and persons who do not share it; and
- c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

6.2 The public sector equality duty is a continuing duty which Members must consider and review at all stages of decision-making. An EqlA report in respect of property disposals to which Members are referred to is as follows:

<https://www.colchester.gov.uk/equality-and-diversity/equality-impact-assessments/disposal-of-property/>

6.3 Breach of human rights - the property was fully and transparently marketed giving all interested parties the opportunity to bid.

## **7. Strategic Plan References**

7.1 There are no particular relevant references to the Strategic Plan. However, the sale of this building will contribute towards the financial resources needed to meet the Council's priorities as set out in the Strategic Plan.

## **8. Consultation**

8.1 The property has been fully marketed through a variety of mediums to ensure full exposure to all interested parties.

## **9. Publicity Considerations**

9.1 The premises have already been advertised for sale.

## **10. Financial implications**

10.1- See Part B  
10.3

## **11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications**

11.1 There are no potential impacts to health, wellbeing and community safety.

## **12. Health and Safety Implications**

12.1 There is no potential impact to the Health and Safety of the public as a result of this sale. The purchaser would need to follow all relevant statutory health and safety protocols when developing the site.

## **13. Risk Management Implications**

13.1 The following risks are identified: -

- a. the selected purchaser may not perform or pull out. There was a lot of interest in the property and CBC can revert to alternative bidders.
- b. the Rowan House refurbishment may suffer some unexpected delays which could delay a sale. However, a good contingency would be built into any sale contract to allow for this.

#### **14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications**

- 14.1 There are some environmental and sustainability benefits associated with the preferred bid; however these cannot be fully stated in this public report as they may identify the bidder. They are outlined in the Part B report and would benefit the wider Colchester community.
- 14.2 The disposal of this building removes it from the Council's carbon emissions and reduces our carbon footprint as an organisation. The ongoing energy consumption would pass to the purchaser who would then need to consider improvements to meet the planning and building control processes that will provide the framework for the future use of the building and site.
- 14.2 The consolidation of CBH and CBC uses, to Rowan House, not only reduces the carbon footprint of operating two buildings, but also results in better access to public transport links, established travel plans/clubs, and a more sustainable town centre location; in turn minimising need to travel to/from sites by private car movement to travel to work. The sustainable travel plans for Rowan House are being updated to reflect this and maximise current opportunities for use of sustainable modes of travel as part of the Rowan House project. Travel between multiple sites during the operational day is also reduced.

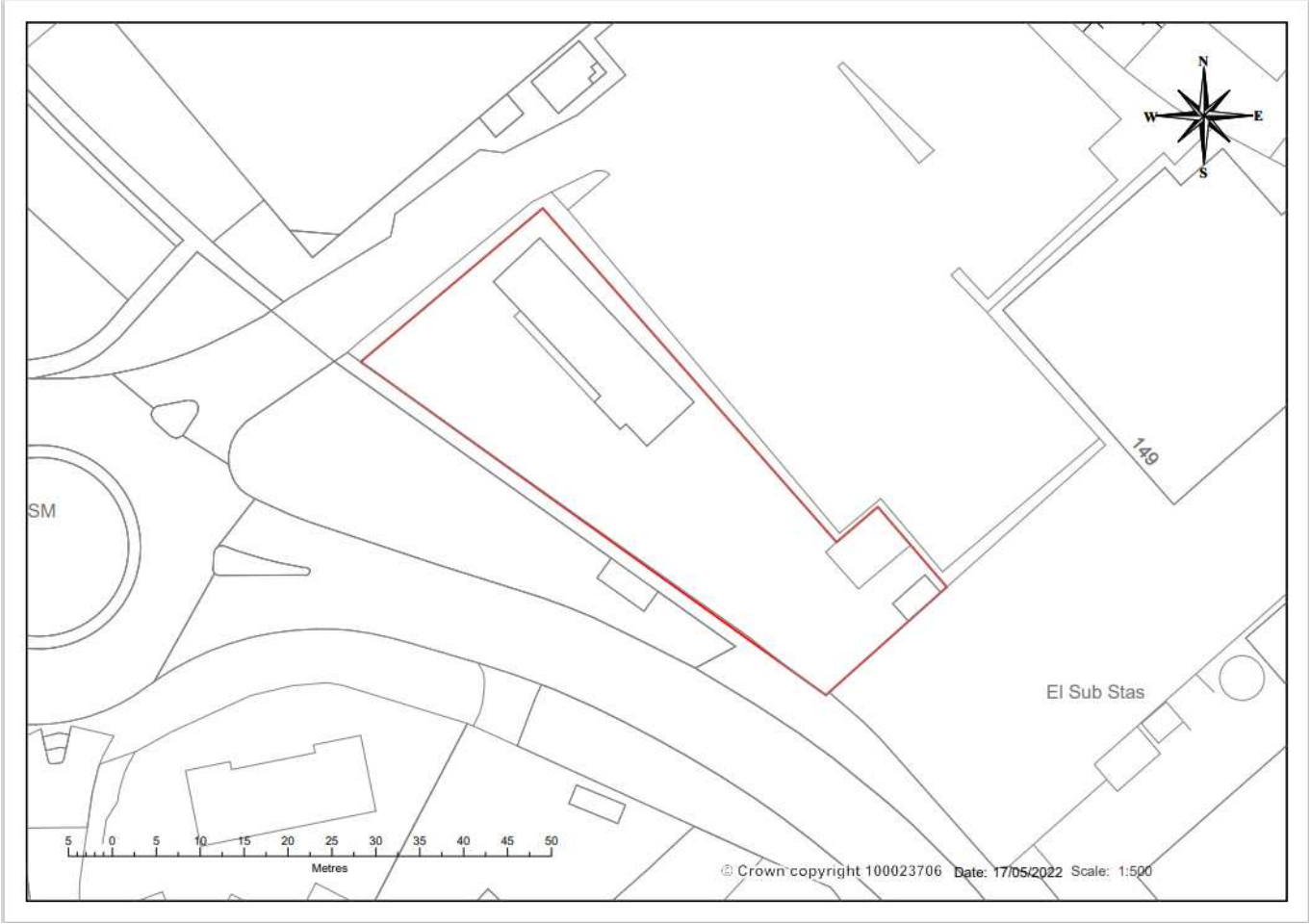
#### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Bid Breakdown – See Part B (confidential)

Appendix B – Heads of Terms – See Part B (confidential)



Site Plan





**6 July 2022**

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Assistant Director of Corporate and Improvement Services</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Richard Clifford</b> ☎ 507832
<b>Title</b>	<b>Member Development Group Annual Report 2021-22</b>		
<b>Wards affected</b>	'Not applicable'		

## **1. Executive Summary**

1.1 The purpose of the Member Development Group is to provide a forum where members can advise on the planning, delivery and evaluation of member development activities. It is an all-party group and is chaired by the portfolio holder with responsibility for member development. The Group is required to report to Cabinet on an annual basis. This report meets this requirement and summarises the work of the Group during the 2021-22 municipal year. The Annual Report sets out information on the provision of member development, expenditure on the member development budget and the outcome of the Council's assessment for the Councillor Development Charter.

## **2. Recommended Decision**

- 2.1 To receive and note the report of the Member Development Group on the work of the Group in the 2021-22 municipal year.
- 2.2 To note the successful outcome of the assessment for the Councillor Development Charter.

## **3. Reason for Recommended Decision**

3.1 The Member Development Group is required to report to Cabinet on an annual basis. This provides Cabinet with an opportunity to review the work of the Group and the provision of member development.

## **4. Alternative Options**

- 4.1 No alternative options are presented.

## **5. Background Information**

### **Annual Report**

5.1 The Annual Report of the Member Development Group for 2021-22 is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. This sets out information about the background to the group and its terms of reference and composition. It summarises the main areas of work undertaken by the Group and provides information about the range of development activities undertaken by members of Colchester Borough Council in 2021-22.

5.2 The main focus of the Group's work in 2021-22 was to prepare for the assessment for the Councillor Development Charter, which is an external review on behalf of the Local Government Association of the Council's member development and support processes. The Assessment was held in April 2022 and the Council was successful in maintaining its Charter status. This has now been maintained since 2011. The value of Charter Status is that it demonstrates that the Council's member development processes are in line with good practice. This provides reassurance to current and potential members, and to other external inspections such as Peer Reviews. It also provides a reassurance to residents that their elected representatives are provided with effective support to enable them to undertake their roles and responsibilities effectively.

5.3 The Assessment Team's report is included as an Appendix to the Member Development Group's report. They highlighted a number of special mentions and areas of continuous improvement, which will form the basis of the Group's work programme going forward.

## **6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications**

6.1 An EQIA for the councillor development policy has been prepared and can be accessed via the link below.

<http://www.colchester.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=2290&p=0>

## **7. Strategic Plan References**

7.1 Member development supports all the Strategic Plan priorities by promoting the skills and knowledge members need in order to fulfil their roles effectively.

## **8. Financial Implications**

8.1 The Annual Report sets out expenditure against the member development budget for the 2021-222 municipal year. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **9. Standard References**

9.1 There are no particular references to consultation or publicity considerations or community safety; health and safety, environmental sustainability or risk management implications.

Appendix 1 – Member Development Group Annual Report

## **Member Development Group: Report to Cabinet 2021-22**

### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of the Member Development Group is to provide a forum where members can advise on the planning, delivery and evaluation of member development activities. The Group is made up of a member of each political group and is chaired by the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for member development. In 2021-22 this was Cllr Paul Dundas, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy.

The Group is required to report to Cabinet on an annual basis. This report meets this requirement and summarises the work of the Group during the 2021-22 municipal year.

### **2. Terms of Reference**

The Group's Terms of Reference are as follows:-

The Member Development Group will advise on the planning, delivery and evaluation of member development activities and make recommendations to Cabinet where appropriate. The Member Development Group will report to Cabinet on an annual basis.

The membership of the Member Development Group will be the relevant Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Member Development and one member from each political group represented on the Council. The Group will be chaired by the Portfolio Holder. Members of the Group will be responsible for the promotion of Member Development within their political group.

The Member Development Group will:-

- oversee the provision of member development opportunities;
- advise on policies and procedures relating to member development; and monitor their implementation and effectiveness;
- regularly review the level and allocation of the Councillor development budget;
- oversee the evaluation of member development opportunities and assess the contribution of member development opportunities towards the Council's corporate objectives;
- ensure that Charter Status for Member Development is maintained and monitor the progress of the implementation of the recommendations from the Charter Assessment.

### **3. Composition**

The membership of the Group in 2021-22 was as follows:-

Councillor Paul Dundas, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Chair  
 Councillor Mark Goacher  
 Councillor David Harris  
 Councillor David King  
 Councillor Sue Lissimore  
 Councillor Gerard Oxford

The Group has been supported by Richard Clifford, Democratic Services Manager and Matt Evans, Democratic Services Officer.

The Group has met on three occasions in 2021-22: 3 November 2021, 21 December 2021 and 29 March 2022.

#### **4. Main Areas of Work**

##### **4.1 The Provision of Member Development**

Details of attendance at member development sessions for 2021-22 is at Appendix 1. The attendance figures are positive and have grown since the previous year. This is at least part due to the continued practice of hosting member development sessions and briefing online which makes attendance for Councillors easier. The figures continue to demonstrate a healthy interest in training and development across the Council.

Measurable objectives were established by the Group to help measure the provision of and attendance at member development sessions and performance against these objectives is shown below. The figures for 2020-21 are also included for comparison and to indicate trends. The Group has expressed a view that in view of improved performance and the period of time since the objectives were first set that the objectives be revised to make them more rigorous and this is something the Group can look at again in the forthcoming year.

	Target	2020-21	2021-22
Number of Councillors attending one or more Development Session	80%	90%	94%
Number of Councillors attending 5 or more Development Sessions	25%	56%	78%
Number of Development Sessions or Briefings provided for Councillors over the course of a municipal year	10	18	28%
Number of Councillors who have completed Leadership Academy programme during the course of the Municipal Year	1	-	-

The programme of member development has provided briefings to keep members up to date on key Council projects and initiatives. A key element of the member development programme in 2021-22 has been the continuation of budget workshops programme successfully introduced in the previous municipal year. The workshops have provided a forum to enable all Councillors to discuss the budget challenges for 2022-23 and later years. Three workshops were held over the course of the municipal year and engagement with the sessions was high.

A number of briefings have been held to keep members up to date on “hot topics” and important initiatives by the Council and partners such as the Vaccine Booster Programme, the Joint Committee for Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community and Permitted Development. Following the tragic murder of David Ames MP an urgent briefing was held on Councillor Safety led by Essex Police which was attended by well over half of the Council.

Planning and licensing training has also been provided to ensure that members are kept up to date with developments in these fields and to ensure that there is a wide pool of members able to sit on the Planning and Licensing Committees. The Group was also involved in the planning of the induction process for new councillors elected in May 2021.

## **4.2 Councillor Development Charter**

The Group oversaw and monitored the work for the successful reassessment of Charter Development Status (previously known as Charter Status for Elected Member Development) in April 2022. This is the fourth time that the Council has been successfully assessed against the Charter standard.

This involved the assessment of the Council’s member development policies and processes against the following criteria:

- There is a clear commitment to councillor development and support;
- The council has a strategic approach to councillor development;
- Learning and development is effective in building capacity.

The assessment is conducted by the submission of portfolio of evidence demonstrating how the Council believes it meets the criteria, which is then followed by an online assessment day where an Assessment Team interview key Councillors and officers. The Group would like it put on record its thanks to all those who met the assessment team in April

The full assessment report is at Appendix 2 but in summary, the Assessors highlighted the following as particular strengths:-

- *Top political and managerial commitment. High level support from leader as the chair of Member Development Group. Key officer support from new Chief Executive and Democratic Services Officers.*

- *Member Development Group is high profile and strategic in focus.*
- *Newly revised Councillor Development Policy and Strategy led by Member Development Group that supports the priorities outlined in the Better Colchester Strategic Plan.*
- *Promotion of the role of councillor via website and active role in schools through Councillor Multi Schools Resources.*
- *Member development programme has high level of participation - 84% via MS Teams. Sessions recorded for future use and resource. Member Development programme is responsive to councillor needs e.g. recent events on modern slavery.*
- *Mandatory training modules are in place around planning/licensing, safeguarding and GDPR.*
- *Budget for member development is sustainable £8k.*
- *Training Needs Analysis carried out in January 2021. High response of 37 councillors and the report to the Member Development Group identified clear priorities and links to the Better Colchester Strategic Plan.*
- *New role profiles in place.*
- *Commitment to leadership development, one councillor per year provided place on LGA Leadership Academy.*
- *Executive Management Team and Cabinet have regular dialogue. Senior Management team regularly attend councillor development sessions.*

Whilst the Group welcomes all these highlighted strengths, in the context of this particular report it particularly noted the comments that the Member Development Group was high profile and strategic in focus, and the recognition of the work it had led on the updated Councillor Development Policy and Strategy.

The Assessors also highlighted the following as areas of continuous improvement

- *To take forward a more focused approach to promoting the role of councillor in order to increase diversity. Utilise LGA Be A Councillor resources and support, look at working with political groups to hold events and have a package to support people in the councillor role including initiatives such as a Carers allowance, Parental Leave Policy etc.*
- *To relaunch, rebadge and have a brand for member development, to raise its profile and to include access to the LGA virtual learning modules.*



- *Look at the values and behaviours of councillors and how it can support more effective collaborative working between councillors, including using social media effectively.*
- *To take forward more joint development between Executive Management Team and Cabinet.*
- *Further develop the role of strategic partners in member development delivery and participation at relevant development events and activities. Include partner involvement in the induction programme following the May 2022 elections.*
- *To develop an approach to Personal Development Plans for Councillor's through conversations via MS Teams to support individual development.*
- *Ensure continued commitment to leadership development to support effective councillor succession planning.*
- *Widen councillor access to LGA leadership resources, particularly the virtual resources.*
- *To commit and take forward Charter Plus commitment and accreditation.*

The Group will look to take forward these issues and they will form the basis of its work programme going forward.

#### **4.3 Member Development Budget and Resources**

The expenditure on the member development budget for the 2021-22 municipal year was £1628. This is a considerable underspend on the budget of £8000. The emphasis on training is to use in house resources where possible, and only commission external specialist training when absolutely necessary and this has contributed to the underspend on the budget. For instance this year Licensing training was provided in house rather than commissioning the consultants used previously. In addition, the Council did not nominate a member to attend Leadership Academy this municipal year, which would normally cost in the region of £1000.

The major expenditure on the budget has been the provision of Scrutiny training which was commissioned from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny

Member development is supported by the Democratic Services Team. Considerable time and effort is put into providing sessions and development by officers right across the organisation. The Group wishes to formally record its appreciation for the time and effort that officers and partners put into providing development opportunities for Councillors.

## **5. Conclusion**

The value of the work of the Group and the member development which it oversees has been demonstrated by the successful assessment for the Councillor Development Charter. Looking forward it will seek to build on this and the recommendations of the Charter Assessment Team to develop processes and policies further to improve the development offer to Councillors.





Attendance at Training and Development Opportunities 2021-22 Municipal Year

Councillors	Number of events attended
Barber, Lewis	3
Barton, Lyn	6
Bentley, Kevin	1
Bourne, Tina	4
Burrows, Michelle	17
Buston, Roger	14
Chapman, Nigel	14
Chillingworth, Peter	11
Chuah, Helen	11
Coleman, Phil	2
Cope, Nick	6
Cory, Mark	13
Cox, Pam	9
Crow, Simon	11
Davidson, Robert	6
Dundas, Paul	13
Ellis, Andrew	7
Fox, Adam	19
Goacher, Mark	2
Goss, Martin	8
Hagon, Jeremy	18
Harris, Dave	21
Hayter, Chris	0
Hazell, Pauline	4
Hogg, Mike	13
Jowers, John	0
King, David	13
Laws, Darius	6
Leatherdale, Martin	7
Lilley, Michael	7
Lissimore, Sue	11
Loveland, Derek	1
Luxford Vaughan, Andrea	18
Maclean, Jackie	2
Mannion, Roger	14
McCarthy, Sam	5
Moore, Patricia	15
Nissen, Steph	6
Oxford, Beverley	11
Oxford, Gerard	9
Oxford, Philip	0
Pearson, Chris	9
Scordis, Lee	4
Scott-Boutell, Lesley	9
Tate, Leigh	15
Warnes, Martyn	20
Whitehead, Lorcan	12
Willetts, Dennis	12
Wood, Barbara	15
Young, Julie	12
Young, Tim	13
	479
<b>Total sessions attended:</b>	<b>479</b>

Training event	Planning Training	Induction Event with Executive Management Team	Licensing Act 2003 training	Tackling the Climate Challenge	Licensing Act 2003 training	Being an Effective Councillor - LGIU	Delays in Elective Surgery	Planning in the AONB
Dates	19-May-21	17-May-21	08-Jun-21	15-Jun-21	21-Jun-21	05-Jul-22	06-Jul-21	13-Jul-21
<b>Attendees</b>	Buston, Roger Chuah, Helen Hagon, Jeremy Hazell, Pauline Hogg, Mike Lilley, Michael Loveland, Derek Luxford Vaughan, Anc Mannion, Roger Cox, Pam Maclean, Jackie Whitehead, Lorcan Willetts, Dennis	Burrows, Michelle Cox, Pam Hagon, Jeremy Laws, Darius Leatherdale, Martin Mannion, Roger Nissen, Steph Tate, Leigh	Buston, Roger Chuah, Helen Hagon, Jeremy Hogg, Mike Moore, Patricia Oxford, Beverley	Burrows, Michelle Buston, Roger Chillingworth, Peter Cory, Mark Cox, Pam Crow, Simon Davidson, Robert Dundas, Paul Fox, Adam Hogg, Mike King, David Lissimore, Sue Luxford Vaughan, Andrea McCarthy, Sam Nissen, Steph Oxford, Beverley Oxford, Gerard Pearson, Chris Tate, Leigh Warnes, Martyn Whitehead, Lorcan Willetts, Dennis Young, Julie	Cope, Nick Leatherdale, Martin Tate, Leigh Young, Tim	Warnes, Martyn	Barton, Lyn Burrows, Michelle Buston, Roger Chuah, Helen Cope, Nick Cory, Mark Dundas, Paul Fox, Adam Goss, Martin Hagon, Jeremy Harris, Dave Hogg, Mike Lilley, Michael Luxford Vaughan, Andrea McCarthy, Sam Moore, Patricia Oxford, Beverley Warnes, Martyn Whitehead, Lorcan Willetts, Dennis Young, Julie Young, Tim	Parish Cllrs Tony Ellis : Chapman, Nigel
	0							

Data Protection Training (Online module)	Risk Management Briefing	Budget Workshop	Scrutiny Training	Planning on the Ice Briefing	Ice Briefing	Town Deal briefing	Cyber Security Briefing	Community Safety briefing	Integrated Healthcare - Gambling Act 2005	Awareness and Prevention	Awareness and Prevention
01-Jul-22	19-Jul-21	20-Sep-21	27-Sep-21	28-Sep-21	05-Oct-21	14-Oct-21	18-Oct-21	26-Oct-21	27-Oct-21	02-Nov-21	November
and Martin Bottwood	Burrows, Michelle	Barber, Lewis	Cory, Mark	Burrows, Michelle	Burrows, Michelle	Burrows, Michelle	Barton, Lyn	Burrows, Michelle	Buston, Roger	Barton, Lyn	Harris, Dave
Bartley, Kevin	Buston, Roger	Burrows, Michelle	Willets, Dennis	Chillingworth, Peter	Chapman, Nigel	Chillingworth, Peter	Bourne, Tina	Chapman, Nigel	Chuah, Helen	Burrows, Michelle	Tate, Leigh
Bourne, Tina	Cox, Pam	Buston, Roger	Wood, Barbara	Cory, Mark	Chillingworth, Peter	Fox, Adam	Chapman, Nigel	Fox, Adam	Hagon, Jeremy	Chapman, Nigel	
Burrows, Michelle	Crow, Simon	Bourne, Tina		Fox, Adam	Cory, Mark	Hagon, Jeremy	Chillingworth, Peter	Goss, Martin	Harris, Dave	Chuah, Helen	
Buston, Roger	Ellis, Andrew	Crow, Simon		Goss, Martin	Ellis, Andrew	Harris, Dave	Chuah, Helen	Harris, Dave	Hogg, Mike	Cory, Mark	
Chapman, Nigel	Fox, Adam	Cory, Mark		Hagon, Jeremy	Fox, Adam	Lilley, Michael	Cory, Mark	King, David	Moore, Patricia	Davidson, Robert	
Chillingworth, Peter	Goss, Martin	Dundas, Paul		Harris, Dave	Goss, Martin	Luxford Vaughan, Andrea	Crow, Simon	Lilley, Michael	Oxford, Beverley	Dundas, Paul	
Chuah, Helen	Harris, Dave	Fox, Adam		King, David	Hagon, Jeremy	Mannion, Roger	Davidson, Robert	Oxford, Beverley	Tate, Leigh	Ellis, Andrew	
Coleman, Phil	King, David	Goss, Martin		Lissimore, Sue	Harris, Dave	Pearson, Chris	Dundas, Paul	Warnes, Martyn	Young, Tim	Fox, Adam	
Cope, Nick	Luxford Vaughan, Andrea	Hagon, Jeremy		Moore, Patricia	King, David	Tate, Leigh	Ellis, Andrew	Whitehead, Lorcan		Harris, Dave	
Cory, Mark	Mannion, Roger	Harris, Dave		Oxford, Beverley	Laws, Darius	Warnes, Martyn	Fox, Adam	Young, Tim		Hogg, Mike	
Cox, Pam	Nissen, Steph	King, David		Pearson, Chris	Leatherdale, Martin	Whitehead, Lorcan	Hagon, Jeremy			King, David	
Ellis, Andrew	Pearson, Chris	Leatherdale, Martin		Scordis, Lee	Lilley, Michael	Willets, Dennis	Harris, Dave			Lissimore, Sue	
Fox, Adam	Warnes, Martyn	Lilley, Michael		Scott-Boutell, Lesley	Luxford Vaughan, Andrea	Wood, Barbara	Hogg, Mike			Luxford Vaughan, Andrea	
Goss, Martin	Willets, Dennis	Lissimore, Sue		Warnes, Martyn	Moore, Patricia	Young, Tim	Laws, Darius			Mannion, Roger	
Hagon, Jeremy	Wood, Barbara	Pearson, Chris		Whitehead, Lorcan	Scott-Boutell, Lesley		Lilley, Michael			Moore, Patricia	
Hazell, Pauline	Young, Julie	Luxford Vaughan, Andrea			Warnes, Martyn		Lissimore, Sue			Tate, Leigh	
Hogg, Mike		Oxford, Gerard			Whitehead, Lorcan		Luxford Vaughan, Andrea			Warnes, Martyn	
King, David		Tate, Leigh			Wood, Barbara		Mannion, Roger			Wood, Barbara	
Laws, Darius		Warnes, Martyn			Young, Julie		Moore, Patricia			Young, Tim	
Leatherdale, Martin		Willets, Dennis			Pearson, Chris		Oxford, Beverley				
Lissimore, Sue		Wood, Barbara					Oxford, Gerard				
Luxford Vaughan, Andrea		Young, Tim					Scordis, Lee				
Mannion, Roger							Scott-Boutell, Lesley				
McCarthy, Sam							Tate, Leigh				
Moore, Patricia							Warnes, Martyn				
Oxford, Beverley							Willets, Dennis				
Oxford, Gerard							Wood, Barbara				
Scott-Boutell, Lesley							Young, Tim				
Tate, Leigh											
Warnes, Martyn											
Whitehead, Lorcan											
Willets, Dennis											
Wood, Barbara											
Wood, Barbara											
Young, Julie											
Young, Tim											

Appendix 1

Joint Committee for Tendering Colchester Borders Garden Community	Committee briefing on Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents	Budget Workshop	Central Colchester Neighbourhood Pilot	LGA Webiner on Personal Safety for Councillors	Briefing on the Vaccine Booster Programme and Volunteering	Media training	Briefing on Permitted Development	Budget Workshop	Planning Training	Suicide Awareness	Central Colchester Neighbourhood Pilot Update
08-Nov-21	18-Nov-21	22-Nov-21	06-Dec-21	08-Dec-21	15-Dec-21	16-Dec-21	05-Jan-22	17-Jan-22	28-Jan-22	10-Feb-22	10-Mar-22
Barber, Lewis Burrows, Michelle Buston, Roger Chapman, Nigel Chuah, Helen Cory, Mark Dundas, Paul Ellis, Andrew Fox, Adam Goacher, Mark Goss, Martin Hagon, Jeremy Harris, Dave Hogg, Mike King, David Lissimore, Sue Luxford Vaughan, Andrea McCarthy, Sam Moore, Patricia Oxford, Gerard Warnes, Martyn Wood, Barbara Young, Julie Young, Tim	Barton, Lyn Chuah, Helen Hazell, Pauline Lilley, Michael Mannion, Roger Oxford, Gerard Warnes, Martyn	Burrows, Michelle Buston, Roger Chapman, Nigel Chillingworth, Peter Cope, Nick Cory, Mark Cox, Pam Crow, Simon Dundas, Paul Fox, Adam Hagon, Jeremy Harris, Dave King, David Luxford Vaughan, Andrea Mannion, Roger Oxford, Gerard Pearson, Chris Tate, Leigh Warnes, Martyn Whitehead, Lorcan Willetts, Dennis Young, Julie	Barton, Lyn Buston, Roger Crow, Simon Dundas, Paul Harris, Dave Pearson, Chris Scott-Boutell, Lesley Tate, Leigh Warnes, Martyn Whitehead, Lorcan	Lilley, Michael Wood, Barbara	Burrows, Michelle Chillingworth, Peter Chuah, Helen Cope, Nick Crow, Simon Davidson, Robert Dundas, Paul Fox, Adam Hagon, Jeremy Harris, Dave Hogg, Mike Leatherdale, Martin Lilley, Michael Luxford Vaughan, Andrea Moore, Patricia Oxford, Beverley Scordis, Lee Scott-Boutell, Lesley Warnes, Martyn Young, Julie	Crow, Simon Dundas, Paul Oxford, Beverley	Barton, Lyn Chillingworth, Peter Chapman, Nigel Chuah, Helen Cory, Mark Cox, Pam Crow, Simon Dundas, Paul Davidson, Robert Dundas, Paul Fox, Adam Harris, Dave Ellis, Andrew Fox, Adam Harris, Dave Hagon, Jeremy Hogg, Mike Lilley, Michael Lissimore, Sue Luxford Vaughan, Anc Lilley, Michael Lissimore, Sue McCarthy, Sam Luxford Vaughan, Anc Mannion, Roger Maclean, Jackie Moore, Patricia Tate, Leigh Warnes, Martyn Willetts, Dennis Young, Julie Coleman, Phil King, David	Barber, Lewis Buston, Roger Cory, Mark Cox, Pam Chapman, Nigel Cope, Nick Crow, Simon Dundas, Paul Fox, Adam Harris, Dave Ellis, Andrew King, David Laws, Darius Leatherdale, Martin Lilley, Michael Lissimore, Sue Luxford Vaughan, Anc Mannion, Roger McCarthy, Sam Moore, Patricia Nissen, Steph Oxford, Gerard Pearson, Chris Tate, Leigh Warnes, Martyn Whitehead, Lorcan Willetts, Dennis Wood, Barbara Young, Julie	Buston, Roger Burrows, Michelle Chapman, Nigel Chillingworth, Peter Cope, Nick Davidson, Robert Fox, Adam Goacher, Mark Hagon, Jeremy Harris, Dave Hazell, Pauline Lilley, Michael Lissimore, Sue Mannion, Roger Moore, Patricia Scott-Boutell, Lesley Tate, Leigh Wood, Barbara Young, Julie Young, Tim Warnes, Martyn Barton, Lyn	Burrows, Michelle Nissen, Steph	Buston, Roger Chapman, Nigel Crow, Simon Harris, Dave Hogg, Mike Lissimore, Sue Luxford Vaughan, Anc Nissen, Steph Oxford, Beverley Oxford, Gerard Wood, Barbara Young, Julie

Financial and Employment Support to residents	Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking
16-Mar-22	28-Mar-22
Bourne, Tina	Burrows, Michelle
Chapman, Nigel	Chapman, Nigel
Cox, Pam	Chillingworth, Peter
Dundas, Paul	Fox, Adam
Fox, Adam	Hagon, Jeremy
Hagon, Jeremy	Harris, Dave
Harris, Dave	Hogg, Mike
Luxford Vaughan, Anc	King, David
Mannion, Roger	Lilley, Michael
Moore, Patricia	Luxford Vaughan, And
Scordis, Lee	Mannion, Roger
Scott-Boutell, Lesley	Moore, Patricia
Whitehead, Lorcan	Scott-Boutell, Lesley
Wood, Barbara	Young, Tim
Young, Tim	



## Appendix 2

### Councillor Development Charter

#### Assessor's Comments

##### Criteria 1: There is a clear commitment to councillor development and support

##### Assessor's comments

There is an impressive commitment and passion for member development throughout Colchester Borough Council (CBC), evident on the assessment day from both councillors and officers. The member development programme benefits from experienced and dedicated officer support, which is highly valued and trusted by councillors. There is a sustainable budget for member development and a strong commitment from the council's leadership, including its new Chief Executive, to maintaining and improving the development programme.

Officers and councillors alike adapted quickly during the Covid-19 pandemic, learning new skills which enabled them to continue to deliver CBC's member development activities virtually. Online learning has increased the accessibility of the councillor development programme for many members (particularly those with work or caring commitments) and attendance levels at training events has risen to 84%. Many councillors felt that virtual learning had enabled the programme to become more flexible and responsive to their needs.

It was recognised that, with public health restrictions now lifted, the council will need to find the balance between remote and in-person training sessions to meet different councillor learning styles. For example, some witnesses on the assessment day spoke of missing the informal networking opportunities that in-person learning provides, whilst others were keen to maintain the virtual learning offer.

Colchester is a diverse area, however this diversity is not fully reflected in the councillor cohort. This was recognised as an issue by a number of councillors we spoke to on the assessment day, with some political groups already considering how they can attract a wider variety of candidates through their selection processes. It is recommended that the council supports political groups in promoting the role of councillors through an enhanced Be a Councillor programme. The council should also look to put in place a package to support people in the councillor role including initiatives such as a Carers allowance, Parental Leave Policy etc.

Many members we spoke to expressed concern regarding the nature of political discourse in Colchester and how this could deter potential candidates from standing as councillors. The assessment team recommends that the Member Development Group (MDG) leads a short task group looking at behaviours and values of members and develops some support/guidance to promote them - particularly around the use of social media.

## **Criteria 2: The Council has a strategic approach to councillor development**

### **Assessor's comments**

CBC has an experienced and engaged Member Development Group (MDG), which has led on the development of a Member Development Strategy which links with the strategic objectives of the council. The MDG are clearly champions for the benefits of member development and committed to working constructively with officers to continuously improve the councillor development offer.

There has been a good response to the council's Training Needs Analysis for councillors, with 37 members providing a response. There was an appetite from witnesses to further building on the TNA's and offering 1-1 individual development conversations with councillors. These could be led by the officer team in Democratic Services and used to produce individual Personal Development Plans for members. Democratic Services are planning on offering a session on their support offer immediately post elections. It would be useful to introduce the enhanced 1-1 and Personal Development Plan process at this time, in order to secure early buy-in.

CBC has committed to sending one councillor per year to participate in the LGA Leadership Academy. It was felt by many witnesses that there was an opportunity to make further use of LGA training courses, especially their new virtual opportunities and resources. This would help enhance CBC's leadership development programme for members and support effective succession planning.

## **Criteria 3: Learning and development is effective in building capacity**

### **Assessor's comments**

CBC has improved its approach to evaluating member development since the last Charter assessment. Evaluation surveys have a good response rate, are reported back to MDG and improvements made as a result. Officers are keen to 're-launch and re-brand'

the member development offer at CBC, to reflect the improvements made, the professionalism of what is on offer and greater inclusion of relevant LGA materials.

CBC works constructively with partners and the pandemic has highlighted the key role that councillors can play as community leaders. Relationships with partners can be further developed through including them in member activities and training, for example by asking partners to lead member development sessions or sit as co-optees on scrutiny reviews. The assessment team recommends that CBC invites partners to lead on sessions within its induction programme post elections, to help foster good relationships between new councillors and partners at the earliest opportunity.

### **Continuous Improvement**

- To take forward a more focused approach to promoting the role of councillor in order to increase diversity. Utilise LGA Be A Councillor resources and support, look at working with political groups to hold events and have a package to support people in the councillor role including initiatives such as a Carers allowance, Parental Leave Policy etc.
- To relaunch, rebadge and have a brand for member development, to raise its profile and to include access to the LGA virtual learning modules.
- Look at the values and behaviours of councillors and how it can support more effective collaborative working between councillors, including using social media effectively.
- To take forward more joint development between Executive Management Team and Cabinet.
- Further develop the role of strategic partners in member development delivery and participation at relevant development events and activities. Include partner involvement in the induction programme following the May 2022 elections.
- To develop an approach to Personal Development Plans for Councillor's through conversations via MS Teams to support individual development.
- Ensure continued commitment to leadership development to support effective councillor succession planning.
- Widen councillor access to LGA leadership resources, particularly the virtual resources.

- To commit and take forward Charter Plus commitment and accreditation.

### **Special Mention**

- Top political and managerial commitment. High level support from leader as the chair of Member Development Group. Key officer support from new Chief Executive and Democratic Services Officers.
- Member Development Group is high profile and strategic in focus.
- Newly revised Councillor Development Policy and strategy led by Member Development Group that supports the priorities outlined in the Better Colchester Strategic Plan.
- Promotion of the role of councillor via website and active role in schools through Councillor Multi Schools Resources.
- Member development programme has high level of participation - 84% via MS Teams. Sessions recorded for future use and resource. Member Development programme is responsive to councillor needs e.g. recent events on modern slavery.
- Mandatory training modules are in place around planning/licensing, safeguarding and GDPR.
- Budget for member development is sustainable £8k.
- Training Needs Analysis carried out in January 2021. High response of 37 councillors and the report to the Member Development Group identified clear priorities and links to the Better Colchester Strategic Plan.
- New role profiles in place.
- Commitment to leadership development, one councillor per year provided place on LGA Leadership Academy.
- Executive Management Team and Cabinet have regular dialogue. Senior Management team regularly attend councillor development sessions.
- Good response to member development evaluation surveys.

- Shared learning opportunities with Parish and Town councils.
- Looking to have a specific session on member development post May 2022 elections to raise the profile of the programme and to outline the support the Council can provide to new members.

**Assessor's comments**

Thank you to members and officers at the council for making the assessment team feel so 'virtually' welcome. Well done! The Council can continue to use the Charter logo and an interim light touch discussion to be scheduled around October 2023. Congratulations on your success

**Recommendation from the verification team**

Colchester Borough Council continues to achieve the Charter Standard. A review of progress against the assessment team's recommendations for continuous improvement will take place in approximately 18 months.



# PETITIONS, PUBLIC STATEMENTS, QUESTIONS

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

Date of Meeting	Details of Members of the Public	Subject Matter	Form of Response	Date Completed
Council, 25 May 2022 and 23 June 2022	Sir Bob Russell	Cabinet system of Council governance	-	-
Cabinet, 8 June 2022	John Akker MBE	The Council's position on the development of new nuclear at Bradwell	Verbal response provided at the meeting by Councillor David King, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy.	8 June 2022
Cabinet, 8 June 2022	Sir Bob Russell	Trust in politics and Middlewick	Verbal response provided at the meeting by Councillor David King, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, and Councillor Fox, Portfolio Holder for Local Economy and Transformation.	8 June 2022
Cabinet, 8 June 2022	Nick Chilvers	Levelling up south east Colchester	Verbal response provided at the meeting by Councillor David King, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, and Councillor Fox, Portfolio Holder for Local Economy and Transformation..	8 June 2022
Cabinet, 8 June 2022	Alan Skinner	Lifelong Learning	Verbal response provided at the meeting by Councillor David King, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy.	8 June 2022

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