

# Cabinet Meeting

**Online Meeting, Virtual Meeting Platform  
Wednesday, 19 August 2020 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.

## Information for Members of the Public

### Access to information and meetings

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

Occasionally certain issues, for instance, commercially sensitive information or details concerning an individual have to be considered in private. When this is the case an announcement will be made, the live broadcast will end and the meeting will be moved to consider in private.

### Have Your Say!

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[Cabinet Have Your Say form](#)

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**COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**Cabinet**  
**Wednesday, 19 August 2020 at 18:00**

**The Cabinet Members are:**

Leader and Chairman      Councillor Mark Cory (Liberal Democrats)  
                                    Councillor Adam Fox (Labour and Co-operative)  
                                    Councillor Martin Goss (Liberal Democrats)  
                                    Councillor Theresa Higgins (Liberal Democrats)  
                                    Councillor David King (Liberal Democrats)  
                                    Councillor Mike Lilley (Labour and Co-operative)  
                                    Councillor Julie Young (Labour)

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

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

**Live Broadcast**

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

<https://www.youtube.com/user/ColchesterCBC>

**1 Welcome and Announcements (Virtual Meetings)**

The Chairman will welcome members of the public and Councillors to the meeting and remind those participating to mute their microphones when not talking. The Chairman will invite all Councillors and Officers participating in the meeting to introduce themselves. The Chairman will, at regular intervals, ask Councillors to indicate if they wish to speak or ask a question and Councillors will be invited to speak in turn by the Chairman. A vote on each item of business will be taken by roll call of each Councillor and the outcome of each vote will be confirmed by the Democratic Services Officer.

**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 8 July 2020 are a correct record.

**08-07-20 public version**

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**5 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.

**6 Have Your Say! (Virtual Meetings)**

Members of the public may make representations to the meeting. Each representation may be no longer than three minutes (500 words). Members of the public may register their wish to address the meeting by registering online 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.

**7 Waste, Environment and Transportation**

**7(i) Final Report of the Waste Task and Finish Group**

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The Cabinet will consider a report setting out the recommendations from the Waste and Recycling Task and Finish Group

**8 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)**

**9 Minutes (Part B)**

The Cabinet will consider whether the draft not for publication extract from the minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2020 can be confirmed as a correct record.

**9(i) 08-07-20 not for publication extract**



**CABINET**  
**8 July 2020**

*Present:* - Councillor Cory (Chairman)  
Councillors Fox, Goss, Higgins, King, Lilley, Luxford  
Vaughan and J. Young.

*Also in attendance:* - Councillors Bentley, Bourne,  
Dundas, Hazell, B. Oxford, G, Oxford and Warnes

**469. Minutes**

*RESOLVED* that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

**Councillor King (in respect of being a director of North Essex Garden Communities Ltd) and Councillor J. Young (in respect of being a substitute director of North Garden Communities Ltd) declared a non-pecuniary interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).**

**470. Urgent item – North Essex Garden Communities Ltd**

The Chairman announced that he had agreed to take an urgent item on North Essex Garden Communities Ltd. A report by the Strategic Director, Policy and Place, had been circulated to each member. The urgency arose as the Council as shareholder needed to confirm along with Essex Council, Braintree District Council and Tendring District Council its agreement to the recommendation of NEGC Ltd to commence the winding up of the company. Any delay would mean that the Council would incur additional costs if the item were to be delayed to the next meeting of the Cabinet.

Councillor Dundas attended and with the consent of the Chairman addressed the Cabinet. He explained that he supported the recommendation, but raised a number of detailed financial queries.

Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, indicated that he would respond in writing to the detailed questions. However, he stressed that the Council had a moral duty to pay its outstanding contribution towards NEGC Ltd and he remained confident that issues could be resolved without the need for legal action.

Ian Vipond, Strategic Director of Policy and Place, introduced the background to the report and explained that NEGC Ltd would stop trading from 31 August 2020. It was hoped that issues could be resolved without the appointment of a liquidator.

Councillor Luxford Vaughan, Portfolio Holder for Customers indicated that the Council

needed at some point to review the performance of NEGC Ltd and the value for money it had provided and learn from the experience.

Councillor J. Young, Portfolio Holder for Business and Culture, explained that the administration had been open and transparent on issues relating to NEGC Ltd and had kept members well informed as matters developed.

*RESOLVED* that:-

(a) the recommendation of the North Essex Garden Communities Ltd Board on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020 to take all necessary steps to wind up the three Local Delivery Vehicles, namely Colchester Braintree Borders Ltd, Tendring Colchester Borders Ltd and West of Braintree Ltd, as set out in paragraph 4.29 of the Strategic Director's report, be noted.

(b) The Council, as Shareholder, take all necessary steps to wind up North Essex Garden Communities Ltd.

#### **471. Have Your Say!**

Richard Piatkowski addressed Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 5(1) of the Remote Meetings Procedure Rules. He explained his concern about the speed with which the new "Garden Club" was being progressed. No residents had been consulted, and no notice was provided. The first most residents knew about this was via local forums and hearsay. This should not be a fait accompli. The proposals should be properly evaluated and considered alongside other proposals. Currently the plans were incomplete and therefore could not be properly considered. No agreement to proceed should be possible without making a robust plan available for consideration and scrutiny.

Councillor Cory, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, and Councillor Goss, Portfolio Holder for Waste, Environment and Transportation, thanked him for his comments and explained that the proposals had been subject to detailed scrutiny. The administration had a good record of communicating with residents, particularly during the Covid 19 emergency.

Fabian Green addressed Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 5(1) of the Remote Meetings Procedure Rules. He explained that the Roman Wall was a cherished part of Colchester's rich heritage and was one of the most significant features of the town centre. Not only was it a key asset to the tourism sector, but it was one of the few remaining Roman structures within the country and brought investment in many other ways. No one in Colchester wanted to see the Roman Wall put at risk in any way. However, leaving it in the hands of a private investor had so far proven that this could happen. Already the Middleborough part of the wall had been put at risk already, with billboards erected on stilts on top of the wall. Fortunately, however, the owners were recently told they had to take them down. The current owners of this section of the wall were selling it and providing the Council with an extremely generous offer which presented the Council with the opportunity to provide a cast-iron guarantee on its future protection and preservation. This would bring with it more opportunities, such as the chance to complete the lighting up of the whole of the Roman Wall.

He asked whether the Council given serious considerations to purchasing the section of the wall from the current owners, and if not what safeguards have been put in place to ensure that the wall will not ever be ruined or harmed in any way in the future?

Councillor Cory, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, explained that the Council had looked after the Roman Wall and would continue to do so. The Council had been speaking to the owners of this part of the wall and he hoped to be in a position to make an announcement soon.

John Akker addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 5(1) of the Remote Meetings Procedure Rules to request that the Cabinet refer concerns about the Planning Committee's consideration of a planning application relating to development on Mersea to the Local Government Ombudsman. There was considerable concern that three members of the Committee who expressed strong objections to the application during the course of the debate had abstained in the vote. If they had voted against the application it would have been rejected. There was also concern about the way the Committee had been conducted and that misleading information had been provided. There was speculation that that the Committee may have further information supplied to it in private and been put under immense pressure behind the scenes. Also, a legal opinion had been referred to but was not placed before the Committee for itself to consider. The Cabinet should refer these issues arising to the National Local Government Ombudsman for an investigation and report. This independent investigation would help restore public trust.

Councillor Lilley, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Wellbeing and Public Safety responded and explained that members of the Planning Committee considered applications on the merits of the case and reached their own individual views on applications. Votes were not taken on party political lines. If there was evidence that other information had been given to the Committee improperly then this should be referred to the Council's Monitoring Officer.

#### **472. Housing Revenue Account: Financial Model and New Council Housebuilding Programme Updates**

The Assistant Directors of Place and Client Services and Corporate and Improvement Services submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor Fox introduced the report which set out a £250 million investment in a new Council housebuilding programme over the next three years. This was based on the sound management of the Housing Revenue Account and the current low interest rates. It would lead to the development of 350 additional affordable homes across the borough and the redevelopment of Elfreda House. Other sheltered housing schemes were in the pipeline for redevelopment.

Councillor J. Young, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Performance expressed her support for the proposals and stressed the benefits to residents of the redevelopment of sheltered housing schemes.

*RESOLVED* that:-

- (a) The positive changes to the 30-year HRA financial model since the commencement of the 2019 “New Council Housebuilding Programme” as set out in the Assistant Directors’ report be noted.
- (b) Given the improved position of the HRA, additional proposals to increase and extend the “New Council Housebuilding Programme” that are described broadly in the Assistant Director’s report be explored through provisional feasibility work in the manner that is described in the report, in order to sample test the viability of different affordable housing delivery methods.
- (c) The more specific options identified for further phases of the “garage sites” and “sheltered housing”, “targeted acquisition(s)”, “town centre site” and “acquisitions” be actively pursued and taken forwards as soon as practicable; and through to their completion and future occupation wherever they remain considered viable.
- (d) Financial provision be made in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) New Council Housebuilding budget for 2020/21, up to £4.585million as set out in Section 10 of the Assistant Directors’ report and the accompanying not for publication Part B Report; and that future financial provisions should be included within the annual budget setting processes as required to continue to drive forwards the viable proposals and create a “pipeline” of housing development from 1 April 2021 onwards.
- (e) Work commence on a new HRA Asset Management Strategy and 30-year HRA Business Plan in 2021, which any progressed options will form a part of, and that these plans will come into effect from 1 April 2022.
- (f) Authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Place and Client Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing to appoint Colchester Amphora Homes Ltd (CAHL) and Colchester Borough Homes (CBH), where required, to help the Council progress any housing projects as set out herein.
- (g) Additional HRA expenditure in 2020/21 of up to £4.585million be approved as set out in paragraph 2.4, section 10 of the Assistant Directors’ report and the accompanying not for publication Part B Report, and authority be delegated to the section151 Officer to determine the split of funding of this additional expenditure between additional HRA borrowing and HRA revenue funding, which will be reported to Councillors as part of the regular financial monitoring of the HRA and Housing Investment Programme throughout the financial year.

## *REASONS*

There is a national housing crisis and Colchester is no different to anywhere else in requiring more homes, especially with regard to affordable homes. The Council is already starting to tackle this issue directly through its housing company, Colchester Amphora Homes Ltd, and through borrowing within the HRA to deliver the “New Council Housebuilding Programme” (NCHP), both of which are beginning to deliver homes for local residents in 2020. The Council appears on course to meet its ambition to deliver 350 new affordable homes over 5 years set in 2019. However, this decision is required in order to make further progress in advancing more schemes; continuing to provide a pipeline of affordable housing delivery that will run over a longer period.

The proposals to increase housebuilding considers the positive changes to the borrowing rates available to the HRA that have improved its current business modelling for the NHCP. With the improved business model position, additional borrowing is affordable and more attractive, being absorbed prudently in financial terms. The budget provisions need to be made for any meaningful work to be undertaken before April 2021, in order to explore options, with only those that are then assessed to be viable to be taken forwards to planning and construction phases.

Even when the 350 homes target was set in 2019, the current NHCP was agreed on the basis that these may not be the only steps that were taken over the next few years, and this decision to pursue further schemes again demonstrates the Council's commitment to delivering high quality affordable homes for the local communities that would otherwise remain on our housing needs register.

### *ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

The Council could decide not to pursue individual projects, or not to pursue any of the projects at all; however this would not make the maximum use of the borrowing capacity that the Council has, consequently missing an excellent opportunity to provide even more affordable housing for those most in need; which is a key priority of the Council as set out in the Strategic Plan. Whilst not all of the ideas may prove to be feasible or viable, it is too early to make an informed decision on this without undertaking some investigative work.

### **473. The Award of Three Contracts for the Construction, Delivery 24 New Affordable Housing at Four Sites Across Colchester**

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

Councillor Fox, Portfolio Holder for Housing, introduced the report and stressed the benefits to the local economy that would result from the award of these contracts. The Council had engaged positively with local firms and provided a pipeline of construction work as such firms emerged from lockdown,

*RESOLVED* that:-

- (a) To award a contract for the construction of 4 homes at Hardings Close, Aldham to the top-scoring contract at the value set out in the not for publication Appendix A.
- (b) In the event of any issues with the top-scoring contractor in decision (a) above, to award the contract to the next best-scoring contractor, at the value set out in the not for publication Appendix A.
- (c) Authority be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Housing to award a contract for the construction of 8 affordable homes at Military Road.
- (d) Authority be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Housing to award a contract for the construction of 12 affordable homes at Scarfe Way (6 homes) and Buffett Way (6

homes), Greenstead.

(e) Authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Place and Client Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to agree and implement all consequential contractual, legal, financial or other related matters for each of the above contracts once awarded and through to completion and occupation of the new homes.

(f) The (previously agreed) budget provisions required in 2020/21 and 2021/22 to deliver all 3 of the construction contracts and deliver the 24 new affordable homes be committed too.

### *REASONS*

The Council has committed to deliver 350 new affordable homes over 5 years between 2019 and 2024 and these contracts deliver part of that commitment. The first contract has been through the full tender evaluation process and should be awarded to allow the works to commence in a timely manner, in line with milestones and project delivery objectives previously agreed by the Council. The subsequent contracts are still within the tender process but will shortly be ready to award.

The design and specification of each of the sites has met the required planning regulations and planning approval has been granted. They have then undergone detailed technical design phases prior to procurement. The contracts deliver much needed affordable homes to an agreed budget that is sustainable within the Housing Revenue Account.

The first contract will be awarded to a local company after a fair and open tender process. The Council has not delayed its procurement for the housing contracts in order to ensure it plays a leadership role in timely opportunity to offer employment to the local economy that is particularly important at this time due to the impact of Covid-19.

### *ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

Not to agree the first contract and/or the request for delegated authority to appoint the forthcoming contractors; however, this would delay any award of a contract, which would in turn introduce delays to the project and delivery of affordable homes. This would not be consistent with previous intentions, or the strategic priorities of the Council and would result in more people remaining on the housing needs register, waiting for high quality affordable homes.

### **474. Waste and Recycling New Strategic Priority**

The Chief Operating Officer submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member together with the recommendation from the Scrutiny Panel meeting of 7 July 2020.

Councillor Goss, Portfolio Holder for Waste, Environment and Transportation, introduced the report. The proposals had been brought forward against the backdrop of a significant loss of income from revenue generating services. This had forced the Council to look at other ways of generating income. The collection of garden waste was a non-statutory service and 65% of Councils charged for its collection. In addition it had been proposed to

introduce wheeled bins where appropriate for the collection of garden waste only, due to the number of muscular-skeletal injuries suffered by waste collection staff handling garden waste in sacks. The administration had actively sought pre-scrutiny on the proposals. Whilst the administration did not want to introduce charges for the service, in view of the financial position difficult decisions needed to be taken. However, the administration was content to accept the recommendations from the Scrutiny Panel and not proceed with the recommended decisions in the Chief Operating Officer's report.

Councillor Cory, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, stressed that the Council did need to look at alternative sources of income. The support received from government to help deal with loss of income from the Covid 19 emergency had been less than anticipated. The Panel's recommendations were welcomed although it was considered that they should be reordered.

Councillor Bentley, Chair of Scrutiny Panel, attended and addressed Cabinet to present the recommendations from the Scrutiny Panel. The Panel had welcomed the opportunity to pre-scrutinise the proposals and had given them very careful consideration. Some inaccuracies in the report had been highlighted and the Panel had put forward a considered set of recommendations for Cabinet to consider.

Councillor Bourne attended and with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Cabinet. The proposed charges were unpopular and residents would not want to pay for a service which had previously been provided for free. What was of particular concern was that the lack of support for vulnerable residents and residents with low income and therefore the Panel considered the proposal needed a fundamental review. Closing the budget gap was a tough challenge which would require difficult choices. All Councillors had a responsibility to join in a mature debate about the future of Council services.

Councillor G. Oxford attended and with the consent of the Chairman addressed the Cabinet. In order for the proposed Task and Finish Group to undertake its task properly and for Councillors to take the necessary decisions it was important for Councillors to be provided with a detailed costed list of all statutory services and a detailed costed list of all the discretionary services the Council provides. This would help inform the debate and allow for a mature debate.

Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, indicated that this information was being collated by the Council's finance team. Councillor Cory indicated that all groups would be represented on the Task and Finish Group, which would report to Cabinet.

Councillor Lissimore attended and with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Cabinet to highlight her concerns about the proposals. She considered this was the introduction of wheeled bins by stealth. The IT systems used by the waste and recycling service needed further development before such proposals could be effectively introduced. It would also increase fly-tipping and bonfires, which was contrary to the Council's climate emergency resolution. In addition, the recycling site at Shrub End needed reorganising before such proposals could be introduced. Confirmation of future timescales was also sought.

Councillor Cory indicated that the Council had been seeking to work with Essex County

Council on improvements to the Shrub End site, but co-operation had not been forthcoming.

Councillor Cory and Councillor Goss responded to stress that the Task and Finish Group would include all parties. It would need to work quickly, and it was hoped it would be able to report within a month. It would need to look at all options and make a recommendation to Cabinet. The information on services that would underpin its work would be shared with all Councillors.

*RESOLVED that:-*

- (a) The recommendations set out in paragraphs 2.1 –2.3 of the Chief Operating Officer's report be withdrawn.
- (b) The following recommendations made by the Scrutiny Panel at its meeting on 7 July 2020 be accepted:
  - (i) A pause be taken on the proposal to introduce changes to the garden waste collection service;
  - (ii) A cross-party Task and Finish Group be set up to review waste service costs and implications and to include representatives of all party groups;
  - (iii) Ward councillors be consulted on any proposed changes to the use of wheelie bins and specifically as to the identification of geographical areas where wheelie bin usage would or would not be appropriate.
  - (iv) Further exploration be made of the five-point response to Budget Recovery agreed at the June Scrutiny Panel meeting, including the forensic understanding of statutory and non-statutory service provision by the Council;
  - (v) Cabinet continue to lobby central government for a long-term financial settlement for the benefit of this council's finances and its residents.

### *REASONS*

Cabinet had referred the proposals for pre-scrutiny and gave considerable weight to the recommendation from the Scrutiny Panel.

### *ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

To proceed with the proposals set out in the Chief Operating Officer's report or to proceed with the alternative options set out in the Chief Operating Officer's report, which were:-

Retain the current garden waste collection service. To continue as per the existing operating model. This will increase the Medium-Term Financial Forecast pressure in 2022/23 by a further £1.050m and this option provides no additional income or efficiency opportunities. The Council will accept the limited ability to improve performance and retain current levels of risk associated with staff wellbeing, financial sustainability, and service

resilience to external factors such as Covid-19.

Stop the collection of garden waste for all residents. Garden waste collection is a non-statutory service. Stopping the service would reduce expenditure by approximately £1m and will contribute to balancing the Medium-Term Financial Forecast. However, the Council will see a decrease in the recorded amount of recycling that the Borough produces, as residents look to either dispose of the garden waste within residual waste (black bags/bins) ending in landfill; an increased risk of fly tipping; and or an increased level of garden waste taken to the Household Waste Recycling Centres. It will also not provide any additional income opportunity and there may be increased revenue costs required to manage any increase in fly-tipped waste.

Provide a Garden Waste Collection Service. As set out in the report, but with no additional offers, services or added value. This option would be to provide a simple chargeable garden waste collection service only, for those wishing to use the service, which would be renewable annually, as set out in the report

#### **475. Stanway Western Approach Community Facility**

The Assistant Director, Communities, submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor Dundas attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Cabinet. He welcomed the proposals to bring forward a new community facility in Stanway. It was badly needed as the current parish hall at Villa Road was permanently booked. It would be an impressive landmark building. The key issue would be finding a tenant for the building. Many of the potential tenants had been badly affected by loss of income in the Covid 19 emergency. Whilst Stanway Parish Council had indicated it may be prepared to take on the role, it would only do so if it had full control of the building and input into the final design. The Council needed to engage with the Parish Council urgently as they needed certainty as they began to plan and budget for the future, and so the Council could explore other options if necessary.

Councillor Lilley, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Wellbeing and Public Safety, indicated that the Council was keen for the Parish Council to take on the management of the facility and discussions with them would continue.

*RESOLVED* that:-

(a) Authority be delegated on this project to authorise spend, and make decisions related to procurement and the award of contract to the Assistant Director of Community in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Wellbeing and Public Safety subject to confirmation that all the section106 funding are received, and the successful tender remains within budget.

(b) *RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL* that the estimated cost of the facility totaling £1.8m is included in the Council's capital programme.

(c) Approval is given to release the s106 funding detailed in Appendix 1 of the Assistant Director's report for this project once all sums are received.

#### *REASONS*

To shorten the decision-making process relating to section 106 spend on delivering a new community facility at Western Approach, Stanway.

To ensure the capital costs are included in the Council's capital programme.

#### *ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

If delegated authority is not assigned, the project could fall behind timescales resulting in the loss of section 106 funds.

#### **476. Request for Delegated Authority for the Award of the Contract for Parking Bay Sensors**

The Assistant Director Environment submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

*RESOLVED* that authority be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Wellbeing and Public Safety for the award of the contract set out in this report, for the supply, installation and maintenance of parking bay sensors at various locations in Colchester and Clacton.

#### *REASONS*

Initial funding for this project, which is coming from the North Essex Parking Partnership surplus funds, was approved by the Joint Parking Committee in January 2020.

The Council was unable to bring the decision to this meeting of Cabinet as there are more details to be finalised with Essex Highways. Traffic management will be a requirement and it is expected that being able to award this contract and to proceed with the project as quickly as possible will be beneficial in the current climate.

#### *ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

Not to delegate the powers requested as this would delay the decision and impact the ability to commence the scheme. The time/benefit balance would therefore suggest that delegation to the Portfolio Holder would be more effective and efficient use of Council resources, without introducing risks.

#### **477. Review of Governance Arrangements**

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

*RESOLVED* that the contents of the Monitoring Officer's report be agreed.

*RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:*

(a) the proposals contained in paragraphs 5.1 (b), 5.3, 5.4 and 5.7 of the Monitoring Officer's report; and

(b) that in accordance with the provisions of Section 17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the appointments to the Governance and Audit Committee and the Environmental and Sustainability Panel for the remainder of the municipal year shall not be on a Group basis and membership shall be as detailed in the Monitoring Officer's report.

*REASONS*

The reasons for the decisions were as set out in the Monitoring Officer's report.

*ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

Not to make the changes suggested in this report however this is not recommended.

**478. COVID 19 Finance Update**

The Assistant Director, Corporate and Improvement Services, submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and the recommendation in the draft minutes of the Governance and Audit Committee.

Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, introduced the report and updated Cabinet on further funding that had been announced by the government. The Income Support Scheme would reimburse the Council for two-thirds of its lost income for this year. Whilst this welcome, it was less than initially promised. The potential losses in income from car parking, commercial rents and sport and leisure were highlighted. The scale of the challenge in terms of closing the budget gap needed to be recognised. The Council's strategy was to try and remain as a low tax authority and to avoid impact on the vulnerable. It was very difficult to raise income significantly at this point.

Councillor Cory, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, stressed that the human cost of the Covid 19 emergency must not be forgotten and highlighted the excellent community work that had helped Colchester deal with the crisis, He would continue to lobby central government for continued and better support for local government.

Councillor Luxford Vaughan, Portfolio Holder for Customers, drew attention to paragraph 8.2 and considered that the reference to the development of a Strategic Growth Development Plan Document was premature in advance of the Local Plan meeting on 14 July 2020. Councillor King responded and explained that it was appropriate for a financial report to work on the basis of assumptions and there was no question of the decision prejudging or prejudicing future decisions of the Local Plan Committee.

Councillor Higgins, Portfolio Holder for Customers, drew attention to the recommendation from the Governance and Audit Committee in respect of forecast dividend for Colchester

Commercial Holdings Ltd. This was forecast at £226,000, which was significantly lower than the previous year, as a consequence of the impact of the Covid 19 emergency on its income streams.

*RESOLVED* that:-

- (a) The likely income impact on 2020/21 as set out in Table 1 of the Assistant Director's report be noted.
- (b) The revised 2020/21 Amphora dividend forecast of £226k as set out in Section 6.1 of the Assistant Director's report and as recommended by the Governance and Audit Committee be agreed.
- (c) To agree the use of £0.250m New Homes Bonus in 2020/21 to cover the Council's Planning Policy development costs as set out in Section 8 of the Assistant Director's report and *RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL* the release of £250k of the 2020/21 contribution for internal purposes, not to be transferred to NEGC Ltd, but for the Planning Policy team
- (d) Progress on the Budget Strategy for 2021/22 as set out in Section 9 of the Assistant Director's report be approved.

*REASONS*

The Assistant Director's report enables the Council to address the forecast budget pressure in 2020/21 and continue the 2021/22 budget process.

*ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

The Council is obliged to balance its budget on an annual basis. There are no alternatives.

#### **479. Financial Monitoring Report – Year End 2019-20**

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

Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, introduced the report and highlighted the small deficits on the General Fund budget and the Housing Revenue Account. These were acceptable in relation to the scale of the budgets and considering the challenges brought out by the Covid 19 emergency at the end of the financial year. He offered his thanks to the Council's Finance team for their hard work and the quality of service they provided.

*RESOLVED* that the financial performance of General Fund Services and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the year 2019/20 be noted.

*REASONS*

The Assistant Director's report enables Cabinet to review the outturn position.

### *ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

No alternative options were proposed as the Council is obliged to report its outturn position.

#### **480. Capital Outturn 2019-20**

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

Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, introduced the report and highlighted a number of schemes of regional and national significance that were funded through the capital programme such as Northern Gateway.

*RESOLVED* that the 2019/20 capital outturn be approved.

### *REASONS*

The capital programme is a key element of service delivery.

### *ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

No alternative options were proposed.

#### **481. Member Development Group Annual Report 2019-20 and Renewal of Member Charter Status**

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

Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, introduced the report and stressed the importance of member development and the benefits that would accrue from the modest investment in member development. It was important that Councillors continued to invest some of their time in development, so they were better able to fulfill their duties and represent their residents effectively.

*RESOLVED* that:-

- (a) The report of the Member Development Group on the work of the Group in the 2019-20 municipal year be received and noted.
- (b) Reaccreditation for Charter Status for Elected Member Development be sought when the current period of accreditation ends in July 2021, but not to pursue Charter Plus at this stage.

### *REASONS*

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.

The benefits of Charter Status are 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.

#### *ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

Cabinet could decide not to seek reaccreditation for Charter Status or to do so at the Charter Plus level.

#### **482. Public Initiatives**

Cabinet considered draft minute of the meeting of the Policy and Public Initiatives Panel meeting of 17 June 2020.

Councillor J. Young, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Performance, welcomed the proposal from the Policy and Public Initiatives Panel. It was sensible that the Panel look at the issue but any resulting proposals would have to be considered against other priorities in terms of resources. Tribute was paid to the work of Alderman Spyvee in providing interpretation boards for the Roman Wall.

*RESOLVED* that approval be given for the Policy and Public Initiatives Panel to explore the possible provision of additional information boards at heritage assets and sites of interest to visitors across the entire area of Colchester Borough.

#### *ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

It was open to Cabinet not to agree the recommendation from the Policy and Public Initiatives Panel.

#### **483. Amended Approach to Supply of IT Equipment**

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

*RESOLVED* that the change from leasing ICT equipment to buying ICT equipment in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules be approved.

#### *REASONS*

The Council needs to invest to replace aging desktop and laptops and the market now dictates that buying is preferable to leasing whilst maintaining the benefits outlined in the previous Cabinet paper. The proposed approach continues to enable the council to refresh and standardise equipment within ongoing revenue budgets; ensuring always up to date, secure devices that are managed and secure, and support the Council's stated ways of digital working.

## *ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

The Council could lease new devices rather than buy outright, however this approach would now be prohibitive in terms of cost.

### **484. Progress of Responses to the Public**

The Assistant Director, Policy and Corporate submitted a progress sheet a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

*RESOLVED* that the contents of the Progress Sheet be noted.

## *REASONS*

The progress sheet was a mechanism by which the Cabinet could ensure that public statements and questions were responded to appropriately and promptly.

## *ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

No alternative options were presented to the Cabinet.

**The Cabinet 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.**

### **485. Minutes – Not for Publication Extract**

The not for publication extract from the minutes of the meeting of 3 June 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

**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.**

### **486. Housing Revenue Account: Financial Model and New Council Housebuilding Programme Updates**

This minute is not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person, including the authority holding the information).

**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.**

**487. The Award of Three Contracts for the Construction, Delivery 24 New Affordable Housing at Four Sites Across Colchester**

This minute is not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person, including the authority holding the information).

**19 August 2020**

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Assistant Director Environment</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Rory Doyle</b> 
<b>Title</b>	<b>Final Report of the Waste &amp; Recycling Task &amp; Finish Group</b>		
<b>Wards affected</b>	All		

## 1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report sets out the recommendations of the Waste and Recycling Task and Finish Group following the work it has undertaken between 13<sup>th</sup> July and 10<sup>th</sup> August 2020 to review waste service costs and implications. It makes a number of recommendations to Cabinet as set out below.

## 2. Recommended Decisions

2.1 The Waste and Recycling Task and Finish Group made the following recommendations to Cabinet:

- (a) Explore introduction of a garden waste collection annual membership fee to enable the frequency of garden waste collections to be maintained
- (b) Any proposal should not include the Garden Club element and instead investment be made in marketing and promotion of a charged for service
- (c) Any proposal should not include a start-up fee.
- (d) Introduce wheeled bins for garden waste in Ward areas that currently have wheeled bins for black sack waste and build a roll out programme for the rest of the borough in those areas that are suitable for wheeled bins while working with local Ward councillors.
- (e) Continue to undertake an assertive recruitment programme to reduce reliance on agency staff moving forward.

2.2 In the light of the Task and Finish Group's recommendations contained at 2.1 above, Cabinet is invited to reconsider the recommendations contained in the report submitted to Cabinet on 8 July 2020 attached at Appendix 1.

2.3 In addition Group members wish Cabinet to recognise:

- the considerable detail on operational matters that officers supplied to the Group to help with their deliberations
- the willingness of the 3 crew members who answered questions and assisted members to draw out new lines of enquiry
- the offer from Portfolio Holder of Resources made during the first T&F Group to lead two Budget Workshops for all members to attend and receive detailed information on current budget position and possibilities for closing the budget gap

- the offer of the PFH for Resources to work with a representation of members across the chamber to look at options for balancing the budget, while working in parallel to Cabinet decisions.

### **3. Alternative Options**

3.1 No alternative options are proposed.

### **4. Background Information**

4.1 At its meeting on 8 July 2020 Cabinet considered a report entitled “Waste and Recycling New Strategic Priority” which is attached at Appendix 1. This report had been the subject of pre-scrutiny by the Scrutiny Panel on 7 July 2020 which had made several recommendations to Cabinet. In the light of these recommendations, Cabinet agreed to withdraw the recommendations contained in the report at that meeting and resolved that:

- (i) A pause be taken on the proposal to introduce changes to the garden waste collection service;
- (ii) A cross-party Task and Finish Group be set up to review waste service costs and implications and to include representatives of all party groups;
- (iii) Ward councillors be consulted on any proposed changes to the use of wheelie bins and specifically as to the identification of geographical areas where wheelie bin usage would or would not be appropriate.
- (iv) Further exploration be made of the five-point response to Budget Recovery agreed at the June Scrutiny Panel meeting, including the forensic understanding of statutory and non-statutory service provision by the Council;
- (v) Cabinet continue to lobby central government for a long-term financial settlement for the benefit of this Council's finances and its residents.

4.2 The Task and Finish Group was established and met for the first time on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020. Membership of the Group was:

- Cllr Bourne - Chair
- Cllr Chuah
- Cllr Goacher
- Cllr Higgins
- Cllr Lissimore
- Cllr Gerard Oxford
- Cllr Whitehead
- Cllr Wood

4.3 Two further meetings of the Task and Finish Group took place. (3 August 2020 and 10 August 2020).

4.4 The initial scoping stage identified three elements to focus on:

- to consider the overall range of costs, issues and opportunities facing the Waste and Recycling service, including the Waste and Recycling New Strategic Priority project, the Council's 20/21 budget strategy, service resilience, staff wellbeing, sustainability and climate commitments.
- To review the proposal to cease free collections and introduce an optional,

subscription-based garden waste collection service, considering comments made at the Scrutiny Panel meeting on 7 July 2020 and Cabinet meeting on 8 July 2020.

- To agree whether the proposed service should go ahead as described and explore what amendments or alternative options might be necessary, making recommendations for Cabinet to consider at a special meeting during week beginning 10 August 2020.

4.5 In summary the Group discussed in year and subsequent year budget implications for:

- introducing a charge for the collection of garden waste
- retain current service and not charge, and
- a sliding scale of charges based on various levels of fee.

4.6 Other options were also considered, including retaining a free garden waste collection service but with a reduction to a four weekly cycle or by providing the service for the 'growing season' only. The Group were unwilling to recommend a reduction of frequency in the garden waste collection service.

4.7 The Group received evidence to show that CBC is a top performing council for reducing waste to landfill (a top environmental priority) and a top performing council for rates of recycling. The information provided also set out that CBC is able to maintain this top performance while being a low council tax area, when compared with similar boroughs across England.

4.8 The Group also received information on the complexity of the operating model for waste and recycling collections in Colchester and how subsequently this makes any changes challenging to manage. In addition other operational matters were explored including:

- operational issues around use of agency workers
- the 2017 introduction of RouteSmart software to facilitate the planning of routes and the use of data to inform this process, and improve performance
- fleet requirements
- income stream reduction from recyclates as a result of volatile global markets
- evidence from three waste crew members on the physical impact of lifting sacks

4.9 The Group agreed that decisions that the Council has to make to either increase charges, or consider reduction in some services, or a combination of both in order to deliver a balanced budget will be extremely challenging and agreed the recommendations set out in this report on that basis.

## **5. Task and Finish Group Conclusions**

5.1. The conclusions are set out in this report's recommendations.

## **6. Strategic Plan References**

6.1. As detailed in the 8 July 2020 Cabinet report

## **7. Consultation**

7.1. The Task and Finish Group recommended that further consultation be undertaken

## **8. Financial Implications**

8.1. The revised Medium Term Financial Forecast reported to July 2020 Cabinet assumed new income generation of £0.500m in 2020/21 and a further £0.550m in 2021/22.

- 8.2. Work is continuing on the 2021/22 budget and 2021/22 to 2024/25 Medium Term Financial forecast in accordance with the approved Budget Strategy. This will include work on further options for a charged-for garden waste service.
- 8.3. Against budget gaps of £3.187m 21/22 and equivalent gaps in later years not to proceed with garden waste charges will increase the challenge of finding alternative savings.
- 8.4. Progress on the 2021/22 budget and 2021/22 to 2024/25 Medium Term Financial forecast will be reported to October 2020 Cabinet.
- 9. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights, Publicity, Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Health and Safety, Risk Management, Environmental and Sustainability Implications**
- 9.1. As detailed in the 8 July 2020 Cabinet report

Appendix 1 - Cabinet Report 8 July 2020 - Waste and Recycling New Strategic Priority

Appendix 2 - Action Notes from Task & Finish Group Meetings on the 20 July, 3 August, 10 August



	<b>Cabinet</b>	<b>APPENDIX 1</b>	<b>Item</b>
	<b>8 July 2020</b>		
<b>Report of</b>	<b>Chief Operating Officer</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Rosa Tanfield &amp; Rory Doyle</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Waste and Recycling New Strategic Priority</b>		<b>☎ 507855</b>
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards		

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council's Covid-19 Recovery Programme has prioritised the need to immediately identify new sources of income to meet the significant saving requirements set out in the budget strategy agreed at Cabinet in June, arising from increased costs and loss of income across a wide range of service areas. Furthermore, the current waste and recycling operating model carries risks in relation to staff wellbeing and a lack of service resilience to external factors, exacerbated during the Covid-19 crisis and ongoing restrictions.
- 1.2 This report presents proposals to generate income through a subscription Garden Waste charging model - 'Garden Club', which would include the introduction of wheeled bins, to safeguard the wellbeing of frontline staff handling garden waste.

## 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To introduce an optional subscription service for garden waste collection, using wheeled bins to support staff wellbeing for suitable properties, and cease free collections of garden waste, to help meet the Council's savings requirements post Covid-19.
- 2.2 To delegate to the Chief Operating Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Waste, Environment and Transportation the procurement of the appropriate number of wheeled bins, equipment and other capital expenditure as outlined in this paper.
- 2.3 To approve the inclusion of £1.149m in the 2020/21 Capital Programme for wheeled bin purchase (£909,450) and vehicle adaptations (£240,000) as set out in Section 9 of this report.

## 3 Alternative Options

- 3.1 Retain the current garden waste collection service. To continue as per the existing operating model. This will increase the Medium-Term Financial Forecast pressure in 2022/23 by a further £1.050m and this option provides no additional income or efficiency opportunities. The Council will accept the limited ability to improve performance and retain current levels of risk associated with staff wellbeing, financial sustainability, and service resilience to external factors such as Covid-19.

- 3.2 Stop the collection of garden waste for all residents. Garden waste collection is a non-statutory service. Stopping the service would reduce expenditure by approximately £1m and will contribute to balancing the Medium-Term Financial Forecast. However, the Council will see a decrease in the recorded amount of recycling that the Borough produces, as residents look to either dispose of the garden waste within residual waste (black bags/bins) ending in landfill; an increased risk of fly tipping; and or an increased level of garden waste taken to the Household Waste Recycling Centres. It will also not provide any additional income opportunity and there may be increased revenue costs required to manage any increase in fly-tipped waste.
- 3.3 Provide a Garden Waste Collection Service. As set out in the report, but with no additional offers, services or added value. This option would be to provide a simple chargeable garden waste collection service only, for those wishing to use the service, which would be renewable annually, as set out in this report.

## **4 Background**

- 4.1 The UK's waste hierarchy sets out five steps for dealing with waste ranked according to environmental impact. Waste prevention (reduction), which offers the best outcomes for the environment, is at the top of the hierarchy followed by re-use and then recycling. The Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 create a legal requirement for Councils to take account of the waste hierarchy.
- 4.2 In addition to these environmental imperatives, Colchester Borough Council, like many local authorities faces a serious financial situation. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, June Cabinet approved a revised Medium-Term Financial Forecast which sets out a £3.187m budget gap in 2021/2022. It is imperative that the Council continues to facilitate better waste reduction and improves recycling in ways that are financially sustainable in the longer term.
- 4.3 Under the terms of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Colchester Borough Council is classed as a Waste Collection Authority, and as such, under section 45(1) has a statutory duty to collect household waste from all domestic properties within its administrative area. Under Section 46(4) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Council has specific powers to stipulate:
- The size and type of the collection receptacle(s)
  - Where the receptacle(s) must be placed for the purpose of collection and emptying
  - The materials or items which may or may not be placed within the receptacle(s)
- 4.4 The collection of garden waste is a discretionary service not a statutory service.

## **5 Impact of the previous waste strategy**

- 5.1 In December 2016 Cabinet agreed a new Waste Strategy and a series of changes to the way in which the Borough collects waste and recycling. The decisions taken included the introduction of wheeled bin collections for specific areas of the Borough with one wheeled bin for residual waste and a second optional bin for garden waste.
- 5.2 The changes introduced created two principal methods of collection:

- Wheeled bin collections for specific areas of the Borough; one for residual waste (180 litre) collected fortnightly and a second optional bin for garden waste (240 litre) also collected fortnightly. Residents were able to opt out of having the second bin for garden waste if they had no requirement for garden waste to be collected.
- Residual waste in all other areas collected in black sacks, 3 sacks fortnightly. The size of black sacks limited to 60 litres, so that three equates to 180 litres. Garden waste collected in white sacks, on alternate weeks. White sacks for garden waste provided free of charge with a limit of 4 sacks throughout the year to match the capacity of a 240-litre wheeled bin.

5.3 Wheeled bins were introduced to the following wards in June 2017 after consultation with ward members:

- Mile End
- Greenstead
- Old Heath & The Hythe (excluding The Hythe and Rowhedge)
- Shrub End – particularly the Garrison areas.
- Stanway
- Berechurch

5.4 The changes resulted in 11,932 properties receiving wheeled bin collections in June 2017. Since that date a further 1,007 properties have been added to that number, so the current total is 12,939 properties. 12,241 wheeled bin properties currently opt for a garden waste collection. The additional properties added are mostly new build properties in Mile End.

5.5 57,556 properties in the Borough are still receiving refuse collections using black sacks and garden waste using reusable bags. Over the last 3 years of delivering the revised Waste Strategy, the following issues can be evidenced and summarised:

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Impact</b>
Staff sickness levels	Crews that work on black sacks/garden waste bags have higher level of sickness (11 days per FTE) as a result of Musculoskeletal Injury than those working on wheel bin rounds (8 days per FTE)
Missed bins	Analysis of the levels of missed bins from both forms of collection identify that it is higher on sack rounds than on wheeled bins (e.g. refuse wheeled bin produced 8.21% of reported missed bins but represent 18.35% of the population.)
Health and safety issues	Research has consistently proven that the level of musculoskeletal injuries associated with using wheeled bins are lower.

## 6. Impact of Covid-19

6.1 The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the Council's ability to sustain waste and recycling collections as a result of a significant reduction in staff numbers and the requirement to mitigate the risk of infection spreading throughout the workforce.

6.2 Ahead of and during the lock down period there was a requirement for stringent social distancing measures and so a number of changes were made to the delivery of services, including the pausing and altering of some services.

- 6.3 Refuse and recycling collections have posed a challenge because over 100 staff start work from the Shrub End Depot at the same time of day and then need to sit in very close proximity in collection vehicles. Numerous additional measures have been put in place to protect and support staff members during this period; from the staggering of start times, adapting crewing out areas and providing additional protective equipment.
- 6.4 Despite these measures the service had to be adapted and some recycling collection frequencies reduced. Government guidance on workplace social distancing has required the avoidance of crowding and minimisation of opportunities for the virus to spread by maintaining a distance of at least 2 metres between individuals. This is not possible with a fully manned refuse collection vehicle which requires a driver and 2 or 3 loaders to deliver the normal service. During the peak of the outbreak, to run a full service would have exposed our staff to an unacceptable risk to their health which is why crews in vehicles were reduced and recycling collection frequencies reduced.
- 6.5 From week commencing 22 June 2020, all services, except for textile collection, have been operating and residents are able to place out their waste and recycling material as per their original calendars.
- 6.6 This period of significant and fast operational changes has enabled the team to review and assess services, along with testing alternative models of delivery. It is clear that any measures that can be taken to simplify the operational model for the service would improve service resilience and staff wellbeing.
- 6.7 As set out in the Budget Strategy report elsewhere on the Agenda, the Council's finances are coming under extreme pressure as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is expected that there will be a significant use of one-off reserves of up to £8.350m in 20/21 and 21/22. Losses are also forecast in funding from Business Rates, Council Tax as well as from income earning facilities such as Sport and Leisure, Car Parking, Museums etc. The following table sets out the Medium-Term Financial Forecast reported to June 2020 Cabinet.

<b>Revised MTFF (£m)</b>	<b>20/21</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>24/25</b>
Service costs	23.877	31.202	24.089	24.299	24.589
Covid Impacts	10.112	-7.978	-1.417	-0.700	0.000
Business rates	-5.885	-4.913	-4.956	-5.000	-4.544
Council tax	-12.448	-11.146	-13.029	-13.748	-14.508
Other funding	-6.925	-2.945	-2.940	-2.944	-2.944
Use of reserves	-8.731	-1.033	1.625	1.250	1.250
<b>Savings to find</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>3.187</b>	<b>3.372</b>	<b>3.157</b>	<b>3.843</b>

## **7. New Proposal for Managing Garden Waste**

- 7.1 Whilst the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the services delivered by the Council, this has also been an opportunity to review, evaluate and gain better insight into service delivery, to focus on priorities and ascertain the true value of the services. The review in relation to garden waste aimed to achieve:
- Improve the health and wellbeing of residents
  - Reduce the environmental impact across the whole of Colchester

- Enable residents to be proud of Colchester and its Council

7.2 In order to achieve these aims, the proposal work towards the following objectives and principles:

- *Colchester is an attractive place to live and visit*
  - Improve customer access to services online
  - Job done right first time and without duplication
  - Optimise systems and technology effectively
  - Improve performance management
  - Develop opportunities to promote Colchester and its green spaces
  - Provide opportunities for communities to be involved in their local areas
- *The Council can adapt to housing growth*
  - Good reporting and monitoring of the services to inform decision making and investment
- *The Council has capacity and resilience*
  - Build financial sustainability
  - Develop income generation to ensure core costs are balanced
- *Staff are healthy, well and engaged*
  - Protect and support the health and welfare of staff
- *The Service is more energy efficient and contributes to reducing climate impact*
  - Enable residents have greater ownership of their waste
  - Enable residents have options in how they manage their waste

## 8. Garden Waste Collection

8.1 The collection of garden waste is a discretionary service that does not need to be provided by the Council. It is proposed that the Council provides an 'opt in' paid for subscription service for the collection of garden waste. This is seen as a sensible alternative to providing the free service, and one which is provided by most (reportedly 65%) UK local authorities. Crucially, this would create a significant and sustainable new revenue stream that will contribute towards future investment in our services, as well as contributing to the savings required to balance the Council's post-Covid budget. Without this proposal, the Council will need to find significant additional savings from other Council services and quite possibly curtail or cease the service offered in any case. Unlike other UK local authorities, it is proposed that the Council provides a value-added subscription service, as described further in the report.

8.2 With the implementation of the new service residents will have the following choices:

- **Opt in to the new garden waste collection service (Garden Club).** Residents joining at launch will pay £25 in Season 1 and renewal of their annual subscription in Season 2 (April 2021) for a full year will be £50 (equivalent £1 per week). Residents joining after launch will pay a fee depending on which time of year they join as set out in 8.7 below.
- **Join Garden Club with a neighbour.** Residents can join garden club with a neighbour(s) and share the costs. The bin/s will be collected from the kerbside of the registered property and the registered property will be able to enjoy the additional benefits being offered by the Garden Club, sharing these with their neighbour(s).

- **Compost at home with a subsidised composter.** The Council has joined with Love Essex and getcomposting.com to be able to offer Colchester residents access to specially priced environmental products, where a garden composter is a little as £9.50, or cheaper if purchasing two. The products are made from 100% percent recycled plastic, including plastics collected by Councils, as well as industrial waste such as old gas pipes, old wheeled bins and car bumpers.
- **Setting up a community composting scheme.** There are currently no known community composting schemes in Colchester, however it is proposed that a grant fund could be developed, and working with the Community Engagement team, develop the opportunity for groups to set up a community composting scheme. Additionally, the Love Essex Fund, offers microgrants of up to £500, to help organisations and individuals to support residents in reducing their household waste. The next round of funding will be in Autumn 2020.
- **Take waste to the Household Waste Recycling Centres**
- **Pay to dispose of the garden waste privately**

8.3 Given the range of alternative options available to residents and financial savings the Council is required to make, it is proposed that, in introducing the subscription service, the current free collection of garden waste will cease.

8.4 Unlike other Council-run chargeable garden waste collection services which charge solely for a collection service, Colchester residents could opt to join the 'Garden Club' (working title). The Garden Club membership will entitle the household to:

- Garden waste collected on a fortnightly basis
- Garden Club Member exclusive offers, such as:
  - Invitation to talks and demonstrations by specialists such as Park Rangers, Landscape Designers, Tree Officers.
  - Seeds and gardening starter packs
  - Exclusive invitations to planting or project openings/launches,
  - Garden Club Member only events
  - Membership of the new Garden Club Facebook group
  - Preview/pre-booking, before public release for:
    - e.g. 'Trees for Years' or other special events
  - Special offers in association with private sector organisations, such as local garden centres (and other offers/deals as can be negotiated).
  - Regular newsletters providing seasonal advice

8.5 In order for this service to be successful, it is essential that the processes and systems are clear and simple to provide a seamless service. The following sets out a summary of the main elements of the proposed Garden Club service.

8.6 **Launch** - To support the launch of the new service in October 2020, it is proposed that a special one-off price is offered to residents of **£25**. This will include both the set-up fee and membership until March 2021. Residents will be able to sign up to an expression of interest as part of the communication and marketing campaign that is being developed and then officially sign up from September 2020, through to the end of March 2021 (Season 1).

- 8.7 **New customers (after launch)** - Residents wishing to join at Season 2 for April 2021 will be required to pay a 'one off' half price set-up fee of **£12.50** (to purchase and deliver the bin to the property) and they will pay a membership fee relevant to the period in which they sign up as set out below. Residents wishing to join after this period, will then be required to pay a 'one off' set up fee of **£25**:

<b>Sign up between:</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Beginning April – end June	£50 membership fee
Beginning July – end September	£37.50 membership fee
Beginning October – end December	£25 membership fee
Beginning January – end March	£12.50 membership fee

- 8.8 **Existing Garden Club Members** - Garden Club members will be required to renew their membership annually (**£50**). Residents will be contacted throughout February and March to encourage them to renew ahead of the start of the new year in April.
- 8.9 Residents may opt to have more than one garden waste bin, at an additional **£50** per annum per bin (plus **£12.50** cost of supplying the extra bins, if all additional bins are ordered at the same time).
- 8.10 Benchmarking across other local authorities has been carried out and the results are provided in Appendix A. This demonstrates that the costs set out are comparable with those in nearby authorities.
- 8.11 It is proposed that the sign up and renewal process will be completed online, with support provided by the Customer Services Centre as required. All communications to the customer will be via the email address registered at sign up, including the membership offers and deals set out above.
- 8.12 A form of staged payment will be made available to those customers requiring it, from April 2021.
- 8.13 Residents in receipt of certain benefits will be entitled to a reduction in the sign-up fee from April 2021, making the sign-up fee **£7.25** initially and **£12.50** (half price) if signing up beyond April 2021.
- 8.14 **Use of wheeled bins** - The previous introduction of wheeled bins to certain areas of the Borough has provided valuable data to help develop proposals. Implementing wheeled bin collections for garden waste through this project will help improve staff wellbeing and performance. However, there are some areas of the Borough where it may not be practical or suitable for wheeled bins. These areas would need to be retained on a garden sack collection service (either compostable or reusable sacks, that will be supplied as part of the Garden Club membership). The criteria used to determine whether a property is suitable for a wheeled bin are:
- Properties situated on a steep slope may not be suitable
  - Properties accessed by several steps may not be suitable
  - Properties where storage of wheeled bins prevent access to the boundary or safe presentation for bin collections may not be suitable (for example terraced houses directly fronting the street)
- 8.15 **Garden waste collection** - Collection days in Season 1 (October 2020 to March 2021) will remain the same but will be reviewed. Any changes to collection days will be communicated to households that subscribe from the beginning of the new Season. Bins

will be emptied on a fortnightly basis; 25 collections across 50 weeks of the year excluding 2 weeks at Christmas/New Year.

- 8.16 Customers who already have a wheeled bin for garden waste, will be issued with a sticker to be placed on the bin to indicate that they are signed up. Customers who do not have a wheeled bin for garden waste will have one delivered. It may not be a new bin, but it will have been checked and cleaned prior to delivery. The Council may choose to collect existing wheeled garden waste bins from those properties that have not signed up to the service. These would then be cleaned and reissued to customers who have signed up.
- 8.17 Garden waste will only be taken if it is presented in the bin i.e. 'side waste' will not be taken.
- 8.18 The volume and tonnage of garden waste collection is varied depending on time of year and how much rain there is. There are generally increased loads from the start of the growing season in April through to late October after the leaves have fallen. The following table shows totals (kg) collected each calendar year.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Kerbside green waste total (kg)</b>
2018	9,609,540
2017	9,889,140
2016	9,175,640
2015	8,804,100

- 8.19 Following the changes to the service during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the re-introduction of the collection service, the crews have completed two collection cycles since. The weights are set out in the table below, but it should be noted that the first cycle is not representative of the usual amounts collected per cycle (i.e. 2 weeks).

<b>Cycle</b>	<b>Totals (Kg)</b>
1	1,276,040
2	578,120

- 8.20 Based on feedback from other authorities, it is projected that:
- 50% of all residents with a free Garden Waste collection today will want to subscribe – this would result in around 35,000 customers for Colchester (estimated over the next three seasons)
  - 25% of the current Garden Waste will be Composted either at home or via an ECC Recycling Centre
  - 25% of Garden Waste will likely end up in the Black Wheeled Bin

## **9. Financial implications**

- 9.1 The proposals for the introduction of the Garden Club include a range of financial implications, including one-off and ongoing costs, and a requirement for capital investment.

### **9.2 Revenue Implications**

- 9.3 The ongoing revenue implications of the changes set out in this paper primarily revolve around income, supplies & services costs and financing costs.

9.4 To deliver sustainable changes, there are additional ongoing costs associated with resource to process financial reconciliation, staged payments, administration, delivery of compostable or reusable bags and contact support for the Garden Club. There is a saving in relation to the purchasing and distribution of re-useable garden sacks.

9.5 To deliver the changes there will be several one-off revenue costs incurred. These will include:

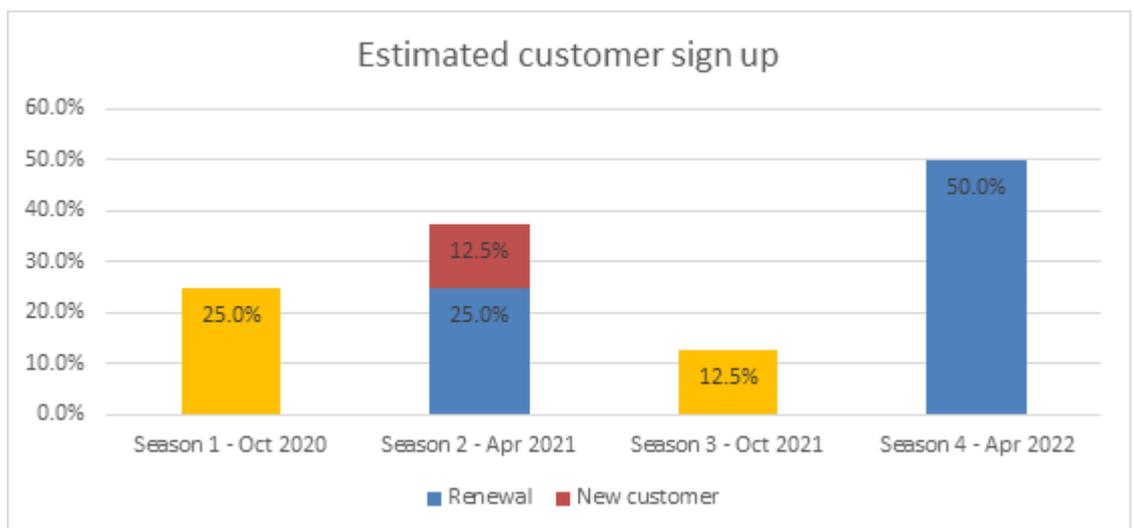
- Systems and support development (including online and digital systems)
- Project support and management
- Communications and marketing campaign
- Dedicated Neighbourhood Wardens who will be required as additional temporary resources to accommodate the project requirements.

9.6 Any one-off costs of implementation incurred will be met from the Garden Club service income in the year. One-off costs are forecasted at £307,000 in 2020/21 and £118,000 in 2021/22.

9.7 **Garden Waste income**

9.8 Income has been estimated with take-up achieving a membership of 50% of all eligible residents by October 2021, renewing in April 2022, in a staged approach. The modelling has been based on the following assumptions and represented in the table below:

- **Season 1** (October 2020): 25% (17,600) of eligible residents will sign up to the new service at £25 (for 6 months)
- **Season 2** (April 2021): Existing members will renew at £50. An additional 12.5% (8,800) new residents signing up for the year (Half price £12.50 sign up and membership fee at £50) (for 12 months)
- **Season 3** (October 2021): An additional 12.5% (8,800) eligible residents will sign up to the new service at £25 sign up and membership fee at £25 (for 6 months).
- **Season 4** (April 2022): All Members (representing 50%) will renew at £50 membership fee



Yellow indicates those customers paying 6 months service

9.9 Following new customers signing up in Season 1, 2 and 3, it is expected that 50% of eligible residents will have signed up and will be renewing regularly. As a result, income is forecast to be higher comparably in 2020/21 and 2021/22 than in 2022/23, as there will be

no new customers paying the set-up fee from 2022/23. From 2022/23, the forecast assumes income will be stable at circa £1.6m.

9.10 In anticipation that a concession option will be developed, an allowance for this has been made.

9.11 The Council currently receives £287,000 of green credit claim income. Forecasting has allowed for a reduction of 50%, however it is not expected that the reduction will be this significant on the basis of the feedback and experience of other local authorities.

9.12 The following table sets out the estimated revenue implications of the proposals contained within this report.

<b>Table of Revenue Implications</b>			
	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>
<b>Revenue implications</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
<b>Recurring Expenditure</b>			
Financial reconciliation and stage payment processing	18	46	48
Delivery services	1	1	1
Customer Contact Centre and administration processing	88	153	156
Print and communications	42	76	88
Saving of purchase of hessian sacks	(13)	(27)	(27)
Purchasing of compostable sacks	27	54	54
Financing costs (Minimum Revenue Provision and Interest)	29	154	154
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>457</b>	<b>474</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Garden Club Membership income (net of concessions)	(991)	(1,845)	(1,625)
Recycling credit income (reduced from non-take up)	72	144	144
<b>Total income</b>	<b>(919)</b>	<b>(1,701)</b>	<b>(1,481)</b>
<b>One-off costs</b>			
Systems development and support	103	14	-
Project Management	72	31	-
Operations & Comms	132	73	-
<b>Total one-off costs</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Overall Net Revenue Impact</b>	<b>(420)</b>	<b>(1,126)</b>	<b>(1,007)</b>

### 9.13 **Capital Implications**

9.14 The capital expenditure requirements of the proposals will include the costs of the purchase of bins and an additional vehicle. It is estimated that this will require capital expenditure of circa £1,149,000 as set out in the table below. The modelling in this report

assumes a 50% take up of eligible residents to the Garden Club (and thus requiring wheeled bins for garden waste), the proposal sets out 60% take up within the capital programme to ensure sufficient resources are approved by Cabinet, should they be required.

<b>Capital Requirements</b>			
<b>Item</b>		<b>Unit Cost (£)</b>	<b>Total (£)</b>
Purchase of bins	Allowing for 60% take up of residents (42,300) requiring a garden waste bin	21.50	0.909m
Adaption of existing fleet	8 vehicles	0.030m	0.240m
<b>Total Capital Provision</b>			<b>1.149m</b>

## 10. Timetable for service changes

<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>
29 June	Scrutiny Panel papers published, proactive comms
30 June	Cabinet papers published
7 July 2020	Scrutiny Panel special meeting (tbc)
8 July 2020	Cabinet decision – press release announcing consultation
July/August 2020	Online 'expression of interest' launch for residents
August 2020	Communication and marketing campaign launched
September 2020	Garden Club sign up launched – Season 1
October 2020	Commencement of Garden Club service – Season 1
April 2021	Commencement of Garden Club Service – Season 2

## 11. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 11.1 A detailed [Equality Impact Assessment](#) has been completed to establish the implications of introducing the services as outlined. The outcome of the assessment demonstrates that there will be limited impact for residents, apart from certain households on a low income.
- 11.2 This impact will be mitigated by introducing a concessionary fee for set up costs and a phased payment method for new customers joining mid-year. In addition, there are multiple alternative options for residents opting not to subscribe to the service.
- 11.3 The Council will continue to support residents who may have difficulty accessing our services, by way of assisted collection schemes and/or direct support from officers, where necessary.
- 11.4 Not all residents benefit from the current garden waste collection service. Fundamentally, the proposal to charge a subscription fee ensures that income is generated from users of the service, rather than the cost being met from the general Council Taxpayer. As a minimum, charges will be reviewed annually as part of the budget and service planning

process. Residents may continue to dispose of garden waste free of charge at the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) operated by Essex County Council.

## **12. Strategic Plan References**

12.1 The proposals specifically support the Strategic Plan 2018-21

### Responsibility

- The Garden Club promotes responsible citizenship by encouraging residents to get involved in their communities and to identify solutions to local issues through either sharing the service or exploring community composting.
- The proposal in this paper is fundamentally designed to encourage re-use and recycling to reduce waste to landfill

### Opportunity

- The Garden Club is an example of an initiative to help residents live healthier lives, and the introduction of wheeled bins for garden waste will support our staff to do so, many of whom are residents

## **13. Consultation**

13.1 The Council's Covid-19 Recovery Programme has intensified the need to immediately identify new sources of income to meet the significant budget pressure as set out in the budget strategy agreed at Cabinet in June and set out elsewhere in this report. The current waste and recycling operating model also creates risks to the Council in relation to staff wellbeing and the lack of service resilience to external factors as set out in this report.

13.2 This paper will be subjected to pre-scrutiny at the Council's Scrutiny Panel meeting on 7 July 2020 and the Panel's recommendations will be made available to Cabinet in considering this report.

13.3 An online 'expression of interest' programme will be launched throughout July and August enabling residents to register to receive more information about the service and to express an interest for signing up. This will provide an opportunity for officers to gain customer insight to further inform the service design and delivery, and gauge potential uptake.

## **14. Publicity Considerations**

14.1 The waste and recycling service serves every household every week and changes will need to be clearly communicated. Given the level of change we need to use many different communication mechanisms to make sure every household hears about and understands the changes. A full communications plan, as outlined below, will be developed and put in place.

14.2 The main roll-out of the Garden Club communications strategy will start in September 2020. This will be for the promotion of the Garden Club and the main objective is to encourage residents to subscribe to the service via the website, although there will be substantial messaging around encouraging those that do not want to sign-up, to compost at home.

14.3 In September, a Garden Club leaflet will be distributed to all households in the borough that currently receive a garden waste kerbside collection (around 70,500 properties). This will be supported with messaging on a variety of channels including the creation of a

promotional video, digital advertising on Facebook, a vinyl banner on the fencing at the Shrub End Recycling Centre, e-newsletter articles, social media posts, press releases and internal communications.

- 14.4 On a resident's penultimate free collection day in September, a large 'luggage' tag will be attached to their garden waste sack or wheelie bin. This tag will let the resident know that it almost their last free collection and contain a strong call to action to take up a Garden Club Subscription.
- 14.5 On sign up to the Garden Club, members will receive a digital 'Welcome to the Garden Club' leaflet.
- 14.6 The vehicle livery on vehicles will be updated for ongoing promotion of the service.
- 14.7 For consistency of message, all artworks would have a matching look and feel and encourage online sign-up.
- 14.8 Previous changes in the waste service give a set of lessons learned about which methods of communication are most effective and these will be reflected in the communications plan.
- 14.9 Although there is likely to be initial public concern about the introduction of a paid for subscription service, experience from other Councils demonstrates that public concern dissipates soon after introduction. Concern can also be mitigated by clearly communicating the improvements overall to customer journeys. Residents who opt to subscribe to the discretionary element of the service will have access to additional benefits promoted to Garden Club members including, access to events, tutorials, retail vouchers/offers etc.
- 14.10 Colchester will be the only local authority in Essex offering additional benefits to residents as part of a 'paid for' collection.

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

- 15.1 Residents homes and their local environment are a key determinant of health. A high performing waste and recycling service contributes to and positively influences perceptions of place and the local environment.
- 15.2 Improving health and wellbeing in communities is a key priority for the Council. Garden Club will act as an enabler and encourage residents to explore nature and green open spaces. This links to existing campaigns delivered by the Council with and alongside community partners including the Woodland Project, #ParksAtHome and Grow you Own at Home.

## **16. Health and Safety Implications**

- 16.1 A full review of Health and Safety requirements as a result of any changes to the waste service will be undertaken to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation. This will include specific training for waste staff in new equipment required specifically bin lifting equipment.
- 16.2 Research has consistently proven that the level of musculoskeletal injuries associated with using wheeled bins are lower and levels of sickness amongst staff on existing wheeled bin collection routes are on average 3 days lower per FTE.

## 17. Risk Management Implication

- 17.1 Take up of the Garden Club subscription service is difficult to project accurately and is a risk factor but experience from other local authorities who have implemented similar changes suggests that the scheme will be popular. As such there is a confidence in the projections (50% participation rate) set out in this paper and that these are realistic and achievable.

Risks	Mitigation
Reputational Damage from residents and ward councillor complaints	Garden waste charging is normal for <a href="#">65% of councils</a> and not charging would mean £1m more would need to be found from other services, if possible, with potentially more difficult consequences. Member briefings will help everyone understand and communicate the reasons for the decision.
Environment Bill is enacted and requires garden waste collections	The Bill passed its second reading in early March has been delayed but may not prohibit charging. If so, and if enacted, this new burden would need to be funded. Unlikely to take effect within MTFP period.
Residents do not receive information about the changes.	Dedicated communications campaign with commercially savvy marketing
Low income households are disadvantaged	Scheme is optional of course but a concession on the sign-up fee will be made possible. In addition, a form of staged payment will be made available for those unable to make a one-off annual payment.
Increased vehicle movements and fuel consumption	With approximately 50% of households estimated to join the Garden Club, overall vehicle mileage is likely to be similar. Light EV Fleet procurement underway and heavy fleet Replacement (mid 2020s) will be zero tailpipe emissions.
Staff do not get behind the change	An important driver for these proposals is employee wellbeing and our staff engagement suggests this will be popular.
Reintroduction of stringent social distancing measures	It will be essential that the Garden Club service is delivered as best it can, as it will be a paid service. As it is estimated that the number of customers who sign up to the service will be phased, the risk of not delivering the service will be low, as capacity will be available within the current levels.  Officers will continue to implement learning from the previous pandemic response, control measures to protect staff maintained as per waste industry guidance.
Supply requirements affected by future spike in infection rates and any subsequent lockdown measures at key points in	Officers will implement learning from the previous pandemic response, control measures to protect staff maintained as per waste industry guidance.

the timeline (October 2020 and Spring 2021).	<p>Early, clear and robust communications to the public about the effect on the delivery at key points will be undertaken</p> <p>There will be robust project management through the Waste &amp; Recycling Project Board and subsidiary specialist and operational working groups.</p>
Income is not sufficient to cover service costs	<p>Expenditure has been modelled on an uptake of 35k households generating £1.75m gross income.</p> <p>Quarterly and monthly data of uptake and income will be closely and carefully monitored.</p> <p>Budget management will separate the service from the rest of the Service budget, in order that the expenditure and income can be monitored carefully.</p>
<p>Reduction in recycling rate</p> <p>Increased amount of garden waste disposed of at Household Waste &amp; Recycling Centres</p> <p>Increased amount of garden waste fly-tipped across the Borough</p> <p>Increased amount of residual waste and associated disposal costs</p>	<p>Recycling rates will be monitored closely and alternative methods to improve CBCs recycling may need to be implemented</p> <p>Service enhancements will be supported by comprehensive communications campaign to engage with residents and the local media, communicating the service and charges to encourage residents to register.</p>
Customer Services/Web not able to accommodate the demand for application and payments.	Customer Services and Digital Services teams have been involved from early planning, processes requirements have been specified and agreed.

## 18. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 18.1 The Council's environment and sustainability ambitions set out clear steps to reduce carbon emissions and reduce waste in the Borough (e.g. through reduced fleet emissions associated with discretionary waste collection and by increasing composting at source).
- 18.2 It is anticipated that these service changes and the enhanced promotion of home composting through Garden Club tutorials and events will see the amount of green waste collected reduce. This is line with evidence from several Boroughs where chargeable garden waste schemes have already been introduced. This generally shows that whilst some garden waste tonnage might be 'lost', significant negative impact on the recycling rate is unlikely.
- 18.3 The existing free garden waste collection draws in material that could be composted at home, meaning that the total amount of waste collected is inflated. Whilst free garden

waste services are an 'easy' way to increase recycling rates, there is no environmental benefit, as the extra material needs to be moved and processed, creating additional environmental impacts. In line with the waste hierarchy it is better to avoid the need for this waste to be collected and treated in the first place.

## Appendix A

LA	2020/21	
	Garden Waste Charge	Method of collection
Basildon	£0	Weekly - 240L standard or 180L available With food waste
Babergh/Mid Suffolk	£5 set up cost £52.50 per year	Wheeled bins only
Braintree	£0	240L fortnightly wheeled bin
Brentwood	£52.50 per year for hire of garden bin £3.26 for a roll of 10 garden sacks	1.240 litre bins & biodegradable sacks (rolls of ten)
Castle Point	£6.20 for 20 sacks or £33 for a 240 l bin	Weekly collection with no winter break - bin or sacks
Chelmsford	£0	Fortnightly collection - 240L standard
Harlow	£42.00 p/a + £30 set up fee for new customers only. Ad-hoc now only accepting compostable sacks purchased @ £19.00 for roll of 20.	Fortnightly bin or sacks
Ipswich	£0	Fortnightly
Maldon	£25 set up cost £46.00 online or direct debit.	March – November, fortnightly Dec – Feb suspend for 2 weeks following Christmas 240 L Wheeled Bin only not all properties eligible
Southend	£0	240L or sacks
Tendring	£75 for the first year (includes £25 set up fee) £50 per year thereafter	Fortnightly with 2-week Christmas break Wheeled bin only
Thurrock	£0; but charge for wheelie bin replacements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £36 for a new wheeled bin</li> <li>• £18.50 for a new wheeled bin if you are aged 60 or over</li> <li>• £18.50 for a new wheeled bin if you receive certain</li> </ul>	Weekly

	benefits – proof of entitlement will be needed	
Uttlesford	£46 for online and cash/cheque payments, £40 for Direct Debits and a 25% reduction if in receipt of LCTS. New customers also required to pay £22.50 for a garden waste bin	Bin (bi-weekly with a break of 4/5 weeks over the Christmas period)) Wheeled bins only
West Suffolk	£42 per year	26 collections year Wheeled bins only

# WASTE AND RECYCLING TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Monday 20 July 2020

## ACTION NOTES

**Present:** Cllr Bourne (Chair), Cllr Lissimore, Cllr Wood, Cllr Oxford, Cllr Goacher, Cllr Higgins, Cllr Whitehead, Cllr Chuah, Cllr Goss, Cllr King, Dan Gascoyne, Rory Doyle, Rosa Tanfield, Paul Cook, Darren Brown, Margaret Maby (Actions)

**Apologies:**

No	Item	Action By	When
1.	<p><b>Terms of Reference &amp; Agree a Chair</b> Cllr Bourne was nominated by Cllr Oxford and agreed unanimously as Chair for these meetings.</p> <p><b>Terms of Reference</b> There are currently 2 key areas - Waste &amp; Recycling Service costs and Garden Waste collections. It was agreed a third point should be added, to make other budget recommendations to Cabinet should the charges for garden waste collection not be agreed as proposed.</p>		
2.	<p><b>Budget Update and Statutory/Discretionary Service Costs &amp; Income</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There have been 3 changes since the budget report was issued in June: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The government announced an income support package which will hopefully cover our income losses. Estimated at £5 mil - waiting on details.</li> <li>• Government also announced a further £500 million funding of which CBC received £317K of that for unringfenced grants.</li> <li>• Council tax and business rates losses can be spread over 3 years – details to be finalised.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Budget gap for 2021/22 is currently forecast at £3.2 million, net of additional income of £1million.</li> <li>➤ Analysis of discretionary and statutory areas of spend – Darren talked through the slides giving a data on services that are over £100k net cost / income.</li> <li>➤ Cllr Oxford requested additional financial information on Ipswich front of house and Colchester front of house staff as there's a difference of £40k between the two. It was confirmed that the services are not identical, but Darren will provide further information. <b>ACTION</b></li> <li>➤ Darren to confirm what the net cost of Cemeteries is approximately £50k which is why it did not appear on the lists. <b>ACTION</b></li> <li>➤ Zones expenditures - These differ due to different works being undertaken in each. More detail required. <b>ACTION</b></li> <li>➤ Cllr Lissimore requested a breakdown on the W&amp;R staffing budget line, with specific regard to agency spend and what has been done to alleviate costs. <b>ACTION</b></li> </ul>	<p>Darren</p> <p>Darren</p> <p>Rory</p> <p>Rory</p>	<p>03.08.20</p> <p>03.08.20</p> <p>03.08.20</p> <p>03.08.20</p>

No	Item	Action By	When
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Cllr Lissimore requested detail on any expiring contracts over the next 18 months. <b>ACTION</b></li> <li>➤ Cllr King requested further information on contracts that have been changed recently and savings that have been accrued. <b>ACTION</b></li> </ul>	Richard Block	03.08.20
3.	<p><b>Waste and Recycling NSP project and Garden Waste Collections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ CBC currently collects waste/recycling from 84,726 properties</li> <li>➤ CBC provides clear sack across the borough once a year. This costs £162,000 +staffing costs =£187,000</li> <li>➤ It was requested Rosa invite some of the staff loaders to attend the next meeting to get a greater understanding and opinions about their role. <b>ACTION</b></li> <li>➤ Collection methodology – Cllr Wood requested from Rosa a breakdown of costs of the free essentials CBC provides to residents i.e kerbside caddy etc. <b>ACTION</b></li> <li>➤ Cllr Goacher requested for more information on the environmental impact of wheeled bins compared to white sacks <b>ACTION</b></li> <li>➤ Cllr Whitehead asked Rory to look at what the potential savings could be achieved from garden collections being reduced to 4 weekly / growing season. <b>ACTION</b></li> <li>➤ Cllr Goacher asked if it would be possible to have an individual cost for those using the garden service once or twice a year ‘pay as you go’. <b>ACTION</b></li> <li>➤ Rory to send any additional reading material re: Benchmarking with other garden waste collection services to everyone. <b>ACTION</b></li> <li>➤ Cllr Oxford requested for proposal to consider increased levels during autumn/ winter where some residents have up to 8 sacks collected. <b>ACTION</b></li> <li>➤ Cllr Oxford requested the costs for providing free Saturday collections to CBH tenants <b>ACTION</b></li> </ul> <p>The Group agree to start the next meeting with the rest of the presentation on the Garden Waste Collection proposals and Benchmarking information from other authorities at the next meeting.</p> <p>It was agreed that the next meeting would be cancelled, and an additional meeting added on 10 August and that the Task and Finish Group would conclude its work after three meetings.</p>	Rosa	03.08.20
4.	<b>AOB - None</b>		
5.	<p><b>Future meeting dates:</b> 3 August 2020 10 August 2020</p>		

**Next meeting: Monday 3 August 2020, 5.00pm**

# WASTE AND RECYCLING TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Monday 3 August 2020

## ACTION NOTES

**Present:** Cllr Bourne (Chair), Cllr Lissimore, Cllr Wood, Cllr Oxford, Cllr Goacher, Cllr Higgins, Cllr Whitehead, Cllr Chuah, Cllr Goss, Cllr King, Rory Doyle, Rosa Tanfield, Darren Brown, Margaret Maby (Actions)

**Apologies:** Dan Gascoyne

No	Item	Action By	By When
1.	<p><b>Actions</b> Minutes noted and agreed.</p> <p>Cllr Wood asked why the budget for salaries agency fee earners, go down in 2021 from £50k to £20k? Rory explained the budget was reduced for agency fees at Budget Build from Sept/Oct last year to reduce agency fees to a minimal amount. However, they'll go over this, this year which will be partly offset by an under recovery in the basic salaries budget. Rory to send this in writing to Cllr Wood. <b>ACTION</b></p>	Rory	asap
2.	<p><b>Garden Waste benchmarking</b> Possible options for garden waste:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue with existing (budget pressure £1m+)</li> <li>2. Stop garden waste collections</li> <li>3. Introduce a charge for garden waste</li> <li>4. Create the 'Garden Club' membership with benefits/offers</li> </ol> <p>➤ Rosa looked at 12 LAs, 7 of which charge, some for a set-up fee between £5 - £30 and an annual membership fee from £40-£50. Collections varied from weekly/fortnightly, to growing season only. Rosa ran through 3 case study slides from other LAs on what they offer and charge.</p>		
3.	<p><b>Q &amp; A with crew members</b> Q: From a health and safety perspective Cllr Goss asked what the difference is between a wheelie bin and garden waste/black sack route? What the feedback from the crews was and the difference wheelie bins would make to crews as employees of the council? A: Eddie explained he'd moved onto wheelie bin routes over the last couple of weeks and it had made a huge difference in his body. He used to be in constant pain from dragging, lifting and shaking garden waste sacks and from spikes/thorns stabbing through the sacks. He felt his body had had enough by the end of the 4 days from constantly moving every single sack and his body wanted to give in. He explained sickness levels through muscle and skeletal problems are lower on wheelie routes because it's one constant movement all day which is easier on the body and therefore not over exhorting muscles. A: Phil explained his route is black bags and garden waste. He and his crew lift between 5 – 25kilos per garden sack and must lift them up a metre to the back of the truck which is the legal limit. He described the feeling as shifting a tonne of sand for every</p>		

No	Item	Action By	By When
	<p>single street, day in day out, but with a wheelie bin you move the bin into position on the truck where it then self-empties and move the bin back to the property. It's a cleaner and safer method for the borough. Sometimes with black and garden waste you get ripped bags and a trail of leaves where bags have been dragged. Phil explained they're losing more time in their working day where they're cleaning up.</p> <p>Q: Cllr Chuah asked how many properties are cleared of garden waste in a day?</p> <p>A: Phil stated it could range from 1,700 to 2,200. That's one day per route and there are 4 garden routes a day.</p> <p>Q: Cllr Lissimore asked if any had worked before the 4 day contract and if they felt under pressure with the rounds that they've got at the moment?</p> <p>A: Phil explained the workload was spread out for a 5 day week but the route changed over to route SMART, designed 3 years ago for maximum peak for a 4 day week starting at 6.30am – 4.30pm but with the borough expanding there aren't enough vehicles, the working day is longer and now finish between 5.15 - 6:00pm</p> <p>Q: Cllr Lissimore asked if they felt the 4 day contract works or whether we should go back to a 5 day contract and re-asses the routes again or get more vehicles more workers – what would make it easier to collect everything? Who decides to pick up on a Saturday on what's been uncollected during the week?</p> <p>A: Eddie explained it's voluntary, but people put themselves forward for overtime if its available but it's a strain on the individual knowing they've got to do it all again the following week and collections aren't going to be achieved again as there aren't enough vehicles and staff. If staff are not off sick then crews move fast because the knowledge is there but when agency and spare staff are brought in, knowledge isn't there so routes move slower.</p> <p>A: Phil stated when it was the 5 day they had 10 open back vehicles but when it was reduced to 4 day with the introduction of route SMART, they lost 2 vehicles because the computer designed the routes and it was deemed achievable through a computer generated course. This was based on 7 secs per household to empty 4 garden sacks. 5 days a week won't change anything as they need more vehicles for the fleet to clear the back log.</p> <p>Q: Cllr Higgins asked - How they cope in Newtown and Castle Ward where it's not possible to have wheelie bins and where they have to have black bags and garden sacks?</p> <p>A: Phil stated it wouldn't affect them as old Colchester areas would have to remain on the original collection method, which would be one hard day lifting but if the rest of the week was wheelie bins it would be a lot easier, safer and cleaner for the whole borough.</p> <p>Rosa will report the above back to the crews. Eddie, Lee and Phil leave the conversation.</p>		

No	Item	Action By	By When
4.	<p><b>Deep dive into Garden Waste proposal, business case and alternative options</b></p> <p><b>Garden club proposal:</b> Rosa ran through the slides explaining details to members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Sign-up fee of £25 – This covers the purchase and delivery of the bin.</li> <li>➤ Cllr Lissimore requested for a simple breakdown of the anticipated garden waste taking into account, less the garden waste credit. i.e loss of tonnage of garden waste which = x amount of garden waste credits. How much garden credit do we get for a tonnage? <b>ACTION</b></li> <li>➤ Cllr Lissimore asked about the agency driver costs, £165pd and agency loader £124pd. How much does it cost for a paid member of staff and what the difference is between the two? <b>ACTION</b></li> </ul>	<p>Rosa</p> <p>Rosa</p>	<p>07.08.20</p> <p>07.08.20</p>
5.	<p><b>Identify further action and information required to inform next meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Loss of garden waste credits</li> <li>➤ Route SMART – information in relation to the last review of the routes and the current pressures on routes, including the reduction in vehicles (10 open back vehicles to 8)</li> <li>➤ How much would it cost for the routes to be more efficient and how much we are spending to keep up with those routes? i.e Saturday/late collections?</li> <li>➤ More detail on service improvement that Rory and Rosa are looking at to advise members next week.</li> <li>➤ It was suggested there needs to be a scheme put forward to expand the recycling centre. ECC &amp; CBC portfolio holders to talk to each other. <b>ACTION</b></li> </ul>	<p>Cllr Goss</p>	<p>07.08.20</p>
6.	<p><b>AOB</b></p>		
	<p><b>Future meeting dates:</b> 10 August 2020</p>		

**Next meeting: Monday 10 August 2020, 5.00pm**

# WASTE AND RECYCLING TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Monday 10 August 2020

## ACTION NOTES

**Present:** Cllr Bourne (Chair), Cllr Lissimore, Cllr Wood, Cllr Oxford, Cllr Goacher, Cllr Higgins, Cllr Whitehead, Cllr Chuah, Cllr Goss, Cllr King, Rory Doyle, Dan Gascoyne, Darren Brown, Mark Paisley, John Kellett, Margaret Maby (Actions)

**Apologies:** Rosa Tanfield

No	Item	Action By	By When
1.	<b>Actions</b> Minutes noted and agreed.		
2.	<p><b>Presentation on changes from the last review (2017), including RouteSMART</b> (slide presentation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ RouteSMART is a secured database of all properties in Colchester. Any new or modified properties which have been amended within the last 7 days are added every week to RouteSMART, assigned a route then exported to FUSION which is a web application designed to allow users to inspect and manage data.</li> <li>➤ Currently there 88,346 properties in each of the 5 main workspaces which consist of refuse, paper &amp; plastic, glass &amp; cans, garden and food waste. Each of these have their own volume and weight etc</li> <li>➤ There are 3 further weekly workspaces for flats which consist of refuse, paper &amp; plastic, glass &amp; cans</li> <li>➤ Any new assisted and exemptions are added, deleted updated weekly</li> <li>➤ In 2017 all routes and mapping were paper based and printed off</li> <li>➤ Colchester is growing by around 1200 properties pa which creates 4 additional collections for the crews to manage</li> <li>➤ Cllr Higgins to email Mark re: properties that have exemption/assisted collection issues. <b>ACTION</b></li> <li>➤ 1,516 properties on a wheeled bin route               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,800 Residual bag route</li> <li>• 1,738 Garden bag route</li> <li>• 2,354 (route 9) is the largest collected black bag route</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Cllr Higgins/ Mark	13.08.20
3.	<p><b>Checkpoint on current position</b> (slide presentation)</p> <p>Cllr King talked through the various slides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ It was suggested we charge non-residential drivers who drive through polluted parts of Colchester – Cllr King to look into this. <b>ACTION</b></li> </ul>	Cllr King	asap
4.	<p><b>Check on Waste principles and suggested additional budget savings / income generation in other service areas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Rory ran through the options for garden waste and costings</li> </ul>		

No	Item	Action By	By When
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Wheeled bins last approx. 10 years whereas sacks last up to a year</li> <li>➤ An analysis on online orders in June/July for garden sacks demonstrated 11,000 sacks were ordered which cost CBC £1 each, which could have purchased 480 wheelie bins</li> </ul>		
5.	<p><b>Agree recommendations for Cabinet</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Group could not agree on reduction of service for Garden Waste collection</li> <li>➤ Continue with an assertive recruitment scheme for local loaders and crew to reduce the number of agency workers required to operate a full service</li> <li>➤ Explore the introduction of garden waste charges which they recognise could be unpopular but being introduced as part of a package of measures to make up the budget deficit</li> <li>➤ Group recommended the garden club initiative is removed</li> <li>➤ Group recommended the set-up fee is removed</li> <li>➤ Introduce wheeled bins for garden waste in Ward areas that currently have wheeled bins for black sack waste and build a roll out programme for the rest of the borough in those areas that are suitable for wheeled bins while working with local Ward councillors.</li> </ul> <p><b>In addition, Group members wish Cabinet to recognise:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ the considerable detail on operational matters that officers supplied to the Group to help with their deliberations</li> <li>➤ the willingness of the 3 crew members who answered questions and assisted members to draw out new lines of enquiry</li> <li>➤ the offer from Portfolio Holder of Resources made during the first T&amp;F to lead two Budget Workshops for all members to attend and receive detailed information on current budget position and possibilities for closing the budget gap</li> <li>➤ the offer of the PFH for Resources to work with a representation of members across the chamber to look at options for balancing the budget, while working in parallel to Cabinet decisions and in respect of any HR consultation on job losses</li> </ul> <p>In conclusion, the T&amp;F Chair would like to thank all the participants and acknowledge that it is possible to stick to T&amp;F principles by conducting a thorough data rich process in a short time span in order to make recommendations to Cabinet. This would not have been possible without the considerable efforts of the PFH for Resources and officers who responded swiftly to our discussions and queries in order to furnish the Group with the evidence we needed to reach the recommendations.</p> <p>Cllrs voted the following for introduction of wheeled bins:</p> <p>Cllr Wood                      Against  Cllr Lissimore                Against</p>		

No	Item	Action By	By When
	Cllr Oxford      Against Cllr Chuah        For Cllr Goacher      For Cllr Whitehead    For Cllr Higgins       For Cllr Bourne        For		
<b>6.</b>	<b>AOB - none</b>		