

Report of	Chief Operating Officer	Author	Ann Hedges ☎ 282202
Title	Strategic Plan Spending Priorities		
Wards affected	All		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 A new Strategic Plan was agreed at full Council in February 2018. In order to progress the priorities it is proposed that available funding should be allocated across a range of themes embedded in the Plan to enable quicker delivery than would be possible without additional funding.
- 1.2 Eight themes have been identified and are set out in more detail at section 5 below. The eight themes are:
- Create Transport for Colchester
 - Clean up and promote the Town Centre
 - Fight Crime and Improve Community Safety
 - Reduce Homelessness
 - Enterprising Colchester
 - Sports and Health for All
 - Reform and Refresh
 - Co-operation

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To agree the eight priority themes
- 2.2 To agree the allocation of £1.95million across 2 years as set out in the Financial Implications to enable additional work.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 These priorities reflect those set out in the Strategic Plan and the allocation of resources will enable them to be moved forward more quickly.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 A different set of actions could be agreed however it is felt that these are of the highest importance
- 4.2 No additional actions could be instigated however there is a significant amount of one-off money available that should be put to use for the benefit of Colchester

5. Background Information

- 5.1 The year-end financial position that was taken to Scrutiny Panel on 12 June 2018 showed a positive position with a number of funding streams available for one-off spending.
- 5.2 A number of priorities have been identified that reflect the Strategic Plan that could be progressed more quickly with additional funding.
- 5.3 Further definition of the themes has been developed:
- **Create 'Transport for Colchester'** - work with Essex County Council and public transport providers to agree a Transport Plan, to secure better public transport and roads, and to get back the power for Colchester to fix the potholes, poor paths and broken roads that so frustrate residents.
 - **Clean up and promote the Town Centre** - make the most of our great town, light up and show off our heritage. Promote the Business Improvement District (BID) and prioritise progress with Vineyard Gate. Make visiting Colchester a **cleaner, greener, better** experience for pedestrians, visitors and residents – with pedestrianisation of the High Street a key step.
 - **Fight Crime and Improve Community Safety** - work with the police to put more officers on our streets, strengthening community policing and making them more visible and responsive to resident's needs: we will be tough on anti-social behaviour.
 - **Reduce Homelessness** - additional investment in property in the Borough to help house vulnerable residents and produce extra income to re-invest. **Build new Council houses**, to help those on our waiting lists or those immediately at risk of homelessness.
 - **Enterprising Colchester** - support our innovative local businesses, large and small. Develop our creative industries and our partnerships with business leaders and the University of Essex.
 - **Sports and Health for All** – take the next steps towards building Northern Gateway as a Regional Sports and Entertainment Hub, working with Sports England and others to raise sports participation across the Borough.
 - **Reform and Refresh** - invigorate Council ways of working, to look at alternative methods of service delivery and to maximise efficiencies to be re-directed towards frontline services. Launch a Policy and Public Initiatives panel to bring in new ideas from the public.
 - **Co-operation** - welcome the help and ideas and support of every party and every part of the community, working with Tollgate Village, forming a cross-party group for tourism and heritage, working with all of those wanting to improve life and prospects for all within the Borough.

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 6.1 An equality impact assessment was available for the Strategic Plan and is relevant for this. The link is available here [Strategic Plan 2018-21](#)

7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 The priorities are all set out in the [Strategic Plan 2018-21](#). This programme of work will take forward a number of areas.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 A number of these priorities will require public consultation and finance for appropriate consultation will be included in the allocation of resources to inform how specific projects will be taken forward.

9. Publicity Considerations

- 9.1 There will be a range of areas that will of interest to the public and proactive communications will be undertaken and a range of communication campaigns will be used to support some of the behaviour change activities.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1 There are three sources of funding that are available to fund the work on these priorities that was set out in a report to Cabinet in June and summarised in the table and commentary below:

	£'000	
New Homes Bonus	1,063	Para 10.2
Improvement due to outturn	279	Para 10.3
Business Rates Pool gain	634	Para 10.4
Total to allocate	1,976	
Remaining balance above agreed level	241	Para 10.3
Total	2,217	

New Homes Bonus 2018/19

- 10.2. The Council is due to receive £3.4m in NHB in 2018/19. Of this £2.38m has been allocated to support the base budget and specific proposals such as supporting the Northern Gateway sports project. It was agreed in the budget that the balance of £1.063m would be used to help deliver projects which support strategic plan priorities.

Balances above prudent level

- 10.3. The end of year General Fund revenue account shows an underspend after proposed budget carry forwards of £79k. When the 2018/19 budget was set, it had been assumed that for planning purposes that the end of year position could potentially be an overspend of £200k. The outturn therefore improves our balances position by £279k. In addition when the budget was set it was reported that balances were £241k above the recommended level.

Business Rate Pool

- 10.4. The provisional Essex business rate pool outturn shows a gain of £834k for 2017/18 which is being carried forward into 2018/19. We do not budget for this gain although we have commented during the year that we were assuming a gain of £0.5m. The 2019/20 budget already assumes that we will use £200k from this to support next year's budget (2019/20) and therefore this leaves a balance of £634k.
- 10.5. It is proposed that £1.95m of this available money is used and that the remaining £267k is left in balances. In addition some themes of work are supported by funding that has

already been agreed much of which has been gained from external funding streams. For completeness existing funding above base budget is also shown as it demonstrates the full financial commitment against the Strategic Plan priorities.

- 10.6. The money will be committed across a range of activities for 2 years, 2018/19 and 2019/20. Initial allocations against the themes are set out in the following table:

Main theme	Existing funding	New allocations	£'000
Transport for Colchester		Enabling & feasibility Small transport projects	150 400
Clean up and Promote the Town Centre		Improving cleanliness Heritage projects Enabling projects	300 200 250
Fight Crime and Improve Community Safety			400
Reduce Homelessness	£3.3m of existing funding £192k of MHCLG funding		
Build new Council Houses	Up to £5m of HRA funding		
Enterprising Colchester	Existing resource within RIF eg £195k for digital strategy		
Sports and Health for All	£266k development grant from Sports England funding. Further delivery grant committed		
Reform and refresh	Aimed at making savings		
Co-operation			150
Communication campaigns			100
Total			1,950

- 10.7. These initial sums are allocated to themes and as more detailed planning is undertaken a comprehensive exercise will be put in place to allocate resource to specific projects to ensure best value.

11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 A number of the priorities will improve the health, wellbeing and community safety for our residents

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 N/A

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 N/A