

Scrutiny Panel Meeting

**Grand Jury Room, Town Hall, High Street,
Colchester, CO1 1PJ
Tuesday, 12 September 2017 at 19:00**

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

Information for Members of the Public

Access to information and meetings

You have the right to attend all meetings of the Council, its Committees and Cabinet. You also have the right to see the agenda, which is usually published five working days before the meeting, and minutes once they are published. Dates of the meetings are available at www.colchester.gov.uk or from Democratic Services. Occasionally meetings will need to discuss issues in private. This can only happen on a limited range of issues, which are set by law. When a committee does so, you will be asked to leave the meeting.

Have Your Say!

The Council values contributions from members of the public. Under the Council's Have Your Say! policy you can ask questions or express a view to most public meetings. If you wish to speak at a meeting or wish to find out more, please refer to Your Council> Councillors and Meetings>Have Your Say at www.colchester.gov.uk

Audio Recording, Mobile phones and other devices

The Council audio records all its public meetings and makes the recordings available on the Council's website. Audio recording, photography and filming of meetings by members of the public is also permitted. The discreet use of phones, tablets, laptops, cameras and other such devices is permitted at all meetings of the Council. It is not permitted to use voice or camera flash functionality and devices must be kept on silent mode. Councillors are permitted to use devices to receive messages and to access papers and information via the internet and viewing or participation in social media is at the discretion of the Chairman / Mayor presiding at the meeting who may choose to require all devices to be switched off at any time.

Access

There is wheelchair access to the Town Hall from St Runwald Street. There is an induction loop in all the meeting rooms. If you need help with reading or understanding this document please take it to the Library and Community Hub, Colchester Central Library, 21 Trinity Square, Colchester or telephone (01206) 282222 or textphone 18001 followed by the full number that you wish to call and we will try to provide a reading service, translation or other formats you may need.

Facilities

Toilets with lift access, if required, are located on each floor of the Town Hall. A water dispenser is available on the first floor and a vending machine selling hot and cold drinks is located on the ground floor.

Evacuation Procedures

Evacuate the building using the nearest available exit. Make your way to the assembly area in the car park in St Runwald Street behind the Town Hall. Do not re-enter the building until the Town Hall staff advise you that it is safe to do so.

Library and Community Hub, Colchester Central Library, 21 Trinity Square,
Colchester, CO1 1JB

telephone (01206) 282222 or textphone 18001 followed by the full number you wish to call
e-mail: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk

www.colchester.gov.uk

Scrutiny Panel – Terms of Reference

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

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

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

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

COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL
Scrutiny Panel
Tuesday, 12 September 2017 at 19:00

Member:

Councillor Beverly Davies
Councillor Christopher Arnold
Councillor Phil Coleman
Councillor Adam Fox
Councillor Mike Hogg
Councillor Lee Scordis
Councillor Barbara Wood

Chairman
Deputy Chairman

Substitutes:

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

AGENDA - Part A
(open to the public including the press)

Members of the public may wish to note that Agenda items 1 to 5 are normally brief.

1 Welcome and Announcements

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

2 Substitutions

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

3 Urgent Items

To announce any items not on the agenda which the Chairman has agreed to consider because they are urgent, to give reasons for the urgency and to indicate where in the order of business the item will be considered.

4 **Declarations of Interest**

The Chairman to invite Councillors to declare individually any interests they may have in the items on the agenda. Councillors should consult Meetings General Procedure Rule 7 for full guidance on the registration and declaration of interests. However Councillors may wish to note the following:-

- Where a Councillor has a disclosable pecuniary interest, other pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary interest in any business of the authority and he/she is present at a meeting of the authority at which the business is considered, the Councillor must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest, whether or not such interest is registered on his/her register of Interests or if he/she has made a pending notification.
- If a Councillor has a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at a meeting, he/she must not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter at the meeting. The Councillor must withdraw from the room where the meeting is being held unless he/she has received a dispensation from the Monitoring Officer.
- Where a Councillor has another pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at a meeting and where the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest, the Councillor must disclose the existence and nature of the interest and withdraw from the room where the meeting is being held unless he/she has received a dispensation from the Monitoring Officer.
- Failure to comply with the arrangements regarding disclosable pecuniary interests without reasonable excuse is a criminal offence, with a penalty of up to £5,000 and disqualification from office for up to 5 years.

5 **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

9 - 18

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held 18 July 2017.

6 **Have Your Say!**

a) The Chairman to invite members of the public to indicate if they wish to speak or present a petition at this meeting – either on an item on the agenda or on a general matter relating to the terms of reference of the Committee/Panel not on this agenda. You should indicate your wish to speak at this point if your name has not been noted by Council staff.

(b) The Chairman to invite contributions from members of the public who wish to Have Your Say! on a general matter relating to

the terms of reference of the Committee/Panel not on this agenda.

7 Decisions Taken Under Special Urgency Provisions

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

8 Decisions taken under special urgency provisions

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

9 Referred items under the Call in Procedure

To consider any decisions taken under the Call in Procedure.

10 Items requested by members of the Panel and other Members

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

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

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

11 Scoping Report – Bus Services in Colchester

19 - 22

See report of Assistant Director (Policy & Corporate)

12 Draft Work Programme 17-18

23 - 30

See report of Assistant Director (Policy & Corporate)

13 Exclusion of the Public (Scrutiny)

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

Part B

(not open to the public including the press)

SCRUTINY PANEL

18 JULY 2017

Present: - Councillor Arnold (Deputy Chairman), Councillor Coleman, Councillor Fox, Councillor Hogg, Councillor Scordis, Councillor Wood

Substitutions: - Councillor Hazell for Councillor Davies

Also in attendance: - Councillor Cory, Councillor T.Young, Councillor Bourne

122. Minutes

RESOLVED as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2017.

123. Year End 2016-2017 Performance Report including progress on Strategic Plan Action Plan

Councillor Young (by reason of holding the position of Chair of Colne Housing) declared a non-pecuniary interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7 (5).

Councillor Young, Portfolio Holder for Business and Culture, and Matthew Sterling, Assistant Director (Policy and Corporate), introduced the Year End 2016-2017 Performance Report including progress on Strategic Plan Action Plan report. The report requests that the Scrutiny Panel consider the significance of the performance of the organisation and its ability to operate effectively and achieve its strategic goals. The report also requests the Panel to consider whether the proposed targets for next year are sufficiently realistic and ambitious.

Matthew Sterling provided the Panel with information relating to the Key Performance Indicators from the previous year. In total, there were ten KPI's listed as green and four categorised as red. Matthew Sterling provided the Panel of a summary of those indicators which had surpassed the targets, this included the number of affordable homes delivered, which had exceeded its target within two of the three years, and the number of planning applications processed, which had the highest performance levels during 2016/17. With regard to those Key Performance Indicators that did not achieve the target, Matthew Sterling commented that the whilst the level of sickness had not achieved this years target, a number of long term sickness cases had been resolved, which would assist with next year's target.

Matthew Sterling also highlighted the progress on the Strategic Plan Action Plan, and highlighted in particular the work on preventing homelessness, promotion of Colchester as a tourist destination and improvement in street cleaning. Matthew Sterling also informed the Panel that many of the targets for next year will remain at the same level, however Cabinet has proposed that the target for planning appeals allowed against a decision to refuse is removed from next year's Key Performance Indicators.

It was suggested by Panel members that, as Cabinet have recommended that the target relating to lost planning appeals be removed, that the Planning Committee should be kept informed of planning appeals that are lost. Matthew Sterling informed Panel members that a total of 60% of appeals are upheld, with 40% of cases lost on appeal; the majority of cases that go to appeal are officer decisions. A Panel member queried whether the previous year's figure was consistent in both last years and this year's report.

With regard to the key performance indicator on affordable houses provided, Panel members questioned whether the current three year target was sufficient given that it had been achieved in two years. In response, Matthew Sterling highlighted that the three year target was ambitious and whilst the Council achieved the target, there is still learning required. Councillor Young highlighted the achievement of the Council to deliver on its affordable housing target and informed the Panel that many other local authorities do not reach their targets. It is proposed that the target for next year will remain as the target for this current year.

The Panel then discussed the key performance indicators related to waste, in particular the increase in residual waste collected per household. Matthew Sterling highlighted that over the years there had been a number of steps to reduce the level of residual waste including introducing food waste and promoting recycling. The aim of the waste review is to reduce these levels further and a review of the new waste system by the Scrutiny Panel will take place in December. Councillor Young, in response to a query, confirmed that 81 missed bin collections is a low number and that having a zero target would not be achievable. Missed bin collections can occur due to new developments and housing estates as well as the occasional use of agency workers.

The Panel suggested that the report containing the current progress and next year's targets could be merged shortening the report.

With regard to how targets are reviewed, Matthew Sterling stated that where performance exceeds the target during the year there is inevitably pressure to improve the target. However, setting targets requires planning to ensure that the target is viable, and incrementally improves performance; with each area taken on a case by case basis.

Some Panel members raised concerns that the activities listed as part of the Strategic Plan Action Plan focused on the urban areas of the Borough rather than the rural. Matthew Sterling highlighted work that had occurred in the rural areas including the seven secrets tourism and visitor campaign, as well as homelessness prevention services. Councillor Young highlighted the introduction of neighbourhood plans and well as Colchester in Bloom

and Litter Warriors as examples of activities outside of the centre of Colchester. Councillor Young also confirmed that the towns listed under the street cleaning section was not exclusive to those areas.

Panel members raised questions regarding the Northern Gateway development. Matthew Sterling stated that further information can be provided to the Panel in the near future with regard to business demand and affordable housing. The Chairman suggested that this would be useful given nature of the site.

A Panel member questioned the way in which the success of tourism and sport and leisure is measured. Matthew Sterling confirmed that for sport and leisure measures included amount spent and total membership numbers. In terms of tourism this takes longer for the outcomes to be seen, however it is possible to track information relating to group travel, coach travel and hotel occupancy. Colchester Borough Council have also launched TV advertising which has made a step change.

The issue of the train services was raised, particularly whether the Council has any powers over Greater Anglia to increase the provision of carriages and expanding station capacity. In response, Councillor Young confirmed that whilst the Council does not have power, it does have influence and can lobby through different areas to improve the train service.

The Chairman of the Panel, following queries regarding the events service suggested that this maybe something that could be reviewed by the Scrutiny Panel in the future.

Discussing the awards that had been given to the Council, members highlighted that there were additional villages that had won the Colchester in Bloom awards. Following a query as to whether the awards won by the Council is good in comparison to other local authorities, Matthew Sterling stated that the basis of the awards is to improve the performance. Councillor Young highlighted that the awards were achieved due to the strategic plan, rather than a focus on achieving awards.

RESOLVED that;

- a) The Panel considered the performance of the Council during 2016-17 and its ability to operate effectively and achieve its strategic goals.
- b) The Panel considered the proposed targets for 2017-18 are sufficiently realistic and ambitious.

124. Review of Colchester Borough Homes' Performance 2016/17

Councillor Hogg (by reason of holding the position of Board Member at Colchester Borough Homes) declared a non-pecuniary interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7 (5).

Councillor Tina Bourne, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, Gareth Mitchell, Chief Executive, Colchester Borough Homes (CBH), and Anne Grahamslaw, Chair, Colchester Borough Homes attended to present the report. The report requests that the

Panel review the performance of Colchester Borough Homes during 2016/17 and to make any recommendations to the Portfolio Holder on CBH performance management arrangements for 2017/18.

Nick Chilvers

Nick Chilvers attended the meeting to question whether Colchester Borough Homes would provide assistance to the Night Shelter in finding new accommodation and funding sources. Mr Chilvers also queried whether the pet ownership policy for Colchester Borough Homes tenants is routinely enforced.

Gareth Mitchell, Chief Executive, Colchester Borough Homes, confirmed that CBH works in close collaboration with a number of providers including the Night Shelter. Colchester Borough Homes had not received a direct approach from the Night Shelter to provide assistance with finding new accommodation. Any decision on providing support would need to be made by Colchester Borough Council Cabinet. Gareth Mitchell acknowledged the important role that the organisations play in homelessness prevention, and the requirement for the organisations to be sustainable. Gareth Mitchell confirmed that he would be happy to hold further discussions if needed.

With regard to the pet policy, this is reviewed regularly and there are a clear set of circumstances where pets would be permitted, such as with assistance dogs. Further detailed information can be provided to Mr Chilvers and the Panel following the meeting. Gareth Mitchell confirmed that Colchester Borough Homes are alive to the issues of the community and of personal safety with regards to pets in the home.

Colchester Borough Homes Introduction and Presentation

Tina Bourne, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities, introduced the report and provided a brief summary of the relationship between Colchester Borough Council and Colchester Borough Homes. Councillor Bourne informed the Panel of the management agreement that was signed in 2013, which agreed that CBH would manage the housing stock, housing options and solutions as well as the homelessness prevention service. CBH also provide a wrap-around service for individuals with high medical and support needs.

Councillor Bourne highlighted that the performance of Colchester Borough Homes had been good during the year and expressed thanks to the Officers for the work in supporting CBH tenants. During the year the cost of renting in the private sector continues to be high, with the availability of social housing and voids for Council properties declining.

Anne Grahamslaw, Chair, Colchester Borough Homes commented on the successful relationship between CBH and Colchester Borough Council and emphasised the support from key Officers and Councillors in maintaining this relationship. Anne Grahamslaw also highlighted that during 2016/17 the Board and Management team have looked again at the governance arrangements to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

Gareth Mitchell presented information on the performance of Colchester Borough Homes during 2016/17. The Panel were informed that Colchester Borough Homes is a low-cost housing organisation in the East of England and provides a good level of performance.

The key areas of focus for CBH are the welfare and safety of tenants, as well as financial stability and utilisation of the assets. Particular highlights provided to the Panel were exceeding the targets for rent collection rates during the year, and a 55% reduction in the number of evictions. Gareth Mitchell also confirmed that the tenancy audits continued during the year, and that 100% of properties have gas safety certificates. Challenges during the year included the increasing level of homelessness and the reduction by 30% in the number of social properties let for rent during 2016/17. The number of newly available social properties for rent has also reduced by a quarter during this year. With regard to the use of temporary accommodation, this has increased by 12% during the year, however this is lower than the national rate of 17%. Colchester Borough Homes are looking to improve the supply of temporary accommodation, some of which would be provided through the private sector leasing scheme. Work is also being undertaken with Circle and YMCA to provide short-term "crash pad" accommodation for single people presenting to CBH as homeless.

Gareth Mitchell provided the Panel with information regarding fire safety in CBH properties. It was confirmed that the Council has no high-rise accommodation in its housing stock, nor are there properties with similar cladding to that found on Grenfell Tower. A fire safety project group has been set up with representation from across CBH and from the CBC housing client team and it is led by CBH's health and safety lead director. The group meets weekly and has established an action plan which is focused on reviewing fire safety arrangements across the Council's housing stock. Actions on the plan include advice to tenants, actions to reduce clutter in communal areas which can cause fire risk, and a programme of inspections of the communal areas and roof spaces in two and three storey blocks.

In response to provisions in the Housing and Planning Act 2016 the Council and CBH have established a "Housing Futures" programme whose aim is to remodel and balance the Council's Housing Revenue Account business plan. CBH have also already implemented changes in the way the Housing Options team works in response to provisions in the Homelessness Reduction Act which goes live in April 2018. Gareth Mitchell also highlighted the work to agree a new Medium Term Delivery Plan with CBC and the requirement on CBH to continue to review and implement smarter ways of working.

The Panel welcomed the presentation provided by Colchester Borough Homes. Attendees from Colchester Borough Homes provided responses to questions from Panel members.

Gareth Mitchell confirmed under the Homelessness Reduction Act, it would be critical for Colchester Borough Homes to ensure that all protocols and liaison arrangements with partner organisations work effectively. Partner organisations will also be required to keep Colchester Borough Homes informed of any homeless individual that they interact with under a duty being established by the new Act. Other local authorities are already required

to notify Colchester Borough Council if a homeless individual is placed in the borough; Prison authorities must also provide information to the Council if an individual is travelling to the area.

The Panel also discussed the refurbishment of the Council stock. Councillor Bourne, highlighted that the Council took the position to sell some accommodation in order to refurbish the two sheltered accommodation schemes, Worsnop House and Enoch House. A further scheme would be considered, however there is no longer any further borrowing headroom to undertake a scheme similar to the scale of Worsnop House as a result of the national rent reduction policy; the Council's creation of the new Housing Development Company is a response to this constraint. Confirmation was also provided that following the renovation of Enoch House, those residents who wished to remain were permitted to do so. In delivering the renovation, 12 family homes were freed-up for families on the housing register as older tenants chose to move into the excellent new sheltered accommodation.

Gareth Mitchell, in response to query from a member of the Panel, confirmed that the aim of the Colchester Borough Homes private sector leasing scheme in the first couple of years is to establish a portfolio of 30 to 50 properties. Whilst this is progressing slowly CBH are working with local agents to identify those properties that are hard to let. Gareth Mitchell also informed the Panel that there are excellent providers of homelessness support in Colchester and whilst the number of homeless individuals in Colchester has risen, it is lower than the national average. In terms of the targets for reducing the use of temporary accommodation, Councillor Bourne highlighted that the number of households presenting as homeless had increased; targets have been increased next year to reflect this. Whilst the aim is to house individuals and families within the Borough, it is not always possible. This causes significant issues as the family will be away from relatives, schools and GP's. A future aim for Colchester Borough Homes would be able to provide temporary accommodation within the borough to prevent this issue.

With regard to the rent collection rate this placed the organisation in the top quartile when compared with 33 other housing organisations in the East of England. The increase in rent collection rates is the result of some excellent work in the housing management team to focus on performance and to build on the already close working with the financial inclusion team. Confirmation that all Colchester Borough Homes properties have smoke alarms and are checked and monitored was also provided.

In response to a question regarding the input from Colchester Borough Homes on national issues, Panel members heard that CBH are engaged with a number of representative bodies, in particular the National Federation of Arms-Length Management Organisations. Colchester Borough Homes also contribute case study information when required, which is supported by Colchester Borough Council.

The Panel were also informed regarding the average days to complete a repair target that emergency repairs are dealt with sooner with a shorter target time. Gareth Mitchell highlighted that text messages are then sent to the tenant to establish whether they are satisfied with the repair and whether there are any further issues.

RESOLVED that the Panel reviewed the performance of Colchester Borough Homes during 2016/17.

125. 2018/19 Budget Strategy, Medium Term Financial Forecast and Budget Timetable

Councillor Cory, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Sean Plummer, Finance Manager, introduced the 2018/19 Budget Strategy Report. The report requests that the Panel consider and note the strategy, medium term financial forecast and budget timetable that was presented to the Cabinet on 12 July 2017. Any comments or concerns raised by the panel will be referred back to the Cabinet.

Councillor Cory highlighted that budget includes a reallocation of funding to strategic plan priorities. This included abolishing costs of child funerals, £60,000 towards tourism campaigns and £40,000 towards events. Councillor Cory also highlighted the allocation of money towards the heat network project, as well as money being put towards the commercial company and the 1918 Commemoration Task and Finish Group. Further work will take place to establish whether it is possible to invest in accommodation that could replace using external bed and breakfast provision.

With regard to the forecast for next year, it is expected that there will be further cuts to the Revenue Support Grant and New Homes Bonus which will create a gap of £868,000. The gap already includes £1.5m of savings that have already been identified, so further innovative solutions are being devised.

Sean Plummer, Strategic Finance Officer, confirmed that budget forecasts are based on a set of assumptions. There is some degree of certainty regarding the Government grant funding as it is based on the agreed 4 year settlement. Work has started to identify possible savings in a number of different areas, however year on year it becomes more difficult to find savings. Sean Plummer confirmed that the New Homes Bonus was to be cut by £1.3m, which reduces the funding available for the Council to spend.

Sean Plummer highlighted the Medium Term Financial Forecast, which detailed that there would be a further £1.6m gap by 2020/21, inclusive of savings and income levels already predicted. With regard to the levels of balances, Sean Plummer highlighted that they are currently £400,000 higher than the Council's recommended level, however these can only be used once.

Questions raised by the Panel

Councillor Hazell questioned why the report includes an assumption that inflation would not be allocated to the Sport and Leisure budget. In response Sean Plummer stated that the budget strategy allows for inflation across all Council's costs, but the approach taken for sport and leisure (and other trading type services) is that these services will find additional income to cover these costs.

Councillor Coleman questioned the reduction in stadium rent amount and Sean Plummer stated that this was part of the rent arrangement in place for the Community Stadium. There is currently a fixed rent, but this will come to an end and it is assumed that the rent level will decrease as it then becomes linked to turnover.

In response to a query from Councillor Arnold, regarding the Pensions actuarial review Sean Plummer stated that the Essex Pension Fund provided an option to pay a lump sum covering three years which the Council accepted. This created a one off cost in the budget for this financial year which has been partly funded from reserves, and the Council will then reinstate reserves in the next two years. This approach meant that an annual provision remained in the budget which could be used to contribute towards the costs at the next review in three years time.

RESOLVED that the 201/19 Budget Strategy, Medium Term Financial Forecast and Budget timetable be noted.

126. Treasury Management – Annual Review 2016/17

Steve Heath, Finance Manager, introduced the Treasury Management Annual Review 2016/17. The report requests the Panel consider the review, note the performance of the Council's treasury management advisors and note new borrowing activity undertaken so far in 2017/18.

Steve Heath stated that treasury management concerns the Council's cash flow, borrowing activity and investment. A mid-year review of treasury management is reported to the Governance and Audit Committee, with the strategy for the forthcoming year to be brought to the Scrutiny Panel in January. Any further updates outside of those timescales will be reported to the Panel when required.

Steve Heath stated that all borrowing and investment activity is managed in house, however Capita Asset Services provide advice on debt and investment activity. Steve Heath confirmed that the strategy anticipated the interest rate remaining at 0.5% until the middle of 2016 before rising, however the rate was actually cut to a quarter of a percent. Steve Heath confirmed that the strategy was set to avoid new borrowing due to the risk and cost of carrying new debt would continue, and the investment policy also continued to reflect a low appetite for risk.

Steve Heath confirmed that revisions to the strategy had been agreed at the September Cabinet meeting. The alterations included revised forecasts and changes to the borrowing strategy to consider long term borrowing. Steve Heath also highlighted that it was necessary to exclude the UK from the minimum sovereign debt limits. The end of the year loan and investment account is on budget and that there were lower recharges on the Housing Revenue Account, but there is a higher level of cash balances than anticipated.

Steve Heath also provided a brief update on the current year's activity, stating that the Council has so far borrowed £5m to support the capital programme and further information of loans and rates is included within the report.

Councillor Arnold asked for further information regarding the Council borrowing £5m to support the capital programme and whether this was a reflection on the level of capital receipts. Steve Heath confirmed that the Council has forecasts of capital receipts for each financial year, the decision to borrow £5m to support the capital programme is to take advantage of the low rates available. Internal borrowing currently stands at £15m, which covers projects such as Rowan House, Firstsite, King Edward Quay and the Business incubation units. Councillor Cory confirmed that the Council remains active in selling and purchasing properties. The Revolving Investment Fund will allocate how each of the assets available will be best utilised, whether the property is invested in or sold. Councillor Cory highlighted the example of Amphora Place which is being funded by capital receipts. In addition there are a number of further projects such as the Northern Gateway and Mill Road which will require up front short term borrowing, which will result in further capital receipts.

RESOLVED that;

- a) The Panel considered the Annual Treasury Management Review for 2016/17
- b) The Panel note the performance of the Council's treasury management advisors
- c) To note new borrowing activity undertaken so far in 2017/18.

127. Annual Scrutiny Report

Councillor Arnold introduced the Annual Scrutiny Report. The report requests that the Panel consider and comment on the draft Annual Scrutiny report and recommend the report to Council for approval on 26 July 2017.

The Panel welcomed the report and expressed thanks to the Strategic Director of Customer and Relationships and the Democratic Services Officer for their support during 2016/17.

RESOLVED that;

- a) The Panel considered and commented on the draft Annual Scrutiny Report
- b) The Panel *RECOMMEND* the Annual Scrutiny Report to Council for approval on 26 July 2017

128. Work Programme 2017-2018

Councillor Arnold introduced the Work Programme 2017-2018, the report requests that the Panel consider and comment on the 2017-18 Work Programme.

Councillor Arnold asked the Panel to provide feedback on the new scrutiny scoping form that has been devised. Members of the Panel welcomed the form and found it useful in developing the ideas that are being requested for scrutiny. Members of the Panel were encouraged to use the form when requesting items in the future.

The Panel then discussed a form that had been submitted by Councillor Scordis regarding reviewing bus services in Colchester. The form requested that the Panel look at bus companies with a view to build a greater level of dialogue, particularly in relation to when

bus services or altered or cancelled. The Panel agreed that the issue of buses be brought to the Scrutiny Panel, with a view of assessing buses across the whole Borough rather than a focus on more urban areas. Pamela Donnelly suggested that further work could be undertaken with the North Essex Clinical Commissioning Group in relation to emissions from buses.

The Panel were also informed that a report relating to the Advertising Boards would not be coming to the August meeting, however a verbal update on the issue may be possible. In addition, the Democratic Services Officer confirmed that a formal scoping document could be brought to the Panel in August to outline the possible methods of reviewing bus companies in Colchester.

Councillor Fox questioned who would be attending for the Safer Colchester Partnership review taking place in September. Pamela Donnelly confirmed that all responsible authorities and organisations would be invited to attend. This included the Police and Fire Services, as well as Health and Probation. All non-statutory partners are also invited along. Councillor Fox questioned whether it would be appropriate to invite the Police and Crime Commissioner to the meeting as well. Pamela Donnelly informed the Panel that the deputy Police and Crime Commissioner knows Colchester very well and therefore may be a more appropriate person to invite.

RESOLVED that;

- a) A scoping document for a review of bus companies in Colchester be brought to the next meeting
- b) The Work Programme 2017-18 be noted.

Report of	Assistant Director (Policy & Corporate)	Author	Jonathan Baker ☎ 282207
Title	Scoping Report – Bus Services in Colchester		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

This report requests the Committee to agree to review the Council's meetings and procedures

1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To consider and comment on the proposals for undertaking a review of bus services in Colchester
- 1.2 To agree to the scope for a Bus service review as included in Appendix 1.

2. Background

- 2.1 Councillor Scordis submitted a request to the Scrutiny Panel for bus services in Colchester to be reviewed. A completed scoping document was circulated to Panel members for discussion at the meeting on 18 July 2017. Following the Panel's agreement to review bus services in Colchester, the Panel requested that a full scoping report be brought to the next meeting.
- 2.2 In approving the review, members of the Panel were keen to widen the scope so that it would encompass bus services across Colchester, focusing on services for both urban and rural areas.
- 2.3 During the 2016/17 municipal year the Panel distributed a questionnaire to all bus operators in the Borough. Questions related to punctuality, real-time data, the number of buses in Colchester, reduction of emissions, accessibility, customer service and fares. All bus companies responded to the questionnaires and the results of which were reviewed by the Panel.
- 2.4 In March 2016, the Scrutiny Panel also reviewed the Colchester Borough Council Air Quality Action Plan, at which the Panel discussed the impact of buses in the Town Centre.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Scrutiny Panel undertake a review of the bus services, according to the scope outlined in **Appendix 1**. The scoping document in **Appendix 1** includes the detail provided on the original scoping form, as well as comments provided by the Panel and additional elements that the Panel may wish to consider.
- 3.2 The Panel will need to consider the approach it wishes to take for an effective review. This includes whether the discussions with the bus companies take place during scheduled Scrutiny Panel meetings, or during private informal meetings. Once an approach has been agreed invitations will be circulated to the relevant parties, with a schedule provided to Panel members once confirmed.

- 3.3 Further to the invitations made to the bus companies, it would prudent to extend invitations to bus user groups in the Colchester Borough area and gather information from bus users to feed into the review. This maybe something that the Scrutiny Panel wish to do before discussions with the bus companies proceed. The Panel will also need to consider how it collects information from members of the public with the timescales and resources available.
- 3.4 To provide consistency with questioning of the bus companies, the Panel may wish to establish a set of standard questions to put to all bus companies. This will enable comparisons to be discussed at the end of the review.
- 3.5 With regard to the timescales associated with the review it is proposed that the review conclude by the end of the municipal year, with a final report being scheduled for the March 2017 Scrutiny Panel meeting. A further review would then take place in six months during the 2018/19 municipal year.

4. Strategic Plan References

- 4.1 The manner in which the Council governs its business is an underpinning mechanism in the Council's Strategic Plan aims to set out the direction and future potential for our Borough.

5. Financial, Equality, Diversity and Human Rights, Consultation, Community Safety, Health, Publicity and Safety and Risk Management Implications

- 5.1 None identified.

Scoping Document

Objectives

- To understand the strategic role and benefits of bus operation and how it can best serve the community.
- To investigate and scrutinise what bus companies are doing to;
 - Improve the punctuality of services
 - Increase bus usage
 - Reduce emissions
 - Make buses more accessible
 - Communicate with passengers when services are cancelled or altered.
- To improve the dialogue between bus companies that operate in the Borough and Colchester Borough Council, Councillors and Residents.

Scope

To review a range of issues identified by Councillors regarding the bus services across the Borough of Colchester, including;

- The reliability and punctuality of the service across the borough of Colchester
- Customer Service provided by the bus companies
- The cost of the services
- How decisions are made on routeing of services
- Emissions
- Accountability of the bus companies
- Measures that can be taken to improve the level of communication between the Bus companies and Colchester Borough Councillors

Key Stakeholders, Partners or other agencies involved

The key stakeholders and interested bodies are likely to include: -

- Bus companies
- Bus user groups
- Members of the Public
- Councillors
- Colchester Borough Council
- Essex County Council
- North Essex Clinical Commissioning Group

Evidence and research to be gathered

- Evidence from the bus companies will be required to complete the review. Information requested will include;
 - Bus usage and punctuality statistics
 - Price scales over the last five years
 - Information on any plans for new buses and current bus emission levels
 - Routeing policies
- Evidence will also be gathered from user groups and members of the public.
- Essex County Council will also be required asked to provide information relating to supported bus services.
- Research of similar sized areas to Colchester Borough and the bus services in those areas.

Timescales and Reporting

Detailed timescales to be determined.

The Panel may wish to finish the review by the end of the municipal year, which would require a report to be submitted to the March 2018 meeting.

An update on the review would be brought back to the Panel within six months.

Lead Officers

Jonathan Baker, Democratic Services Officer
Pamela Donnelly, Strategic Director for Customers and Relationships
Paul Wilkinson, Transportation Policy Manager
Belinda Silkstone, Environmental Protection Manager

12 September 2017

Report of	Assistant Director (Policy and Corporate)	Author	Jonathan Baker Tel. 282207
Title	Work Programme 2017-18		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

1. Action Required

- 1.1 The Panel is asked to consider and comment on the 2017-18 Work Programme.

2. Alternative options

- 2.1 This function forms part of the Panel's Terms of Reference and, as such, no alternative options are presented.

3. Supporting Information

- 3.1 The Panel's work programme will evolve as the Municipal Year progresses and items of business are commenced and concluded. At each meeting the opportunity is taken for the work programme to be reviewed and, if necessary, amended according to current circumstances.
- 3.2 The Chairman of the Scrutiny Panel requested the inclusion of the Forward Plan of Key Decisions as part of the work programme for the Scrutiny Panel, and this is included an **Appendix A**.

4. Strategic Plan References

- 4.1 The Council recognises that effective local government relies on establishing and maintaining the public's confidence, and that setting high standards of self governance provides a clear and demonstrable lead. Effective governance underpins the implementation and application of all aspects of the Council's work.

5. Standard References

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

Work Programme for 2017/18

Meeting date / agenda items and relevant portfolio
Scrutiny Panel meeting - 13 June 2017
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 12 June 2017
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Financial Monitoring Report End of Year – 2016/17 2. Capital Expenditure Monitor 2016/17 3. Creation of New Commercial Companies and Colchester Housing Development Company
Scrutiny Panel meeting - 18 July 2017
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 11 July 2017
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Year End 2016/17 Performance Report including progress on Strategic Plan Action Plan 2. Review of Colchester Borough Council Performance 2016/17 3. 2018/19 Budget Strategy, Medium Term Financial Forecast and Budget Timetable 4. Treasury Management – Annual Report 5. Annual Scrutiny Report
Scrutiny Panel meeting -15 August 2017
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 8 August 2017
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CANCELLED
Scrutiny Panel (Crime and Disorder Committee) - 12 September 2017
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 5 September 2017
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safer Colchester Partnership (Crime and Disorder Committee)
Scrutiny Panel – 27 September
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's Briefing – TBC
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Boards Update including wider PSPO for the Town Centre
Scrutiny Panel meeting - 7 November 2017
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 31 October 2017
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local Council Tax Support – Year 17/18 2. 2017-18 Revenue Monitor, period April – September 3. 2017-18 Capital Monitor, period April – September 4. ICT Support contract 6 Month update
Scrutiny Panel meeting - 12 December 2017
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 6 December 2017
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 6-Monthly Performance Report and Strategic Plan Action Plan 2. Waste – 6 Month Update
Scrutiny Panel meeting - 30 January 2018

Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 24 January 2018
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2017-18 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme, Medium Term Financial Forecast, Housing Revenue Accounts Estimate and Housing Investment Programme (Pre-scrutiny of Cabinet Decision) 2. Treasury Management Investment Strategy
Scrutiny Panel meeting - 27 February 2018
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 20 February 2018
1.
Scrutiny Panel meeting - 27 March 2018
Scrutiny Panel Chairman's briefing – 21 March 2018
1.

COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL

FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS 1 October 2017 – 31 January 2018

During the period from 1 October 2017 – 31 January 2018 Colchester Borough Council intends to take 'Key Decisions' on the issues set out in the following pages. Key Decisions relate to those executive decisions which are likely to:

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

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

The Council invites members of the public to attend any of the meetings at which these decisions will be discussed and the documents listed on the Plan and any other documents relevant to each decision which may be submitted to the decision taker can be viewed free of charge although there will be a postage and photocopying charge for any copies made. *All decisions will be available for inspection at the Library and Community Hub, Colchester Central Library, 21 Trinity Square, Colchester and they are also published on the Council's website, www.colchester.gov.uk*

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

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

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

If you need help with reading or understanding this document please take it to the Library and Community Hub, Colchester Central Library, 21 Trinity Square, Colchester or telephone (01206) 282222 or textphone users dial 18001 followed by the full number that you wish to call and we will try to provide a reading service, translation or other formats you may need.

KEY DECISION REQUIRED	DOES DECISION INCLUDE EXEMPT INFORMATION (or information defined by the Government as Confidential)	DATE OF DECISION or PERIOD DECISION TO BE TAKEN	DECISION MAKER (title and name, including Cabinet, portfolio holders and officers)	DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED OR TO BE SUBMITTED TO DECISION TAKER TO CONSIDER (and from where they are available)	CONTACT DETAILS FROM WHICH DOCUMENTS CAN BE OBTAINED (name of the authors of the reports)
Approval of Colchester Borough Council's Digital Strategy 2017-22, public-facing and internal policy versions.	No	11 October 2017	Cabinet (Cllrs Bourne, Cory, Feltham, Lilley, B Oxford, J Scott-Boutell, Smith, T Young) Please contact via Democratic Services (01206) 507832 email: democratic.services@colchester.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder Report	Steven Eke, Project Officer, Commercial Services. 01206 508795 or 07596 978359
Housing Revenue Account Fees and Charges 2018-2019 To agree the HRA fees and charges for 2018/2019	No	November/ December 2017	Councillor Tina Bourne, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities	Portfolio Holder Report, including appendices of charges	Daniella Woraker Housing Systems Business Partner daniella.woraker@colchester.gov.uk 01206 282392

**CONTACT ADDRESSES
FOR
COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Adrian Pritchard, Chief Executive
Rowan House, 33 Sheepen Road, Colchester CO3 3WG
Tel: (01206) 282211
email: adrian.pritchard@colchester.gov.uk

Pamela Donnelly, Strategic Director, Customer and Relationships
Rowan House, 33 Sheepen Road, Colchester CO3 3WG
Tel: (01206) 282712
email: pamela.donnelly@colchester.gov.uk

Ian Vipond, Strategic Director, Policy and Place
Rowan House, 33 Sheepen Road, Colchester CO3 3WG
Tel: (01206) 282717
email: ian.vipond@colchester.gov.uk

Ann Hedges, Chief Operating Officer
Rowan House, 33 Sheepen Road, Colchester CO3 3WG
Tel: (01206) 282202
email: ann.hedges@colchester.gov.uk

Matthew Sterling, Assistant Director Policy and Corporate
Rowan House, 33 Sheepen Road, Colchester CO3 3WG
Tel: (01206) 282294
email: matthew.sterling@colchester.gov.uk

Lucie Breadman, Assistant Director Communities
Rowan House, 33 Sheepen Road, Colchester CO3 3WG
Tel: (01206) 282726
email: lucie.breadman@colchester.gov.uk

Hazel Simmonds, Assistant Director Environment (interim)
Rowan House, 33 Sheepen Road, Colchester CO3 3WG
Tel: (01206) 282632
email: hazel.simmonds@colchester.gov.uk

Leonie Rathbone, Assistant Director Customers
Rowan House, 33 Sheepen Road, Colchester CO3 3WG
Tel: (01206) 507887
email: leonie.rathbone@colchester.gov.uk

