



CORPORATE PLAN 2021-24



Great Place
Great People
One Community

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Version History

Version Number	Details of changes	Approval
September 2021	N/A	Full Council 29/09/2021
November 2021	Additions to partnerships list in Section 6 and Annexe 2	N/A

Foreword

Great Place. Great People. One Community.

Welcome to our new corporate plan, which is the product of ongoing collaboration during 2020 and the first half of 2021 between Members and Officers of the Council, further refined through engagement with the Council's Scrutiny Committees and consultation with residents, partners and businesses in the Borough.

The plan has been developed during unprecedented times; Covid-19 has been the biggest challenge to health and wellbeing in decades and the economic impact at the time of drafting this plan is not yet clear, but will have a wide ranging effect on businesses, jobs and the livelihoods of residents.

In response, the Council has worked collaboratively with partners and the community where there has been an unparalleled mobilisation of collective resources and volunteers to face this challenge head on. This response has helped to significantly mitigate the impact, has saved lives and supported the most vulnerable in the community.

Whilst acknowledging that the threat of Covid-19 has not yet fully passed and will continue to have an influence on day-to-day lives, the Council must look beyond current circumstances and prepare its longer-term plans for the Borough with a focus on the benefits of growth and supporting our recovery from the pandemic.

In developing this plan, we have reviewed feedback collected through resident surveys and looked at what the data tells us needs improving in the Borough; some of the key areas that are important to our community and require improvement include:

- a thriving economy with opportunities to develop skills and access quality employment;
- a safe, inclusive and healthy community with support, in particular, to vulnerable residents, the young and elderly;
- enough good quality homes, including affordable homes, are built and transport systems exist that make it easy to get about for work and leisure; and
- natural and historic assets that are protected and improved, surroundings that are clean and pleasant and efforts made by all to combat climate change.

The Council continues to face financial pressures which have, in the short-term, been made worse by Covid-19; income has fallen from the closure of facilities such as car parks, leisure centres and community halls and expenditure has increased in response to the pandemic. Whilst the Council's finances have been well-managed during difficult

times, the pressure remains on the Council to continue to find efficiencies and cost savings whilst maintaining the services valued by our community.

This new corporate plan has deliberately widened its focus beyond the services that the Council provides directly. Recognising that some of the challenges people face in their lives cannot be addressed by a single entity, working in partnership with others in the public, private, community and voluntary sectors has become an increasing priority to ensure that, collectively, these organisations operating in the Borough have a positive impact on people's lives.

Growth is at the heart of this new corporate plan. Alongside the clear economic benefits from growth such as a thriving local economy with new and better-paid jobs, the Council can use growth to leverage important and much needed investment in the infrastructure of the Borough, from affordable housing and transport improvements to enhanced education and health services.

Our priorities are set out in more detail in this document and we are committed to achieving our vision for Castle Point.

Councillor Andrew Sheldon
Leader of the Council
September 2021

Executive Management Team
September 2021

1. Introducing our Vision, Priorities, Objectives and Targets

- 1.1 Our long-term vision (see Figure 1 on the following page) for the Castle Point Borough, together with our priority areas, objectives and targets are positioned front and centre in this corporate plan so that residents, businesses and partner organisations can see what the Council is aiming to achieve and how we will measure progress towards delivering this vision.
- 1.2 For those who want to understand more about how the Council has arrived at this vision, the rest of the plan covers a range of background information and local intelligence that has been used to inform its development, together with a high-level roadmap of activity the Council will take over the short-, medium- and long-term.
- 1.3 To achieve our vision, the Council will focus on the following four priority areas with a series of objectives sitting under each:

Economy and Growth

People

Place

Environment

- 1.4 We also give regard to the **Enablers** of: Leadership; Democracy; Partnerships; and Resources. As the label suggests, these are important factors to get right to enable the Council to achieve its vision. More on the work around these enablers is set out in the Annual Initiatives in Section 8.
- 1.5 The priority areas and objectives are set out in more detail over the following pages (Figures 2 and 3).
- 1.6 Figures 4a – 4d set out the indicators and targets under each priority area. Collectively, these will give an indication on progress being made towards achieving our long-term vision. Therefore, many of these targets will run beyond the timescales of this plan.
- 1.7 The Council recognises that it cannot directly or single-handedly influence many of these indicators – in particular those relating to Economy and Growth – and so other measures will also be used to track progress on implementation and effectiveness of the activities set out later in this plan in Section 8. These activities will be updated each year, informed by other strategies that exist across the Council as well as by the service plans produced by each department.

Figure 1 - Vision

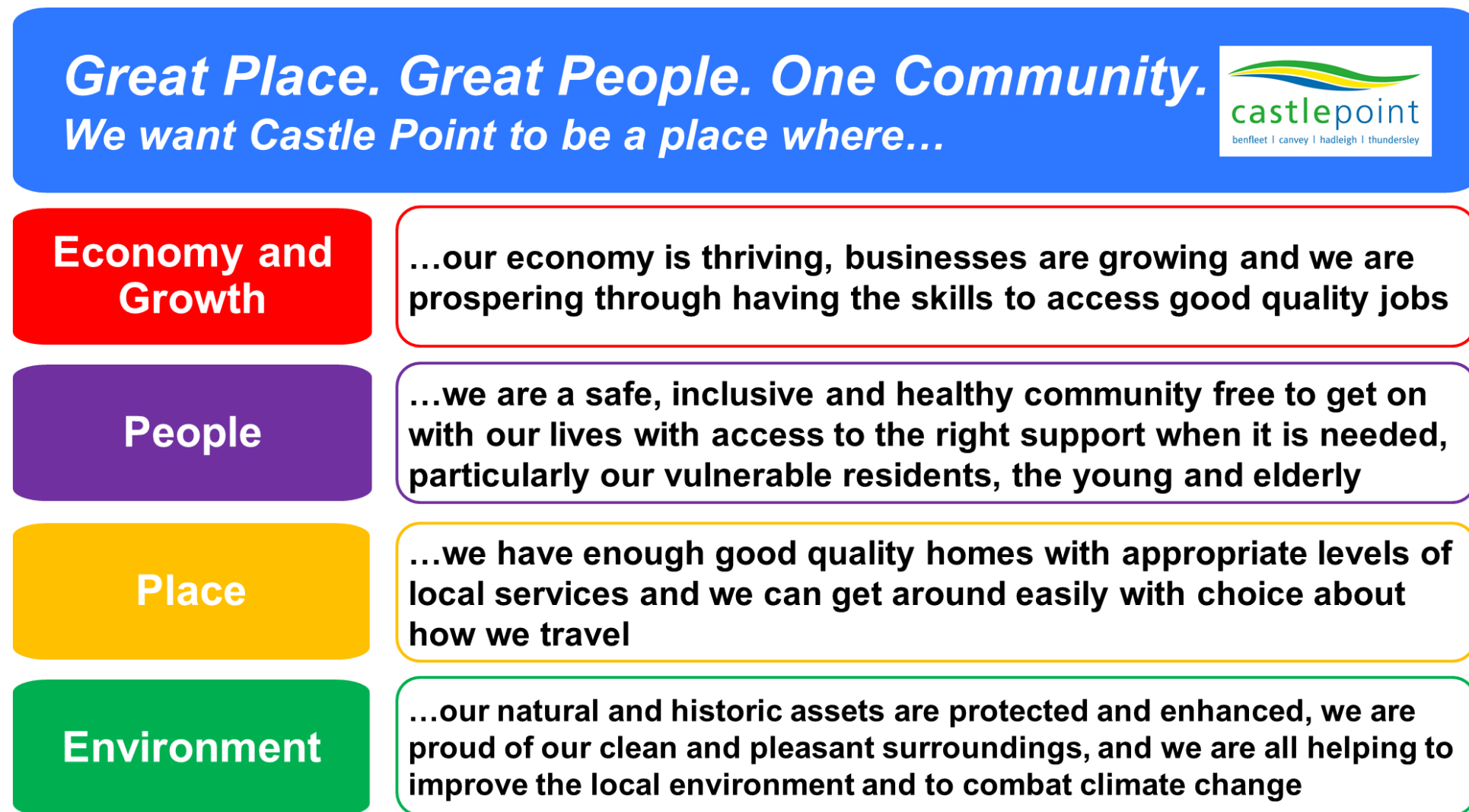


Figure 2 – Priority Areas and Objectives (Overview)



Figure 3 – Priority Areas and Objectives (Detail)



Figure 4a – Economy and Growth – Indicators and Targets

Priority Area 1:

Economy and Growth

Objective

Target

Productivity

We want the local economy of Castle Point to create more value, driven by our vibrant town centres, increased earnings and the productivity of our companies

E&G 1: Improvement to Castle Point's comparative position on Gross Value Added (GVA) per head (from the 2018 baseline of 14th out of 14 local authorities in Greater Essex)

Business Growth

We want the right conditions for existing businesses to grow and new businesses to come here, including good transport links and access to a skilled workforce

E&G 2: Increase in the number of businesses in the Borough to 3,545 by 2024 (from the 2019 baseline of 3,225 businesses)

Work and Prosperity

We are proud of our strong work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit; we want all of us to embrace the opportunities of work and the prosperity it brings

E&G 3: Increase in average workplace-based earnings to £592 per week by 2024 (from the 2019 baseline of £538 per week)

E&G 4: Increase in average resident earnings to £671 per week (from the 2019 baseline of £610 per week)

Skills

We want to make sure that everyone has the right skills to access good quality jobs on offer now and in the future

E&G 5: Increase in the percentage of the working-age population with NVQ Level 4+ to 35% (from the 2020 baseline of 29.2%)

E&G 6: Increase in the number of apprenticeship starts in the Borough to 750 by 2024 (from the 2018/19 baseline of 630)

E&G 7: Reduction in the percentage of local businesses that report local skills shortage when recruiting (to establish baseline in 2021)

Figure 4b – People – Indicators and Targets

Priority Area 2:

People

Objective

Target

Community

Our communities are one of our biggest strengths; we want to nurture our community spirit across the whole Borough so that we can all feel safe and that we belong

PE1: Increase in the percentage of people who agree that there is a strong sense of community in the local area to 70% (from the 2020 baseline of 59%)

PE2: Increase in the percentage of people who feel safe outside in their local area after dark to 55% (from the 2020 baseline of 42%)

Health and Wellbeing

We want to lead long and healthy lives with access to leisure facilities and organised activities that encourage us to keep active and feel good about ourselves

PE3: Increase in the percentage of people who are active (participating in physical activity for 150+ minutes per week) to 65% (from the November 2020 baseline of 61.1%)

PE4: Increase in life expectancy at birth to a) 80.7 years for men; and b) 84.0 years for women (from 2017-19 baseline of 80.2 and 83.5 years, respectively)

PE5: Reduction in life-expectancy gap between the most- and least-deprived parts of the Borough to a) 5.7 years for men; and b) 4.1 years for women (from 2019 baseline of 6.0 years and 4.3 years, respectively)

PE6: Increase in the score of Life Satisfaction to 8.20 (from the 2020 baseline of 7.99)

Vulnerable People

Those in our community who are vulnerable will be cared for and looked after

PE7: Increase in the percentage of people who agree that when they need help there are people who would be there for them to 90% (from the 2020 baseline of 86%)

Young and Elderly

We want to nurture young people to reach their full potential and give support to the elderly through providing services that deliver community value

PE8: Increase in the percentage of secondary school pupils who agree with the statement "my life is going well" to 70% (from the 2019 baseline of 64%)

PE9: Reduction in the percentage of people who report that they often feel isolated from others to 7% (from the 2020 baselines of 9%)

Figure 4c – Place – Indicators and Targets

Priority Area 3:

Place

Objective

Target

Homes

We need to have enough quality new homes to support our growing population, minimise homelessness and meet our housing needs as they change over different stages of our lives

PL1: To deliver homes in accordance with the Five-year Housing Land Supply requirements and as set out in the Local Plan

PL2: Increase the number of new affordable homes to 100 per annum by 2025 (from the March 2021 baseline of 13)

PL3: Maintain the percentage of homelessness prevention or relief duties that end in a successful outcome at 70% and 50% respectively (baseline March 2021 of 68% and 53%)

Infrastructure

We want to ensure that new development is designed to make places safe and helps to deliver affordable housing, transport improvements, great public spaces, schools and healthcare

PL4: To delivery infrastructure to support growth in accordance with the requirements of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (no baseline)

PL5: Decrease in the average travel time to key local services – walking or by public transport – to 16 minutes (from the 2017 baseline of 17.2 minutes)

Getting Around

Getting around is important to us for both work and leisure so we want a transport system that is effective and offers real choice for the way we travel; not just the car but walking, cycling, bus or train

PL6: Increase the percentage of residents who travel to work by either walking, cycling or public transport (i.e. not private car)

Figure 4d – Environment – Indicators and Targets

Priority Area 4:

Environment

Objective

Target

Natural and Historic Assets

Our natural and historic assets are our best kept secret – from the beaches and the foreshore to the “green lungs” of our parks and open spaces – we want to protect and enhance these

E1: Achieve at least 70% satisfaction with parks and open spaces by 2024 (from the 2021 baseline of 58%)

Clean and Green

We are proud of where we live and want to keep our local neighbourhoods looking clean and green

E2: Increase satisfaction with Council’s efforts to keep public land clear of litter and refuse to 65% (from the 2021 baseline of 61%)

E3: Maintain or reduce the percentage of streets inspected which are deemed to be unsatisfactory using Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse methodology at under 10%.

E4: Maintain the percentage of fly tips removed within one working day at 90%.

Reducing Waste

We want to help improve the local environment by reducing waste and reusing and recycling more

E5: Increase the percentage of household waste recycled or composted to 54% (from the 2020 baseline of 52%)

E6: Reduce the average amount of residual household waste per household to 750kg (from the 2021 baseline of 906 kg per household)

E7: Increase satisfaction with the waste collection service to 87% by 2024 (from the 2021 baseline of 84%)

Climate Change

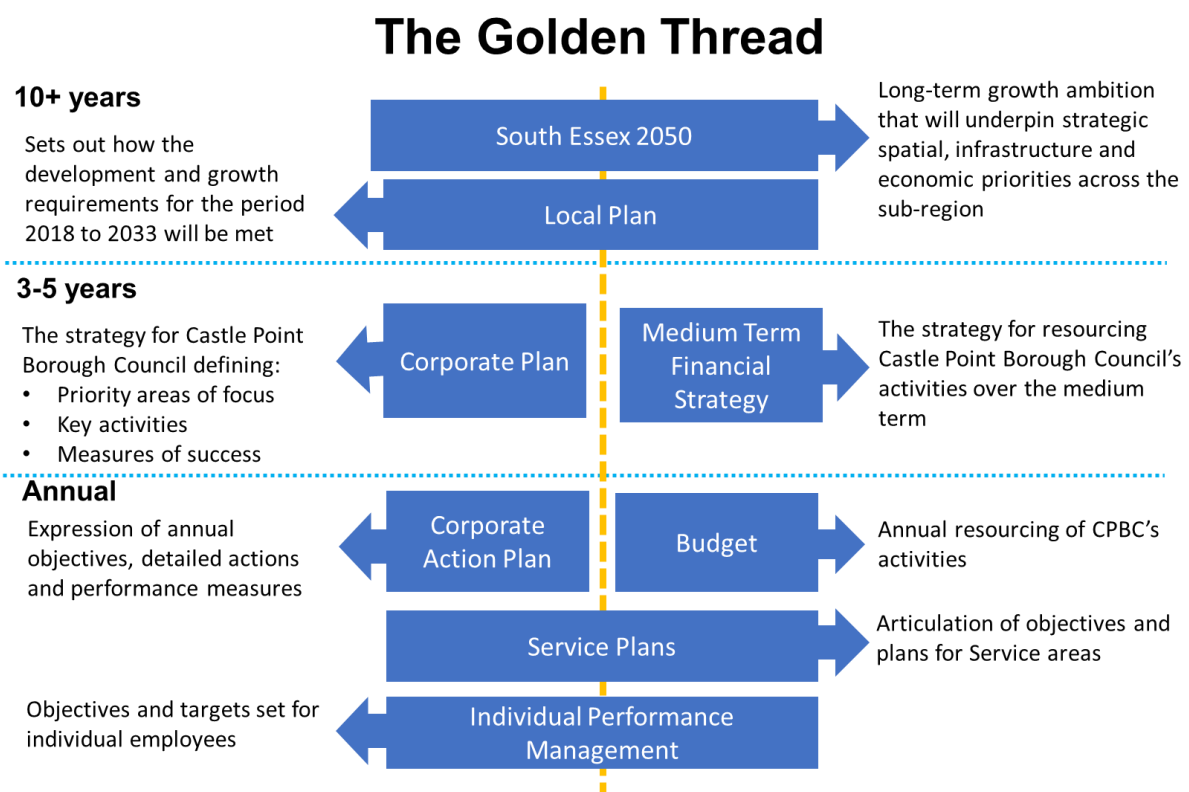
We also want to help combat climate change by making choices in our lives that reduce CO2 emissions

E8: Reduce the amount of CO2 produced from the Council’s building and operations by 15% by 2024 (from the 2020 baseline of 2051 tonnes)

2. The Strategic Framework

2.1 The Castle Point ‘Golden Thread’

- 2.1.1 The corporate plan is part of a wider and complex strategic framework which is expressed at national levels in legislation and national strategies, at regional/sub-regional levels as well as at a local level.
- 2.1.2 At the local level, the Council’s strategic planning framework ensures everything is aligned so that a ‘golden thread’ runs through plans and strategies. The diagram below shows how this all fits together and how the priorities in this corporate plan are reflected in other plans across the Council as well as through individual performance management of Council employees.



- 2.1.3 All our plans consider the needs of residents, customers and service users through consultation processes, and there are a number of other strategies – not shown here – with which our plans align.

2.2 Our Values

2.2.1 Our values influence everything that we do and inform how we interact with and shape our community. They also demonstrate that how we work to deliver our priorities is equally as important to us as what we do.

Equality:	Fair treatment for all
Respect:	Respect for each other
Integrity:	Integrity in the work we do and the decisions we make
Caring:	Listening and acting on staff, councillor and customer needs
Innovation:	Seeking new, improved ways of working and delivering services
Teamwork:	Valuing everyone's contribution
Accountability:	Being open and accountable to our residents, customers, partners, councillors and staff.

3. Profile of Castle Point and Key Challenges

- 3.1 Castle Point is a small borough covering just 17.3 square miles, with a population of 90,524¹. We are located at the heart of the South Essex sub-region on the northern bank of the Thames Estuary between the larger settlements of Basildon to the west and Southend to the east. It is these larger settlements, along with London, on which Castle Point relies for a great deal of its employment, services and leisure opportunities.
- 3.2 Castle Point is well connected within the wider Essex area and London by the strategic highway and railway network. The A13, A127 and A130 pass through Castle Point linking the Borough with opportunities in South Essex, mid-Essex and London. The railway service is well rated for customer satisfaction and provides fast, direct connections to Basildon, London and Southend, and connecting services to employment growth locations in Thurrock.
- 3.3 Spatial footprints for housing, health and economy naturally align Castle Point with other neighbouring local authorities: we sit within the South Essex Strategic Housing Market Area; are closely aligned with Southend-on-Sea and Rochford Councils through work in partnership with the NHS; and the South Essex councils of Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock, together with Essex County Council are working to make South Essex greater through sharing resources, lobbying government and collaborating with business and residents.
- 3.4 The Thames Estuary is a significant feature in the landscape of Castle Point. It has played and will continue to play an influential role in the natural environment and scope of development within the Borough.
- 3.5 Just over 55% of Castle Point's land is designated as Green Belt. As a result, most of the Borough's population live within one of four towns: Benfleet (22%), Canvey Island (43%), Hadleigh (14%), and Thundersley (21%).
- 3.6 Castle Point as an area has a long history but is essentially modern in character, there are a few older buildings remaining, although major re-development took place mainly between the two world wars. There remains in the Borough large areas of public open space, marshland and woodland.

¹ Population Estimates mid-2020, ONS

3.7 The Borough faces a number of challenges:

Economy

- *Employment:* The level of out-commuting both impacts on, and is influenced by, the quality of local employment opportunities. Jobs within the Borough are generally low skilled, and this is reflected in relatively low workplace-based earnings compared with other parts of Essex. There is a high dependence on public sector work and the bulk of employment for local people is outside of the Borough.
- *Skills and Qualifications:* Just 29.2% of the working-age population in Castle Point have skills equivalent to NVQ Level 4 or above (Level 4 is equivalent to the first year of a bachelor-level degree course)². This is the third lowest in Greater Essex (including Southend and Thurrock) and significantly below the Greater Essex average of 35.2% and England average of 41.7%. This matters because as well as a direct correlation between qualifications and earnings, forecasts on job growth in the Borough indicate a rise in skilled employment which local people will not be able to access unless skill levels improve.
- *Town Centres:* Due to the high level of out-commuting from Castle Point, the local town centres lose a substantial proportion of the residential spend to other centres, particularly Basildon, Southend, Lakeside (in Thurrock) and Bluewater (in Kent) because people are more willing and used to travelling for what they need and want. As a result, the town centres in Castle Point need revitalising in order to make them more attractive to existing residents and as locations for business and housing. An increase in the number of people working from home provides an opportunity for more spend to be retained locally.
- *Pockets of deprivation:* Overall, the Borough ranks 182nd out of 317 local authorities in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) where a lower rank indicates more deprivation³. However, there are four Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs – areas of between 1,000 to 3,000 people) that fall into the 20% most deprived in England and one LSOA that is in the 10% most deprived in England. This has a range of implications, including for life-expectancy which is 6.0 years lower for men and 4.3 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Castle Point compared with the least deprived.

² Annual Population Survey 2020, ONS

³ Indices of Deprivation 2019, Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government

People

- *Health:* For a variety of health statistics⁴, Castle Point is around the average or better. However, the key issues relate to lifestyle factors including obesity and below-average levels of physical activity. Castle Point has the highest smoking rate in the county (21.5% of the population) with just four in ten people having never smoked. 65.6% of the population are either overweight or obese which is above the England average. The Castle Point and Rochford Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has patients with high prevalence of diabetes at 7.2%, above the England average at 6.5%.
- *Ageing Population:* The population of the Borough is ageing. A quarter (25.5%) of the population in Castle Point are aged 65 and above⁵. A population that includes a higher proportion of older people will need a different mix of services compared to that existing in the Borough today. There will be a need for more specialist accommodation to be provided as the number of elderly people increases. There are also health implications as the percentage of people with diabetes and for people with dementia will be higher, as elderly people may be more susceptible to these illnesses. Hospital admissions due to falls, particularly in those aged 80 and above, are relatively high in Castle Point as are the number of hip fractures.
- *Young People:* Young people (under 20 years) will continue to make up over 20% of the population and it is important that their educational and social needs are met. Between 2020 and 2030, population estimates indicate that the 10-14 and 11-19 year-olds will be the biggest growing age groups for children: an increase of 273 and 851, respectively⁶. School and college places and services will need to be available to support these changes. There is currently a perception that young people do not have enough to occupy them, resulting in crime and anti-social behaviour. This issue needs to be addressed to achieve greater community cohesion and improve perceptions about crime.
- *Community Safety:* The overall crime rate per 1000 people in Castle Point is 25% lower than the average for England, 21% lower than the average for Essex and is the 12th lowest rate of crime out of 14 Essex local authority areas (including Southend and Thurrock)⁷. However, perceptions of feeling safe remain relatively low, especially after dark, when compared with other areas of Essex; just 42% of residents in the Borough indicated that they feel

⁴ Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (Castle Point Profile) 2019, Essex County Council

⁵ Population Estimates mid-2020, ONS

⁶ Population Estimates 2018, ONS

⁷ Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (Castle Point Profile) 2019, Essex County Council

safe after dark (although 93% of residents indicated they feel safe during the day).⁸

- *Ethnicity*: There is limited diversity across the population in Castle Point. Approximately 97% of the population regards themselves as white with the remaining 3% of residents from black, Asian and other minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds⁹, although in recent years a Haredi Jewish community has relocated to Canvey Island. The community has purchased an old senior school site and established a synagogue, community centre and school. Data from the 2021 Census will provide more insight into changes in the Borough over the last ten years.

Place

- *Housing*¹⁰: The pace of housing growth in the Borough has been the second lowest in Essex with an average of just 0.4% growth in overall housing stock per year between 2001 and 2019; the number of homes has increased from 35,770 in 2001 to 38,828 in 2019. Castle Point Council is the second lowest stockholding council landlord in England with just over 1,500 homes. This results in a shortage of affordable housing for which there is an acute demand. A total of 82.9% of households in Castle Point are people who own their own homes (either with a mortgage or outright), more than the national average (64.2%) and the average for Essex (72.0%). There is a very low proportion of social tenants (5.4%), who may be impacted by low stock levels, and low proportion of private tenants (11.8%). Affordability remains an issue with 2020 median property prices over 11 times median workplace-based earnings.
- *Highways and Transportation*: Although the Council is not responsible for highways and transportation, the quality of transport networks in and around the Borough has an impact on people's lives. Satisfaction with Highway services overall in 2018 was just 17% which is second lowest in Essex. Satisfaction is also relatively low for pavements and footpaths; traffic levels and congestion; and the condition of the roads¹¹. In 2020, 72% indicated they felt that road and pavement repairs were most in need of improvement. The level of traffic congestion was also an area indicated by residents most in need of improvement¹². Most commuting into and out of the Borough is done by car with very low bus usage, even for those travelling within the Borough.

⁸ Essex Residents Survey 2020, Essex County Council

⁹ Census 2011, ONS

¹⁰ Live Housing Tables (various), Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government

¹¹ Essex Residents Survey 2018, Essex County Council

¹² Essex Residents Survey 2020, Essex County Council

Environment

- *Climate Change*: Climate change is a significant issue for the UK and the Council is committed to tackling this – agreeing a target of net-zero carbon emissions by 2040 – and has implemented a number of initiatives in recent years to reduce the impact of the Council's operations on the environment. These include: insulation, boiler replacements in Council-owned housing; LED light upgrades and pool covers in the leisure centres; facilitation of grants to privately-owned houses to improve energy efficiency (especially those experiencing fuel poverty); and various other lighting and insulation improvements to Council offices and community halls.
- *Recycling and waste minimisation*: Related to the above, the Council continues to work with residents to reduce the amount of waste produced and divert as much of this waste as possible away from landfill by recycling and composting. Combined recycling and composting rates have remained at around 50% for some years and the Council is looking at ways to increase these levels.

4. Consulting with our Communities

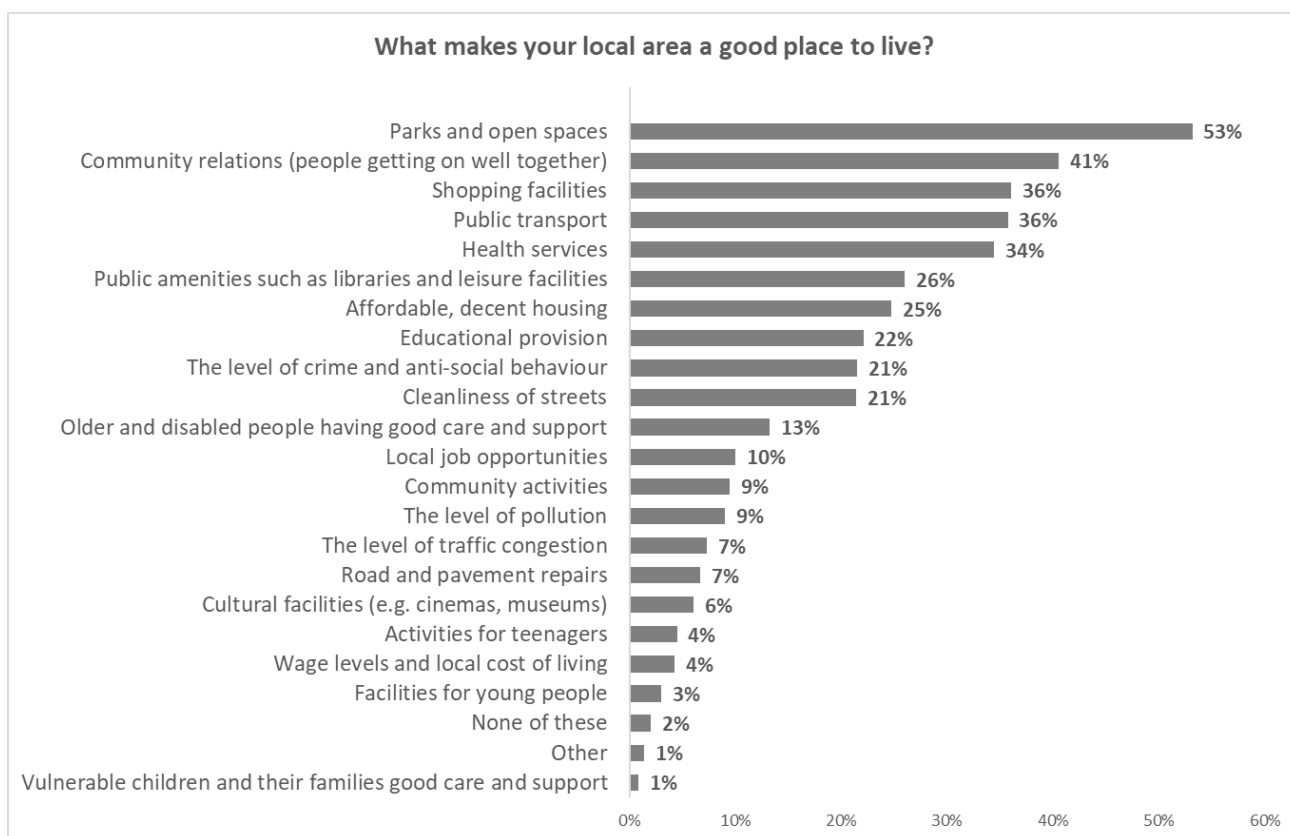
- 4.1 The Council consults with service users as part of normal service operation and before implementing plans to change or stop providing services. Many services conduct regular surveys to inform decision making and gauge levels of satisfaction. Major policies and strategies are also subject to consultation. This Corporate Plan has also been consulted on as part of its development.
- 4.2 There are two other main sources of data used to provide the Council with an understanding about general perceptions and satisfaction levels with specific services: Essex Residents Survey and Castle Point Residents Survey (conducted as part of the corporate plan consultation).

4.3 Essex Residents Survey 2020

- 4.3.1 The Essex Residents Survey is conducted across the county with results broken down by each of the direct-level councils and is a useful source of intelligence to understand perceptions about Castle Point as a place to live. The following paragraphs set out a summary of key findings.

Area as a Place to Live

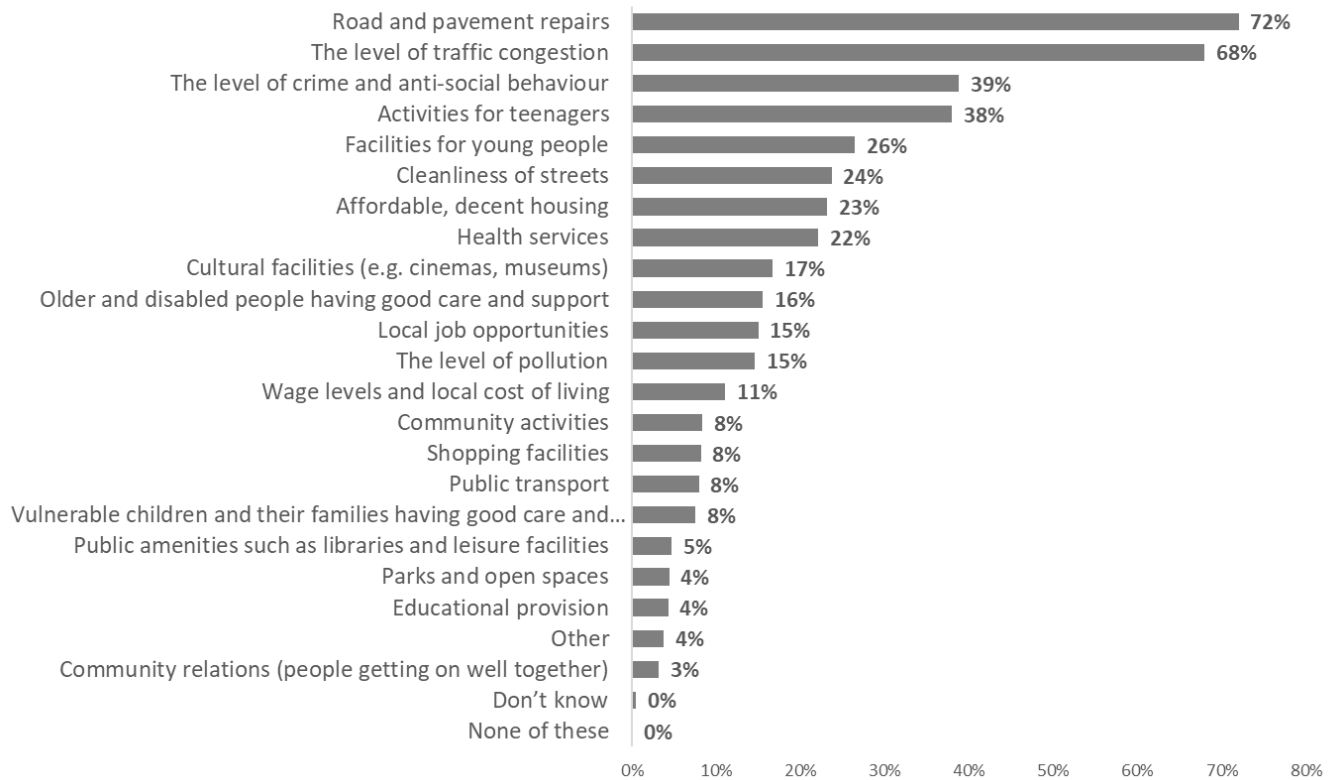
- 4.3.2 Participants in the survey were asked *what makes your local area a good place to live?* The following chart shows that *parks and open spaces* (53%), *community relations* (41%), *shopping facilities* (36%) and *public transport* (36%) scored highest in Castle Point. The first three factors were the same when aggregating results across Essex – 60%, 34% and 33% respectively, indicating what people value in their local areas is broadly similar across the county.



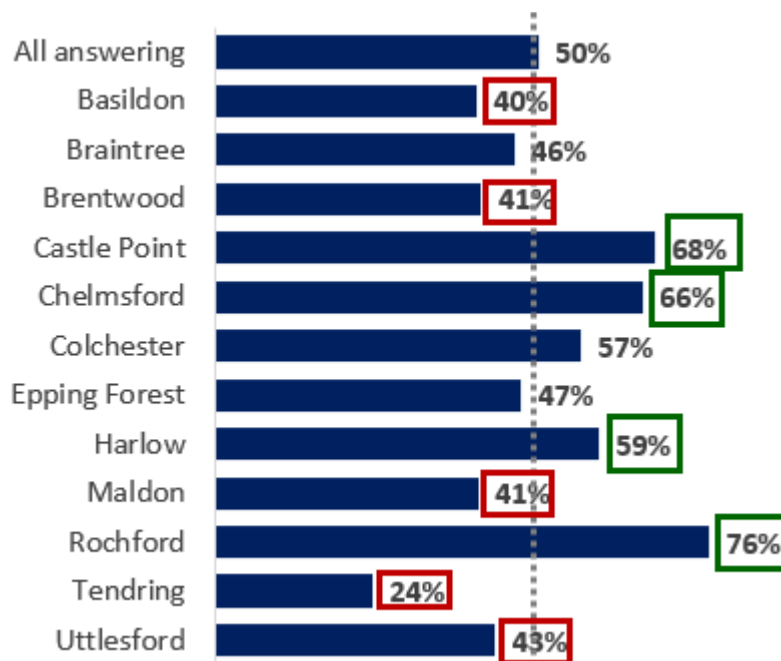
Source: Essex Residents Survey 2020

4.3.3 Participants were then asked to indicate which of these factors needs improving. The following chart presents the results for Castle Point. The top three factors that needed improving were: *road and pavement repairs* (72%); *the level of traffic congestion* (68%); and *the levels of crime and anti-social behaviour* (39%). These were the same top three for the results aggregated across Essex with 72%, 50% and 34% respectively. This indicates that in Castle Point more people think that traffic congestion and levels of crime and anti-social behaviour need improvement than the average across Essex, with concern about traffic congestion levels significantly higher than the Essex average. *Activities for teenagers* (38%) and *facilities for young people* (26%) also scored higher in terms of needing improvement than the Essex averages of 26% and 24% respectively.

Which of the things below, if any, do you think most need improving in your local area?



Percentage of respondents who indicated that Traffic congestion levels need improving

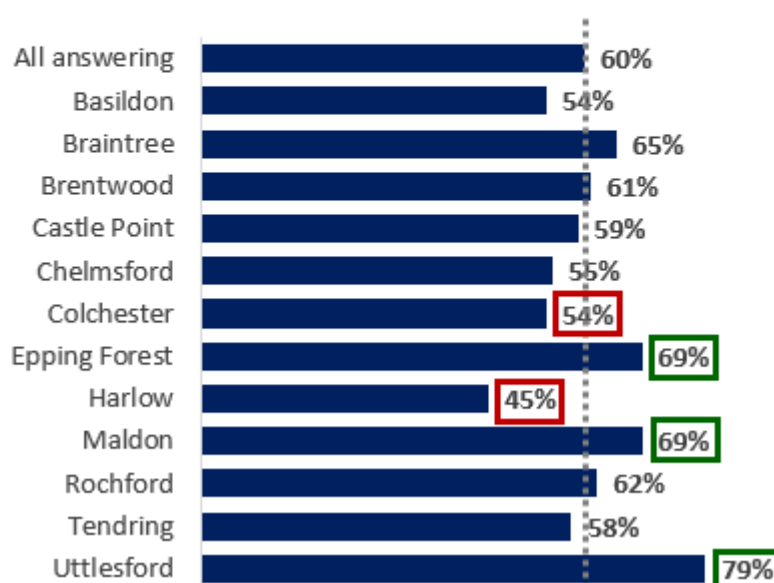


Community Cohesion

4.3.4 The same survey asked Castle Point residents the *extent to which they agree or disagree that there is a strong sense of community in your local area*. 59% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that there is a strong sense of community in Castle Point, which is slightly lower than the Essex average of 60% (the highest in Essex was 79% and lowest 45%).

To what extent do you agree or disagree that there is a strong sense of community in your local area?

% agree strongly / agree slightly

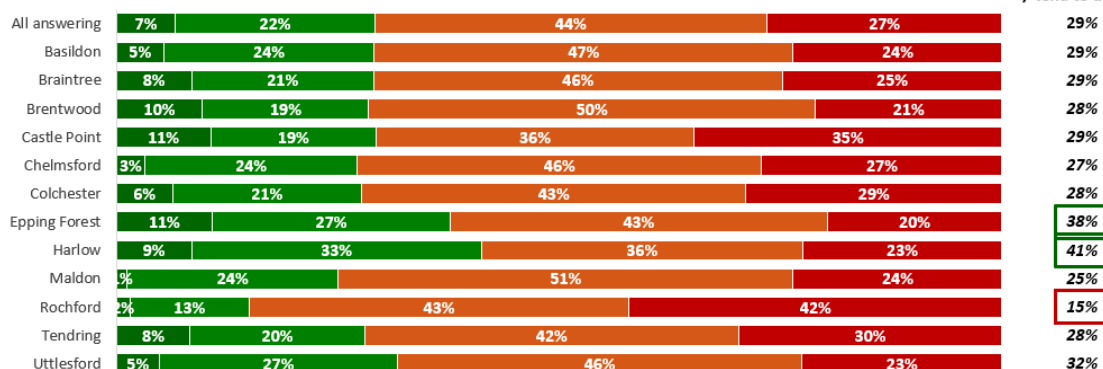


Views about the Council

4.3.5 In respect of *influencing decisions in the local area*, 29% agreed they could influence decisions in Castle Point, up from 15% when the survey was last carried out in 2018. This is the same as the Essex average of 29% (the highest in Essex was 41% and lowest 15%).

Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area (excluding don't know)?

% Definitely agree / tend to agree

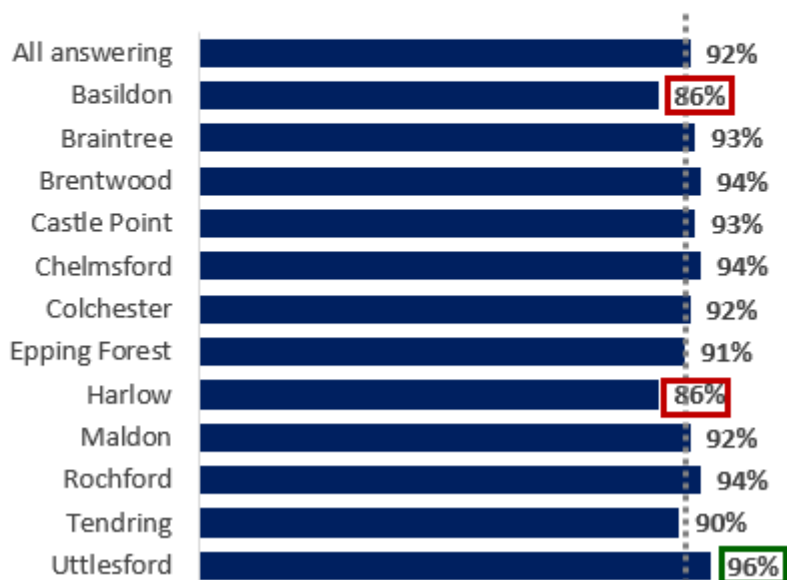


Fear of Crime

4.3.6 Fear of Crime after dark remains high in Castle Point, despite relatively low actual crime rates in the Borough. When asked *how safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area?* 93% answered they felt safe during the day, falling to 42% after dark. Average figures for Essex are 92% and 54%, respectively. Castle Point is one of two areas of Essex significantly lower than the Essex average. Analysis across Essex also suggests that concerns about the level of crime and anti-social behaviour is higher in areas with a higher level of deprivation.

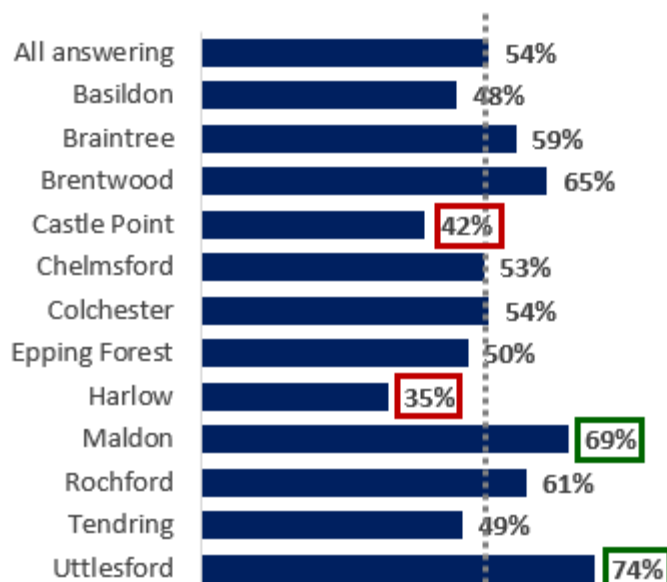
***How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside
in your local area during the day?***

% very safe / fairly safe



***How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside
in your local area after dark?***

% very safe / fairly safe



4.4 Corporate Plan Public Consultation

4.4.1 In March and April of 2021, a public consultation was held to inform this corporate plan. Members of the public and partner organisations were asked to complete a survey about the relative importance of the proposed priority areas and objectives. Residents also had the opportunity to provide feedback on Council-provided services.

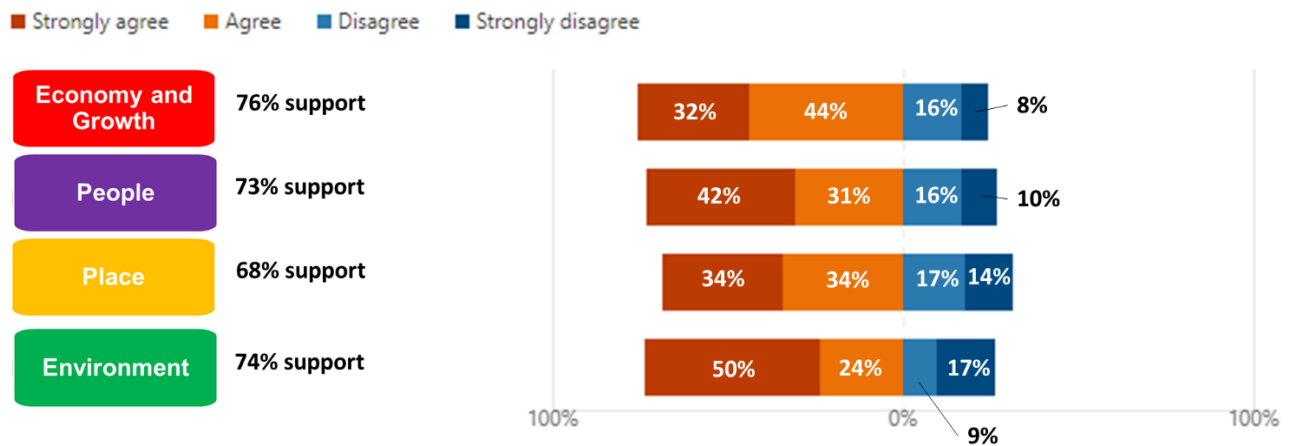
4.4.2 There were 213 responses, with the results set out below.

Priority Areas

4.4.3 There was broad levels of support for each of the priority areas, ranging from 76% for Economy and Growth through to 68% for Place. This is positive that the vast majority of respondents were supportive of the Council's proposed priorities. The following graphic shows more detail on the breakdown of the support.

Four Priority Areas

(May not add up to 100% because of rounding)

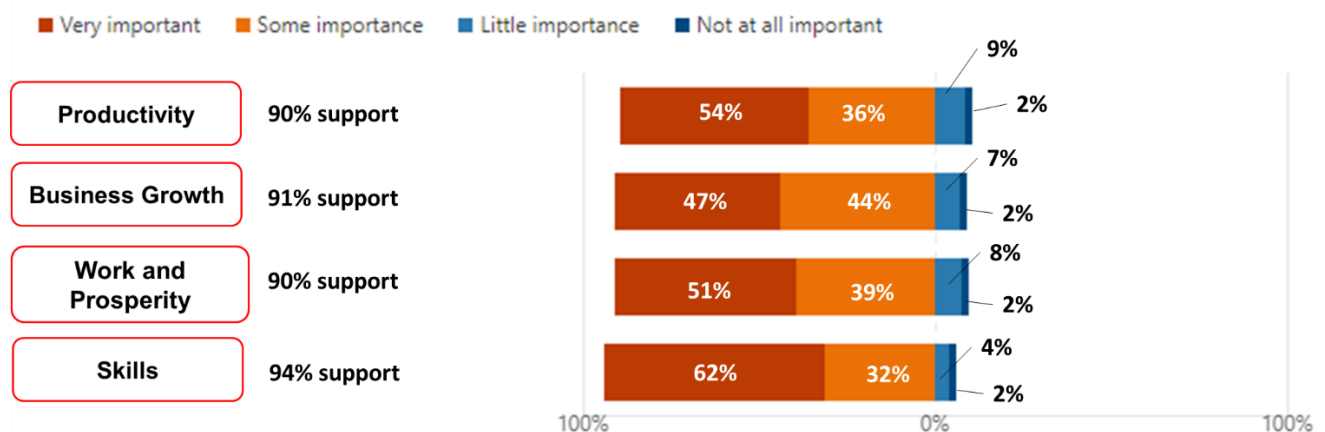


Objectives

4.4.4 Most of the 15 Objectives received overwhelming support, with over 90% support for 13 of the 15. The objective about Infrastructure scored just under 90%, with the objective about Housing receiving the least support at 56%. The following four graphics show more detail about the level of support across each of the objectives.

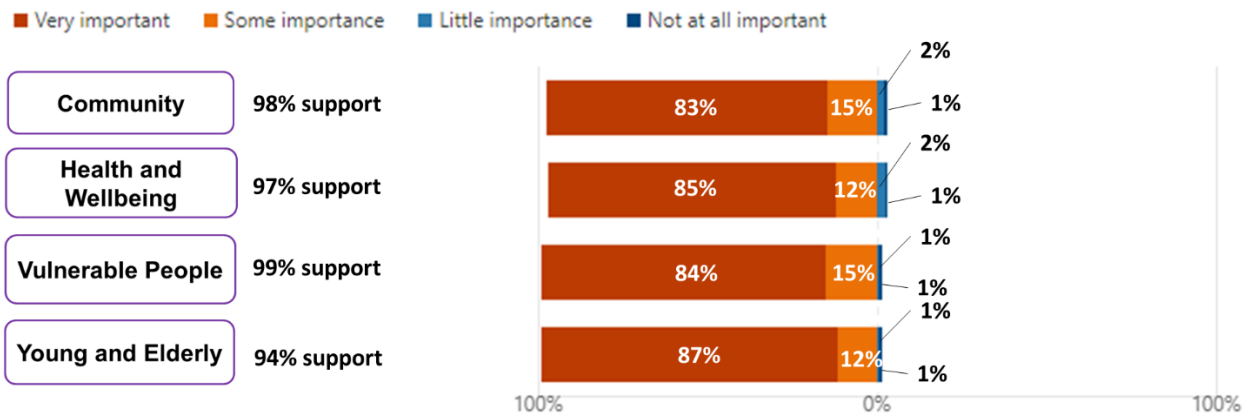
Economy & Growth Objectives

(May not add up to 100% because of rounding)



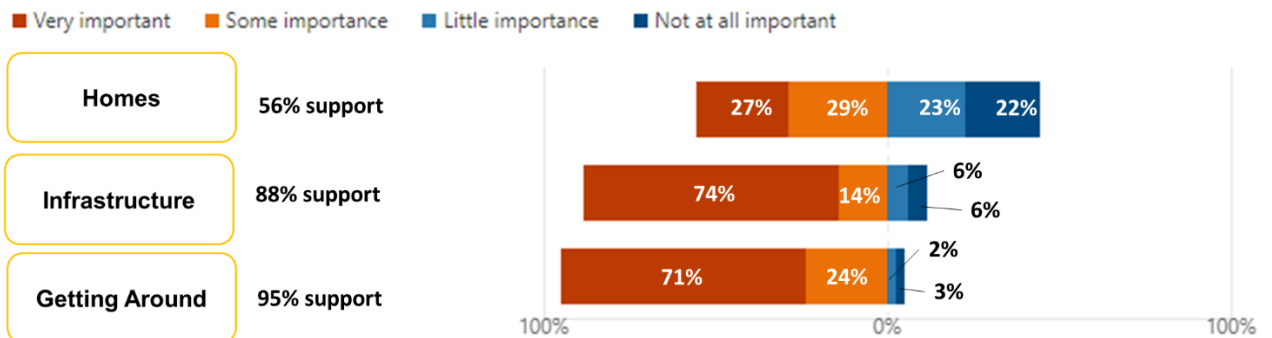
People Objectives

(May not add up to 100% because of rounding)



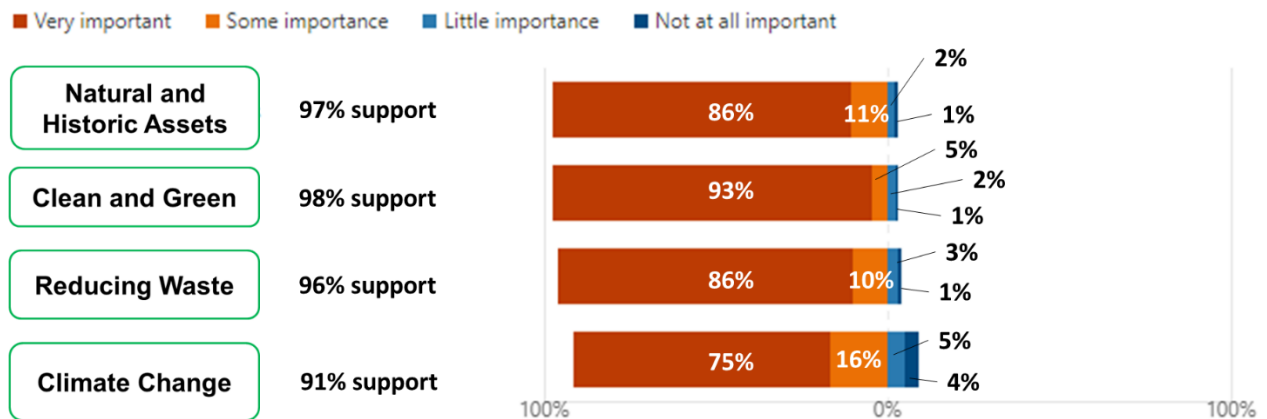
Place Objectives

(May not add up to 100% because of rounding)



Environment Objectives

(May not add up to 100% because of rounding)



Other comments

4.4.5 A number of helpful comments were also provided by respondents which have been analysed and suggested the following additional areas to which the Council should give consideration and these will be included in plans as they are developed for each year of this corporate plan.

Economy and Growth

- Supporting new businesses to set up in Castle Point
- Attract larger scale organisations to the area, through incentives or business support
- Investment in basic skills – apprenticeships
- More focus on green tourism initiatives
- Focus on local procurement of goods and services to boost local economy

People

- Continued support for community groups and organisations, help facilitate their growth to build better community projects, events and integration.
- Better community support services for new parents / young families
- Facilities in parks to help people to keep fit
- Mental health support for young people

Place

- Access to social housing, including schemes supporting residents obtaining their first home – shared ownership, rent to buy etc.
- Greener travel – more cycling and pedestrian provision
- Preventing pavement obstructions by vehicles
- Potholes and pavement maintenance
- Road infrastructure

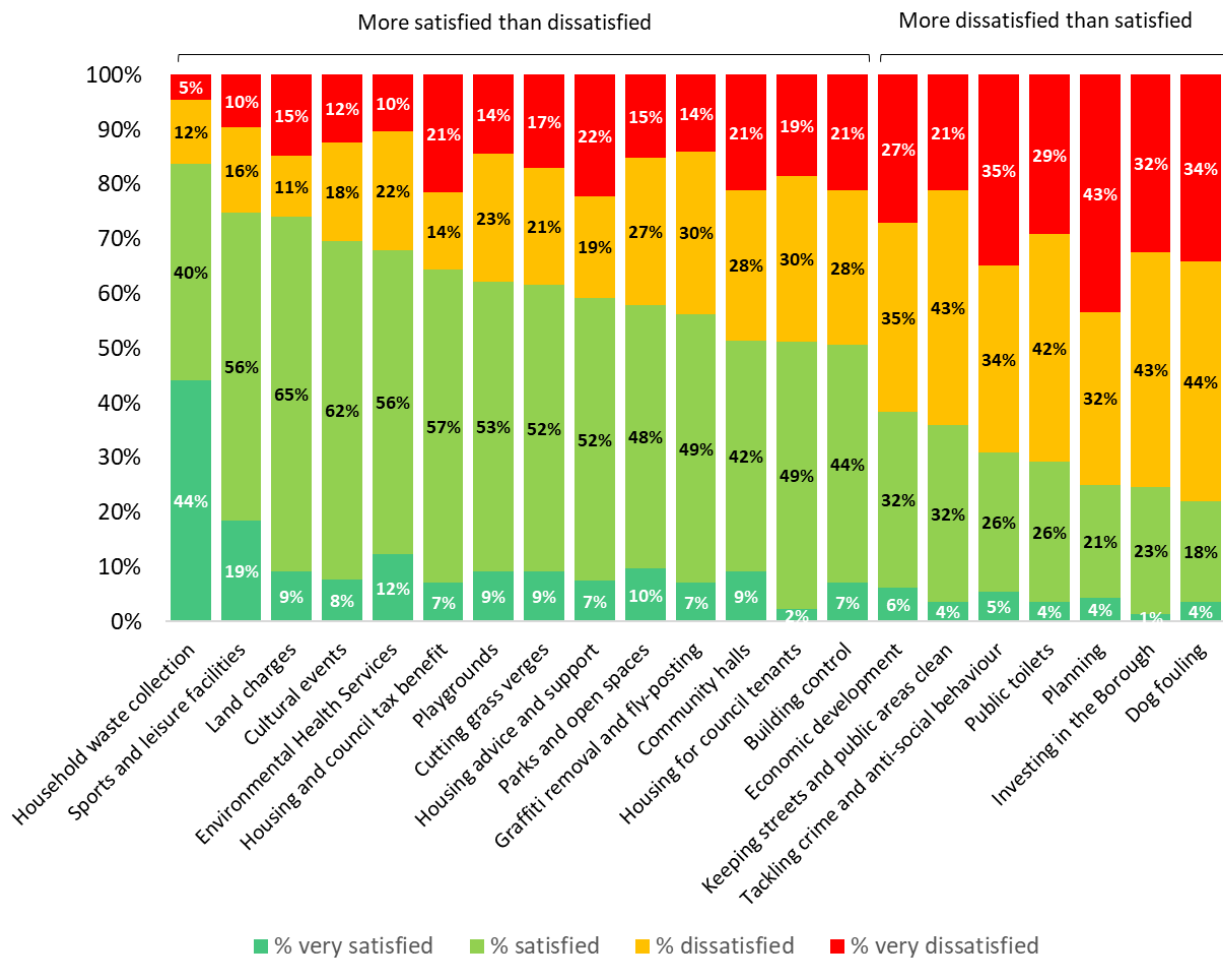
Environment

- Greater community involvement with the protection and enhancement of our natural, historic and manmade heritage
- Electric car charging points
- More organised litter picking
- Supporting schools and local businesses in becoming more environmentally friendly
- Work with supermarkets and shops to reduce plastic waste
- Work with local takeaways to support waste disposal and litter picking around vicinity of premises

Satisfaction with Council Services

- 4.4.6 The same survey also invited participants to indicate their levels of satisfaction with Council-provided services. Results are summarised in the chart below. Some of these satisfaction results are included as key measures presented in Figures 4a-4d and the survey will be conducted annually to understand changes in satisfaction levels over time.

Satisfaction with Council Services 2021

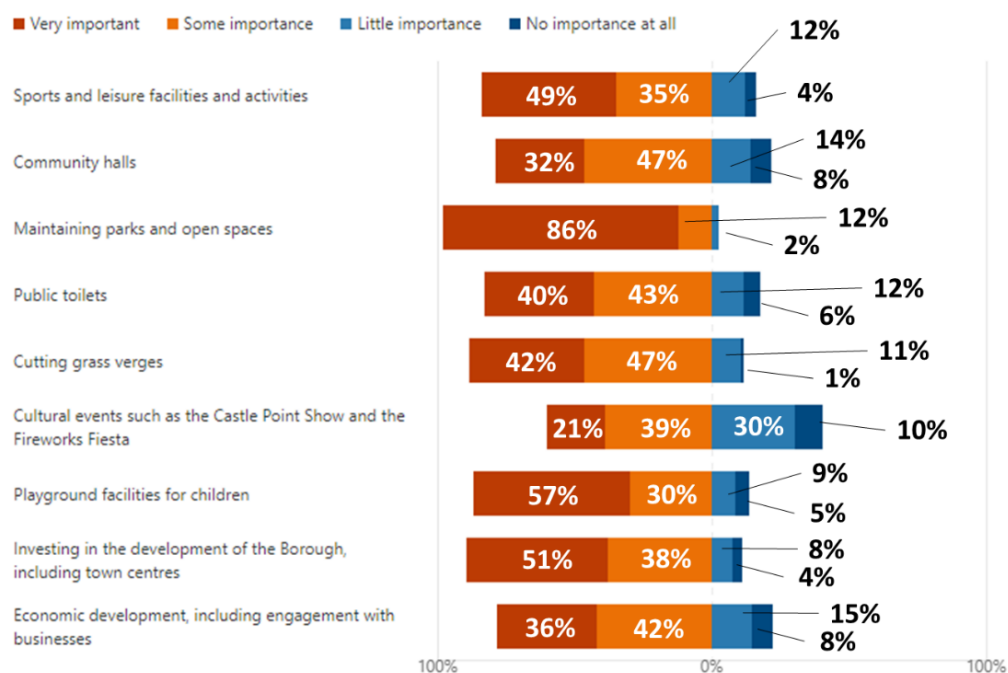


Relative Importance of Discretionary Services

4.4.7 The same survey also asked participants to indicate which of the Council's discretionary services are important to them. The following chart shows perceptions around relative importance of these services, providing helpful insight into what services the residents of Castle Point value.

Importance of Council Services - Discretionary

(May not add up to 100% because of rounding)



5. Ongoing Financial Pressures

- 5.1 Ongoing delivery of priority services is the central focus of the Council's Financial Planning Strategy which sets out how the Council plans to resource the delivery of its services and is applied in compiling the Council's medium-term financial forecast, considering:
- The financial settlement for local government that determines the amount of government grant and redistributed funding the Council receives towards its expenditure.
 - Developments in the economy, including key external influences and drivers.
 - Changes in government policy, legislation or regulation.
 - Financial risks which may or may not materialise over the lifetime of the strategy.
- 5.2 The most significant risks facing the Council at the current time are in relation to the lasting impact of the pandemic (Covid-19) and potential changes to the funding mechanism for local government.
- 5.3 The global pandemic (Covid-19) and the resulting national lockdown which commenced in March 2020 had a gross impact on the Council's financial position of £171k in 2019/20 and £2.8m in 2020/21. Government funding resulted in a net impact of £131k in 2019/20 and £38k in 2020/21.
- 5.4 Whilst the national vaccination programme is underway, it is not possible to know when the country will fully return to normal or what the lasting impact on the Council's financial position may be post recovery. There are many possible scenarios and combinations of outcomes, for example:
- A greater number of residents working from home on a permanent basis may lead to a reduction in the use of the Council's main commuter car park.
 - Impact on the wider economy may result in higher unemployment impacting on service users' ability to pay for services and facilities. This could, for example, lead to a reduction in the use of leisure facilities and a higher level of claimants for local council tax support.
 - Increased working from home and increased leisure or free time may result in increased use of local facilities and amenities resulting in increased associated costs and/or revenues.
- 5.5 Many scenarios have been considered, but given the high degree of uncertainty the Council has not made changes to its detailed budget at this time, but has instead established a plan which will allow it to respond to any impact which may arise in a measured way. An earmarked reserve has been established which will sit alongside the detailed budget, demonstrating prudent financial management by setting aside a sum of money which may be utilised to smooth any detrimental impact and maintain a balanced budget.

- 5.6 The position will be monitored throughout 2021/22 and the reserve applied as and when required. The intention is for the 2022/23 budget process to incorporate the lasting impact of the pandemic and changes in services, once these are better understood.
- 5.7 In terms of the second risk, changes to the funding mechanism for local government, these changes were anticipated to have been introduced from April 2020 but have been deferred at least twice. It is expected that they will be deferred once again with implementation from 1st April 2023. It is not known precisely what the impact will be for the Council, but a prudent level of funding has been assumed in the financial forecast with no growth. These prudent assumptions have given rise to a budget gap of approximately £1m in 2022/23 rising significantly in later years.
- 5.8 Without some certainty around future funding it is impossible for local authorities to plan effectively however, the Council must be proactive and has therefore embarked on programmes of work intended to achieve the level of savings which will be required in order to balance the budget in future years.

6. Our Partnerships

6.1 We work closely across a range of partnerships and share many joint ambitions.

These partnerships include:

- Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA)
- South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP)
- Opportunity South Essex (OSE)
- South Essex Housing Group (SEHG)
- Essex Developers Group (EDG)
- Castle Point and Rochford Community Development Partnership
- Castle Point and Rochford Health and Wellbeing Board
- Castle Point and Rochford Community Safety Partnership
- South East Essex Alliance
- Essex County Council
- Essex Partners

6.2 Further information about these partnerships is set out in Annexe 2.

7. Our Roadmap

7.1 This section sets out our high-level roadmap of activities to deliver the ambitions in this corporate plan and beyond.

Great Place. Great People. One Community. Economy and Growth



Productivity

Business Growth

Work and Prosperity

Skills

Short Term 2-5 Years	Medium Term 5-10 years	Long Term 10+ years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Essex <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic framework is produced which sets out the integrated programme and key principles to deliver sustainable growth Delivery of 5-anchor programmes through the Association of South Essex Local Authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Essex <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium term actions as set out in the strategic framework and anchor programmes Local businesses and education providers an integral part of the South Essex Technical University 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Essex <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued delivery of long-term anchor programmes Further programmes as required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the role of town centres Phased delivery of planned development Public realm improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of town centre action plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regeneration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New areas of focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canvey Seafront <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master planning and delivery of new public facilities at Thorney Bay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canvey Seafront <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master plan implementation 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting Local Businesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building business support capacity through our partners Establish a business-led forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting Local Businesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance business support capacity through our partners Continuation of business-led forum 	

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People



Community

Health & Wellbeing

Vulnerable People

Young and Elderly

Short Term 2-5 Years	Medium Term 5-10 years	Long Term 10+ years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme of Council-run Events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme of Council-run, Community-run and Privately-run Events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme of Community-run and Privately-run Events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Health Initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme of initiatives informed by effective partnership working and Health and Wellbeing Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Health Initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme of initiatives informed by effective partnership working and Health and Wellbeing Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Health Initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme of initiatives informed by effective partnership working and Health and Wellbeing Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Social Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of and participation in key partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Social Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint commissioning of services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Social Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint commissioning of services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leisure Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements and ongoing maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leisure Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of overall leisure provision across the Borough and fit of Council-owned facilities in this wider provision 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Halls <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmed improvements and ongoing maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Halls <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of overall community hall provision across the Borough and fit of Council-owned facilities in this wider provision 	

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Place



Homes

Infrastructure

Getting Around

Short Term 2-5 Years	Medium Term 5-10 years	Long Term 10+ years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examination and adoption Master Plans and planning permissions in accordance with the housing trajectory Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in place Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Housing Strategy to 2026 Strategic Transport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with partners and emergence of a joint approach to transport planning Agreement with Government ASELA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Delivery Board partnership between ASELA and Homes England in Place Agreement with Government Small housing site quick wins delivered Homelessness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy to 2024 (Prevention; Temporary Accommodation; Settled Accommodation; Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st Review of Local Plan in accordance with the South Essex Plan Medium term implementation Infrastructure delivery in accordance with IDP Housing Provision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Housing Strategy to 2031 and then to 2036 Strategic Transport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early implementation of strategic transport improvements ASELA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium term and medium sized sites being delivered Long term growth locations in planning stages Homelessness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy to 2029 and then to 2034 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd Review of Local Plan in accordance with South Essex Plan Continued delivery including long term growth allocations Housing Provision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of future Housing Strategies Strategic Transport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First stages of integrated transport system in place Funding in place for latter stages ASELA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long term growth locations underway Homelessness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of future Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategies

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Environment



Natural and Historic Assets

Clean and Green

Reducing Waste

Climate Change

Short Term 2-5 Years	Medium Term 5-10 years	Long Term 10+ years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural Assets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy for protection and enhancement of existing and new assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural Assets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural Assets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New stewardship models
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste and Recycling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste reduction strategy Early implementation of waste reduction strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste and Recycling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of waste reduction strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste and Recycling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New models of waste and recycling collections and disposal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbon Reduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish the Borough's carbon footprint Carbon reduction strategy developed and quick wins implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbon Reduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carbon Reduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of ambitious carbon reduction targets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Neighbourhoods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council-led initiatives to work with communities to keep neighbourhoods clean and green 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Neighbourhoods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community-led initiatives to keep neighbourhoods clean and green 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Neighbourhoods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New stewardship models

Great Place. Great People. One Community.

Enablers



Leadership

Democracy

Partnerships

Resources

Short Term 2-5 Years	Medium Term 5-10 years	Long Term 10+ years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear understanding of key partnership the Council needs to be represented on (Members and Officers) Increasing participation in and influence over these partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council seen as a key partner and involved in all relevant partnerships 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community engagement strategy in place Early implementation of strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantially engaged community and democratic participation 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercialism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial Strategy in place and delivery of short term actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercialism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with services that could benefit from a more commercial approach Emerging culture of commercialism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercialism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income from commercial activities re-invested in services Strong culture of commercialism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable Finances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short-term budgeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable Finances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium-term financial strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable Finances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial policy

8. Our Annual Initiatives for 2021/22

- 8.1 For each of the four priority areas we agree a set of annual initiatives that the Council will implement, and which are designed to support the objectives set out in this corporate plan.
- 8.2 In the first year of this plan (2021/22) and due to the unique circumstances of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, there is a strong focus on recovery both for residents and businesses in the Borough as well as for the Council.

Economy and Growth

Objectives: Productivity; Business Growth; Work and Prosperity; Skills

Initiatives to support delivery of objectives:

- Delivery of ongoing regeneration projects in Hadleigh Town Centre
- Delivery of ongoing regeneration in Canvey Town Centre
- Implements improvements to Canvey Seafront and put in place a long-term investment plan
- Administration of grants to businesses whilst support is available from government in response to Covid
- Support to businesses to enable compliance with statutory requirements relating to Environmental Health
- Deliver an efficient, enabling and safe licensing regime to support licensed businesses in the Brough to operate
- Work with the managing agents of the Knightswick shopping centre to ensure that income streams from this investment are achieved and that the centre contributes to a vibrant local economy on Canvey Island
- Work with the Essex County Council Economic Growth team to support the creation of apprenticeships in local businesses

Performance Measures:

Annually

- a. Number of apprenticeship starts in the Borough
- b. Percentage of businesses that report local skills shortages when recruiting
- c. Number of businesses operating in the Borough

People

Objectives: Community; Health and Wellbeing; Vulnerable People; Young and Elderly

Initiatives to support delivery of objectives:

- Through the Local Plan, robust planning policy in place to deliver health benefits and safer communities
- Support the NHS with the Covid vaccination programme through provision of vaccination sites in Council-owned facilities and communication with our residents about the importance of the vaccination
- Continue to provide an effective reactive and proactive response to the Covid pandemic, including: regulatory checks on businesses, advice, education and assisting public Health England and the Essex County Council Public Health team
- Administer Disabled Facilities Grants in a timely manner, to support those with disabilities to remain in their own homes
- To progress the project to deliver the new Paddocks Community Centre, in line with wider working group and partners and to ensure the offering of the facility is tailored to wants and needs of residents
- Promote clear pathways with our health and wellbeing partners, and ensure we publicise the range of opportunities available to improve the health of our residents
- Establish a board to encourage partnership working and the establishment of joint projects amongst a wide range of appropriate partners to address inequalities in Castle Point, focussing on areas and social groups where deprivation is prevalent
- Implement plans to ensure that Leisure Centres are well maintained and improved to meet service user needs, retain members and increase usage
- Work in partnership with Police and partners to implement the Community Safety Plan action plan (targets mirror those of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner)
- Support the development and implementation of the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the joint Castle Point and Rochford Health and Wellbeing Board
- Develop further the partnership with Castle Point Association of Voluntary Services (CAVS) as a key partner and conduit to the wider community and voluntary sector in the Borough
- Delivery of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Performance Measures:

Quarterly

- a. Percentage of prevention or relief duties which ended during the quarter with a successful outcome: i) prevention ii) relief
- b. Leisure satisfaction – Net Promoter Score i) Waterside Farm ii) Runnymede

- c. Leisure Memberships
- d. Percentage of usable allotment plots owned and managed by Castle Point that are vacant
- e. Percentage of food premises that are awarded a score of at least 3 on the food hygiene rating scheme
- f. Amount of Disabled Facilities Grant allocated as a percentage of overall budget

Annually

- g. Proportion of people participating in physical activity
- h. Percentage of people who feel safe outside in their local area after dark
- i. Percentage of people who agree that there is a strong sense of community in the local area

Place

Objectives: Homes; Infrastructure; Getting Around

Initiatives to support delivery of objectives:

- Progression of the Local Plan through Examination to Adoption, supporting increase in overall supply of housing and affordable housing to meet local need
- New Infrastructure Delivery Plan as part of Local Plan adoption to set out wider infrastructure needs for the Borough
- Establish a taskforce comprised of officers and councillors (and an officer led working group) to examine the options for improving access to Canvey
- Work through existing partnerships to discuss highway maintenance issues; and better inform the public of highway and street scene works being undertaken in their area
- Influence and support the work of the Association of Local Authority Chief Executives (ASELA), including:
 - Providing leadership and technical advice and evidence base for the Joint Strategic Framework (JSF)
 - Participate in and influence Project Delivery Board and sub-groups
 - Manage public consultations and decisions on the regulatory stages of the JSF
- Adoption of the Housing Strategy and delivery of year 1 initiatives
- Continue to deliver works highlighted in Private Sector Housing Service Plan 2020-2025.
- Complete the construction of 1 x House in Multiple Occupation, 2 x 3-bedroom houses and 7 x 2-bedroom houses
- Ongoing delivery of Planning and Building Control Services

Performance Measures:

Quarterly

- a. Overall tenant satisfaction with repairs and maintenance
- b. Average void turnaround time
- c. Percentage of planning applications processed within target time limits for major and non-major applications
- d. Percentage of Building Control applications processed within statutory time limits
- e. Progress of the Local Plan against the milestones set out in the Local Development Scheme

Annually

- f. Number of new affordable homes in the Borough
- g. Number of new homes built in the Borough
- h. The delivery of the ASELA five-anchor programmes against targets set out in those programmes, including the preparation of a strategic planning framework

Environment

Objectives: Natural and Historic Assets; Clean and Green; Reducing Waste; Climate Change

Initiatives to support delivery of objectives

- Through the Local Plan, strengthened policy protection for open spaces with enhancements to existing and new open space as part of the delivery of new homes
- Work across the authority to calculate a baseline of existing carbon emissions and implement year one actions of the plan to reduce carbon emissions from the Council's operations
- Apply for external grant funding for energy efficiency / carbon reduction measures for delivery via the Council and/or third parties
- Maintain the quality of parks and open spaces, including retention of Green Flag status at Woodside Park
- Maintain Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) status of Thundersley Great Common through monitoring and implementation of programmed works
- Continue the education and promotion of waste reduction, re-use and recycling to residents to maximise recycling and composting rates
- Ongoing promotion of the garden waste collection service
- Undertake feasibility study into the introduction of trade recycling in the Borough
- Targeted education and enforcement of residents' and businesses' environmental responsibilities to reduce litter and detritus on public land leading to a cleaner and healthier Borough

- Contract management to ensure that effective street scene cleansing is delivered
- Implement enhancements to the street scene cleansing contract to improve the appearance in and around town centres
- Identify, and apply for, potential sources of external funding for street scene improvements
- To support voluntary groups who undertake litter picks or improvements to the public highway
- Installation of 35 street recycling bins and changes to recycling points across the Borough
- Working with Environment Agency on renewal of steps down to the foreshore on Canvey Island as part of the flood defence work

Performance Measures:

Quarterly

- a. Percentage of household waste recycled or composted
- b. Percentage of streets inspected which are deemed to be unsatisfactory using code of practice for litter and refuse methodology
- c. Percentage of fly tips removed within one working day
- d. Number of default notices served in relation to Highway Grass Verge cutting
- e. Number of service requests received in relation to Highway Grass Verge cutting

Annually

- f. Satisfaction with maintaining parks and open spaces
- g. Satisfaction with household waste collection, including recycling and composting
- h. Satisfaction with Council's efforts to keep public land clear of litter and refuse
- i. Amount of CO2 produced from the Council's building and operations

Enablers

Enablers: Leadership; Democracy; Partnerships; Resources

Initiatives to include:

- Delivery of Local Plan to increase income from planning application fees, planning performance agreements and increased new homes bonus and Council tax
- Plan for and implement a Covid-safe election in May
- Implement induction training for any new councillors elected to the Council
- Implement the budget setting process to achieve a balanced budget for 2022/23, setting Council Tax and Housing rents on time
- Undertake budget monitoring to ensure that the ongoing impact of Covid on the Council's finances is mitigated

- Conduct a full review of fees and charges as part of the Council's commercialism agenda
- Annual Survey of residents' satisfaction with the Council and Council services
- Member and Officer involvement in key partnerships including: Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA); Castle Point Regeneration Partnership; Opportunity South Essex; Castle Point and Rochford Health and Wellbeing Board; Community Safety Partnership; South East Essex Alliance; Essex Waste Partnership Board; Essex Partnership for Flood Management
- Support the implementation of the Government's Roadmap through Stages 1-4 as the country moves towards an easing of restrictions
- Ongoing development of different ways to access services and ways of delivering services
- Implementation of a communication plan to share key information and better-inform residents of the work of the Council

Performance Measures:

Quarterly

- a. Percentage of calls taken from customers by First Contact that are dealt with without the need to transfer to the back office
- b. Average number of days sickness absence per FTE staff for all Council Services (rolling year): i) short term ii) long term
- c. Number of wheeled bin garden waste subscribers
- d. Channel shift to online services: i) take up of e-billing for Council Tax and Business Rates ii) use of Open Channel online forms
- e. Average time to process benefits claims: i) new claims ii) change of circumstances

Annually

- f. Overall satisfaction with the Council

Annexe 1: Annual Report 2020/21

The annual Objectives for 2020/21 were agreed by Cabinet in March 2020, just before the first national lockdown was announced. Much of the year was spent supporting the health-led response to Covid-19 to ensure that our residents were kept safe and some highlights of that work are included below.

Despite this clear need to shift focus over the year, the Council continued to provide most of its services over 2020/21 and our achievements, set out under our 2020/21 corporate priorities and objectives, are also included in this section.

Health-led response to Covid-19

Partnership working

In response to Covid-19, the Council worked collaboratively with partners and the community where there was an unparalleled mobilisation of collective resources and volunteers across the Borough. This collective response helped to significantly mitigate the impact of the virus, supported the most vulnerable in the community and saved lives.

Voluntary, community and faith sector partners played a critical role in the local response to the pandemic emphasising the effectiveness of partnership working and the importance of community networks to mobilise resources quickly and deliver timely support to those who need it. Through provision of services from foodbanks to prescription delivery, from support for loneliness and isolation to counselling for depression and anxiety, the pandemic highlighted the importance of this third sector in supporting local communities. The volume of support ran into tens of thousands of interactions and certainly in the early stages of lockdown this support was literally a lifeline to those clinically extremely vulnerable who were self-isolating and had no other means of getting food and essentials.

A vibrant and effective voluntary, community and faith sector is key to achieving many of the positive outcomes for people in the Borough and the Council will continue to work in partnership across this sector, working principally through the Castle Point Association of Voluntary Services (CAVS), providing the necessary ongoing support.

Environmental Health

Throughout 2020/21 and continuing in the 2021/22 financial year, the Environmental Health service redirected much of its resources to advise and support local businesses and residents to help minimise the impact of Covid-19.

The permanent members of staff, along with Covid Compliance Officers, worked with many businesses throughout Castle Point to ensure they were provided with up-to-date information to allow them to operate in a way which made their premises Covid secure. Spot-checks of hundreds of premises were carried out over every day of the

week and often outside of normal office hours. Where necessary, enforcement action was taken against those businesses that failed to comply with legislation. The website was updated regularly to ensure that the Covid Secure information was kept in line with the latest legislation and guidance.

Environmental Health have worked effectively in partnership working with the local police division; joint visits took place and information was shared regularly to support the work of respective organisations. The service also worked in partnership with colleagues in the Regeneration team at the Council to help businesses in the high streets re-open safely.

The Service developed and launched a Covid secure sticker which is awarded to those businesses in Castle Point which are not only legally compliant but have taken additional steps to minimise the risk of spread of Covid-19.

Environmental Health have also been fundamental to the effective local operation of Test & Trace, maintaining constant cover to allow for a prompt and comprehensive response to any local outbreak notifications.

Financial Support to Individuals

In September 2020, the Government announced that there would be a new legal duty in England on all those who tested positive for Covid-19 or who were identified by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact, requiring them to self-isolate.

To reinforce the importance of self-isolation and help ensure people have access to the support they need, Government also provided funding for a new Test and Trace Support Payment scheme – split into a statutory and discretionary schemes – for people on low incomes who are unable to work and are financially impacted while they are self-isolating because they cannot work from home. The Council was required to make the scheme publicly available in just two weeks following the announcement.

The scheme had originally been intended to run until the 31 January 2021 but was extended to the 31 March, then to 31 July and then to 30 September, and was also widened to include eligibility for parents and guardians of children required to self-isolate following a surge in cases resulting from the re-opening of schools.

A similar Essex-wide discretionary scheme was also implemented, with funding provided by Essex County Council, to support those residents who were not in receipt of the main qualifying benefits required to meet eligibility under the main scheme.

In total, to the end of May 2021, the Council has administered £186K to almost 400 individuals in the Borough allowing them to self-isolate and slow the spread of the virus.

Financial Support to Businesses

Between April 2020 and March 2021 Government announced a raft of support measures for businesses whose ability to operate was impacted by the Covid-19 restrictions. In total 11 different Government-led support measures were implemented in Castle Point, including Expanded Retail Relief, Nursery Relief, Closed Business Lockdown Payments, Wet-led Pub Payments, Local Restriction Grants, Additional Restriction Grants, and Restart Grants to name just some. In total to the end of May 2021 the Council has distributed £24.2M in financial support to business across the Borough.

Additional Essex-wide schemes were also implemented with funding provided by Essex County Council. These provided support to those businesses not eligible for the Government mandatory schemes, and small- and medium-sized enterprises who needed to adapt their premises and/or operations to continue to operate in a Covid-secure way. In total, to the end of May 2021 these schemes have enabled a further £110K support to local businesses.

2020/21 Objectives

Overarching Objective

1. To work with local authorities and partners to prepare a long-term strategy for the development of, and investment in, South Essex including a coherent approach to economic development, transportation, housing, town centre regeneration and planning policy. To adjust the Council's corporate plan in alignment with the strategy developed.

The Prospectus for Growth and Recovery was published by the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) in July 2020. The prospectus helped to inform the development of five anchor-programmes, including the preparation of a strategic planning framework due for draft publication during 2021.

A significant amount of evidence has been prepared and published by ASELA with further work underway. The joint commissioning of evidence across South Essex also helps to inform our plans and strategies.

This Corporate Plan has been developed to reflect and support the ambitions of ASELA.

Environment

2. Ensure that the Borough's Parks, Public Open Spaces, Seafront & Foreshore, Ancient Woodlands, Walks and Leisure facilities are well maintained, accessible and publicised to increase usage and satisfaction rates

The Borough's parks, public open spaces, seafront & foreshore and ancient woodlands have been as important as ever over this last year providing residents with quality places to enjoy for leisure and exercise, especially during restrictions imposed during lockdowns. Improvements during 2020/21 have included:

- Parks and open spaces:
 - a new playground at Swans Green;
 - resurfacing works at Woodside Park and John H Burrows recreation ground;
 - picnic tables at South Benfleet and Beveland recreation grounds;
- Seafront and foreshore:
 - public toilet improvements at Thorney Bay, Labworth and Lubbins;
 - painting of the seawall
- Leisure centres:
 - Installation of LED lights and motion sensors;
 - Pool covers at both leisure centres
 - Drowning-detection technology in both swimming pools
 - Commencement of work to convert squash courts at Waterside Farm Leisure Centre into a new fitness studio

The Council also secured substantial funding of £700k towards remodelling and resurfacing of the Labworth Car Park. This work will be carried out in 2021/22.

Satisfaction levels with the Leisure Centres has remained high despite the disappointment of closures during the year. Exceptionally high Net Promoter Scores (NPS) were achieved – 72 and 78 for Runnymede and Waterside Farm, respectively – due to the arrangements put in place to ensure social distancing at the centres. Nationally, leisure facilities score around 40-45 for Net Promoter Score.

As a result of these scores, Castle Point Leisure Services was informed in December 2020 that it had retained its 2019 crown for *Best Member Experience – Local Authority* as well as winning a prestigious *Platinum Medal*, the only club in the UK to achieve this honour and 1 of just 5 from a worldwide pool of over 5,000 leisure facilities.

3. Re-develop The Paddocks Community Hall to ensure the provision of a modern and efficient facility that is valued by the local community

A Working Group was formed, consisting of members from all parties to progress the provision of a new facility to replace the Paddocks Community Hall. The Working Group met on three occasions and also visited the Chantry Way Centre in Billericay to see the new community facility which was overseen by the same architects commissioned by the Council to undertake a high-level feasibility study and potential layout plans for a new multi-functional community facility.

Work will continue in 2021/22 with the same architects to complete a detailed feasibility study and options appraisal to arrive at a preferred design and site location for the new community centre.

4. Engage with and influence the development of the new Resources and Waste Strategy for England

The Government has undertaken a number of public consultations e.g. extended producer responsibility, deposit return scheme and consistency of refuse collections to help inform how it wishes to progress the strategy but no decisions have yet been taken. Officers will continue to keep a watching brief so that the Council can respond to any changes that impact on service delivery in a timely manner.

The collection of household waste and recycling continued throughout 2020/21. At the end of the year, over 50% of all household waste collected was either recycled or composted. In a survey carried out as part of a consultation on this new corporate plan, waste and recycling scored the highest level of satisfaction of all Council services, with 84% of respondents indicating that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the service.

Housing and Regeneration

5. Engage with the public and private sector to promote and obtain the development of good quality housing in the borough including affordable housing, market housing and social housing and ensure that developer contributions to new infrastructure are secured and spent

Over the year, there were 13 new affordable homes built in the Borough. This is an improvement on the previous year when no new affordable homes were delivered although remains significantly below the target in the draft Local Plan (approved for submission in October 2019) and consequently substantial action in terms of the use of S106 Agreements to secure affordable housing, and the building of affordable homes by the Council and Registered Provider partners is required to improve this figure.

The Council continues with its programme to develop and acquire new housing stock. There is a pipeline to build an additional 7-bedroomed House in Multiple Occupation (HMO), plus an additional 40 family-size homes over the next 5 years.

Although surveys of tenant satisfaction with repairs and maintenance were not undertaken in the final quarter of the year – as the incumbent contractor was demobilising and the Council was changing to new contractor – satisfaction levels when last recorded at the end of December 2020 remained high at 98.3%.

Void property turnaround times were adversely affected by Covid-related restrictions over the year with an average of 41.4 days per property. This will remain a focus in 2021/22 to ensure that when properties become vacant they are available to re-let as soon as possible.

The Council now has an Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which accompanies the Local Plan, and will secure the infrastructure necessary to support growth.

6. To improve the public realm of our town centres and deliver effective master planning for key sites

In Hadleigh town centre, The Crown public house was demolished further to consultation and Cabinet approval, clearing the way for regeneration of the Hadleigh Island Site which is subject to on-going work to develop a viable scheme. The Council worked closely with Essex County Council on a public realm scheme that has seen significant improvements along London Road.

At Canvey Seafront, a working group has been established to develop a masterplan for the area and discussions are ongoing to consider proposals by local business owners to invest in the seafront. The Council is also progressing a scheme at Thorney Bay with the support of a £1.52m grant from the Coastal Community Fund.

Both of these areas of the Borough remain a focus in 2021/22.

September 2020 saw the launch of a new market in Canvey town centre, supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

7. Agreement of the Local Plan and successful examination of the plan leading to its approval

Progress was made on the new Local Plan. The plan was submitted for examination in public on the 2 October 2020. The examination Hearing Sessions commenced in May 2021 and concluded at the end of June. The Inspector's report is due by the end of 2021.

8. Deliver the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was approved by Cabinet in November 2019 and implementation of this strategy took place during 2020/21. Key achievements included: the completion of a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) at Hatley Gardens; securing additional funding for outreach homeless work; and establishment of a new Tenancy Sustainment role. Work has continued in 2020/21 in both preventing and relieving homelessness. Over the year, the Prevention duty ended for 107 households of which the Council secured accommodation for 73 households (68%) and the Relief duty ended for 135 households of which we secured accommodation for 72 households (53%).

Health & Community Safety

9. Develop partnership arrangements to create greater opportunities for more effective joint working, including health & wellbeing and community safety

Work has continued, where restrictions allowed, to support the priorities of the Castle Point and Rochford Health and Wellbeing Board as set out in their strategy:

- Reducing levels of overweight and obesity;
- Improving mental health and wellbeing;
- Supporting people to lead independent lives to stay in their own homes for as long as possible.

This activity has included stressbuster sessions for young people, basic cookery courses to promote healthy eating and physical activity sessions. 2021/22 will see the development of a new Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The Council has been actively engaged in the South East Essex Alliance. The Alliance brings together key partners to create opportunities for people to live well in South East Essex. This extends beyond the traditional boundaries of health and social care and incorporates wider system partners to tackle the social determinants of ill health such as education, employment and housing.

The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) met remotely over 2020/21. Most face-to-face initiatives were paused and any unused grant from the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner was rolled forward to 2021/22. Nevertheless, electronic and remote communication continued amongst partners, alongside front-line policing, throughout the pandemic. Funded CSP activities included adverts at bus stop with messages of reassurance, Crimestoppers campaigns, newsletters, and detached youth work.

Perceptions of safety, especially after dark, remain lower in Castle Point than in comparable parts of Essex, with 42% of respondents indicated that they felt “fairly safe” or “very safe” after dark. This is despite levels of recorded crime in Castle Point being amongst the lowest in Essex.

A Commercial and Democratically Accountable Council

10. Ensure the organisation has the right capacity and resources in place for effective customer focussed services whilst ensuring a balanced budget for 2020/21 and future years

Covid-19 brought significant cost pressures to the Council in 2020/21 both from increased need for services and reduced income e.g. leisure centres and car parks. However, these pressures were mitigated through careful budget management and a range of support grants from government to help the Council to respond to the pandemic and offset some income losses. In February 2021, a balanced budget was agreed by Council for the 2021/22 financial year.

Work on the Commercialism Strategy will be picked up in 2021/22 and help the Council to explore opportunities to offset future pressures on the budget.

Work on strategic asset management has progressed and included the disposal of Chapman Sands which generated a significant capital receipt for the Council.

The number of wheeled bin garden waste subscribers was 11,719 at the end of year, generating additional income for the Council.

11. Implement initiatives to reduce costs of delivery or generate income whilst maintaining excellent customer services, including:

- *Efficiencies through the use of technology*
- *Council website as a gateway to self-service, interactive forms and automation*

The Council promoted the use of the “Open Portal” as a way for customers to manage Council Tax transactions online and over the year there were 1,871 transactions managed in this way. The number of customers signed up to the e-billing service for Council Tax and Business rates increased by over 1,000 to just under 8,500 users.

Website improvements included the introduction on an online shop for garden waste bins and replacement recycling and composting receptacles.

Customers continued to have full access to First Contact over the year and the team dealt with 96% of all queries without the need to transfer to the back office.

12. Ensure the Council is fit for purpose by meeting national and local requirements to agreed timescales and to optimum performance standards

Despite the significant disruption over the year, the Council continued to meet national and local requirements across most of the areas of its operations.

Contract management continued to be effective with pro-active monitoring and rectification of any performance issues. The performance for street cleanliness met target and was an improvement on performance on the previous year; just 8.7% of streets were deemed unsatisfactory compared with 8.9% in 2019/20. Fly tipping and grass verge cutting indicators also demonstrated strong performance over the year.

The two-year rolling average for processing planning applications remained strong with 100% of major and 99.3% of non-major planning applications determined on time. All Building Control applications were processed within statutory timescales

Processing of housing benefit claims was strong with 97% of claims processed within 14 days. New claims saw an average of 23 days and change of circumstances an average of 5 days.

Annexe 2: Our Partnerships

We work closely with a range of partners and share many joint ambitions. These include:

Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA)

The Association of South Essex Local Authorities is a partnership of neighbouring councils that have come together to deliver growth and prosperity in the region. ASELA wants to be at the forefront and support the south Essex region to be a UK leader in economic recovery, and drive sustained economic growth and prosperity within its communities.

The local authority partners are Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea, Thurrock and Essex County Council.

<https://www.southessex.org.uk/>

South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP)

The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) is one of 38 LEPs, established to provide the clear vision and strategic leadership to drive sustainable private sector-led growth and job creation in their area. LEPs were set up by the government to be the key body determining strategic economic priorities while making investments and delivering activities to drive growth and create jobs.

<https://www.southeastlep.com/>

Opportunity South Essex (OSE)

Opportunity South Essex (OSE) is the local federated board for the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP Ltd) for South Essex and works closely with ASELA.

<https://www.southessex.org.uk/opportunity-south-essex>

South Essex Housing Group (SEHG)

The South Essex Housing Group (SEHG) is a partnership between Essex County Council, South Essex Local Authorities and Registered Providers with support from South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and Homes England to help improve housing growth in Essex and to support wider housing and related services focusing on the private, intermediate and affordable sector.

<https://www.housingessex.org/south-essex-housing-group/>

Essex Developers Group (EDG)

The Essex Developers Group (EDG) aims to eliminate barriers to building and maximise commercial opportunities by getting the public and private sectors working together. EDG members seek to work with the Government, including the Housing Minister, Homes England and South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) to accelerate housing delivery, including the supply of much needed affordable homes.

<https://www.housingessex.org/essex-developers-group/>

Castle Point and Rochford Community Development Partnership

The Community Development Partnership is chaired by the Castle Point Association of Voluntary Services (CAVS <https://www.cavsorg.uk/>) and engages with key partners across Castle Point and Rochford, creating a network of organisations working together to support residents.

Castle Point and Rochford Health and Wellbeing Board

Although the statutory responsibility for health and wellbeing sits with Essex County Council (ECC) which manages a county-wide Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB), Castle Point Borough Council has, in partnership with Rochford District Council, been part of a local HWB since 2013, when public health responsibilities moved from the NHS to local government.

<https://www.castlepoint.gov.uk/health-wellbeing-board/>

Castle Point and Rochford Community Safety Partnership

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 placed a joint responsibility upon specific agencies to work together, and with other agencies within the community, to develop and implement strategies to protect their communities from crime and help people feel safe. As a leading member of the Castle Point and Rochford Community Safety Partnership, Castle Point Borough Council is firmly committed to tackling crime and disorder and reducing the fear of crime in the Borough.

Other statutory members are from the following key agencies:

- Essex Police
- Castle Point and Rochford Clinical Commissioning Group
- Essex County Council
- Essex County Fire and Rescue Service
- Rochford District Council

<https://www.castlepoint.gov.uk/community-safety-partnership/>

South East Essex Alliance

The South East Essex Alliance is a partnership across the NHS, local government, Essex Police and the community and voluntary sector.

A core element of the SE Essex Alliance mission is to enable smooth and easy access to integrated health and care provision and for partner agencies and professionals to work together to reduce health inequalities. They will work with each other and with the local populations to understand and respond to needs, and mobilise resources within local communities. The approach will require a shift in focus away from boundaries of organisations towards prevention and supporting the strengths of communities and individuals.

Essex County Council (ECC)

Essex County Council is the county council that governs the non-metropolitan county of Essex in England. It has 75 councillors, elected from 70 divisions.

As a non-metropolitan county council, responsibilities are shared between districts (including boroughs) and in many areas also between civil parish (including town) councils. Births, marriages/civil partnerships and death registration, roads, libraries and archives, refuse disposal, most of state education, of social services and of transport are provided at the county level. The Plan for Essex runs from 2021-25:

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/plans-and-strategies>

Essex Partners

The public service reform agenda in Essex is led by the Essex Partners, which includes senior leaders from across a range of public sector bodies, universities and the voluntary and community sector. Essex Partners is responsible for leading the development and delivery of the new Vision for Essex, The Future of Essex and recognises the importance of shifting to a system leadership model, collaborating across organisational, cultural and other boundaries to deliver better outcomes for the people we serve.

<https://www.essexfuture.org.uk/>